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The Mission Manifest

Series: The Mission of The Village Church

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I. Introduction

- A. One of the greatest tragedies in American history took place on September 11, 2001
 - 1. Four airplanes were hijacked soon after take-off on that fateful morning
 - 2. Two were flown into the World Trade Center by hijackers who had commandeered the cockpit
 - a. Another was flown into the Pentagon by hijackers as well
 - 3. The fourth, United 93, was disrupted in its flight by courageous passengers and crashed into the countryside in southwestern PA
- B. Of course, immediately, as this drama was unfolding, everyone wanted to know who was behind this attack
 - 1. And who were the actual perpetrators, who were the hijackers
 - 2. Who would actually commit themselves to this diabolical scheme?
 - 3. Who would conspire to wreak such devastation and death on innocent people who were simply going about their business?
- C. Amazingly, the FBI was able to identify all 19 of the hijackers within 45 minutes of attack
 - 1. That fact led to all kinds of conspiracy theories
 - 2. How were the authorities able to do it so quickly?
 - a. The FBI must have known beforehand that something was up
 - 3. And of course, in our current state of rapid, constant news – everyone had their theory
 - a. Many were convinced something was fishy in even the highest echelons of our government
 - b. Something conspiratorial and sinister
- D. But the truth, as it usually is, was much simpler
 - 1. The reason they were able to identify the hijackers so quickly was that, during the hijackings, calls from flight attendants to their supervisors identified the names and seat locations of the intruders on all the flights
 - 2. Using a document pervasive in the transportation industry
 - 3. A document called a manifest
- E. A **Passenger Manifest** identifies the names of every person on board every airplane
 - 1. A name that must match the identification used at check-in and security
 - 2. A name that also can be matched with the credit card used to purchase the ticket
- F. No intra-governmental conspiracy was necessary to explain any of this

1. Once a few names were identified
 - a. Linked to credit cards
 - b. Further linked to other tickets on other flights
 - c. Verified with those other passenger manifests
2. Bingo – all 19 hijackers identified within an hour
- G. It's one thing to know who's on board a flight that is scheduled to fly from Boston to San Francisco, or from Newark to Los Angeles
 1. Or to know which terrorists are committed to a diabolical mission to destroy a nation's way of life
- H. But it's another, even more important issue, to identify who's committed to an even more significant mission
 1. A global mission
 2. Not a nefarious mission of destruction
 - a. But redemptive mission of glory
- I. What I want to know is, who is on that airplane?
 1. Who is on the greatest of all missions?
 2. Who is on board with the mission, not that will result in the deaths of thousands of people
 - a. But that will result in the saving of millions of human souls
 3. Not just in one nation
 - a. But in a multitude of nations
 4. I want to know who's on that passenger manifest
- J. And by virtue of my position, I'm even more interested in who's on the passenger manifest for the flight that is taking off from this airport
 1. This airport right here
 - a. The airport called The Village Church at Shell Point
- K. Because, you see, The Village Church has a mission
 1. And while we adopted about six or seven years ago
 - a. And while we've explained it numerous times
 - b. And while we frequently hear about it
 2. This morning I want to check and see if your name is on the manifest
 - a. If you've bought your ticket
 - b. If you've boarded the plane
 - c. If you're on your way with the rest of us
 3. Because this plane is not going to crash
 - a. It can't be hijacked
 - b. It's mission will be completed
- L. Is your name on **The Village Church's Mission Manifest?**

II. **Our Mission**

- A. **We are building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ**
- B. It's a mission that is wholly congruent with the Great Commission
 1. The mission Jesus gave to the church
 - a. **Matthew 28:18–20** (ESV) — 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.”

- b. **Acts 1:8** (ESV) — 8 “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.”
2. Building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ is about building a community that will do its part to fulfill the Great Commission
 - a. The Great Commission – which we’ll hear very much about as we begin our Global Impact Week next week
3. But to help us launch into GIW, this morning we’re going to remind ourselves of our mission
 - a. And recommit ourselves to participating in what God has set apart for us in this community – in The Village Church at Shell Point
- C. Our mission is “building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ
- D. **Contextual** mission
 1. **Rooted in who we are** in this community
 2. This is a unique community, and the mission flows out of what God is doing and what He wants to do in this place at this time among this people
 3. While the mission could apply to almost any congregation, you’ll see why it’s particularly applicable to us
- E. **Specific** mission
 1. Forgiveness, purpose and hope are specific issues and concepts
 - a. Definable, explainable, and demonstrable
 2. The mission statement is not some abstract, foggy, psychobabble like so much of what we hear in our contemporary culture
 3. Forgiveness, purpose and hope are things we can sink our teeth into, understand, and apply
- F. **Expansive** mission
 1. Even while the mission is specific, it is expansive
 - a. It takes us from **our past, into our present, toward our future**
 2. Forgiveness forces us to deal with our past in Christ
 3. Purpose propels us into the present with real significance – what we do today counts forever
 4. Hope drives us into our future destiny with confidence
 5. So the mission is expansive – past, present and future are all integral to who we are
- G. **Memorable** mission
 1. Statement is **concise** enough to be memorable
 - a. By the end of our examination of it you will all be able to say we are building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in

