

INNER LIFE On Mission – March 23, 2025

Intro: In the opening lines of his song “So Help Me God”, songwriter Benjamin William Hastings writes, *“I’m a pilgrim bound for Zion in the wild pursuit of God... I’m not quite where I could be, but I’m not where I was.”*

- **Who else can relate to that?** *“...not quite where I could be, but I’m not where I was.”*
- I’m keenly aware of how much further I have left to go in my apprenticeship to Jesus. As Hastings put it, *“...not quite where I could be.”* How true.
 - o Sometimes I find it easier to dwell first and foremost on this side of the equation... *on how much I need to grow.* It is good, however, to remember that there is another side to this. *“...not quite where I could be.”* YES. But, *“...I’m not where I was.”*
 - o In other words, I’m not perfect, but I am trending in the right direction, and given the right conditions (mainly, God’s Faithfulness and His outrageous promise that He will finish the good work He began in me), I’m heading towards a better, brighter future. A hopeful, glory-filled one! This is true for all followers of Jesus!
- **Reflection:** have something to write on... the baptism course talks about how we HAVE been saved (**Justification**), ARE being saved (**Sanctification**), and WILL be saved (**Full Restoration**).
 - o Looking back in your life, what has God saved you from? How has He set you free? Walked you through a valley? Provided for you? Where would you be without Jesus?
 - o Would you agree that you are where you are today by the grace of God? If not for Jesus..?
 - Hold onto that thought... we will come back to it.

Intro GoLove Missions Trip x SOAR Heartland, March 28-April 1st

- 3 nights, 4 days of ‘YES’ to mission! Including training sessions, prayer, worship and outreach!
- High School Aged Participants will also be reading a biography in preparations for GoLove.
- Our final day will be spent here at church, unpacking our time & asking “What’s Next Lord?”.
 - o **Today’s sermon is dedicated to this annual effort to mobilize and equip young people to give their ‘YES’ to Jesus and Life On Mission, through initiatives like GoLove & beyond!**
 - o At the end of our service we will pray for those participating in this year’s GoLove!

A | Everyone Is Called To Life On Mission

- If you’re a Christian, that means Jesus has given you a mission. Are you engaged in that mission? – that’s the question. We talk about Life On Mission often here at Southland. What do we mean by that? Is that actually Biblical or just a catchy way to motivate people? Yes, its Biblical! :)
- One of the most prominent examples is the **Great ComMISSION**, from Jesus Himself, shortly after his resurrection from the dead, and just before His Ascension to the Father.
- ***¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “ALL AUTHORITY in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matt. 28:18-20***

Lost In Translation? Commission Defined: (www.merriam-webster.com)

- “a formal written warrant granting the power to perform various acts or duties...”
- “an authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or to perform prescribed acts”
- “a task or matter entrusted to one as an agent for another”

Acts 1:8, *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

- **Romans 1:16**, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.*

We have been left with a task (mission), Church! Not a 'great suggestion' – a commission!

- **Getting To The Heart of the Issue:** Let's back this up one step further and bring it into laser focus... we are called to Love God, Love People. This is our mission!
- ³⁶ *"Teacher, which is the **GREATEST COMMANDMENT** in the Law?"* ³⁷ *Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'* ³⁸ *This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* ⁴⁰ *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."* **Matthew 22:36-40**
 - o ... we are called to Love God, Love People & Carry the Gospel. This is our mission!

A Word On Discipleship – I do, WE do, YOU do.

Simply put, Discipleship is the process by which we learn and teach others to do things! Think practical. Let's talk dishes... loading the dishwasher. We have taught our kids to help with this. **3 basic steps...**

1. **I DO (you watch)...** This starts from a very young age. They observe this daily routine of loading and unloading the dishwasher. As it gets closer to their time to participate I may even begin to explain the process to them as I do it.
2. **WE DO (together)...** Then comes the day that we include them in the process. Anticipate mistakes... graciously coach them and work with them. (this isn't the time saving step yet... in fact, this is the part of the process that will take the most of your time... but it's worth it!)
3. **YOU DO (I watch)...** Now that they have a handle on the process... they've seen us do it many times AND we've worked alongside them and coached them in the process (even the scary stuff like handling knives and putting in the detergent), we "commission" our kids into the club... the C.D.D.A.T.T. club (*constantly doing dishes all the time club!*). **The last step: You do... I watch! :)**

Discipleship – I do, WE do, YOU do. Can we see this in the Gospels? The Great Commission seems to fall into the "You Do" category. Can we observe the other steps in Jesus' Discipleship approach? YES!

