

Let's Go: Mission Jay Cookingham

Matthew 28:19-20

"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."

The Barna Group, the leading Christian research organization focused on the intersection of faith and culture... recently reported this amazing fact.

51% of Churchgoers don't know of the Great Commission...25% heard the term but couldn't tell the researchers what it meant. Only 17% could tell what the Great Commission is.

If the people of God are unsure of His mission, can you imagine how difficult the world finds it? We have a lot of work to do! Let's pray.

In the Great Commission, Jesus calls every Christian to step out in faith and spread the Good News... Jesus details more of this mission in Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." Acts 1:8

In this verse we see a **local mission field (Jerusalem)**, a **regional mission field (Judea, where Jerusalem was located, and Samaria were regions)** and a **global one**. This strategy is not an order of mission; go here first then here, but rather the scope of the overall mission.

Basically... Go everywhere! Go locally, regionally and globally.

Samaria was to the north of Jerusalem, a place of great hostility and mutual mistrust due to the racial and cultural issues. Judea was the "most like me" for the early Jewish believers but they faced a different hostility because of their new faith. The global call was a huge step of faith for them, leaving culture and tradition behind to reach a world so different from theirs.

It's obvious that the Great commission is a cross-cultural work... not just a geographical work. To go beyond cultural borders as well as geographical ones.

After all, Hyde Park is a remote part of the world to someone in Africa... or India... or the Ukraine. God is defining what our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and remote areas are.

Our BBCC Mission: Reaching people with the life changing message of Jesus Christ. Lines up with the Great Commission and ask us to be something quite extraordinary.

This mission requires us to be Smelly and Seedy... Let me explain.

It doesn't take much of something that gives off a smell to have an effect on you. Fresh coffee in the morning, apple pie in the oven, fresh cut grass... the air after it rains. My wife says she loves the way I smell... she also love the smell of skunks...not sure what that says about the way I smell.

So... What do you smell like or rather...Who do you smell like? 2 Corinthians 2:14-16

*"But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the **fragrance** of the knowledge of him everywhere. (15) **For we are the aroma of Christ** to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, (16) to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?"*

Paul may have been referring to Roman victory parades. The Romans made sure everyone knew they had been victorious by burning incense on altars throughout the city. For the victors, the aroma was pleasing; for the prisoners it meant certain slavery or death. So as believers, we are victorious soldiers. **And when the gospel of Christ is preached, it is a pleasing fragrance to God.**

But unlike Roman victory parades... the aroma of the Gospel can bring hope to prisoners! Hope that helps people see Jesus as the author of life. So they receive him as Lord and Savior.

In this way... Smelling like Christ gives off the aroma of life. As followers of Christ we have to be mindful of how we smell to the world. Do we spread the aroma of God's love in a gentle, loving way, a way that brings life? This is a powerful question to ask ourselves. **This world needs followers that smell like Jesus!**

Alright, we found out how smelly we need to be... I have another question. How seedy are you? I'm not talking about your character or mine but I'm wondering **how seed-like** we are?

A seed is basically a copy of the plant it came from. Hidden within its genetic makeup is all the information needed to grow into a complete plant. All it needs is the right conditions to germinate... to grow. Some seeds need exposure to cold...some need complete darkness, others the bright sunshine. There are seeds with hard shells that must be scarred or cracked to germinate. Some need to be dormant for a long period of time. Seeds come in all shapes and sizes.

Matthew 13:31-32 talks about seed size

"He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. (32) It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

This Scripture gives us a powerful proclamation... **Don't measure the results of the harvest by the size of the seed!** Don't measure how much is going to grow by seed size. God doesn't!

Don't let the enemy fool you, saying your seed is too small, or the conditions aren't right, or you're too scared, or that you have waited too long. Your seed is important to the work is doing... Grow where the Lord of the Harvest plants you!

The mission needs seedy and smelly people! Not perfect ones but willing ones.

However... The mission is not about what we “ought or should” be doing, it’s about following Christ out of love. This mission is not a guilt trip... it’s a grace trip. Get this please... The Church is not responsible for all the problems in the world... sin is. And... the Church is not responsible for solving all the problems of the world... Christ is. Jesus is the answer, not us... but we are the vessels He chooses to work through to accomplish the Gospel.

We are not the message... we are messengers...smelly and seedy ones!

John 20:21

“Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

We are sent into a mission to make disciples... This command is inviting us into a life changing mission. Our priority is to make disciples... reaching, teaching, inviting, planting seeds, announcing Good News, smelling like Jesus and loving people into a life giving relationship with God. We are called to baptize them, immersing them into a covenant that will transform their lives. This is the Great Commission!

Our commitment comes from a sense of belonging, of knowing who we belong to. That connection, that sense of belonging to God’s family fuels mission with worship. We will not always need to be on mission (it will end some day) but we will always need to worship.

Worship keeps the mission in perspective (expands our field of vision) and it keeps us in **grace mode** when we’re on mission. We realize the grace given to us by God and extend it freely to others. **Worship keeps our focus on Jesus and helps us see the harvest as He sees it. It’s how we see where we are to go.**

The apostle Paul addresses our level of responsibility in 1 Corinthians 3:6-9

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. (7) So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. (8) He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. (9) For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.”

In other words... our job is to plant and water seeds (and smell good doing it). God’s job is to make things grow.

We are servants, field hands, like Paul and Apollos...doing what God has sent us to do. Understanding that lifts a big burden off our shoulders. But we still have the privilege and responsibility of planting and watering those seeds.

BBCC Mission: Reaching people with the life changing message of Jesus Christ

REACH, is such a powerful word, it’s an action word and it means...

- To touch or grab hold on by stretching out or expanding
- To establish communication
- To succeed in influencing, impressing or stirring up interest

We want to touch the lives of others, we want to communicate in a way that influences them, that stirs their heart towards the Messiah, and in order to do that...we'll need to be smelly and seedy.

So we plant seeds that give off the aroma of life.

- Seeds of Evangelism – Where we share the Gospel message
- Seeds of Generosity – Where we share time/talent/treasure to help meet needs
- Seeds of Hospitality – Where we share our everyday lives to invite people in
- Seeds of Reconciliation – Where we share the gift of unity

Ecclesiastes 11:6

“Sow your seed in the morning and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.”

People on mission understand the God's redemptive opportunities are 24/7... 365. People who understand harvest work is both intentional and hard work... but such rewarding work!

I'm not talking about growing Bridge Builders. We're not trying to build a church... Jesus said He would build His church... We want to see more people enter the Kingdom; become dedicated disciples following Jesus with all they have. We want to see people free and out of darkness.

Because we are...

1 Peter 1:23

“Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.”