

CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS

Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

How mission was born
in the heart of God

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Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

Cross-Cultural Missions Course

Church of the Nazarene

Mesoamerica Region

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Biblical Foundations of Global Mission
A book in the School of Leadership series.
A Cross-Cultural Missions Course

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Table of Contents

Lesson 1	Jehovah: A Missionary God	9
Lesson 2	Abraham Travels Beyond the Borders of His Country	17
Lesson 3	Chosen to Be a Light to the Nations	25
Lesson 4	Jonah Disobeys God	33
Lesson 5	The Missionary God Becomes Incarnate in Jesus Christ	43
Lesson 6	The Mission of Jesus Christ's Disciples	51
Lesson 7	The Holy Spirit and the Work of Missions	59
Lesson 8	Paul: A Missionary Like No Other	67

Introduction

The School of Leadership book series is designed to provide a tool for the church to train and educate its members so they can actively participate in Christian service according to the gifts and calling (vocation) they have received from their Lord.

Each book provides study materials for a course of the School of Leadership program that is offered by the Theological Institutions of the Mesoamerica Region of the Church of the Nazarene. These are: AIBN serving Guatemala North; ASTN serving El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua; SENAMEX North serving Central and South Mexico; and SENDAS serving Costa Rica and Panama. The leaders and the schools (presidents, directors, academic vice presidents and directors of decentralized academic studies) actively participated in the program design.

The School of Leadership has five core courses common to all ministries and six specialized courses for each individual ministry. After completing the series, the respective Theological Institution gives the student a certificate (or diploma) in Specialized Ministry.

The general objective of the School of Leadership is “to work with the local church in equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, giving them solid, theological, Biblical knowledge and developing them through the exercise of their gifts for service in their local congregation and in society.” The specific objectives of this program are threefold:

- Develop the ministerial gifts of the local congregation.
- Multiply service ministries in the church and community.
- Raise awareness of the vocation of professional ministry in its diverse forms.

This series entitled *Cross-Cultural Missions* has the objective of helping churches to be aware of the reality of the world today without Christ. The purpose is to involve the church in the preparation and support of those called to cross-cultural missions. We want to thank Ruben and Monica Fernandez, Benjamin Cruz, Ana Crocker, Maddai Gonzalez, Erika Hasenauer, David Campos, Claudia Cruz, Esther Quezada, Marlen de Soria, David Cooper, Charles Gailey, Ulises Solis, Sara de Diaz, German and Patricia Picavea, Samuel Aparicio and Shelley Webb who all contributed to this project.

A special thanks to Dr. Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez for her dedication as General Editor of the project, to the Regional Ministry Coordinators, and to the team of writers and designers who collaborated to publish these books. An additional thanks to the teachers who will share these materials. They will make a difference in the lives of thousands of people throughout the Mesoamerica Region.

Finally, I give thanks to Rev. Edwin Martinez and his team in Mesoamerica Regional Literature for the publication and distribution of these materials, and to Dr. L. Carlos Saenz, Mesoamerica Regional Director, for his continued support in this task, which is the result of his conviction of the important need for the church to be comprehensively trained.

I pray for God’s blessing for all the disciples whose lives and Christian service will be enriched by these books.

Scott Armstrong
Coordinator of Global Mission
Mesoamerica Region

What Is the School of Leadership?

The **School of Leadership** is an educational program for lay ministry in different specialties to engage in the mission of the local church. This program is administered by the Theological Institutions of the Church of the Nazarene in the Mesoamerica Region and taught both at these institutions and in the local churches enrolled in the program.

Who Can Benefit from the School of Leadership?

It is for all the members of the Church of the Nazarene who have participated in Levels Saving Grace and Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness of the discipleship program A Journey of Grace, and who, with all their heart, wish to discover their gifts and serve God in His work.

The Plan - A Journey of Grace

In the Church of the Nazarene, we believe that making disciples in the image of Christ in the nations is the foundation of the missionary work of the church and the responsibility of its leadership (Ephesians 4:7-16). For this, at all levels of the church, the implementation of progressive discipleship is promoted as “A Journey of Grace” (John 14: 6), a lifestyle of discipleship. The School of Leadership is part of the “Sanctifying Grace - Ministry Development” section, and is designed for those who have gone through the “Prevenient Grace” and “Saving Grace” sections of the discipleship path.



The work of discipleship is continuous and dynamic; therefore, the disciple never stops growing in the likeness of his Lord. This growth, when healthy, occurs in all dimensions: the individual dimension (spiritual growth), the corporate dimension (joining the congregation), the holiness in life dimension (progressive transformation of our being and doing according to the model of Jesus Christ) and the service dimension (investing our lives in ministry).

Dr. Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez
Managing Editor, The School of Leadership Book Series



How Do I Use This Book?

This book contains eight lessons of the School of Leadership program, along with activities and final evaluation of the course.

How are the contents of this book organized?

Each of the eight lessons of this book contains the following:

- ▶ **Objectives:** These are the learning objectives the student is expected to understand at the end of the lesson.
- ▶ **Main Ideas:** A summary of the key teachings of the lesson.
- ▶ **Development of Lesson:** This is the largest section because it is the development of the contents of the lesson. The lessons have been written so that the book can be the teacher, and for that reason the contents have been written in a dynamic form and in simple language with contemporary ideas.
- ▶ **Notes and Comments:** The information in the margins is intended to clarify terms and provide notes that complement or extend the content of the lesson.
- ▶ **Questions:** Sometimes questions are included in the margin that the teacher can use to introduce or reinforce a lesson topic.
- ▶ **What did we learn?:** The box at the end of the lesson development section provides a brief summary of the lesson.
- ▶ **Activities:** This is a page at the end of each lesson that contains learning activities, for individuals or groups, on the subject studied. The estimated time for implementation in class is 20 minutes.
- ▶ **Final evaluation of the course:** This is the last page of the book and once completed the student must remove it from the book and hand it in to a course instructor. The final evaluation should take about 15 minutes.

How long is each course?

The courses are designed for 12 hours of class over 8 ninety-minute sessions. Each institution and each church or local theological study center will coordinate days and times of the classes. Within this hour and a half the teacher or the teachers should include time for the activities contained in the book.

What is the role of the student?

The student is responsible for the following:

1. Enroll on time for the course.
2. Buy the book and study each lesson before class time.
3. Arrive for class on time.
4. Participate in class activities.
5. Participate in practical ministry in the local church outside of class.
6. Complete and submit the final evaluation to the teacher.

What is the role of the teacher of the course?

The professors and teachers for the School of Leadership courses are pastors and laity committed to the mission and ministry of the church and preferably have experience in the ministry they teach. The Director and/or the School of Leadership at the local church (or theological institution) invites their participation and their functions are the following:

1. Be well prepared by studying the book's content and scheduling the use of class time. When studying the lesson, you should have on hand the Bible and a dictionary. Although the lessons are written using simple language, it is recommended that you "translate" what you consider difficult in order to help the students understand. In other words, use terms that they can better understand.
2. Ensure that the students are studying the material in the book and achieving the learning objectives.
3. Plan and accompany students in the activities of ministerial practice. The local pastor and the director of the respective ministry must schedule these activities. These activities should not take away from class time.
4. Take daily attendance and grades in the class report form. The final average will be the result demonstrated by the student in the following activities:
 - a. Class work
 - b. Participation in ministerial practice outside of class
 - c. Final evaluation
5. At the end of the course, collect the evaluation sheets and hand them in with the form "Class Report" to the local School of Leadership director. Do this after totaling the averages and verifying that all data is complete on the form.
6. Professors and teachers should not add tasks or reading assignments apart from the contents of the book. They should be creative in the design of the learning activities and in planning ministry activities outside the classroom according to the reality of their local church and its context.

How do I teach a class?

We recommend using a 90-minute class session as follows:

- **5 minutes:** Review the topic of the previous lesson and pray together.
- **30 minutes:** Review and discuss the lesson. We recommend using an outline, chalkboard, cardboard or other available materials, using dynamic learning activities and visual media such as graphics, drawings, objects, pictures, questions, assigning students to submit parts of the lesson, and so on. We do not recommend lecturing or having the teacher reread the lesson content.
- **5 minutes:** Break either in the middle of class or when it is convenient.
- **20 minutes:** Work on activities in the book. This can be done at the beginning,

middle or end of the review, or you can complete the activities as you proceed in accordance with the issues as it relates to them.

- **20 minutes:** Discussion about the students' ministry practice that they currently do and that they will do. At the beginning of the course you will need to present the schedule to the students so that they can make arrangements to attend the ministry practice. In the classes when the students discuss their ministry practice, the conversation should be focused on what they learned, including their successes and their errors, as well as the difficulties they encountered.
- **10 minutes:** Prayer for the issues arising from the practice (challenges, people, problems, goals, gratitude for the results, among others).

How do I implement the final course evaluation?

Allocate 15 minutes of time during the last class meeting for the course evaluation. If necessary, students may consult their books and Bibles. Final evaluations are designed to be an activity to reinforce what was learned in class and not a repetition of the contents of the book. The purpose of this assessment is to measure the understanding and evaluation of the student concerning the class topics, their spiritual growth, their progress in the commitment to the mission of the church and their progress in ministerial experience.

Ministerial Practice Activities

The following are suggested activities for ministerial practice outside of class. The list below includes several ideas to help teachers, pastors, directors of local School of Leadership groups and local ministry directors. From the list you can choose the activity best suited to the contextual situation and the local church ministry, or replace these with others according to the needs and possibilities of your context.

We recommend having at least three ministerial activities per course. You can put the whole class to work on a project or assign group tasks according to interests, gifts and abilities. It is advisable to involve students in a variety of new ministry experiences.