1. **I DO (you watch)...** **Matthew 9:35-36**, ³⁵ *Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*
 - Take a look at Jesus' life... one thing is abundantly clear; Jesus was on a mission, and the disciples were along for the ride! After 30 years of obscurity, He burst onto the scene. Jesus travelled from town-to-town preaching, teaching, healing the sick and even raising the dead! He was driven by compassion. This was his mission. **(I DO)**
2. **WE DO (together)...** ³⁷ *Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field..."*
 - **We see the brilliance of Jesus!** In v37 He identifies a problem. *"The harvest is PLENTIFUL, workers are FEW."* In v38 we get a window into the heart of God... not only does His heart

LONG for hurting, helpless people (*driven by compassion*), he also desires to mobilize others to mission (*driven to commission*)!! **He engages His disciples in the process, starting with prayer!**

- Remember how I said that this is the longest part of the process (i.e. “WE DO”). It takes time, patience and much intentionality to mobilize others. But it is also where you reap the most fruit. This is how the mission goes beyond yourself... you bring others in.

i. Introduce Hudson Taylor – Brighton Beach Story (June 25, 1865)

- **It’s significant that Jesus starts with prayer.** *“Prayer isn’t everything, but everything comes out of prayer.” (P. Ray).* Church, look around you! Jesus is inviting us into the “We Do”... Ask God to show you a glimpse of the harvest field all around us. Then begin to pray. Have you considered God might be inviting you to join his prayer circle?

3. **YOU DO (I watch)... v10:1+5.** This is when we see Jesus get a little bit sneaky... here’s what I mean by that. Jesus feels the weight of the harvest (driven by compassion), and calls His disciples into action (driven to commission). **In other words... Jesus has His disciples *pray themselves* onto the harvest field!**

- *10:1 Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness...⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out... Matt. 10:1, 5*
- We may miss this due to the fact that there is a chapter break between v38 and v10:1. But these things are all connected. Jesus instructs them to pray, then commissions them to act! And just like that, the disciples are conscripted into the Mission!

Sound familiar?? *Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority...* Matthew 10:1

¹⁸ *...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.* ¹⁹ *Therefore go...* Matthew 28:18-19

Their mission is **OUR** mission because... **it’s Jesus’ MISSION!**

The Heart of God: The Harvest is PLENTIFUL, workers are FEW

“To have had missionaries and no money would not have caused me any anxiety . . . but to have money and no missionaries was a very serious matter.” (Hudson Taylor, Founder of C.I.M)

- *“God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” (Hudson Taylor, Founder of C.I.M)*

Everyone Is Called To Life On Mission | Question is... are you living yours out?

- **Mission is simply this... partnering with God where he is already at work!**
- **P. Ray, “God isn’t going to give you grace to run someone else’s race... run YOUR race!”**
 - o **Who are you praying for or what are you praying about?** That’s a guaranteed starting point! “Each one, reach one!”
- **Last question before we move on... Have we hidden the calling for life on mission in the fine print?** The church, particularly in comfortable environments like the West, has been guilty at times of reducing the gospel to a “dead sea message”. Just about what you will receive... what flows to you, not through you to others.

B | (Part 2) Everyone Is Called To INNER LIFE On Mission

Now we’ve arrived at the crux of my message this morning. Let’s talk about INNER LIFE On Mission. Perhaps this all sounds a little “raw-raw”... I worry about it coming across that way. So here’s a couple

questions to set the stage: **1)** *What sustains this lifelong call to Life On Mission? How do we not lose steam?* **2)** *What safeguards the mission so that we know that we're actually getting it right? How do we ensure that we're building HIS Kingdom, not our own?* **3)** *When the task gets difficult (which it will), where do we draw our strength from and find the resolve to keep going?*

The answer, in short, is... in the secret place. Everyone is called to INNER LIFE (with God) on Mission.