Jesus Christ

2. And if someone on the street asks you about TVC you'll be able to say that we are a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ

H. **Positive** mission

1. One of the great criticisms of the evangelical church these days – and in some respects it's warranted – is that the evangelical church is defined in terms of what it is against, what we are not
2. But this mission is about **who we are** – expressed in positive terms
 - a. We are building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ

I. **Aspirational** mission

1. "Building a community" is intentionally phrased
 - a. It indicates that we are a **work in progress**
 - b. That we haven't arrived
 - c. That we are still growing
2. It's an aspirational mission
 - a. It's who we aspire to be
 - b. It's goal-oriented

J. But most importantly, it's a **Biblical** mission

1. To see it's biblical foundation
 - a. And to understand how it's so well-suited to this community
 - b. Let's unpack it's elements

III. **Our Core**

A. The core of the mission of TVC is the threefold "forgiveness, purpose, and hope"

B. **Forgiveness**

1. Forgiveness is central to the person and work of Jesus Christ
 - a. He came to save His people from their sins (**Matthew 1.21**)
2. It is one of the central features of the Lord's Prayer – the prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray
 - a. "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (**Matthew 6.12**)
3. Notice that there are two dimensions of forgiveness that Jesus mentions in this prayer
 - a. A vertical dimension and a horizontal dimension
4. Vertical: "Forgive us our debts..."
 - a. We are to ask God to forgive us our debts, our trespasses, our sins
 - b. We can only do that in Jesus Christ
 - c. Jesus lived a life without sin, without transgression
 - d. Jesus died in our place, taking upon Himself the just punishment for our sins
 - e. And He simply asks that you cast yourself on His mercy; believe in Him, in His life and in His death for you
 - f. And receive the forgiveness that He offers – free forgiveness
 - g. Not forgiveness based on anything you have done or could do

- h. For you could do nothing to earn your forgiveness; Jesus offers it for all those who will simply trust in Him
- 5. We need to be a forgiven people
 - a. One of the things I noticed when I first came here was that there were many in the community – even in this church – who have been to church, sometimes for most of their lives
 - b. But who never really understood the forgiveness of God
 - c. Who assumed that God’s forgiveness was based on being a good person
 - d. That as long as we weren’t really really awful sinners – like Adolf Hitler or Mohammed Atta and the other highjackers – God would kind of look the other way and let us slide
 - e. Nothing could be further from the truth
 - f. God is holy and altogether righteous; He cannot look upon even a hint of wickedness
 - g. But God, in love, sent His Son – to live the life we could never live, die a death in our place, taking upon Himself the punishment for our sin that we deserved
 - h. And all He asks is that we cast ourselves on His mercy, ask Him to forgive us
- 6. But I noticed in this community that many needed to hear that message of grace
 - a. And that – perhaps you’ve noticed – that we’re all in the homestretch of life
 - b. And we don’t have much time to get this figured out
 - c. So we need to be a community of forgiveness
 - d. Trusting in Jesus alone for our forgiveness
 - e. And sharing and proclaiming that forgiveness to our neighbors
- 7. And then there is the horizontal dimension – “forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”
 - a. We need to have clean slates with our friends, neighbors and family
 - b. We need to experience forgiveness on the horizontal level
 - c. And when we do that, we demonstrate and testify of the forgiveness we have from God in Jesus
- 8. I learned soon after I came, not only that many in this community needed to understand that forgiveness was not something we earned, but was a free gift of grace
 - a. But also, that everyone had a history
 - b. A history – and plenty of stories to back up the history
 - c. And usually that meant there was some degree of baggage
 - d. Baggage – you know what I mean
 - e. Broken relationships with family, friends, loved ones
 - f. And those broken relationships needed to be healed
 - g. And once again – we’re on the home stretch of life