Suggested Ministerial Activities for the Course: Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

1. Write a skit or play about the history of one the missionaries in the Bible to present in a Nazarene Missions International service.
2. Design an informational bulletin or newsletter to distribute to the congregation about the theme: *We were chosen to be a light to the nations.*
3. Organize a special activity for children where they will represent various missionaries from the Bible. They will tell their stories and experiences and answer questions about their life during Sunday School or Children's Church.
4. Interview pastors and lay people who planted and started churches to find out how the Holy Spirit guided them during the founding of their churches.
5. Using Paul's strategy, research what topics are of interest to the non-Christians in your community (worries, ambitions, musical tastes, favorite sports, etc.). Using the interests that were identified as a starting point, present some creative ideas to the class of how you could evangelize this group of people.
6. Invite a missiology professor from a Seminary or Biblical Institution to organize a workshop for church leaders and teachers on the topic: *Jesus Christ, Our Model for Incarnational Mission.*
7. Show a movie about the life of Paul to a group of church members, then share with each other what we can learn from Paul in regards to missionary service. This could be done in a home, a church or a classroom, and it could involve teens, children or adults; or it could be presented to everyone and then have them divide into groups for discussion.
8. For either the congregation or a small group in your church, organize a time of prayer or fasting, concentrating on missionaries serving in Europe and the Middle East, places where Paul and the apostles took the gospel but where many of its inhabitants today do not know Jesus.



LESSON 1

Jehovah: A Missionary God

Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

Objectives

- Learn about the origin of mission.
- Understand God's constant desire to have communion with human beings.

Main Ideas

- Starting with the book of Genesis, the Bible teaches that God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is a missionary God.
- God's intent is that His creation be a reflection or "image" of His glory.
- All mission originates in the redeeming love of God.

Introduction

Since the 18th century, the passage known as the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 has been key to understanding the mission of the Church. However, the mission of the Church originated in the mission of God, and that mission has been revealed to us since the origins of humanity.

Did you know that without chapters 1 through 3 of Genesis, the words of Jesus quoted in Matthew 28:19-20 would never have been said? The God who created the heavens and the earth and sent His Son Jesus to save the world is the same God who gave life to all humanity. People from every nation on earth share the same origin and come from the same family, or in other words, they share the same lineage.

In this lesson we will study God as the originator and creator of the mission, that is, how He sent Himself to rescue humanity from their sin and from a destiny of suffering and death.

God's Purpose for Creating Man and Woman

The book of Genesis reveals to us that we were created for a mission. 

The first chapters of Genesis not only tell about the sin the first humans committed, but also about the first missionary calling in history and the first revelation of God's redeeming purposes. This missionary God can be seen at work for the first time in these chapters because starting with humanity's disobedience in the garden and continuing all through history, God has called and sought a lost humanity through prophets, pastors, missionaries, and finally through His Son Jesus.

God is not only the creator of the world but also its ruler. Genesis 1 tells us that God saw all that He had made and declared it to be "very good." The divine work of creation was good not only in its essence but also in its purpose.

God blessed His creation and said, "be fruitful" (Genesis 1:22, 28). This word should not only be understood as multiplication in numbers but

*The word mission comes from the Latin word **missio**, which is derived from the word **mittere** and means "to send."*

The word mission means the sending of someone with a message or with a mission to accomplish.

"Missions originated in the heart of God. It is not something we decide to do for God, but God reveals his purpose to us so that we may have a creative part in his mission" (Willis, 9).

One of the first tasks God gave to Adam was to name all living creatures (Genesis 2:19).

also as the continual development of man and woman in their relationship with God, their relationship with others, and in their use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Psalms 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” The psalmist is pointing out an **additional divine purpose for God’s creation**, which is to proclaim or give testimony of the glory of God.

After creating the world as a “very good” home, God created Adam and Eve in His image and likeness. Genesis 2:7 says that after forming man from the dust of the earth, God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. In making them in His own image, God crowned man and woman with glory and honor and charged them with ruling all of creation and placing it under their feet (Psalms 8:5-7). The divine image in man and woman is what enabled them to be in relationship with God and to be stewards of God’s creation.

According to Genesis 1:26 and 28, the mission that the Creator gave to humanity was to govern, be fruitful, increase in number, and have dominion over the earth. Receiving the image and likeness of the Creator is not only a privilege but also a responsibility. Humanity is called to reflect the character of God for all of creation.

God’s Creation Becomes Polluted

What changes occurred in human beings because of sin?



God created humanity to live in communion with Himself and to govern His divine creation. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve disobeyed and failed to carry out the mission God had given them; in other words, they rebelled against God and sinned. Even so, and thanks to God’s mercy, humanity still carries the image and likeness of God, though it has been stained by sin.

Man and woman were created with the ability to choose; we refer to this as free will. God knew that by creating man and woman with the freedom to make decisions there would be a chance that they would disobey and rebel against Him, allowing pain and death to enter His perfect creation.

Even though God warned them of the consequences of disobeying, they decided to go against the divine will. God taught them about the limits of what they could take for themselves from Creation (Genesis 1:26 and 2:16-17). There was a fruit tree that was not good for them: the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” If they ate from that tree, its fruit would bring death. The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve deliberately sinned against the divine will. Their eyes were opened, they lost the innocence God had created in them, and the intention to do evil entered their thinking. This is how human beings turned their backs on God. As a result of this rebellion, a dividing wall was placed between the holy God and His creatures, a wall known as sin.

*To be created man and woman in the **image of God** means that we are like God in certain ways. The image of God is what distinguishes us from animals. Only human beings have been created in His image, with the capacity to enjoy and to grow in relationship with God.*

In the original created order, Adam and Eve also received God’s moral image, which is His holiness. However, that moral image was lost because of sin, and that is why Adam and his descendants were separated from having communion with God. It is only in Jesus that humans can be freed from their sin and recover God’s moral image in their beings. This is possible through the new birth and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

God created man and woman with the ability and the freedom to make their own decisions. We call this **free will**. God never wanted to create puppets. His desire has always been to develop loving relationships and friendships with all human beings so that both parties can enjoy this relationship and be mutually blessed in it.

The books of Genesis and Romans show us the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve, also called the fall.

The Consequences of Sin in Genesis 3:14-24; 4:8; 6:5,6	The Consequences of Sin in Romans 5:12; 8:21, 22
1. The serpent is cursed above all animals.	1. Men and women are destined to die because of sin.
2. Enmity between the serpent and the offspring of the woman now exists.	2. The rest of creation also suffers the consequences of humanity's sin and groans to be free from them. (Romans 8:22)
3. Childbearing will be painful.	
4. The man will rule over the woman.	
5. It will take great labor to meet basic needs.	
6. Banishment from the Garden of Eden.	
7. Violence and killing.	
8. Excessive evil.	

Even today, humanity is suffering from the terrible consequences of sin. It is impossible for human beings to free themselves from sin and its consequences by their own efforts. All of creation is affected by sin in one way or another, even God's children. But the book of Genesis talks about a hope. Genesis 3:8-10 tells us that God looked for Adam and Even in the garden after they sinned. God took the initiative then, and He continues to do the same today. God continues to seek out every child, teenager, and adult to rescue them from sin and its consequences.

To have **“dominion”** means that human beings have been given authority to manage and govern the earth and all that is in it (Swanson). As the earth's stewards, we must love and take care of it as the divine creation it is. Humanity must not take advantage of the ability to subdue creation but instead must value it as a privilege and treat it like an important mission.

Thanks to Jesus Christ's intercession on our behalf, it is possible to reach the Father. However, what is this intercession? How do we explain it? Liliana Radi, Coordinator of Nazarene Missions International in South America, wrote about this: *“Intercession provides the context for God's plan for humanity. That plan began back at the time of the creation and the fall: Adam was supposed to represent God on planet earth, directing and governing it for God. God told Adam what to do and placed him as His representative before the rest of creation. Adam was a mediator for God. In a literal sense, Adam was God's intercessor or the earth's mediator. Because Adam failed, God sent another human being – ‘after Adam’ – to accomplish what the first Adam should have done. Christ stood as God's representative on behalf of humanity (John 1:18).”*

This intercession is the result of the great love and mercy of God, who has always desired that we be reconciled to Him. The Church of the Nazarene writes about “prevenient grace” in the seventh paragraph of its Manual: *“...through the fall of Adam they became depraved so that they cannot*

now turn and prepare themselves by their own natural strength and works to faith and calling upon God. **But we also believe that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is freely bestowed upon all people, enabling all who will to turn from sin to righteousness, believe on Jesus Christ for pardon and cleansing from sin, and follow good works pleasing and acceptable in His sight.**

Because of His grace and love, God sent His Son to be an intercessor who would free us from sin and reconcile us to Him.

The Incarnation: God's Rescue Mission

Only the work of Jesus Christ can free us from sin and its consequences.



Because human beings cannot free themselves from their slavery to sin, God, in His love and mercy, sent His Son to be incarnated. The Son chose to come to the world to save humanity and all of creation from sin and its consequences.

God, in Jesus Christ, crossed the barriers of time and space to be near His creation and walk with them. Jesus came to help us find the path that leads us to an intimate communion with the Creator and freedom from sin. This is why the Son of God became incarnate in Jesus. He came to the world to show us the way to salvation and free us from the consequences of our own wickedness. This is why God is a missionary God.

In Old Testament times it was announced that God the Father would send His Son, the Messiah, to pay the price for our rescue. This is why Christ came to the world, preached the gospel of salvation, died on the cross of Calvary, and was resurrected on the third day. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God solved the problem of sin, gave us freedom from the dominion of sin, and confirmed His victory over the powers of Satan and death.

