

Vision 20/20

*“Have you never read in the Scriptures: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes”?”
(Matthew 21:42 ESV)*

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
(Acts 1:8 ESV)*

*“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”
(Matthew 25:13 ESV)*

What Is Our Mission As A Church?

October 27th, 2019

Matthew 28:16-20

Rev. Paul Carter

Introduction:

Good morning church! This is our 6th Sunday in our Vision 20/20 series and today we are talking about our mission as a church. So turn in your Bibles please to Matthew 28:16-20; that’s on page 835 in your pew Bibles. We’re going to be talking today about our mission GENERALLY – all churches have the same mission. You don’t get to make it up. You don’t get to pull it out of a hat. To be a disciple is to take your marching orders from King Jesus. And this is what he told us to do – so we’re going to talk about our mission generally and we’re also going to talk about our mission particularly as a gathered church in the City of Orillia. Because how a church does what all churches are called to do is determined to some extent by the context and the unique gifts and opportunities that each church is given by the Lord. So we’ll speak generally and specifically this morning and we’ll do it all in reflection upon this text that hopefully now lies open before you. Hear now the Word of the Lord, beginning at verse 16.

“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe

all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:16–20 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to God!

The Mission Of The Church:

So OBVIOUSLY the main job that is given to EVERY CHURCH on God’s Green Earth is TO MAKE DISCIPLES. You don’t have to have been to seminary to bring that out of the text. That’s the main IMPERATIVE – the MAIN COMMAND in the original Greek of the passage that we just read. The other verbs there are circumstantial participles which simply means that they give us some more information about HOW TO MAKE DISCIPLES. We make disciples by GOING, BAPTIZING and TEACHING.

That is the MISSION of the church.

Go!

Go into the City of Orillia.

Go into Canada.

Go into South Africa.

Go into India.

Go into ALL THE WORLD and MAKE DISCIPLES!

Call on them to repent and be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Call on them to DIE TO THEIR SINS and to COME TO GOD through Christ. Call on them to PUBLICLY IDENTIFY with Christ – that’s what baptism is. It is a statement of faith. You are saying – “I believe that Jesus lived, died and rose again for me.”

And it is a public identification. You are saying – from now I am dead to myself and alive to Jesus – that’s what baptism is – that’s what it means to convert.

So go into all the world and call on people to do that.

But then don’t stop there.

We need to TEACH PEOPLE to OBSERVE and OBEY all that Jesus commanded us. John Broadus puts it this way:

“To disciple a person to Christ is to bring him into the relation of pupil to teacher, ‘taking his yoke’ of authoritative instruction, accepting what he says as true because he says it, and submitting to his requirements as right because he makes them.”¹

So – that’s our job. We need to bring people into that kind of relationship with Jesus. We’re supposed to get people to that place.

Now, how in the world are we going to do that?

The Mission Of The Church:

We’re going to do it first of all:

1. By teaching and equipping you

The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 4:11-12:

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”
(Ephesians 4:11–12 ESV)

¹ John Broadus, as cited in D.A. Carson, *Matthew Chapters 13 Through 28* in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 595-596.

Are you seeing that?

The job of the pastors and elders – the shepherds and teachers – is not to DO the mission of the church and report back to you. No. The job of the shepherds and teachers is to EQUIP YOU to do the mission of the church. You are the main workers. The pastors and elders are supposed to teach, coach and encourage you.

We do that, primarily by teaching the Word of God.

The Apostle Paul wrote to a young pastor and said:

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16–17 ESV)

So – what EQUIPS PEOPLE FOR EVERY GOOD WORK? The Word of God. And it is the job of the pastors and elders to TEACH IT.

So very practically – that is why we put such an emphasis on Word ministry in this place. We’ve probably all been to churches where the service is 55 minutes long and 35 minutes of that is taken up with singing and then there is a 5 minute prayer followed by a 15 minute sermonette.

Well to be perfectly honest with you – that is not adequate for the scale and urgency of the task that we have been given.

