

A Missional Life

Neighborhood as Mission (Jer. 29:4-7; Col. 4:2-6)

The MISSION of the WELL: Leading ALL *GENERATIONS* to love God, follow Jesus, and model His mission to transform all peoples and nations (w/ the gospel) =the work God invites each of us into

*This mission is not just a church thing...if God has called you *HERE*, we see it as a mission for this life (*Missional life*)! -Am I on Mission with Christ in all areas of my life?(worksch/live/play/rest?)

Last week: Work as Mission. Work is God's **idea**. Work is **worship** when done for Christ.

*Why did you choose the neighborhood where you live now? Affordability? Schools? Amenities? Pr

-**Where you live is no accident. God can/does open/shut doors to put us where He wants us.

=**Even if you were in a buyers' market** (*lots of choices*): God uses our circumstances, wisdom (pros/cons list), & even how we feel=**discernment** -to move in us to put us where He wants us!

-Acts 17:26-27 "and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might feel around for Him and find *Him*, though He is not far from each one of us;" *God created us; chose us to live in the century, country, race, and language that we were born into. He chose your parents, your heritage, & He leads your future.

*Where we live and how we live *matters* to God! Because we are in the people business & our life and ministry to God is **NOT** just for ourselves. **We exist for His glory!** & what brings Him glory?? = spreading His glory through the gospel to those who've never heard it. Everywhere we go!

*Romans 15:20 Paul's heart: "And thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on another man's foundation." Paul = To go and plant his life where people don't know Jesus. *What is different about your calling?? =**Missional Life!**

1. A fundamental principle for the Christian: We are **missionaries** before we are homeowners, renters, or commuters. We often think mission means going somewhere **else**, but God first calls us to **love** where we already are and make an **impact** on those right around us.

*Last command of Jesus before ascension: Matthew 28:19 "As you go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe all I have commanded, and remember...I am with you forever"

= We are **missionaries** before we are homeowners. We are missionaries wherever we go & live.

-We **tell** people about the gospel (Good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ)

-We **baptize** new Believers into the local Church to be known in biblical community

-We **disciple** new Believers to learn to follow Jesus, know His WORD, love His Church, lost world

-We are **sent** by Christ, for Christ, and with Christ everywhere we go. Our life is His! **Missional life**

*Consider the Lord's heart for Mission when He sends His children to a new place to live:

-**Context:** Israel in their disobedience are being exiled in Babylon. **New culture/lang. people grp**

-**Jeremiah 29:4-7** "⁴This is what the Lord of armies, the God of Israel, says to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵'Build houses and live *in them*; and plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶Take wives and father sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may give birth to sons and

daughters; and grow in numbers there and do not decrease. ⁷ **Seek the prosperity (blessing) of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord in its behalf; for in its prosperity will be your prosperity.**' -God instructs His children to live and plant their lives into this new place (Not to isolate, but to integrate). To **Invest** in their new habitation like they were going to be there for the rest of their lives. i.e. "**Bloom where you are planted**"

-The city's blessing would be to their blessing; the neighborhood's blessing is their blessing!
-God blesses us to be a blessing to others.

God has strategically placed His people in particular neighborhoods not merely to reside there, **but to represent Christ there, seeking the good of their community while intentionally *living out* the gospel and *proclaiming* the gospel.

-Scripture consistently presents God's people as strategically positioned for His purposes.

-The exiles in **Jeremiah** wanted out of Babylon. They were longing for a better place. Instead, God told them to settle down and invest in the very city they wished to escape.

-The **Colossian** believers lived in a pagan culture resistant to the gospel. Paul did not tell them to retreat. He instructed them to pray, engage, and speak wisely to outsiders.

-The **church** has often viewed mission as something that happens overseas. Scripture reminds us that mission begins across the street. **Your neighborhood is not an accident. Your street is not random. Your neighbors are not incidental. God has placed you there on purpose.**

I. God Sends His People Into Communities/Neighb. for Kingdom Purposes -Jeremiah 29:4

Notice God's language: "***I have sent you into exile.***" Babylon was not outside God's control.

The exile was painful, but it was purposeful. The people viewed Babylon as a temporary inconvenience. **God viewed Babylon as a mission field.** They were going to influence a new culture with the truth that there is ONE True God -Yahweh is His name.

*[How many Hindus live near you? Buddhists? Californians? Lost Texas who think they are good?]