- h. We don't have much time to get this taken care of
- 9. So our mission is to be a community of forgiveness
 - a. I like to describe it in two ways
 - b. We need to be a **Forgiven** community
 - c. And we need to be a **Forgiving** community
 - d. Forgiven – vertically, forgiven by God for our own sins
 - e. Forgiving – horizontally, forgiving one another
- 10. Both dimensions are necessary in being a truly Christian community
- 11. Consider what Jesus says about the horizontal dimension, and how that affects the vertical dimension
 - a. **Matthew 6:14–15** (ESV) — 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- 12. Can't have one without the other
 - a. A community of forgiveness
 - (1) Forgiven
 - (2) Forgiving

C. **Purpose**

- 1. Purpose is what the Great Commission is about
 - a. The Church – Big C Church, the universal church – has purpose because the last thing Jesus said was to go and make disciples of all nations (**Matthew 28.28-20**)
 - b. And He told us to be His witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (**Acts 1.8**)
 - c. And we at TVC are committed to the Great Commission
 - d. It's one of our core values
- 2. And our purpose always is rooted in Jesus Christ
 - a. **Colossians 3:17** (NASB95) — 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
- 3. We at TVC are invested in a plethora of ministries which mirror the Acts 1.8 outline – Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth
 - a. Our Jerusalem is Shell Point – we have a great deal of investment in ministry in this community
 - b. Our Judea and Samaria involves Fort Myers and SW Florida – we are invested in benevolent ministries in our city and region
 - c. Our “ends of the earth” are our international ministries – which we highlight during GIW
- 4. So at TVC there are a multitude of opportunities to find purpose in Jesus Christ
- 5. And that matters here in this community – and it's one of the reasons why it's such an important element in the core of our mission statement
- 6. We're in a retirement community
 - a. What used to give many of us purpose is in the rear view mirror

- b. We've put what got us out of bed into our life's scrapbook
- c. So now what? What's next?
- d. We've got to have our purpose redefined
- 7. And in TVC, we redefine our purpose in relation to Jesus Christ
 - a. So purpose is a critical dimension of who we are at TVC

D. **Hope**

- 1. And hope is pervasive in the scriptures
 - a. And hope is rooted in the person and work of Christ
- 2. **Romans 5:1–5** (NASB95) —
 - a. 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 - b. 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in **hope** of the glory of God.
 - c. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;
 - d. 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;
 - e. 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- 3. We must be a people of hope – it is integral to who we are
 - a. If we are not a hopeful people, we are no Christians!
- 4. Hope concerns our future, our “not yet” in our relationship with Christ
 - a. We Christians are a “forever people”
 - b. Jesus came that whoever would believe in Him would have eternal life
 - c. That's a forever life that starts now – and does not end when we die
 - d. In fact, in Christ Jesus, it is a glorious destiny, in His presence
 - e. Without any obstacle to our enjoyment of God
 - f. God who is the essence of love
 - g. And Christ who is the incarnation of love
 - h. And the Holy Spirit who is the indwelling of love
 - i. That's our future
- 5. But that future only happens in Christ Jesus
 - a. Who's death paid the penalty for our sins
 - b. But who's resurrection destroyed the power of death
 - c. And is the guarantee of eternal life for all who believe
 - d. And the guarantee of a resurrection, where every tear will be wiped away, and there will be no more pain, no more death
- 6. It's a glorious future
 - a. But only one we can be assured of when we are in Christ Jesus
- 7. And once again, it is especially suited to our community
 - a. Our community of seniors
 - b. Our community of people who are slowly but surely losing our

- capacities
- c. Our community living in a time of increasing suffering
- d. Our community, many of whom wonder how we'll get through these challenging years
- 8. Well, we get through these challenging years by our hope in Christ
 - a. By our confidence in His redemption of us
 - b. By our assurance that we will be with Him in eternity
- 9. So it is central to who we are at TVC, that we be a community of hope
 - a. Encouraging one another to look forward to our glorious future

IV. **Our Champion**

- A. And our champion in all of this is Christ Jesus
 - 1. We are building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ
- B. None of it happens apart from Christ
- C. **Hebrews 12:1–2** (ESV) —
 - 1. 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
 - 2. let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,
 - 3. 2 looking to Jesus,
 - 4. the **founder** and perfecter of our faith,
 - 5. who for the joy that was set before him
 - 6. endured the cross, despising the shame,
 - 7. and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
- D. “Founder” is also translated “author” or “pioneer” or “champion”
 - 1. He is the One who has gone before
 - a. He has blazed the trail
 - b. He shows us the way – He is the way!
 - 2. Jesus Christ is our champion
 - a. And nothing of any lasting value is possible apart from our being “in Christ”
- E. **Ephesians 1:3–14** (ESV) —
 - 1. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us **in Christ** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
 - 2. 4 even as he chose us **in him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.
 - 3. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons **through Jesus Christ**, according to the purpose of his will,
 - 4. 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us **in the Beloved**.

