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The Community

Series: The Mission

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The Village Church

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I. The Mission

- A. The Church of Jesus Christ has a foundation
 - 1. And that's Jesus Christ, her Lord
 - a. We just sang about that one foundation
- B. But the Church of Jesus Christ also has a mission
 - 1. Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church has given the church her mission
 - 2. It's also known as the Great Commission
- C. **The Great Commission**
 - 1. The Great Commission is actually expressed in several places in the New Testament
 - 2. The most well known is the one at the end of Matthew's gospel
 - 3. **Matthew 28:18-20** (ESV) —
 - a. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
 - b. 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,
 - c. 20 **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded** you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
 - 4. The Great Commission is echoed in similar terms at the end of both Mark's and Luke's gospels (**Mark 16.15, Luke 24.46-48**)
 - 5. And the other place we find the Great Commission is in the 1st Chapter of Acts
 - 6. **Acts 1:8** (ESV) —
 - a. 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."
- D. All of these passages come from the voice of Jesus – the Lord of the Church
 - 1. And, in fact, from the voice of Jesus at the end of His ministry, after His resurrection, and just before His ascension into heaven
 - a. And I would think the Church ought to pay close attention when the very last words of the Lord of the Church are to be His witnesses, to all nations, making disciples, and teaching everything Jesus has commanded
- E. Now, what does that mean for the local church – a church like The Village Church
 - 1. Certainly, the Church's mission is our mission too!
 - a. But every church is unique

- b. Each one has its own “peculiar people” as Peter once said!
 - c. Each one has its own gifts, its own resources
 - d. And each one has its own context, its own community
2. So TVC has studied the issue of the mission of the church
- a. Has examined our resources and ministry context
 - b. And has affirmed our mission as a local expression of the Great Commission

F. **The Mission of The Village Church**

1. **We are building a community of forgiveness, purpose, and hope in Jesus Christ.**
2. You’ll note a few things about this mission statement
3. First, the mission is **“in Jesus Christ”**
 - a. Just as the Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord, the mission of TVC is in Jesus Christ
 - b. He is the source of the mission
 - c. He is subject of the mission – that is, He is the reason we have a mission in the first place; His life, death and resurrection has provided redemption for all who would ever believe in Him
 - d. And He is the object of the mission
4. **Colossians 3:11** (ESV) —
 - a. 11 ... Christ is all, and in all.
5. **Colossians 1:16** (ESV) —
 - a. 16 ... all things were created through him and for him.
6. So, we don’t have a mission apart from Jesus Christ!
7. Second, our mission is the mission of a **community**
 - a. We cannot fulfill our mission by ourselves
 - b. We need each other
 - c. God has saved us individually by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ
 - d. But He has placed in a community – a community called the local church
8. That raises a question that needs to be addressed, especially in this day and age – can you be a Christian apart from participation in a local church
 - a. The answer is, yes you can
 - b. You can be a Christian and not participate in a local church
 - c. It’s called being a disobedient Christian
 - d. And you would also be a spiritually impoverished Christian
 - e. Because the local church, according to the scriptures, is filled with believers who have spiritual gifts
 - f. And who apply those gifts to building up the body of Christ for common good
 - g. And if you don’t participate in a local church, you’ve cut yourself off from the very gifts God has provided for your own growth and ministry
9. So we’re a community – we’re in this together

- a. Just as we're a worshipping community, we're also a community on mission
- 10. And the third thing to mention is that our mission statement says "we are building a community"
 - a. That's present tense – and that is every bit intentional
 - b. Because it indicates that we're a work in progress
 - c. Our mission is not static, but dynamic, growing
 - d. He's not finished with us!
 - e. Our mission not only defines who we are, it defines who we are becoming
 - f. It's aspirational in that sense
- 11. People sometimes complain about Shell Point that we're always building something – that it seems like we're never finished
 - a. And that's certainly true
 - b. But until Christ returns, He continues to build His Church
 - c. We're all in the middle of a construction project
 - d. "We're building a community..."
- G. Now, what kind of community are we building?
 - 1. Well, the core of our mission is threefold: We are building a community...
 - a. Of forgiveness, purpose and hope
 - 2. And each one of those elements was chosen because they are integral to our community
 - a. They are what discipleship and ministry looks like at The Village Church

II. A Community of Forgiveness

- A. Clearly, forgiveness needs to be in the DNA of every local church, TVC included
 - 1. Jesus has come to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1.21)
 - 2. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is designed to redeem lost sinners
 - a. And the essence of the redemption of Jesus Christ is forgiveness
 - 3. Luke 24:46–47 (ESV) —
 - a. 46 "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,
 - b. 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."
- B. In addition to the forgiveness of sins for believers, to be a community of forgiveness means that we need to be a forgiving people
 - 1. That is, both forgiven, and forgiving
 - 2. There is both a vertical and a horizontal dimension of forgiveness
 - a. For if we are forgiven by Christ, we must be forgiving of others
- C. Mark 11:25 (ESV) —
 - 1. 25 "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