- **Important:** We are still talking about the same mission, only now we are focusing on what it looks like inwardly in the heart of a Disciple before it goes outward.
 - o **There's a "flow to you" piece that is essential if we are going to get to "flow through you".**

I wonder – when you hear “Life On Mission”, what comes to your mind?

- Sharing Jesus with others? (GOOD!) Serving the Poor? (GOOD!) Serving at church? (GOOD!) Serving in the Community? (GOOD!) Discipling your family? (VERY GOOD!) Praying for others?!
 - o **All of these are excellent! And more could be added.** They are all outward, “flow through you” actions that should be found in the life of a disciple!
- **How about this:** when you hear life on mission, do you think... prayer closet? Do you think early morning before the sun comes up with Bible in one hand (and cup of coffee in the other), asking God to speak to you? Or how about pacing that patch of rug in your basement in the evening, lifting up needs to your Heavenly Father for yourself and others?
 - o When you hear “Life on Mission” do you think... a life of radical vulnerability, bringing your sins out into the light of your small group of accountability partners? Praying and being prayed for? How about committing to grow in Character – hiding Spirit-filled words of truth from Scripture into your heart that will help you fight the battle?
 - Is this “Life on Mission”? I would say YES, absolutely!

To illustrate this point, I need to call on a very important prop! It's my “bread-n-butter”, so to speak. I've used this illustration more than any other – so much so that I'm hoping to get sponsored one day... by Britta Water Filtration! :) kidding!

- Anyone thirsty? I am! I could use a nice clean drink of water.
 - o **Hold up Britta Jug:** Anyone know what this is? Solution to my problem!? It's a Britta Jug!
 - **Only problem is... its empty!** If I want water to drink, I need to do something first... add water to the top reservoir, right? **(Add water and continue talking).**
- **Where am I going with this?** I am trying to illustrate a principle. In order to have water to pour out, you must first fill the top reservoir and give it time to process. Nothing is more frustrating than coming to the fridge for a glass of water, only to find that its empty!!
- And in the same way, if you want to give your yes to mission, you must first receive from God.
 - o THIS IS NOT A FORMULA – but it's a Biblical principle and one that is clearly observable in the life of those faithfully living on mission – including... JESUS!
 - o **“We love because he first loved us.” 1 John 4:19**
 - o **Paul asked, “What do you have that you did not receive?” 1 Corinthians 4:7**
 - o **Paul later wrote, “For what I received I passed on to you...” 1 Corinthians 15:3**
 - o **James 1:17, “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father...”**

Caught, Not Taught: Jesus was a MASTER TEACHER, and he did explicitly preach on this topic. Most notably, perhaps, are Jesus' words on Abiding from John 15. That is **taught truth** (explicit), but what about Jesus's life example. This would be **caught truth** through observation (implicit).

- **Luke 5:16 (NASB95):** *"But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray."*
 - o **We see this example consistently in the life of Jesus.** Luke 4 (Capernaum)... Jesus was on a roll, teaching in the synagogues, healing multitudes of people from "various kinds of sickness" and delivering many people from demonic spirits (presumably late into the night). The crowds were amazed by Him and growing in number... but 4v32 says, *"At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place."* He slipped away to pray, then left.
 - o **Another example:** in Matthew 14, Jesus fed 5000 men plus women and children with just a few loaves and fish. This is one of His most famous miracles, recorded in all 4 gospels. v22 says, *"²² Immediately (afterwards) Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray."*
 - o **And lastly...** the night before His greatest trial on the Cross, what was Jesus doing?
 - **Luke 22:39-41 says,** *"³⁹ Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." ⁴¹ He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed..."*

WHY THE WILDERNESS? Why did our Lord retreat so often throughout His life on earth? Is it perhaps that Jesus was "filling his Britta" (bear with me) to complete His Mission??