-How many lost and precious souls live on your street? When's the last time you even considered

*God's sovereignty and providence extends to where **His** people live. Throughout Scripture:

- **Joseph was placed in Egypt. Esther was placed in Persia. Daniel was placed in Babylon.**
- **Paul was placed throughout the Roman Empire. The early ch. was scattered into the nations.**
- **AND YOU were placed to live in Argyle, Northlake, Justin, Denton, FM, Lantana, HV, Haslet, Krum**

God advances His mission through the placement of His people. That includes YOU! Ur family

A pastor once challenged his church to map every household represented in the congregation. They discovered that hundreds of believers lived within a few miles of nearly every neighborhood in their city. The realization was striking: The church had been praying for God to send missionaries while God had already sent hundreds of them. Themselves!

People simply drive into their garages every evening without recognizing their assignment.

-Many Christians see their home as a refuge from mission.**

***YET God often sees it as the base of operations for mission. Your neighbor's souls matter!**

II. God's People Must Seek the Welfare of Their Communities -Jeremiah 29:7

"Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you. [Lit. seek the 'shalom'] of the city...

The Hebrew word "*shalom*" carries the idea of flourishing, peace, wholeness, and well-being.

-God did not tell them merely to survive Babylon. He told them to bless Babylon. =**Witness**

****Remember, what was Israel's assignment as God's cov. People? His chosen people?**

=That they would be blessed to be a blessing to others! To *introduce* nations to One true God.
-Is. 42:6 "**You will be a lighthouse to the nations**"=**they failed**; so God brought them **to** nations

This is remarkable. Babylon was not their ally. Babylon was their captor. Yet God's people were called to love and serve those around them. To reflect God's character & nature of Love!

*Christians are *not* called to be consumers of neighborhoods. We are called to be contributors. We should be praying & asking "How can God use me for the good of this neighborhood?"

After the devastating hurricane Katrina struck coastal Miss., our church helped one church become known not for its worship services, but for its cleanup crews. Members cleared debris, distributed food, repaired homes, and *served anyone in need*. Years later, community leaders still referred to that congregation as "**the church that showed up.**"

*Before many people listened to their message, they experienced their love, Care, Consistency
=**Seeking the welfare of a community creates credibility for the gospel.**

-John 20:21: Jesus = "**As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.**"

-God's people are **sent** into places for the blessing of others. = **We are to be a SENT people!**

=Every Christian is a sent person. **This shifts the congregation's **identity**:

-We are Not merely residents, BUT Sent ambassadors. We are lights in a dark place. = **Hope**

***Your neighborhood becomes a place of divine assignment.** Our neighborhood is part of God's providence & *you* are His hands and feet to love, serve, bless, & share the gospel w/ 'em!

So how do we live on mission purposefully in our neighborhoods? =*Col. 4:2ff

*God has sovereignly placed every believer in a specific neighborhood so that through their presence, service, and witness, others might come to know Christ. **How do we do this???***

Colossians 4:2-6 "² Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴ that I may make it clear in the way that I ought to proclaim it.

⁵ Conduct yourselves with **wisdom** toward outsiders, **making the most of the opportunity**. ⁶ Your speech *must always be* [with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

A missional life in our neighborhoods requires prayerful presence, sacrificial engagement, gospel intentionality, and confidence in God's sovereign placement & leading. **He opens doors!**

-This is a divine assignment. God is in control. He wants to bring lost people to faith. AND God wants to use YOU. YOU are God's plan A. (there is NO plan B); your faithfulness matters to 'em

1. A Missional Life Begins with Persistent Prayer

Colossians 4:2 "**Continue steadfastly in prayer.**" Paul starts with prayer because mission is ultimately God's work. Programs cannot save people. Friendliness cannot save people.

Only God can save people. Only God can open blind eyes, change hearts, transform lives. **HOW?**

=**Through Prayer; consistent praying, fasting, & prayer walking** =asking God to work in em

****Who's your ONE???** -who are you consistently praying for? Witnessing to? Serving? blessing

-Our Prayer acknowledges God's sovereignty in salvation. He saves for His glory & our benefit

Before the modern missionary movement expanded, many believers committed themselves to praying by name for neighbors, coworkers, and friends. Some prayed for years before seeing fruit. One pastor tells of praying for a neighbor every day for nearly a decade before that man eventually came to faith in Christ. **The years of prayer were not wasted.**

God was preparing both hearts -one for salvation, the other for worship;

Mission without prayer becomes self-reliance. Prayer without mission is apathy. =both

****Mission with prayer becomes participation in God's work.** He invites us to pray & share

-Prayer reminds us that God Opens Doors We Cannot Open

Colossians 4:2-3 "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that **God will open up to us a door for the word**, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ." BTW, where was Paul??

Paul was imprisoned. Yet he did not ask for release. Did demand his rights. Ask for comfort.

=He asked for opportunity.