Before returning to heaven, Jesus Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit so that His disciples would receive power and authority. We find the fulfillment of this promise in Acts 2:1-4, which states that all of God's sons and daughters can be filled with His Spirit. The Gospel of John reveals the purpose for the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, which is to help them to know Jesus intimately, just as He is (15:26), and to guide them into all truth (16:13).

According to Romans 8:1-2, the mission of the Holy Spirit is to restore the moral image of God in man and woman; this moral image includes His righteousness, love, and holiness. John 14:16-17, 26 declares that the Holy Spirit's mission is to convince those who are far from God of sin, justice, and the coming judgment so that they will return in repentance to the feet of their Creator.

"God had an only Son and He made Him a missionary"

(David Livingstone, cited by Queiroz).

Prevenient Grace:

this phrase comes from the Latin, gratia preveniens, which means "to come before." This means that God always takes the initiative and draws near to a human being before he or she responds. According to John Wesley, one of the gifts of prevenient grace for the spiritual life is our conscience. He believed that while most people think that the conscience is a quality all human beings inherit naturally, they do not realize that it is actually a gift to us through God's prevenient grace.

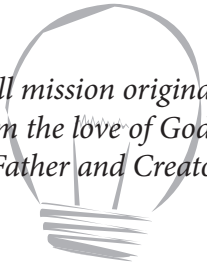
Redeem:

to deliver or rescue from some evil, such as death or slavery, by payment of a price. Jesus Christ paid this price on the cross to free all of humanity from their slavery to sin (Wood, New Bible Dictionary, Redemption).

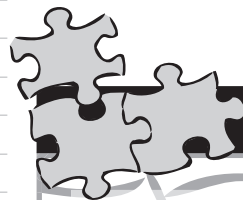
God's Character:
when the Bible affirms that God is righteous, kind, holy, almighty, faithful, patient, merciful, and loving it is describing God for who God is – in other words, it is describing God's character.

In conclusion, beginning with the sin of Adam and Eve, all of creation has suffered from the consequences of sin. Human beings have become enemies of God, of each other, and of creation. Even so, in the midst of this hopelessness, another story emerged. This is the story of salvation in which God took on Himself the mission to restore His creation. Thanks to the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, every man, woman and child can be free from the power of sin and death. Through the Holy Spirit we can learn to live in obedience to God by following the example of Jesus.

The Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is a missionary God. All mission has its origins in the love of god, our Father and Creator.



All mission originates from the love of God, our Father and Creator.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

God, in His perfect love, created this amazing universe, commissioning man and woman to act as His representatives. However, humanity disobeyed and left the perfect will of God, and to this day all of creation is suffering from the consequences of this decision. Instead of abandoning them to their destiny of death, God sent Himself as a missionary to rescue them and guide them to the path of salvation.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In groups of three or more, use the columns below to write a list of ten materials that are needed to build a bridge and another list of ten things that are needed to start and maintain a friendship.

MATERIALS NEEDED TO BUILD A BRIDGE	THINGS NEEDED TO START /MAINTAIN A FRIENDSHIP

2. In the same groups, compare the words in both columns and share ideas about how the lists are like each other. (For example, the cement can be compared to the first conversations we have with an acquaintance because these words are the foundation for a friendship; that is the only way to get to know another person)

3. Still in the same groups, answer the following questions: In today’s world, what is it like to begin a friendship? How do we wish it were? Why is it hard for me to start a friendship with my neighbor, co-worker, etc. and reflect God’s love towards them? Why is it easier to share the gospel through friendships?

4. Write down the names of six friends, neighbors, family members, or co-workers with whom you can share Christ. Take a day of the week to pray for each name and do everything you can to start a friendship with them in the next week.

PRAYER LIST OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM I CAN SHARE CHRIST		
Monday:	Wednesday:	Friday:
Tuesday:	Thursday:	Saturday:

5. End this activity with a time of prayer asking God to help you us to be like Him, a missionary God, who took the initiative to build a bridge to us. Pray that we might be able to do the same and build bridges to reach others.

A stylized graphic of a mountain range with three peaks, rendered in shades of gray. The mountains are layered, with the foreground being a darker gray and the background being a lighter gray. The peaks are rounded and the overall style is minimalist and modern.

LESSON 2

Abraham Travels Beyond the Borders of His Country

Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

Objectives

- To study Abraham's missionary call.
- To understand that a missionary call means going where God leads.

Main Ideas

- God called Abraham to begin the formation of His people in a foreign land.
- A missionary calling includes both responsibilities and privileges.
- God tests the faith of those who are called to be missionaries.

Introduction

Abraham was born in Ur, and though his name was originally Abram, God changed it to Abraham after establishing the covenant (Genesis 17:5). The name Abraham comes from the Hebrew root *ab*, which means father, and *ham*, which means nations. The name can be interpreted as "father of a host of nations" or "father of the faithful" (Hamilton, 463-4).

If we are following the Biblical account, Abraham's story begins about two thousand years after the creation account. Four hundred years had passed after the great flood, and humanity was once again steeped in wickedness. That is precisely when God called Abraham to serve as a missionary. Abraham was the first human missionary in history. Thanks to the life and ministry of this great patriarch, we can understand God's plan of redemption for all of humanity.

Called to Cross Borders

In this section we will study the barriers Abraham had to cross. 

In today's world, does God still desire for His disciples to leave everything behind in order to preach the gospel of salvation? Luke 14:33 states that no one who does not give up all of their possessions can be a disciple of Jesus.

The book of Genesis tells us how God continued to act within history to seek the restoration of His creation. God began to work through Abraham's family, whom He called to establish a covenant that would have deep repercussions for the future of all humanity. This covenant included promises from God to Abraham and his family, as well as a special mission.

God promised Abraham that his descendants would form a great nation, that He would form special relationship with them, and that He would give them their own land to inhabit. The mission for Abraham and his descendants was to be instruments of God to bless all of the families of the earth.

In Abraham's time, they did not have the geographical borders between nations we have today, however the missionary call always implies crossing borders, such as religions, cultures, languages, etc. What are other "borders" missionaries have to cross today?

God called Abraham to a missionary ministry. For Abraham, this divine calling meant a complete rejection of everything that tied him not only to his Chaldean culture, but also to his land, his family, and his father's house.

The first six verses of Genesis 12 tell us that Abraham left Ur with his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot. When one leaves his or her home to go to another country or culture one becomes a "foreigner." There are many ways that Christians and foreigners are alike. John 17:14-18 and Philippians 3:20 show some clear similarities between Christians and foreigners.

Foreigner	Christian
1. Not from the country they are living in	1. Not from this world.
2. Sent by God with a purpose.	2. Sent by God.
3. Not a citizen of the country.	3. Not a citizen of this world.

One of the difficult things about God’s call to Abraham and today’s missionaries is that sometimes the Lord asks us to leave our families and relatives. In the New Testament, the life of discipleship that Jesus calls us to is just as radical as God’s call to Abraham. Jesus said, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26).

Why do you think that God’s call is so demanding? The simple and direct answer is that we cannot be His disciples if we have other people who occupy a more important place in our lives than God. In the original language, the word translated as “hate” in the New International Version did not have the same meaning of contempt as it does today. The word meant “to love less.” It was a concept that taught the principle of prioritizing. In this case, obedience to God the Father is to be above everything else, even over our family relationships.

If we accept the call to be disciples of Jesus Christ, we must understand that He will have priority over everything else in our lives. Some Christians think that this command is only for those who have received a “call to ministry,” but it is actually for all who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior.

The name of Abraham’s father was Terah, his brothers’ names were Nahor and Haran. His brother Haran died in Ur and his father in the land of Harran. Abraham and his relatives remained in the city of Harran for 15 years, probably because his father’s illness kept them from continuing their journey. This is where Abraham had time to think about the calling that God had placed on his life.

A Calling with Responsibilities and Privileges

The first thing God asks of a missionary is obedience.



If someone asked you to put your life in the hands of someone that you do not know, you would definitely think twice or three times before making that decision. However, we are always placing our lives in the hands of strangers when we travel by plane, by bus, by train, or even when we undergo surgery. If this is true, why wouldn’t we put our lives under the care of God who is our Creator and Savior?

Abraham received God’s call while he was living in Ur of the Chaldeans. According to Acts 7:1-8, when God first called Abraham He did not give him

Regardless of their nationality, how are foreigners treated in your country? It is easy to welcome foreigners when they come from “important” countries, but what about our neighboring countries that we don’t always get along with? They also matter to God.

Why does Christ, our God of love, ask us to leave our parents and siblings in order to accomplish the mission He has given us?

How many of the people you interact with are blessed by your Christian testimony or lifestyle? What inspires you about the lives of other Christians? What aspects of the life of someone who calls him or herself a “Christian” might point someone away from Christ?

Cross-cultural:

a particular aspect of the mission of the Church which entails crossing some kind of border in order to proclaim the gospel. These can be geographic, social, political, cultural, or linguistic borders. This cross-cultural mission allows all cultures to take part in the redeeming love of God, and this mission is accomplished from any culture to any culture (Cooperación Misionera Iberoamericana).

If God called you today to be a missionary, what would be hardest for you to leave behind? God might not call you to go to another country (or he might), but He is calling you to serve in your church and community. This will mean leaving certain things that occupy your time. What would you be willing to lay down in order to answer God's call?

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even their own life – such a person cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

the name of his destination. Still, Abraham immediately obeyed the calling and God gave him the land of Canaan as his inheritance. Even before Isaac was born, Abraham believed that he would be the father of a great nation. Here we are able to see that the divine call to all believers is a calling to put all our trust in God.