I think there is a compelling case for this! *"Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. John 5:19-20*

- **I'll leave you with a thought: Matthew 6:5-13.** Jot it down, read it later. Right in the heart of Jesus' famous *Sermon On The Mount*, He teaches on prayer (i.e. Lord's Prayer Passage). **Interestingly, before Jesus tells of WHAT to pray, He tells us WHERE to pray.** *But as for you, when you pray, go into your **inner room**, close your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:6*
- **Everyone is called to INNER LIFE (with God) on Mission.**
- **Life with Jesus begins in the INNER ROOM.** In the same way that God placed a desire in the burning heart of Hudson Taylor to take the Gospel deep into the heart of interior China (China Inland Mission), we too must ask God for a resolve to get into the INNER ROOM.
- **[PP]** *"No man should stand before an audience who has not first stood before God. Many hours of communion should precede one hour in the pulpit. The prayer chamber should be more familiar than the public platform. Prayer should be continuous, preaching but intermittent." A.W. Tozer*

C | Preparation, Not Perfection

Like Jesus, we too need to meet with God in the INNER ROOM... in the secret place. This is where we receive from God, fill our reservoir, and get His heart for our lives and the world around us. If Jesus modelled this in His ministry, it stands to reason that we need this too, right!?

- **But unlike Jesus, we are corrupted by sin.** We are broken, fractured and in need of Restoration. This only intensifies our need for INNER LIFE on Mission!
- Not only do we sin, in our fallen state we form engrained sinful habits (i.e. bad character).

Character PREPERATION Matters

Iceberg Illustration | Calling & Character:

- It's all very exciting! **But we must talk about character.** Why? For PREPERATION! Because who we are impacts what we do. **Character is the foundation for calling!!** (i.e. iceberg illustration)

Think About A Building: If the foundation is weak, the building might look good... but it won't last.



There are **WAY TOO MANY** stories of people with good intentions, hoping to make something of their lives and build the Kingdom, but due to a lack of character they've hurt a lot of people in the process and brought shame to the name of Jesus. I'm not talking about quote on quote "non-believers" here. I'm talking about Christians!

²⁰ In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. ²¹ Those who cleanse themselves from the latter (aka, Deal with Sin, Grow in Godly Character) will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. 2 Timothy 2:20-21

- **This is a Process!** *"It is God's will that you should be sanctified..." 1 Thess. 4:3.*
- **Sanctify** = to purify, set apart or aside (for good work), make Holy, clean, wholesome.
- We won't change the world if we look, act and behave just like everyone else. We are called to be set apart!

We aren't talking about *perfection*. We are talking about **PREPERATION**!

- Are saying we shouldn't even bother reaching out to others until we are "mature" and have perfect character? **NO! Jesus Anticipates Our Weakness... and still says, "Follow Me!"**. You don't need to have arrived before God can use you, otherwise you won't be used!
- **Consider Peter...** *⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ¹⁰...Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him. Lk 5:8-11*
- **Let's return to our reflection from the start...** Where would you be without Jesus? He is so gracious, isn't He? *"...not quite where I could be."* YES. But, *"...I'm not where I was."*
 - o **But remember...** if he has shown this grace and patience to us... how ought we act towards others around us?

Preparation is an ongoing process guided by the Holy Spirit to get us ready to be used by God for a life of PURPOSE! You don't 'arrive' at good character. It is something you keep working on for a lifetime. Inner life on MISSION fuels outer life on MISSION!

- **[PP] Preparing well means...**
 - o Bringing the real us to Jesus (daily) and falling into grace!
 - o Preparation involves self-discipline and self-control (yes's and no's).
 - o Looking first to the example of Jesus... then to the 'cloud of witnesses' (Heb. 12:1-3)

One more story about... Hudson Taylor!

[PP] *"The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed."*

- **Preparation for China;** Hudson received his call from the Lord to dedicate his life to China early on in his Christian life. I **was inspired by how quickly he began to prepare for that calling.** Although it would be some years before he actually stepped foot on Chinese soil, Hudson immediately began to prepare his body, mind, and soul for the mission. A list of things he did include: **1) waking up early (5am) to study and prayer, 2) Learning (or brushing up on) Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Chinese, 3) studying medicine in various capacities, including as a pharmacist apprentice, a doctors apprentice, and schooling at the hospital, 4) disciplined exercise and diet routine (learning to eat less, and more meager food to accustom himself with conditions on the missions field), 5) practicing evangelism and care for the poor, 6) Removing "non-essentials" from his life, such as his mattress + butter, to accustom himself with living conditions on the missions field.**