The Apostle Paul was in Ephesus for just under 3 years – and yet listen to what he says in Acts 20:26-27. He says:

“Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all,²⁷ for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” (Acts 20:26–27 ESV)

Over the course of 3 years – less than 3 years actually – he taught them the whole counsel of God – that is, he taught them the entire Old Testament – and how that ought to be read and understood through the lens of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

You don't do that in 1 weekly installment of 15 minutes or less.

You do that through long, thorough and in depth Bible preaching.

That's what went on in the early church. Acts 2 gives a picture of the early church. Listen to how Luke describes them, he says:

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42 ESV)

They were devoted to the apostle's teaching – he goes on in the same passage to tell us that they met regularly in Solomon's Portico – a large meeting space in the temple – and also house to house. So they had large group teaching and small group teaching.

Again – to be very practical, this is why we do Sunday church and this is why we do smaller teaching groups. We need both. We need every method we can think of to get as much of the Word of God into our hearts and minds as humanly possible.

This is why we started the Into The Word podcast.

When we started the Into The Word podcast back in January of 2017 I remember thinking that if 100 people a week listened to the thing it would be worth doing. If we can get 100 extra servings of God's Word into the minds and hearts of our people on a weekly basis I will be over the moon with joy and gratitude!

And of course through the magic of the internet we now have listeners all over the world. We have regular listeners in Denmark, Mexico, Norway, Germany, Great Britain, Australia, Singapore and Japan – not even to mention the United States which is where most of our listeners come from; in fact about 90% of our listeners now come from somewhere other than there - but it is the HERE that I am most excited about. What I am most excited about is that there have been over 57,000 listens or downloads in the City of Orillia since January of 2017. And another 9,000 from Barrie – which I assume is from our people as well.

That's a lot of Bible.

And that MATTERS because it is when the Word of God washes over us and the Spirit of God works within us that people are broken down and built up into the same image and likeness as Jesus Christ. That's how people grow. That's how people change. And that's how people are equipped to embrace and pursue the Great Commission.

So first and foremost, we are pursuing the Great Commission by teaching and equipping you.

Secondly, we are pursuing the Great Commission:

2. By supporting families

To be clear, we are talking about what the church does – the gathered church does - because this is a series on the Mission and Vision of the church – but it's very important for us to understand that actually, when it comes to making disciples the FAMILY IS PRIMARY even over the church.

This was true even in the Old Testament. Right after giving Israel the law and commandments of God Moses says to the people:

“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (Deuteronomy 6:7 ESV)

Are you hearing that? You are going to do this! Moms and dads. In the house. That's where this is going to get done – that's where discipleship happens. That's why Paul says that to fathers in Ephesians 6:

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4 ESV)

So dads are disciple makers - and moms are too.

I'm going to read you a passage that gets a lot of people angry, but I'm going to read it anyway – because it is in the Bible and therefore it is very important.

In 1 Timothy 2:12-15 Paul says:

“I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. ¹⁵ Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” (1 Timothy 2:12–15 ESV)

So, it seems like in the early church a lot of women wanted to be pastors and elders of the church. They were putting themselves forward but Paul here tells them to stand down. Because these women were making a mistake - the same mistake we just talked about – they were OVER ESTIMATING the importance and centrality of PASTORS AND ELDERS with respect to the work of the church. They were thinking that the PASTOR is the really important person. You want to be him. He is the GREAT DISCIPLE MAKER. He is the ONE at the very heart and centre of the mission we have been given as a church.

But that's not true.

The job of the pastor is just to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

You are the GREAT DISCIPLE MAKERS! I am just your coach and trainer.

You already have the best job in the universe.

Everybody should want to be like you.

But these women missed that – just like we miss it so often still today.

So they wanted to be the pastors.

But the Bible seems to say that men and women are EQUAL but DIFFERENT. Both made in the image and likeness of God.

Both leaders.

But both called upon to give priority attention to a particular aspect of the leadership mandate. And both given the necessary equipment to fulfill that role.

To state the obvious – only women were given the necessary equipment to have and raise babies.

And so Paul here seems to be saying that women are not to aspire to the pastorate – rather they are to embrace the importance and priority of child rearing. That seems to be what he is saying in verse 15. A woman will be saved by submitting to God’s will for her – by embracing the priority of parenting - and of course, by persevering in faith, love and holiness and self-control. To put that another way, you can’t rebel against the Lord and consider yourself a disciple.