The way that Acts 7:1-8 tells the story, God didn't promise Abraham anything when He called him out of Ur of the Chaldeans. God just asked him to believe and obey. For his part, Abraham didn't ask for any guarantee of prosperity or wellbeing for his obedience. The book of Acts simply says that Abraham obeyed. Abraham had many possessions when God called him. Besides livestock, it has been estimated that he had about 1,000 servants with their families that depended on him.

It is wonderful to see how God responds to those who are obedient to His calling and who given themselves completely to His service. As the Genesis account tells us, Abraham received the following promises from God:

Verse	Promise
Genesis 12:2 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing."	God would establish His chosen nation from the children of Abraham and Sarah. Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, came from this nation.
Genesis 12:3 "... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."	This promise tells us that it was God's intent from the very beginning to bless all the nations with His salvation and goodness.
Genesis 13:14-15 "The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, 'Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.'"	God promised Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan. The covenant was an everlasting covenant for all the generations. However, the possession of the land would not be unconditional; it would depend on their obedience to God.
Genesis 17:7 "I will establish my covenant... to be your God and the God of your descendants after you."	This is the greatest promise we can find in the Scriptures. This is the first and foundational promise all other promises are based on. It means that God is promising to have a permanent relationship with His faithful people, to be their God and Savior.

The Bible tells us that many of these promises were fulfilled while Abraham was still alive, and the others came after his death. God is faithful to fulfill His promises to those who obey His will.

Abraham's Answer

What has made Abraham such an influential figure for so many generations?



Abraham answered the divine call in his life with faith. This was one of the distinguishable characteristics of his life. Some of the fruits of this faith were these:

Trust. The Bible tells us that Abraham did not hesitate when he heard the call of God, and that he did not have a series of questions for God about his future. Now, this doesn't mean that Abraham was not worried about his future. Still, he trusted the One who knows it all and can do anything.

The second fruit of his faith was **influence**. Abraham's answer to the divine call resulted in Lot joining his uncle and traveling with him to Canaan. Many times a sincere faith is the inspiration for others to make a decision to follow the ways of the Lord. If our faith is waning, it will affect the lives of many people, especially those who are new believers.

The last fruit of his faith was his **witness**. Abraham, in obedience to God, traveled the road through the desert, guiding a caravan of more than one thousand people and many livestock. When those who saw Abraham and his caravan go by learned that he was on his way to a land that he didn't know, they did not think he would have a good future. Without a doubt, the relatives that stayed in Harran probably thought that Abraham had made a crazy decision. From a human point of view, what was Abraham getting himself into? A difficult and dangerous journey. An unknown future for which he was risking all that he possessed.

When he arrived at Shechem, the land of the Canaanites, God appeared to Abraham, renewed His promises, and comforted His servant. As an act of thanksgiving, Abraham built an altar to God and worshiped. This was most likely an impressive event. For the first time in Canaan, that land that knew nothing of the Lord God, more than one thousand people (Abraham and all the people with him) held a worship service to Him! Abraham left an enduring testimony for all the inhabitants of that place.

Abraham was obedient to God's call. He lived during a time when humanity was mired in the sad darkness of sin and idolatry. Those were difficult times. When he felt alone, the God who called him revealed Himself to lift his spirits and strengthen his faith.

Even today, God is calling people who are willing to leave everything behind to go wherever He will guide them, to proclaim the good news of salvation.

Any profession of faith in Jesus Christ that does not include a willingness to reorder one's life in obedience to Him as Lord is not the same kind of faith that Abraham professed, and therefore, it is not a true saving faith. The divine calling to all believers is a call to place all of our faith in God.

What did Abraham have to put into practice in order to obey God's call?

"By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country.... By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice" (Hebrews 11:8-9, 17).

Abraham's Faith is Tested

True faith leads to obedience to God, even when His purposes are hidden.



Mount Moriah is on the site where Jerusalem was founded and probably where the Temple was built. Some archeological evidence exists to also connect Mt. Moriah with the site where God gave Jesus, His only Son, as a sacrifice for the sins of all humanity.

(Wood, New Bible Dictionary; "Moriah" and "The Temple Mount in Jerusalem").

Abraham was overjoyed when God fulfilled His promise in a miraculous way and gave him Isaac, his son, when he was already very old. He never anticipated what God would be asking him later, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:2). This request by God is very surprising to us, but it is probably even more surprising to see that Abraham's faith was so real that he was willing to obey, willing to sacrifice the son that God had promised him (Genesis 22:3-10).

In response to this act of faithful obedience, God gave Abraham a promise of enormous proportions, "I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me" (Genesis 22:17-18).

Through this promise God added to the promise he had already given Abraham when He called him for the first time. Back then God had promised, "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:2-3).

The final promise in these two passages is a blessing for all of the peoples of the earth, a missionary undertaking that began with the obedience of one person and his family. This is why the apostle Paul wrote, "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:14). Jesus Christ is the *son of Abraham* (Matthew 1:1), the one through whom the promises to the patriarch were fulfilled for all the families of the earth who respond in faith.

As we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ we must not forget that our mission is to be instruments of blessing and that the promises of God to Abraham's family and descendants are now available to all of humanity! Wherever the mission of the church is being carried out there should be a blessing of God for the people. Those who have received the grace of God through His Son, a descendant of Abraham, are called to bless all of the families of the earth. And this means being willing to cross cultural boundaries.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Just as God called Abraham at the right time to follow Him to a foreign land, God continues to call His children today to share the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ with all of the families of the earth.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Abraham received a call to leave his home so he could receive God's promises and respond to the challenge of taking on God's mission. In your opinion:

What things might you have to "leave" in order to respond to God's call?

What things might the Church have to "leave" in order to respond to this call?

2. In groups of three answer these questions:

Do you think that God only calls young people to be missionaries? Why?

What is the relationship between faith in God and commitment to His mission?

What example would you use to explain to someone the extent to which God wants us to trust in Him?

3. Group Activity: Moving

Begin by having everyone in the class pair up with another student. Once everyone is seated, the teacher will proceed to split up the pairs and give each person a new partner. When the teacher is done, they can say: You probably felt something as your partner was traded off. This represents a small kind of "move" as you were taken out of your comfort zone.

The teacher then will ask if anyone has had to move to a new home, city, state, or even country and ask them to share: How did you feel? What was hard to leave behind? How would you have felt if you didn't know where you were moving to? What new things have you learned?

Close this activity with prayer, using the following questions to begin a personal conversation with God: In what ways has God asked me to leave my comfort zone lately? What is God's call for my life? Am I completely willing to follow and obey God, no matter where or what it might cost?



LESSON 3

Chosen to Be a Light to the Nations

Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

Objectives

- To understand that God has chosen the Church for a purpose.
- To recognize that the Church's mission goes beyond its own community.
- To appreciate the priestly function of the people of God.

Main Ideas

- God chose a people for the purpose of showing His glory to the rest of the nations.
- God's people had to live in obedience to the Word of God.
- Israel's call was to serve other nations and cultures, tell them about the only true God, and show them how to live in holiness.

Introduction

1850 B.C. Abraham arrives to Canaan
1500 to 1220 B.C. Joseph brings his family to live in Egypt (12 tribes)
1220 B.C. Moses begins the exodus from Egypt.

It took about 650 years and many generations after Abraham reached the land of Canaan for his descendants to finally become numerous. God saved them from a famine by sending them to live in Egypt through one of Abraham's great-grandchildren who by the hand of God went on to govern all of Egypt. His name was Joseph. Seventy members of Jacob's family went to Egypt and millions left in the exodus under the leadership of Moses to once again possess the land of Canaan.

It is important to understand God's reasons for choosing Israel as His people. Why Israel? Weren't there other nations that were more politically, socially, and culturally advanced?

Sovereign Will:

the plan God has worked out for the universe; God has control over all things. One of God's trademarks is taking ordinary things and making something extraordinary out of them. In Scripture we read that God used ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary deeds. However, every person God chose had a sensitive heart, was ready to listen, and was willing to be obedient. Talents and abilities are not a prerequisite to God being able to use someone. Achievements, awards, or accomplishments do not guarantee our usefulness for God's kingdom; a contrite and willing heart is all that is necessary.

God Chooses Israel

In this section we will study how God chooses and calls.



Any choice involves a process of differentiation and separation. For example, God chose Abel and not Cain, He chose Shem and not Ham or Japheth, and He chose Abraham and not Nahor, Haran or Lot. Why? Is it because God prefers some and discards others in order to fulfill His purposes? No. God does not discard anyone! We can distinguish here two important aspects that play a role in the divine choosing:

1. God chooses and calls out of love and mercy.
2. God also chooses and calls according to the character of the person in order to accomplish the different tasks that exist in the ministry of the Kingdom of God. This is an act of God's sovereign will.

Speaking about God's choice of Israel, professors Senior and Stuhlmüller write the following: "God called, or chose, Israel at a low point of its existence.... 'Israel' as such did not exist, only a conglomerate group of dispossessed people, marred and confused by revolutions, migrations, and wars" (Senior and Stuhlmüller 1983, 85-6).

Then, why did God choose Israel? What did these people do to deserve the favor of God? According to Deuteronomy 7:7-8 and 9:4-5, God chose them out of His love and to fulfill His oath with their ancestors. God chose Israel out of His love and mercy. What a great privilege this was! While that was true for Israel, that kind of privilege also implied certain responsibilities and conditions. Exodus 19:5 narrates to us how the people of Israel had two conditions to fulfill: to obey God fully and to keep His covenant.