- D. Jesus teaching of the Lord's Prayer is even more emphatic
1. **Matthew 6:12** (ESV) —
 - a. 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 2. **Matthew 6:14–15** (ESV) —
 - a. 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,
 - b. 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- E. Now, what does a community of forgiveness look like in TVC?
1. There are a number of ministries that we could look to for examples
 - a. And I'm sure you've all read the Annual Report!
- F. But let's start with **Alpha**
1. We've been teaching Alpha for more than 20 years here at TVC
 2. Alpha is an introduction to the Christian faith, especially for those who are seeking
 - a. It's a wonderful ministry built around, well, community!
 - b. It's gathering around a table for a meal, in which relationships are developed
 - c. And then there's excellent teaching using material developed over the years by Nicky Gumble at Holy Trinity Church Brompton in London
 - d. And each session concludes with discussion groups in which seekers are free to ask questions in a non-threatening atmosphere
 3. Alpha is run by a dedicated group of servants, including discussion leaders and meal servers
 - a. And most recently have been led by Keith and Deb Hughes
 4. But every year there are people who come to saving faith in Jesus Christ and experience forgiveness
- G. But then there is the horizontal dimension – forgiving one another
1. Certainly that happens in a community like ours, and probably has less to do with a program than with consciences that are touched by the Spirit of God as a result of the preaching of the word and through the many Bible study groups we have at TVC and in Shell Point
 2. But let me suggest a couple other ministries that often finds people discovering the forgiveness of one another
 - a. One is **Grief Share**, a ministry in which people who have experienced loss can come together for mutual support
 - b. And it's remarkable that in the context of loss how often consciences are sensitized, and relationships are healed
 - c. Sometimes people discover they even need to forgive themselves for things they hadn't even realized
 3. And then there's **Crossroad's Prison Ministries**
 - a. We have nearly 30 people working in that ministry in which mentors evaluate Bible study lessons of incarcerated men and women

- b. And through that ministry many discover the ways in which they need either to forgive others or ask forgiveness for their own offenses
- H. These are ministries of TVC in which the community of forgiveness prospers

III. **A Community of Purpose**

- A. The second element of our mission is that we're building a community of purpose
 - 1. That's especially important in our retirement community
 - a. For what got us out of bed in the past is likely in our rear view mirror
 - b. And we find ourselves, now that I'm retired, asking what's my purpose? Why am I still here?
- B. But there is much opportunity here at TVC to discover one's purpose in Jesus Christ
 - 1. In fact, we find ourselves redefining our purpose in light of the Lord of the Church in a way that we may never have considered
- C. **1 Corinthians 10:31** (ESV) —
 - 1. 31 ... whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- D. We've already mentioned ministries in which TVC people have discovered a renewed purpose in Jesus Christ
 - 1. Ministries like Alpha, Crossroads Prison Ministry
 - 2. But there are others
 - a. Many are involved with some of our community benevolent ministry partners, like **Trailways Camps**, or **Path2Freedom**, or the **South Fort Myers Food Pantry**
 - b. Most of the people involved in those ministries really weren't involved in them until they came to TVC!
- E. But I would also want you to not overlook the obvious
 - 1. And that's how we support the Great Commission in this church
 - 2. Our giving to the Great Commission reflects our commitment to full engagement with the international ministries that we support
 - a. Most notably, with the **Great Commission Fund** of the C&MA
 - 3. We have two international workers who are members of our church – Lisa who works with CAMA Services with refugees in South Asia, and Janice who works in church ministries in Thailand
 - a. And our giving supports them substantially
 - 4. And we also support substantially the ministries of the Banzhafs in Italy, the Riverons in a nearby island country, and others
 - 5. And we also regularly support two Arabic speaking churches made up largely of refugees, one on the east coast and one on the west
- F. We routinely give to missions more than half of what we give to support our own TVC ministries
 - 1. And you should know that TVC is routinely in the top five giving churches to the GCF in the C&MA in the United States

- a. And the other churches that give more are substantially larger than our congregation
2. We praise God that this congregation has caught the vision of the Great Commission
3. And all of that giving is a reflection of what it means to be a community of purpose

IV. **A Community of Hope**

- A. Finally, we are a community of hope
 1. Hope is integral to who we are as the people of God
 - a. And Christian hope is pervasive in the scriptures
 2. **Romans 5:2–5** (ESV) —
 - a. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
 - b. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,
 - c. 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,
 - d. 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
- B. There are a lot of ways in which hope is diffused throughout our community
 1. But let me mention just one – one that may not be on your radar, but a ministry that is extremely valued by those who are blessed by it
 2. And that’s the ministry of **Vespers**
- C. Vespers is a weekly worship service in each of the Assisted Living Facilities
 1. Under the direction of Jerry Palmquist, and with a faithful group of volunteers, those in assisted living sing together, enjoy fellowship, are encouraged by special musical gifts, and hear the word of God proclaimed
 - a. All in a way that brings hope for many who find themselves in challenging circumstances
 - b. And need to hear the message of hope that only Jesus can bring
 2. Vespers takes place in the Arbor, the Springs, and in King’s Crown
 - a. And they each average between 25 and 30 participants each week
 3. You know, that’s like three small churches which are essentially satellites of TVC
 4. And so, Vespers is one of those ministries in which the hope of Jesus Christ is experienced
 - a. And is one of TVC’s treasures

V. **To God Be the Glory**

- A. Of course, as we’ve seen in the last series of messages from Romans 11.33-36, all of these ministries, and the mission of TVC, is all about the Glory of God
- B. **2 Corinthians 4:15** (ESV) —
 1. 15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

C. **Romans 11:36** (ESV) —

1. 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.