If the Lord assigns you a priority task, you can’t reject that task and still think of yourself as a disciple.

Now – why am I opening that can of worms in the middle of a mission and vision series?

Two reasons.

First of all you might as well know who we are before you decide if this is the church you want to go to.

Let me put my cards on the table. I believe that if something is in the Bible then it is A) True. And B) Helpful.

Therefore I don’t care what the spirit of the age says – I think we are way off base as a culture on gender and sexuality issues. I think we are so confused that we don’t even know which way is up and which way is down anymore. So I realize this sounds crazy. I realize we have no cultural context for “equal but different”. But that doesn’t matter – because it’s in the Bible and therefore

we believe it is true and that things would be better if we actually did what it says. You should know that about us as a church because that's not going to change anytime soon.

But I'm also bringing this up in the middle of a mission and vision sermon because actually THIS IS WHERE THE MISSION LIVES OR DIES.

Let me be blunt.

Moms – you are the most important disciple makers in the universe.

Let me go back to what John Broadus said about making disciples. He said:

“To disciple a person to Christ is to bring him into the relation of pupil to teacher, ‘taking his yoke’ of authoritative instruction, accepting what he says as true because he says it, and submitting to his requirements as right because he makes them.”²

Well let me ask you something – who is going to be more important in that process when it comes to your kids.

Me?

Or you?

It's you by a long shot.

You are the one who brings your child to the feet of Jesus. You are the one who can show your child what it looks like to allow Jesus to have authority in your life. You are the one who can model for your child what it looks like to accept what Jesus says as true – SIMPLY BECAUSE HE SAID IT.

You.

² John Broadus, as cited in D.A. Carson, *Matthew Chapters 13 Through 28* in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 595-596.

You are the most important person in that process.

By a country mile.

And so of course the devil spends most of his time trying to get you to want to be anywhere else but there and to be doing anything else but that.

I get it. I want to punch him in the face for doing that – but I get it.

So let me beg you sister: PUSH BACK.

Don't believe the lie that being a mom is not the most important job in the history of the universe – because it is.

My job is simply to prepare you to do your job. You are CENTRE STAGE. And we are praying and cheering for you. We are going to resource you. We are going to teach you. And then we are going to unleash you and watch you CHANGE THE WORLD.

That's why I shared that passage.

Now if you are upset or offended by it, Pastor Evan would be more than happy to meet with you after the service.

But we need to move on. We are pursuing the Great Commission here also:

3. By planting churches

Here we are moving from the general to the specific. Every church that takes the Great Commission seriously is doing those first two things – they are teaching and equipping their people and they are supporting and encouraging families.

But now we are going to look at some things that we feel that God has uniquely and particularly gifted and enabled us to do.

You should have receive a little pamphlet as you came in this morning called Vision 20/20. Open that up to the part about “Our Particular Sense of Mission”. The first couple of paragraphs just outline the general mission that all churches are doing but then look at the fourth paragraph, the one that begins with the words “we find ourselves planted in the City of Orillia.”

So every church has to look at their context and has to assess their particular resources and opportunities and then from that they can determine their particular sense of mission. Here is what we have prayerfully discerned. Let me read it to you:

We find ourselves planted in the City of Orillia. We believe God put us here for a reason. Therefore, our particular sense of mission begins here. Within the City of Orillia and its surrounding communities we feel called to pursue the following:

1. To plant and resource faithful and reforming churches.
2. To raise up pastors, planters and preachers who can serve that network of churches.
3. To develop the total capacity of our hub congregation and campus in order to serve and resource this network of churches.³

This brings us to the next thing I’m going to say as well so we might as well put that heading up for you also. We are pursuing the Great Commission by planting churches and also by training leaders.

4. By training leaders

Obviously those things go hand in hand.

