

YAMs

Summer Midweek 2010



The Gospel, The Culture and The Church:
a radical reformation



yams summer midweek 2010 | wednesdays @ 6 p.m.

Week Eight:

Missional: *joining God's mission to reconcile the world*



covenant chapel

MISSIONAL:

As we close out our summer midweek over the next two weeks. I would love for us all to take some time – time that we’ve already set aside - to think and pray and write down ideas about how we can begin to engage our culture with the gospel. Think of our final two weeks together as the “lab” section of our discussions.

First, let’s review a little about where we’ve been this summer in talking about the Gospel, the Culture and the Church...

First, we talked about our mission – understanding and accepting the three-fold mission Jesus gives his followers:

- The Gospel – Love God
- The Culture – Love our Neighbors
- The Church – Love our Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We also talked about the pitfalls we stumble into when we leave out one or two of those three parts out.

We’ve talked about the perceptions our culture has about the church. The main six were:

Hypocritical | “Get Saved” Mentality | Antihomosexual | Sheltered
Too Political | Judgmental

We talked about why people have a pretty valid reason to think these things because we, as followers of Christ, have not done a great job representing him.

After that, we talked about misperceptions our culture has about the gospel – difficult truths people question and often keep them from fully embracing the message of the gospel. These were:

- The Gospel is a crutch
- The truth of the Gospel is opposed to knowledge
- The Bible is a good book, but not the inspired Word of God
- The God of Christianity, Islam and Judaism are the same god
- A loving God could never condemn people to hell
- Jesus is just one of many ways to heaven
- The Gospel has no relevance for life in today’s world

The next week, we talked about getting started – how to begin our mission. We talked about four essential characteristics we must have when engaging the culture with the gospel:

Awareness | Vision | Strategy | Courage

We then talked specifically about the culture in which we all live – Southern Kansas City. We answered questions about our particular culture. I hope that these will be useful to you as you seek how to begin or continue your mission.

After that, we talked about what it means to go beyond outreach and really love our neighbor. We talked about the difference between presentation evangelism and participation evangelism, and wrestled with the positive aspects of both.

Our primary takeaway from that week was that we need to stop thinking in terms of outreach as something we do from a distance and really do the difficult work of coming alongside people. Three necessary things we must do:

- Repent of our self-righteousness
- Go into the culture
- Be bold with the truth of the gospel

Then last week we talked about excuses – things Satan uses to try to keep us from reformation. While there are potentially many of these, here are the ones we talked about:

- **Excuse #1:** I'm the Only One Who Cares
- **Excuse #2:** Everyone Around Me Knows the Gospel
- **Excuse #3:** I'm Busy (aka the "once...then..." mentality)
- **Excuse #4:** I Don't Know What to Say or Do

We concluded that we cannot separate learning from doing. Also, as we try to find the best way to engage our culture with the gospel, we cannot let wrestling with difficult questions lead to inaction. We must be people of action. We also mentioned that most of these excuses stem from lies we believe about ourselves, our culture or the genuine need people have for Jesus. Replacing these lies with the truth is essential to our mission.

So to wrap it all up this week, we're talking about being "Missional"

Now this has been a buzz word in recent years, particularly among churches with a large young adult and college student population. There have been literally hundreds of books written on the subject about what this means and what it looks like lived out practically.

But, rather than get bogged down in all those debates, I'll try to explain what the heart of this word and movement is, and then let you seek God's direction on what that should look like in your life.

The term missional is rooted in the idea that the God we serve is a missional God. From the time he created the world, he has been on a mission to glorify himself by redeeming and restoring all things. And as he does that, he reconciles us – his followers – and then calls us to carry on that work. Consider Paul's words in 2 Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 5:14-20: For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All

this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

This is such an amazing passage, and it is the heart of what it means to be missional. Despite our sin and the fact that we could never deserve grace, God has reconciled us to himself through Jesus. Our sins are not counted against us. And not only that, but he gives us the amazing privilege of being a part of reconciling others to him.

We too often view this mission as a burden, but please see how beautiful and amazing this is! The one who created us and saves us invites us and gives us a role to play in the most important, significant thing in eternity.

Imagine how amazing it would be if followers of Christ lived this way without anything hindering or blurring this one great purpose of our lives. What would our church look like? What would our city look like? What would the world look like?

Let this be our burden as the Church There is no greater burden, no greater use of passion, no greater use of our mist of a life than to join God on his mission to reconcile people to himself. Let us arrange our lives in a way that makes much of Christ and glorifies God and boldly challenges and invites others to do the same.

May we never be the same because God has reconciled us to himself. And may the world never be the same because we spend our lives being used to reconcile others to God.

The rest of summer midweek time is devoted to us helping each other figure this out. It is so rare that we set aside time to reprioritize and realign our lives to God's mission and purposes. So I would encourage us to take this time we've already set aside to do just that.

Think. Pray. Write down ideas. Where are you or can you begin building relationships with people who don't know Christ? What are effective ways to share the gospel with these people? Specifically, when and how will you begin? What will you commit to? Who will you share this commitment with so you will be held accountable?