When the people entered the Promised Land, God helped them to form a nation with strong social, political, economic, military and judicial structures. This is why on the Mount Sinai God gave them His Magna Carta, the Ten Commandments; it was on this foundation that God would establish this new nation. It wasn't enough for the chosen people to hear the voice of God; they also had to keep His covenant. In other words, they had to put these commandments into practice every day. They were to be God's special treasure. Israel was to be a nation that lived according to the Lord's will and authority. If they remained faithful to the covenant with God, He would protect them, prosper them, teach them, and free them from all their enemies.

On top of this, God wanted Israel to understand that all the earth belonged to Him, that His authority reigned over all of the kingdoms of the world and that He had the power to liberate Israel from all her enemies. In order for this to happen, Israel had to keep her promise to obey the voice of God and to keep His covenant.

The Nature and Role of God's People

Israel, as God's representative, had to fulfill their role as a holy priesthood.



Exodus 19:6 says, "you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." During the time of Moses, God designated the tribe of Levi to be dedicated to His priestly ministry. The Levites were to be models of obedience, consecration, and holiness so that the other nations of the earth would know God as Lord and Savior. Priests had two main roles:

1. Represent God before the people
2. Represent the people before God

God wanted Israel to fulfill these same roles with the other nations. The role of priest must not only be understood as a "religious" function but also as an example for a new way of living. In both the Old and the New Testaments, God expected priests to be a chosen lineage, a holy people, and God's possession, but they were also to proclaim the virtues, blessings, love and mercy of God.

God "sanctified" the nation of Israel, setting them apart from all other nations to be a people that were "exclusively" His. They were to be a people

To study about free will and God's call:

-John 15:15

-Romans 8:28-30

-Ephesians 1:3-14

*"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light"
(1 Peter 2:9).*

Levites:

in the Old Testament, a Levite was a member of the tribe or family of Levi, one of Jacob's sons, and one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Levites had a priestly role in the old Kingdom of Judah. They did not have an inheritance or land because their sole role was to take care of everything related to the temple (worship, praise, sacrifices, offerings, etc.). They were entirely dedicated to serving the Lord.

that walked according to the Lord's will. To be "holy" means to be set apart, but not in the sense of being segregated or untouchable. It means that someone has been set apart for a specific and divine purpose.

Larry D. Pate explains the priestly ministry of Israel in the following way:

1. Israel's life had to be a life of worship to the only true God, but it also had to include living out God's righteousness by obeying the laws and commands given by God.

2. Israel had to fulfill her ministry of being an intermediary between God and the nations of the earth, and between the nations and God. In doing this, Israel would be like a precious jewel that would attract the nations to the love of God so that they could enjoy His divine blessings.

Speaking about the Church today, Purkiser says the following: "The Church as the 'New Israel' exemplifies on a spiritual plane what the Old Israel was meant to exemplify on a geographical and political plane. Peter applies the great statement of Exod. 19:6 to his readers and as a consequence urges them to holy living" (Purkiser 1983, 217). See 1 Peter 2:9.

Israel's Mission

What was the mission of God for Israel?



The Isaiah passages of 42:7 (known as the "Song of the Suffering Servant"), Isaiah 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13 and 53:12 all describe what should be the mission of the chosen people of the Lord. The fulfillment of the mission would benefit not only Israel, but also the rest of the nations.

This ministry given to Israel was a prophetic and personal foretelling of the work of Jesus Christ. The mission of Israel and Jesus Christ share the following characteristics:

A. A Universal Mission

Israel had to obey God's will and preach His message of righteousness and love to the entire world. Through this universal mission for the people of Israel, God wanted to establish a kingdom of justice in the world that would open the eyes of the other nations that were living in the darkness of their ignorance, sin, and idolatry.

B. A Mission to Serve

Mark 10:45 says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus' ministry was to serve and that was precisely the ministry God expected Israel to fulfill in their missionary work to the nations. Israel should serve the nations, teaching them the path that leads to the one true God through a life of holiness and righteousness.

What motivates the church to accomplish its mission?

- The power of the Holy Spirit, which motivates us to love everyone.
- The desire to see God being worshiped by all nations in every tongue.
- The desire that every person on earth would know God's love.
- Being obedient to Christ's command to go and make disciples in all the nations.
- The fervent desire to use all possible means to reach every person who would be lost without Christ.
- The desire to see churches grow and multiply in order to spread God's kingdom.
- Having compassion for a suffering and oppressed world.

This is the same mission each believer shares today: to be witnesses of the light of Jesus. God desired to bless all of the families of the earth through His chosen people. He wanted everyone to know His love, mercy, justice, and salvation. This is the vision God has for His Church. In the kingdom that Jesus Christ is coming back to establish, there will be believers from every nation and tongue who will come to worship Him (Revelations 5:9-10).

The Homogenous Unit Principle

God is pleased when His children worship and serve Him as one.



Asking whether God chooses some and not others brings up another question: In our churches are we focusing on one group and excluding (on purpose or not) others? Should we do this so that the church will grow?

In the study of church growth, the “homogenous unit principle” has been a popular theory in the last few decades. Basically, this principle states that churches grow larger and more quickly when the people look alike, that is, when they are nearly identical. According to this idea, a church will grow more if it only focuses on attracting people only from rural settings or only people from urban settings. They would also say that a church will experience more growth if it focuses on attracting a certain ethnic group and does not reach out to other races or cultures. According to this principle, we would be crazy to think about having a church of both poor and rich people who sit in the same pews, or try to attract both white and black people (or other races) at the same time.

Many churches follow this principle to the letter in their growth strategies. Some churches are the most homogenous places in the world! The homogenous unit principle is not a reflection of the kingdom of love and justice of which God dreamed. Of course, it is much more comfortable to spend time with people who think like us, look like us, and share the same preferences.

But the same thing is not happening in businesses, restaurants, stadiums, parks, or even in the world of politics, where people from diverse cultures and ethnicities work together. Is this separation God’s will for His people? How many different races, cultures, or nationalities are represented in our congregations? How many are represented in our community? Local congregations should reflect the diversity of groups that are found in their local communities.

Have you ever been to an event where several cultures and languages were represented? Some years ago the author of these lessons, Scott Armstrong, attended an event in Pilar, Argentina with Extreme Nazarene Ministries. At that event there were 450 lay people and pastors of all ages (volunteers ranged from 1 to 94 years of age!) who spoke more than seven languages, ministering together and using their gifts to help “build” the

*“For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me”
(1 Corinthians 9:16-17).*

*“The church which does not evangelize ends up fossilized”
(Queiroz).*

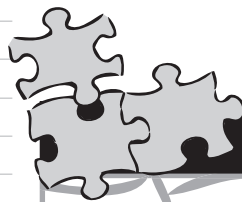
kingdom of God. The result was that more than 800 people came to Christ. On the last day, more than 2,500 people shared time together playing soccer, eating, and celebrating what God had done.

A **homogenous** group of people refers to a group that shares characteristics such as race, culture, political view, socioeconomic standing, education, preferences, etc. In contrast, a **heterogeneous** group of people is a mixed, assorted group where there is diversity such as a mix of races, cultures, socioeconomic standings, professions, etc.

One could just shout, “What a blessing!” However, planning for and organizing such a diverse group of people is never easy. One culture might not understand another. It is easier to worship God in our own language rather than waiting for other groups to sing in two or three additional languages. It is much easier to evangelize people from our own culture who speak our language. So why was so much money, time, and effort invested in organizing this kind of event?

Among the many reasons we could mention, there is one that stands out: events like these give us an opportunity to catch a glimpse of the Kingdom of God. What unites us is more important than what divides us! Our calling is not to “tolerate” people who seem different because they come from different cultures. Our calling is to work together and grow together as we are built up and build others up! This doesn’t mean we will always agree in everything and that we will never have misunderstandings. However, if Christ is our focus, we can worship together and in that way testify to the world of His unifying Spirit.

We must remember John’s vision in Revelations 7:9-10. *“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.... And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’”*



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

God chose the people of Israel in His love, mercy, and sovereignty. For their part, Israel was to be attentive to the voice of God and obedient to His commandments. The people were to be a priestly nation set apart for the Lord. Their mission was to bring the rest of the nations to the love of God through acts of service without distinctions of culture, language or social class.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Respond to the following questions:

- What changes must happen in a neighborhood so that God will be worshipped there, so His Word will be obeyed, and so that people's lives can be healthier?

- Imagine Jesus observing what your congregation is doing regarding evangelism. What would please Him and what wouldn't?

- Describe what opportunities you have had to talk to people who don't believe in Christ. Have you taken advantage of these opportunities?

2. In the first column, write your seven favorite places where you spend the most time (for example: home, work, mall, church, school, etc.). In the second column, order these places according to how easy it is to “shine... like stars” (Philippians 2:15); order them from where it is the hardest (1) to the easiest (7). Then on the third column explain why it has been difficult to shine in the places you rated the lowest (1, 2, and 3).

My seven favorite places	Order: from the hardest location to easiest “to shine”	Explain why it is hard “to shine” in places 1, 2 and 3.
1.	1.	
2.	2.	
3.	3.	
4.	4.	
5.	5.	
6.	6.	
7.	7.	

3. Have the whole group participate in the activity: *The Match* (a variation on Hot Potato).

Instructions:

- Form a circle with the students either seated or standing.
- The teacher starts the game, lighting a long wood match (for lighting barbecue grills or candles) and passing it to one of the people next to them, saying, “I receive the light, and I pass it on to you.” People continue doing this around the circle, and it has to be done quickly before the match goes out.
- Whoever is holding the match when it does go out has to pay a penalty, such as singing a song, jumping up and down so many times, reciting a Bible verse from memory, etc.
- Game can be played until 3 or 4 matches have been used, depending on the mood of the participants.
- Discuss what you learned through the activity: just as the match burns down over time, people’s time on earth is also limited, which is why we must be a light.
- Close with a time of prayer, asking God to allow you to be light at all times and wherever you go



LESSON 4

Jonah Disobeys God

Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

Objectives

- To identify the prejudices that limit our involvement in the lives of certain people.
- To understand the blessing that comes from answering God's call.
- To evaluate my level of obedience to God's mission.