We feel that God has uniquely blessed us with a gift and capacity for leadership development. Last Sunday we were ministering in 5 churches other than our own 2 – did you know that? We were here obviously, at FBC campus and RCC campus, but then we are also ministering at Countryside Community Church – we had a worship team down there for their special remembrance and

³ PowerPoint people: Please display this citation – the part in blue. You don’t need to put it in blue, that is just to mark it off. Thanks!

celebration Sunday. We were at Essen Presbyterian Church – we had the Voices of Praise team down there. Then we had Scott Hogeveen preaching at The Atrium, Justin Oliver preaching at the Sundial and Matt Skarlatt preaching at Severn Bridge Brethren Church.

That's 7 congregations in total – 7 different assemblies of God's people served and resourced by leaders that have been trained and sent out from here.

That's a big part of our sense of mission as a church.

Now let me go back to line one from that excerpt I just read you.

⁴Within the City of Orillia and its surrounding communities we feel called to pursue the following:

1. To **plant and resource** faithful and reforming churches.

RCC was a “branch plant”. We use that terminology because they are a PLANT – they are a new work, but they are also a BRANCH – they are still us.

If you go down to RCC next Sunday you will be going to a different location but you will still be attending First Baptist Church, Orillia.

They are us.

We are them.

But, the goal is to move them towards autonomy and that will be happening over the next couple of years. How exactly we will end up defining “autonomy” is still in the process of being decided but because of our geographical proximity, we have had the luxury of taking a very slow and deliberate approach. For the first 3 years I went down there every week to preach. I would preach here and then during the last song I would drive down there. That's why we moved our service time here back to 9:30 – so that I could leave here and get there for an 11:00 start.

⁴ Powerpoint people: Please display.

That will change come this January.

As of January 12th we will be running parallel – meaning that I won't be going down there at all anymore. Pastor Levi will be preaching there every week. That's step one on the road to autonomy and there will be other steps to follow.

Now – if we plant again – when we plant again – will we do it the exact same way?

I don't know. It depends on the circumstances. We are committed to multiplying and planting churches – however, whenever, wherever the opportunity presents.

And we are committed to RESOURCING churches.

Our material is already being used in churches all over the world – right now. We plan to put more money, more time and more energy into that because the Lord in his mercy has been blessing that.

So – we are pursuing the great commission by teaching and equipping you, by supporting families, by planting churches, by training leaders – and then lastly:

5. By resourcing partners – locally, nationally and overseas

Let me read to you again from that document you received on your way in. Just below what I already read to you, it says this:

In addition to our concern for and calling to the City of Orillia and the surrounding communities we also have a burden for our brothers and sisters around the world. As long as the Lord provides the capacity and the opportunity we are determined to pursue the following:

1. To resource church planters serving in unreached areas.
2. To support trainers and educators building up the church in less developed areas.
3. To develop, train and launch men and women who have been called to serve the Lord in these particular ways.⁵

⁵ Powerpoint People: please display.

When the Apostle Paul was gathering up money from well off churches in Greece and taking that money to the poor and overtaxed church in Jerusalem in the first century he said this:

“For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴ your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness.” (2 Corinthians 8:13–15 ESV)

The goal of foreign missions is not to “rob Peter to pay Paul”, rather it is to overflow out of our abundance so that our brothers and sisters laboring in more difficult parts of the vineyard may have enough. That’s what the Bible means by FAIRNESS.

God has been so incredibly good to us church. Will you say amen to that?

By his grace we have everything we need to do what we’ve been told to do in the City of Orillia – and still we have some to share.

That’s why we are so happy to be able to provide 100% of the on the ground support for Craig and Rene as they head to South Africa.

That’s why we are so happy to be able to invest in the evangelism training that is being done by Pastor Paul Maseh in northern India.

That’s why we are so happy to have Anna and Cornell Christen with us right now as they are home on a brief break from their work in Ireland.

That’s why we are happy to support the work of church planting in Newfoundland.

Because God has been good to us as a church! He has given us bread to eat and seed to sow. Our cup is full and runneth over – so by the grace of God, we are going to make disciples in the City of Orillia and we are going to make disciples in Empengenni Province in South Africa – and we’re going to make disciples in northern and southern India both. We’re going to make disciples in Ireland, Albania, The Dominican Republic, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Because God is worthy – because he has given us enough, because the hour is late – and because this is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Let's pray together.