****The greatest obstacle to evangelism is often not opposition. It is passivity.**

*****We assume gospel opportunities are rare, nobody wants to here about Jesus.**

BUT, Paul assumed God was creating them. That God opened doors for people to hear *good new*

Many believers have experienced that A casual conversation about family becomes a discussion about purpose. A neighborhood barbecue becomes an opportunity to discuss faith. A crisis creates openness where none existed before.

=What appeared ordinary became providential. God specializes in opening doors.

***We are praying to create relationships, deepening relationships with the lost.**

=Casual Convo. – Personal Convo. – Spiritual convo. - Gospel conversation.

2. A Missional life is a life of distinction: a Holy distinction (how we live matters more than even what we say)! Colossians 4:5-6 "**Walk in wisdom toward outsiders...**" "**Let your speech always be gracious...**"

-Mission involves both **conduct** and **conversation**. "**Share the gospel everyday, if necessary, use words**" -Francis of Assisi

-Our Lives Validate Our Message or it doesn't. Our actions matter!

Our Neighbors observe:

- How we handle conflict.
- How we treat our spouses.
- How we respond to hardship.
- How we care for others. Care for our animals. Care for our property. Care for Neighborhood!

In our lives, The gospel is not merely heard, It is observed. Or it isn't.

****Our vocation, our calling to live on mission in our neighborhoods is a calling to be filled with Christ - & live & love in HIDS gospel power. HE is enough!! Christ has already defeated death, overcome sin, broken down every spiritual barrier that anyone could ever have; Jesus lives in us. His gospel power is *in* us! Our Vocation is to release the God who is all powerful from within us & unleash HIS love, HIS grace, His Truth on your neighbors. **Jesus does this!!!****

****The calling of God to live a missional life is *not* something else you have to DO...another burden; one more thing to fail at as a Christian. The gospel teaches us that Jesus does this – *IN YOU* and *THROUGH* to a watching and needy world. The power is from God. **You are vessel!****

-When you are so satisfied w/ Christ = JOY exudes in you!! People notice. Be prepared to share

Five Biblical Applications for a Missional Life in Our Neighborhoods

1. Pray Intentionally for Your Neighbors

Create a prayer list of every household on your street.

Pray for: Salvation; Marriages; Children; Health; Opportunities for gospel conversations

*Prayer changes how we see people = Neighbors stop being strangers and become souls.

2. Practice Intentional Presence

Many Christians live beside people they barely know. Slow down. Take walks.

Sit on the front porch. Attend community events. Learn names. Ask questions.

Build relationships. Jesus often ministered through His presence before proclamation.

3. Pursue the Good of the Neighborhood

Seek practical ways to bless your community.

Examples: Organize service projects. Help elderly neighbors. Support local schools.

Welcome new residents. Care for families in crisis. Get involved: PTO; School Board; City Council; neighborhood HOA;

-Your family & the church should be known for love, generosity, and service.

-Who and where will your Community Group adopt? Missional Community Group...

4. Look for Open Doors to Share Christ

Ask God daily: "**Who can I encourage toward Jesus today?**"

Be prepared to: Share your testimony. Explain the gospel. Invite someone to church.

Offer to pray with a neighbor. Get familiar with the Romans Road. Ask God for souls!!!

5. Live Distinctively for the Glory of God

People should see something different. Not perfection. But Christlikeness.

Let your: Hospitality, Integrity, Kindness, Generosity, Forgiveness, Intentionality point others toward Jesus.

**Your life may be the first gospel some neighbors ever encounter.

The question is not whether your neighborhood needs the gospel.

The question is whether we recognize that God has already sent us there.

The mission field may not require a passport. It may simply require opening the front door.

Community Group Discussion Questions

1. Jeremiah 29:7 says, "Seek the welfare of the city." What does seeking the welfare of your neighborhood practically look like in your current season of life?
2. How does knowing that God has sovereignly placed you where you live change your perspective on your neighbors and community?
3. Who are two or three neighbors, coworkers, or local friends that God may be prompting you to pray for consistently?
4. What barriers keep you from building deeper relationships with people in your neighborhood?
5. Paul asks believers to pray for "open doors" for the gospel (Col. 4:3). Can you share a time when God unexpectedly opened a spiritual conversation?
6. In what ways do your lifestyle, speech, and daily habits either strengthen or weaken your gospel witness?
7. What is one specific action step you can take this week to move from being a resident of your neighborhood to being a missionary in your neighborhood?

Closing Challenge:

This week, identify one neighbor, learn something new about them, pray for them by name, and look for one opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ in a practical way. Then ask God to open a door for a gospel conversation.