

the **MISSION** *of* **GOD**

*Notes from Session 1
of the Tri-Church Summit 2018*

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A COMFORTING REALISATION

God has been on mission, forming a people for himself, long before he called you and I to be. As we begin to consider what God has called us to do (make disciples) it's comforting and thrilling to first look at what he has promised that he, himself, will do. A Biblical vision of our Almighty God on mission to sovereignly form a people for himself will serve to spur us on in the mission he has given us.

Read over Matthew 28:18-20, John 20:21, & Acts 1:8.

What's your response to the disciple-making mission we are called to?

What are your excitements and/or fears?

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THE BIBLE—GOD'S MISSION MANIFESTO

The mission of God is a subject as big as the Bible itself! Though there's a lot going on throughout the pages of Scripture, the Bible could be summarised as God's mission manifesto. It tells a consistent and overarching story of how God is at work, forming a people for himself.

How can you see God at work forming his people throughout the Bible?

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GOD WILL FORM HIS PEOPLE FROM THE GROUND UP

In the beginning God formed his people from the ground up (cf Genesis 1:26-27). People are the pinnacle of his creation, made in his image to reflect his perfect reign as they rule over every other living thing. If you want to look at something in the universe that's awe-inspiring and resembling of the awesomeness of God, don't look at a sunset or a vast sky of brilliantly radiant stars—look at a human being!

People are amazing. Consider how beautifully the story is told of how God lovingly gets his hands dirty forming a man from the dust like a gardener, and how he gets up close to blow life into him. Consider how he intently grafts a woman from the man like a skilful surgeon. And consider how he brings her to the man in the first marriage so they would be fruitful and multiply (cf Genesis 1:28, 2:7 & 2:21-24). This is God on a mission, forming his amazing people for himself.

What does all this have to say about the inherent value and worth of people?

What do you love about people that speaks of their God-given value and worth?

In what ways might this view of people impact our disciple-making mission?

In our broken world where God's amazing people do wicked things like sell one another into slavery, God is still at work forming his people from the ground up (cf 2 Corinthians 4:6, 5:17). He brings about a 'let there be light' moment of new creation in us and this is something so much bigger and better than just a return to Genesis 1. Now, we bear God's image in Christ, *the image of God* (cf Colossians 1:15 & Hebrews 1:3) and we are fruitful and multiply supernaturally (cf John 3:1-8).

GOD WILL FORM HIS PEOPLE & HE WON'T BE STOPPED

As we follow the narrative of the Bible, we see in Genesis 3 that God's people reject him and his mission, and God responds in grace by going in search of them (cf Genesis 3:8-9), clothing their shame (cf Genesis 3:21), and making them fruitful and multiplying them (cf Genesis 4:1). God won't be stopped in his mission to form a people for himself, not even by the people he's forming.

Can you think of other times when God keeps his mission going despite our sin? Look up Genesis 6:1-8, 7:17-24, 9:1, & 9:7 and see his commitment to his mission. Look up Genesis 11:1-9 & 12:1-3 and note God's continued gracious blessing.

Likewise, God's mission cannot be thwarted by the world. Not even the Egyptian superpower of evil and tyranny can stop him. He will build his people and the pyramids of Egypt will not overcome them, just as Christ will build his church and the gates of hell will not overcome us. This is seen in Acts also when fierce opposition threatens to squash the early church and the result is that 'the word of God continued to increase, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly' (cf Acts 6:7). God's mission to form his people for himself is not in danger of failing!

Look up Exodus 1:1-12 and note what you find there.

Look up Acts 1:8, 2:41, 2:47, 5:12-14, 6:7, 8:1, 9:31, 12:24, & 16:5.

Why not spend time praising him for his unstoppable commitment to his mission?

Every mission needs a memorable campaign slogan, and God has chosen a great one. Throughout his mission manifesto (the Bible) he has repeatedly promised us, "I will be their God and they will be my people." Hear his steadfast love and grace in that statement. Hear how his voice speaks for both sides of this relationship. Think of it as a one-way marriage

vow spoken by Almighty God that cannot be broken. He will form his people for himself and by his promise, offered time and again, we can know that he won't be stopped by anyone or anything.

Look up Genesis 17:7-8, Exodus 6:7 & 29:45, 2 Samuel 7:24, Jeremiah 24:7, 31:33 & 32:37-38, Ezekiel 11:20 & 37:26-27, & Zechariah 8:8. What do you notice? Commit God's mission slogan to memory and preach it to your own heart often.

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GOD WILL FORM HIS PEOPLE & HE WILL GET IT DONE

God has been on mission, long before he called you or I to be, forming a worldwide people for himself. Despite our rebellion against him, he has set his promise upon us that he will be our God and we will be his people. Despite a world of opposition, he won't be stopped in his mission. God has done (and is doing) all this in the Gospel, recreating his enemies in the image of Christ by a rebirth from the Spirit, making them his very own children and treasured possession. By being found in Jesus, we can say of God, now and forevermore, "I am his and he is mine." As we consider our disciple-making mission, let us not forget the Sovereign, Almighty God who is at work on mission through us. He is forming his people from the ground up, and he won't be stopped, and he will get it done!

Look up Revelation 7:9, 19:1, & 19:6. What do you find here? Read Revelation 21:1-7. This is the certain end to God's mission.

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