Main Ideas

- The life of Jonah is an example of the misfortune that comes upon those who disobey God's calling.
 - When we accomplish God's mission it always results in blessed lives.
- Christians should not allow feelings of nationalism or racial prejudices to inhibit their mission to be a light to the nations.

Ethnicity:

word originating from the Greek *ethnos*, which means nation. It is a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition (Oxford Dictionaries).

Racism is prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior (Oxford Dictionaries).

- Many times racism is believed to be something extreme and obvious: people of one race fighting against people of another.
- More often it takes place in subtle ways. Also, many believe that racism does not take place inside the church, or could it be that we are just better at hiding it?

Jonah is possibly the most criticized Biblical character, receiving more critical comments than any other prophet of God. He has been called rebellious, intolerant and nationalist. However, if we are being honest, we can all identify with him in various ways.

Here are the descriptions of two scary (and real) scenes to help us to examine our attitude towards missions:

Scene 1: A new missionary goes to the field with all the training and desire to become incarnate in the culture. Two years later the missionary returns to his country disappointed. Some people ask: Why didn't you see results? Why are you coming back home? The missionary responds: "The people over there were difficult. They wouldn't listen to me. They are not friendly, and judging foreigners is a part of their culture."

Scene 2: The pastor preaches to his/her homogenous congregation one Sunday: "We are all missionaries. We must reach our neighbors for Christ." The next Tuesday, the church board meets to decide whether they will let a church made up of members of another race join their congregation. "I warn you," says one of the deacons, "if we combine congregations we will have to worship in their language and follow their customs. Who wants to do that? It's uncomfortable. It would be better for them to meet in our building after our service gets done on Sundays." Another member adds, "We shouldn't even allow that! Most of them are here illegally..."

Both scenarios happened in churches in Latin America. It is a sad thing when racism is present within the Church of Christ. Galatians 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Paul is not proclaiming these powerful words as a goal to achieve or something that may one day be true. He proclaims it as a present reality. The question is this: as individuals and as a Church, are we living out this reality or fighting against it? The story of Jonah is useful for evaluating our willingness to reach other cultures and ethnic groups.

Introduction

God's Mission for Jonah

Jonah had the ability and training to accomplish the mission given to him, but he did not have the right attitude.

Why was it so difficult for Jonah to love people different from himself?



Jonah received a specific mission. God spoke to him in a clear way because God did not want the prophet to doubt the divine will. Jonah's mission was specific, and it was a two-stage plan:

1. **"Go to the great city of Nineveh..."** This command was specific. Besides telling him what city to go to, it warned Jonah that it was a "great city," great in political and economic power. It was the capital of the Assyrian empire, one of the greatest of its age.

Why was God so eager to send one of His servants to Nineveh? We find the answer in the same story. The city's wickedness was so great that they were about to be destroyed because of their sin. However, God had compassion on them, and they needed to hear God's message of judgment, love, and mercy.

2. **"...and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."** Because Nineveh was such a sinful and cruel city, God sent Jonah to illuminate the minds and hearts of half a million people who were lost in their sin. Jonah eventually went to Nineveh and declared, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4). The people of Nineveh believed in God, fasted together and repented.

In Jonah's time the Jewish people were spiritually blind, so that it was difficult for them to accept that God loved not only Israel but also all the Ninevites. Many times we Christians can be like Israel. We guard the blessings of the gospel for ourselves. What would have become of us if the Apostles had done the same thing?

Rejecting the Mission

Going against God's will brings misfortune.



The first thing Jonah did after receiving his mission was to flee in the opposite direction God had told him to go. Why did he run to Tarshish? We don't know, but we can guess that Jonah feared that if the people of Nineveh did repent, God would forgive a city that, from Jonah's point of view, did not deserve God's mercy and forgiveness. This was likely the reason Jonah did not want to follow the mission God had given him. Jonah rebelled against God, substituting his own will for God's divine will, and that is always a dangerous thing to do.

Why did God call Jonah knowing what was in his heart? The simple reason is that God loved His servant and wanted him to learn a lesson.

Attitude:

a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior (Oxford Dictionaries).

How many people live in your community? Do you think all of them have heard the message of salvation? If your answer is "no," there is no doubt you are a missionary of God who can take the message of salvation to them. Is there something preventing you from doing so?

God's calling is for everyone. The mission of taking the gospel to everyone is not only for pastors and evangelists, but also for every child of God.

What are some ways in which Christians and churches today excuse themselves from accomplishing the mission of taking the gospel to every person?

“**Nineveh** was one of the most important capitals of the Assyrian empire. They conquered ten of the tribes of Israel, killing children, women, and the elderly. The history of Israel shows how they were persecuted time and again by the Assyrians. During the time of Jonah, the Jewish people had a hard time accepting that God didn’t only love them; God also loved the Ninevites. Most likely Jonah was thinking, “How can the God of Israel be calling one of us to proclaim this message of judgment to our cruelest enemies?” (Armstrong, 2010).

There is no doubt God is calling all who serve in the ministry and work of the church to witness to the lost. If God is calling you, it is because He wants to use your testimony to evangelize your neighbor, your community, your city and the entire world.

*“The world is my parish”
(John Wesley, cited by Queiroz).*

The same thing happens when God calls us. God calls because we are His disciples and He knows the more we are involved in the mission the more we will grow in Christlikeness. When God sees a need, He does not hesitate to call His servants to attend to that need. Who else could God call on but those who are preparing to serve and awaiting the divine call? There is no doubt that God calls all who are serving in the ministries of the church to witness to the lost.

Maybe not everyone runs away like Jonah, going to another city to hide from God. Most have probably read Psalm 139:7-8, which says that it is impossible to hide from God who is omnipresent. Evading or neglecting the calling is doing something similar to what Jonah did. If we believe that God ignores our disobedience, we are wrong. God is calling each of His children because He wants to use our testimony to evangelize our neighbors, our communities, our cities and the whole world!

Fulfilling the Mission

It is important to get rid of barriers that keep us from fulfilling the mission.



The prophet Jonah was influenced by the religious and nationalist attitude of his country. Israel did not want to share with anyone the blessings and promises they had received from God. This exclusivist way of thinking went against the will of God. On the one hand, Israel was keeping the blessing of God for themselves, and on the other hand, God desired to take His message of blessing to other nations. It was through Israel that God wanted to proclaim His mercy, love, forgiveness and salvation to all the nations.

Jonah was just as nationalistic as the Jews of his day. He wanted to keep God’s mercy and love for his own nation. After all, Jonah thought, the Ninevites did not deserve the mercy of God. His nationalism was stronger than his desire to obey the will of God. The societies where Christians live today are not that much different because they are being bombarded by ways of thinking that do not agree with the Word and the will of God.

Ideologies that Run Contrary to the Word of God	
Consumerism	Teaches that happiness comes from “possessing” things that will give us satisfaction and well-being.
Prosperity theology	States that if we are children of God, there is no reason for us to suffer from economic scarcity. If we are suffering economically, then our faith in Christ is put in doubt.
Homosexuality	Teaches that God created some with the natural predisposition to be partners with people of the same sex. In order to justify this lifestyle they state that God’s love is more important than God’s holiness. As such, they state that homosexuality is acceptable to God.
Liberation theology	Sees the poor and oppressed as victims, morally innocent before God, and their oppressors as eternally culpable. The Bible teaches that both the “oppressors and oppressed” must be contrite before the righteousness of God.

Exclusivism:
the action or policy of excluding a person or group from a place, group, or privilege
 (Oxford Dictionaries).

The Jonahs of the 21st Century

In this section we will point out the prejudices of nationalism.



Unfortunately there are many people like Jonah in our day. How do we understand the words nationalist and patriot? According to the Oxford Dictionary Online, a nationalist has, “*strong patriotic feelings,*” and “*believes in the superiority of their country over others.*” A patriot “*vigorously supports their country and is prepared to defend it against enemies or detractors.*” These concepts tell us that people love and respect their countries.

However, what do those words have to do with Jonah? It turns out that the place where God sent Jonah, Nineveh, was the most important city of the Assyrians. They conquered the Northern Kingdom around the year 721 B.C. In order to understand Jonah’s attitude, it is necessary to know this historical fact because his nationalism and patriotism affected his willingness to follow the mission God had given him.

Jonah’s first mistake was to go in the opposite direction God had shown him. In the story, Jonah tried to fix the situation by attempting to commit suicide in the storm. He thought that by dying he would be free to disobey the Lord. What is interesting is that the other men in the boat decided to row harder so they wouldn’t have to throw Jonah overboard. Is it normal for a person who has a relationship with God to want to commit suicide? Doesn’t it seem contradictory that the other men were more interested in saving Jonah’s life than Jonah himself?

Could it be that some Christians today would rather “die” than be instruments of God’s mercy to those who have hurt them? When Jonah

Are you willing to go anywhere, to any city or town, to proclaim the gospel? Or do you have limits and conditions to your obedience like Jonah displayed?

Consumerism: a social and economic order that encourages the purchase of goods and services in ever-greater amounts. The accumulation and purchase of goods which are not essential are very important as a sign of status, prestige, personal satisfaction, and happiness (Wikipedia).