5. 7 **In him** we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,
6. 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight
7. 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth **in Christ** 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things **in him**, things in heaven and things on earth.
8. 11 **In him** we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,
9. 12 so that we who were the first to hope **in Christ** might be to the praise of his glory.
10. 13 **In him** you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed **in him**, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
11. 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of **his glory**.

F. Eleven times

1. “In Christ,” “in Him,” “in the Beloved,” “through Christ”
2. Everything about being a Christian is about being “in Christ”
 - a. Identified with Christ
 - b. United with Christ
 - c. Finding our salvation in Christ
 - d. Discovering our purpose in Christ
 - e. Uplifted by our hope in Christ

G. Being “in Christ” means to be identified with Christ and united with Christ spiritually

1. Aside – that’s what baptism represents
2. **Romans 6:3–5** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized **into Christ Jesus** were baptized into his death?
 - b. 4 We were buried therefore **with him** by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
 - c. 5 For if we have been **united with him** in a death like his, we shall certainly be **united with him** in a resurrection like his.
3. E-Connections this week I addressed the issue of baptism
 - a. Baptism is the sign Jesus established whereby we would become publicly identified with the Savior
 - b. I mentioned that we will be having a baptism service following the Palm Sunday morning service
 - c. Baptism is a wonderful, dramatic picture of what it means to be “in Christ” to be identified, united with Christ in His death and resurrection
4. Consider being baptized when this opportunity is presented on Palm Sunday
 - a. If you have questions about baptism – see Pastor Don or me

- b. If you've been baptized as an infant and wonder if you should be baptized as a believer, talk with one of us and we'll help you sort through the issues
 - 5. But one who is "in Christ" has been baptized into Christ Jesus spiritually
- H. Christ is our Champion
- 1. There is no mission at TVC apart from Christ
 - a. If you want to have a mission apart from Christ, join the Rotary Club or the Kiwanis or whatever
 - b. Not that there is anything problematic about those fine organizations
 - c. But they are not the church; they are not rooted in Christ Jesus
 - d. And they cannot be the avenues of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ

V. **Our Coworkers**

- A. So we have examined the biblical foundation for our core – forgiveness, purpose, and hope
 - 1. And for our Champion – Jesus Christ
 - 2. What about our Coworkers
- B. We are building **a community**
 - 1. In the outline I could have used the word "community" but I preferred to use the name "coworkers" today
 - 2. I picked up that emphasis from my days in the Morgantown C&MA Church
 - a. We had a Chinese church that grew out of the English speaking church
 - b. I was involved in developing the first leadership core for that church
 - c. And when we hired a pastor, we had a very fine one – Joseph Cheng
 - 3. And he, in Chinese Christian tradition, always spoke of all of his congregation as coworkers
 - a. It's a reminder that we are all on mission together
 - b. We all have a job to do; responsibilities to fulfill
- C. But community is an important biblical work as well
 - 1. **Acts 2:42–47** (ESV) —
 - a. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and **the fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.
 - b. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.
 - c. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things **in common**.
 - d. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.
 - e. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking

- bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,
- f. 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.
2. **“Fellowship” = koinonia (Gk)**
 - a. **“Common” = koine (Gk)**
 3. The early church was a body of coworkers that cared for each other
 - a. Shared sacrificially with each other
 - b. Cared for each other
 - c. And worked together in the mission
 4. And that’s who we are at TVC
 - a. That’s who we aspire to be
 5. **We are building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ**

VI. **Our Manifest**

- A. So the bottom line this morning
 1. Are you on the Mission Manifest?
- B. Are you committed with us to being a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ?
 1. The plane is taking off
 - a. Are you on it?
 - b. Is your name on the manifest?
- C. It’s not a nefarious mission
 1. Not a criminal mission
 2. Not a diabolical mission as was the case on 911
- D. But it’s a glorious mission
 1. A mission destined for success
 2. A mission which will result in the salvation of souls
 - a. Of those in our Jerusalem and Judea
 - b. In our Samaria
 - c. And unto the ends of the earth
- E. Are your bags packed?
 1. Are you on board?
 2. Is your name on the manifest?