Stereotype:

a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing (Oxford Dictionaries). The term generally refers to a negative concept assuming that a group of people are all violent or ignorant, etc.

preached the message of repentance to the people of Nineveh, he did not understand the true message because he was not showing love to all people. Jonah spoke the message with his lips, but his heart was not following the same message. Thanks be to God because no matter the indifference of His servant, He wanted, and still wants, to reconcile with those violent nations.

We need to examine our attitudes when we share the message of salvation with others. It's possible for us to do it without feeling any genuine compassion for them or showing them God's love. In that case, the message of the gospel might be communicated through wonderful words, but the speaker's attitude will not be communicating God's mercy and love. As a Jew, Jonah was filled with feelings of hatred towards the Assyrians. The last thing he wanted was happiness and salvation for these people who had brought so much disgrace to his nation.

God ends the conversation with Jonah with a question, a question we should answer too. These words speak against our prejudices, both personal and nationalistic: "And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?" (Jonah 4:11).

Prejudice:

a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience (Oxford Dictionaries).

To evaluate whether we are being influenced by nationalistic feelings, it is good to ask ourselves the following questions: How many times have I rejected foreign people or brothers/sisters in Christ because they are living illegally in my country? Do I hold anger against those who are in conflict with my country, be it for political, economic, border, or other issues? Would I be willing to go to these places to share the gospel message or serve them by providing medical help, food, education or other needs?

When I see an Immigrant I...		
THINK	FEEL	ACT
Dirty Thief Liar	Disgust Fear Repulsion	Turn my face away Stand on guard Do not believe them
STEREOTYPE	PREJUDICE	DISCRIMINATION
Cognitive Component	Emotional Component	Behavioral Component

Discrimination:

the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex (Oxford Dictionaries).

As Christians, our lives and emotions must be aligned with the heart of God. God's missionary heart has no room for vengeance or retaliation. We must decide to leave behind all prejudices and nationalistic feelings that will keep us from serving God and His mission.

In conclusion, what should we do so that we do not make the same mistake as Jonah?

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Name groups of people that are rejected by those in your community because of their nationality, ethnicity, social status or other reasons.

2. Have you shared your testimony with any of these people? If you said "no," why haven't you done so? Number these reasons from 1 to 9 ranking the reasons that people have for not sharing the message of salvation, with number 1 being the main reason:

___ It does not interest me.

___ I don't know how to do it.

___ I fear being rejected.

___ I don't have time.

___ I don't feel the need to share.

___ It is not my gift.

___ Our church is doing just fine. We are few, but we are happy this way.

___ I have a different ministry; I am already very involved in the church's programs.

___ I don't have non-Christian friends.

3. Test to measure racial prejudices. To complete this test, in the places marked by an "X" insert the name of the group that generates the strongest feelings of rejection by people in your context. If the statement reflects your way of thinking put a checkmark on the "True" column, if it goes against your way of thinking mark it as "False."

	Questions	True	False
1	I would not like to have a(n) X teacher, even if he/she is a good teacher.		
2	I could never fall in love with a(n) X.		
3	I would not do business or hire a(n) X because they are not trustworthy.		
4	X children are not as intelligent, which is why they get low grades in school.		
5	If a family member had a child with X traits, I would not be comfortable.		
6	If a(n) X family comes to my church, I would have a hard time being their friends.		
7	X teens are irresponsible and lazy in their studies.		



LESSON 5

The Missionary God Becomes Incarnate in Jesus Christ

Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

Objectives

- To know how Jesus accomplished the mission.
- To learn from Jesus' example as a missionary.
- To value the message of hope we possess.

Main Ideas

- Jesus was the missionary sent by God to reconcile humanity through His message, example, sacrifice and resurrection.
- Jesus is the only one who has defeated sin, death and Satan.
- Christians should allow Christ to become incarnate in them and proclaim the God of love to those who do not yet know Him.

Introduction

“In the New Testament, the title ‘Son of God’ expresses Jesus’ special status and relationship to God. In the Gospel of John it indicates the closeness of the relationship between the Father and his pre-existent and only Son: ‘No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known’ (John 1:18). Jesus himself taught this: ‘but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God’ (John 5:18).”

(Wood, New Bible Dictionary).

When the world was covered in darkness and hopelessness, the radiant star of Bethlehem appeared. From that time, the light of Christ has shined brighter and brighter, showing humanity the way of hope and salvation that no other human or spiritual “power” could show.

Those of us born into Christian homes are familiar with the story of the birth of the Son of God. We celebrate it every year at church, in family gatherings and among friends. For those who are not Christians or were born in homes where Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism are practiced, Christmas goes by unnoticed because the incarnation of God in Jesus makes no sense to them.

Even though some might deny or consider the miracle of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ to be absurd or impossible, the Bible confirms that the virgin birth of Christ was a reality, an event that changed the course of history for humanity. The missionary God sent His Son into the world to save what He had lost (John 3:16).

The Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ

Jesus, the missionary sent by God to us.



“So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son” (John 1:14, New Living Translation).

John 1:14 declares, *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us... full of grace and truth.”* God’s eternal Son, the Messiah of the Hebrews, the Christ of the Greeks, left His home in heaven to “set up his tent” (according to the original Greek text) and live among us. He did not only leave His home, but also made Himself nothing in order to be like us (Philippians 2:7). Jesus Christ left His heavenly home and willingly submitted to the limitation of the human condition. Why did he do this? Out of love – the greatest love that humanity could ever know.

Speaking on this subject, Mark 10:45 states the following: *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a*

ransom for many.” Even though He was subject to our human limitations, the glory of God shone bright in Jesus.

Jesus Christ was the missionary *par excellence* of all time. The word missionary means “one who is sent.” This is what John 20:21b shows us. “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” We can paraphrase this text to say, “Just as I am a missionary, you all are also missionaries.” Jesus was a missionary because He was sent.

However, what was His mission? Luke 19:10 and Matthew 28:19-20 give us the answer: “to seek and to save the lost,” and to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Christ was focused on His mission of revealing God’s truth and justice. As the mediator between God and humanity, He is the only Savior, reconciler, and supreme peacemaker between races, tribes, and peoples. Jesus Christ’s message of unity should become an important part of our missionary message.

Jesus was the only one to conquer Satan, death and sin. He gave His life and poured out His blood so that all who believe in Him and follow as His disciple may have eternal life. Jesus is the only one who offers resurrection and life eternal.

Jesus Christ, the Missionary of Reconciliation

As a priest, Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice to cleanse our sin.



From the time of His birth to His death, Christ willingly humbled Himself. The cross was not a surprise to Jesus. From the time that Adam and Eve sinned against God, the Father saw the cross as the altar of sacrifice to save humanity from sin and death.

Jesus fulfilled His priestly function when He became the intercessor between humanity and God. He did for us what a defense attorney would do for one who is accused. But besides being our intercessor, Jesus Christ was also the author of our salvation. He shows us the way that leads to the Father. This is why Revelations 1:5-6 says that Christ is “*the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.*”

Think about this illustration. One person helps another person, but the second person swindles the first one and leaves. After a while, the first person learns that the other one is now living in misery, does not have anyone to show them love and compassion, and to make matters worse, wants to end their life. In most cases the person that was swindled would say that the second person “deserved it.” However, facing this same situation,

“God had an only Son and He made Him a missionary”
(David Livingstone, cited by Queiroz).

Jesus is the “divine prophet,” the one who was promised and sent of God as His unique redemptive Messenger to all humanity under all circumstances for all time. Christ was in His own person God’s salvation Message
(Taylor, Beacon Dictionary of Theology, Christ).

How is Jesus’ glory made manifest today? Through whom is Jesus’ glory manifested today?

Priestly:
Jesus’ priestly mission consists in being the mediator, the bridge that unites and thus brings humanity to God, to salvation, to the true light and true life
(Taylor, Beacon Dictionary of Theology).

If Jesus is the only hope for the world, how often should we be presenting Him to those have lost all hope?

“The old life is gone; a new life burgeons! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what he is doing”

(2 Corinthians 5:17-19, The Message).

Nirvana:

an ancient Sanskrit term used in Indian religions to describe the profound peace of mind that is acquired with “liberation.” The word literally means “blown out” (as in a candle) and refers, in the Buddhist context, to the imperturbable stillness of mind after the fires of desire, aversion, and delusion have been finally extinguished (Wikipedia).

God’s attitude towards humanity was very different. God, through Jesus Christ, sought us out, had mercy on us and forgave us.

God took the first step to restore communion with human beings, and even though humanity rejected His Son to the point of sending Him to the cross, God continued His plan. Thanks to the obedience of Jesus Christ, it is now possible for us to be restored to the image of God and to be in communion with Him. Also, Jesus gave us the model we need to live according to the will of God.

2 Corinthians 5:18 and Colossians 1:20 speak about the opportunity that all human beings have to be reconciled to God through the work of Jesus Christ. Christ gave us free access to the presence of God through repentance, confession and the forgiveness of our sins. This is how Jesus fulfilled the mission the Father gave Him.

The Resurrection of the Son of God

Christianity is the only faith with a positive message for those facing death.



The resurrection of Jesus is one of the greatest and most incredible facts in the history of all humanity. If we deny the resurrection of our Lord, the foundations of the Christian faith would crumble and, as Paul said, preaching about salvation and our faith in Him would all be in vain. In addition, it is because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ that we can have the promise that one day we will also be resurrected by the power of God.

Death is one of the biggest hurdles human beings have to face. In spite of all of the scientific breakthroughs and advances, we are yet to find a solution for death.

People’s attitudes toward death vary. For example, some prefer to face death because they are afraid of growing old or being ill. They believe that death brings an end to all human suffering, so they opt for suicide or euthanasia (assisted suicide). These people might be going through situations that make life so terrible for them that they prefer to take a step towards the unknown rather than continue in their suffering.

It is interesting to know some of the arguments that other religions use to answer this problem of death. For example, Buddhists believe that after death humans are reincarnated (they come back in another body) an infinite number of times. If the person was “good” he or she will continue to follow this path throughout their lives until they reach “nirvana.” According to J. Cabral, “It would be amazing to spend so much time on earth dealing with philosophical, religious, and other kinds of speculative ideas, only to then reach nothingness...”

Hindus also believe in the “transmigration of the soul.” In other words, they believe that after death the soul returns to live in a human body, or

in a plant, or an animal (could be a fish, insect, bird, ox, or monkey). The soul will not find rest until it is able to escape this inescapable cycle (the established number is 860 thousand reincarnations). In the meantime, the soul is achieving spiritual levels until it can finally fuse with “god.”

Clearly, neither Buddhism nor Hinduism has found a solution to the problem of death. Neither of these religions shows any evidence of a God who has broken the chains of death through love, or of a God who gives life to His children so that they can be with their Creator for all eternity.

The Bible teaches us that death was not God’s creation; God is the source of life, and everything that has life depends on Him for that life. Death was introduced to creation when humanity grew apart from the Lord. Anything that promotes death goes against the will of God. This is why death does not bring an end to the problem of human suffering. On the contrary, if a person lived in constant rejection of Christ, death would mean having to live in suffering, apart from God, for the rest of eternity.

Jesus Christ is the only one who has an answer to death because he resurrected with power and defeated the tomb. For those who have not accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, death is the end of all hope of being reconciled with their Creator. This is why every Christian must do all that they can so that other people will have a chance to hear the gospel.

Christ’s resurrection has begun a countdown to the end of this present human age. Christ has the power to accomplish all of the events that will bring about the establishment of His kingdom. So it is thanks to His resurrection that the Word of God is being preached with power in all of the nations.

As Christians, we must not retreat when there is opposition to the preaching of the gospel. But in saying that, we must remember that winning people for Christ is very different in some parts of the world – some will be persecuted, some might even be killed. However, the work of God will not be stopped permanently because the gospel of righteousness must be preached to all the world before Christ will return.

Being Incarnate in the World

In this section we ask, “How do we allow God to be incarnate in our lives?”



God sent His Son to show us the path of salvation. Every person must make a decision concerning Christ: whether or not one will allow Christ to become incarnate in him or her. How do we allow God to become incarnate in us? What does incarnation mean? Incarnation happens when the qualities, actions, ideas and opinions of another person are represented in one’s life. It literally means to live ‘in the flesh’ like someone else lives or used to live.

Euthanasia:
comes from the Greek, meaning “good death.” It refers to the practice of intentionally ending a life in order to relieve pain and suffering (Wikipedia).

Jesus accomplished His mission.
Are we doing the same?

"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"
(2 Corinthians 5:20).

One way of explaining this idea of incarnation is to use the example of an ambassador. The role of an ambassador is to represent and protect the interests of his or her country while doing business and gaining knowledge about the conditions and happenings in another country. The two roles are interesting. The ambassador must promote and develop friendly relationships in all areas between the two countries. When we allow God to become incarnate in us, we carry out similar roles.

So, if we are ambassadors of God in this world, we must ask the following question: Am I being an ambassador for God in my neighborhood, in my job, in my school, with people from other cultures, etc.? Am I promoting "friendly relations" (and more than that) between God and those who do not know Him?

In order to understand the work of Christian missions, we must pay more attention to Jesus, to His mission, and to the purpose of His mission in the world. During His time on earth, Jesus showed compassion. His ministry was to preach, teach and serve the needy. In the end, He went to the cross to sacrifice Himself for sinners. Through His resurrection Jesus gave His followers the tasks of preaching the gospel in all the world and being His "hands and feet."



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Jesus, who was sent as a missionary by God, is our model for the ministry of reconciliation to which we are called. Through His sacrifice, Jesus won the victory over sin, death and Satan. When Christians allow Christ to become incarnate in them, they can function as ambassadors of the Lord to those who live in the darkness of sin and the ignorance of empty religions.

Activities

Time



20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read 1 Peter 2:9-10 and answer this question: How can I be “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation” in my daily life?

2. Write down a list of the virtues or qualities that Jesus has that all Christians should incarnate in their role as missionaries:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

F. _____

G. _____

H. _____

I. _____

J. _____

3. What qualities of Jesus do you need to nurture in your own life?

4. Divide the class in two teams. Each team will represent a nation and will name someone as president.

One nation will be the Tulips, and the other will be the Jaguars. A conflict arose between the two nations because of an apple tree that grew in the land of the Tulips but was planted by the Jaguars. Both nations want to have exclusive rights to eat the apples of the tree.

The problem is that the two “presidents” do not want to talk with each other. Because of this, each nation must choose an ambassador. Each president will have a secret talk with their ambassador to give them ideas on how to solve this conflict. The job of the ambassadors is to fix the conflict without going against the interests of their nation or their president.

After a time of negotiations, the ambassadors will answer the following questions in front of the class: How did you feel having to resolve this conflict? Were you able to truly represent the interests of their presidents? Were you able to communicate their ideas correctly?

Answer the following questions with the whole class: How do we compare/relate this game with our role as God’s missionaries? Are we being effective ambassadors right now? How can we become better ambassadors?

A stylized graphic of a mountain range with three peaks, rendered in shades of gray. The mountains are layered, with the foreground being a darker gray and the background being a lighter gray. The peaks are rounded and the overall style is minimalist and modern.

LESSON 6

The Mission of Jesus Christ's Disciples

Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

Objectives

- To understand that the mission implies making disciples.
- To make a personal commitment to the mission.

Main Ideas

- Jesus commissioned His disciples to make disciples of every race, tongue and nation.
- Jesus grants authority and His own presence to support the ministry of disciple-makers.
- As a church, our primary mission is to use creative strategies to make disciples.

Introduction

In previous lessons we have learned that God did the following things in order to achieve His mission of rescuing His creation:

Holistic ministry:
refers to the responsibility of the church to serve as Christ did, serving all people, in all of their needs, including spiritual, emotional, physical, or intellectual needs.

1. He chose a nation that would proclaim that God is not only Lord and Creator of everything that exists, but also that God is Savior. However, His chosen people were not successful in their ministry.

2. For this reason, the Son of God became incarnate to preach the message of the Kingdom of God and to offer His life as a sacrifice so that humanity could attain salvation and eternal life.

3. Jesus Christ accomplished His mission. He lived, died and resurrected from the dead just as He had announced. Before returning to the Father, he commissioned the church with the responsibility of continuing His ministry.

This lesson will answer the question: How should the church accomplish the ministry for which Christ has commissioned us?

Christ's Example to the Church

Jesus gave us a holistic model for ministry.



The parable of "the sower" warns us about the different types of ground, or hearts, where the seed of the kingdom of God is sown.

Teaching, preaching and service are three ministries Jesus gave to the church for the proclamation of the gospel.

Matthew 9:35 mentions that Jesus began His ministry by **teaching** the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and He dedicated the majority of His time teaching people how to conduct a life that pleased God. However, speaking in human terms, it would have been impossible for one person to preach the good news to all people on earth, and Jesus knew this. That is why He prepared a group of teachers, His disciples, who would continue to spread the gospel and make more disciples.

The Holy Spirit is the power that transforms lives through the teaching of the gospel. This power lived in Jesus and lives today in His disciples. We can

Local mentality:
when people have a local mentality, it is as if they are completely enclosed by walls. It feels comfortable to be surrounded by the same people all the time and it becomes easy to lose sight of the mission to take the gospel to all people. People with a local mentality believe that it isn't necessary to leave their small world to evangelize others; they consider it enough to be around the people who are closest to them.

Mission is the reason for living for each disciple of Christ and for the Church.

*"You have one business on earth – to save souls"
(John Wesley, cited by Queiroz).*

*"...in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"
(Acts 1:8).*

God is working even now in a great movement to free millions of people from poverty and hunger. The world is making progress in its fight to end extreme poverty. However, there is still a lot we can do as Christians.

Christ's Command to His Church

Each Christian must become a discipler.



What constitutes the Christian mission? Every child of God must accomplish the mission the Lord gave to His Church. This includes the mission inside the church doors, and perhaps even more importantly, the mission outside the church doors. The command given in the Great Commission says to, "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). It is interesting to notice that Jesus used the Greek word *ethnos*, which means, as Larry Pate describes so well, "To make disciples of all *ethnos*, in other words of every tribe, every language, every city, and every nation. This is the same word John uses in Revelations 5:9-10 when he describes the great multitude of the saved. In this great crowd John saw people from every nation, language, city, and nation."

Today there are still many nations that do not know the gospel of justice and salvation, so it is still our mission and responsibility to preach to them before Christ comes. We must not allow our consciences to rest by saying that "the Lord will have mercy on them," since that would be irresponsible and go against God's will. The Great Commission has been given to every child of God. We must proclaim the gospel, not only to those who are close to us, but also to those around the world.

Unfortunately, sometimes we believe and obey Satan more than Christ. The enemy often tells us, "If there are so many you could be winning here in your community, why worry about those who are so far away?" We can fall prey to a provincial, closed and selfish mentality. Of course, if we are not willing to share the good news with those near to us, how can we expect to do it in contexts and communities that are far away? Yet, someone once said, "If the Church had waited until all of Jerusalem had been saved and until all of the social problems had been solved before spreading the gospel to other parts of the world, the Church today would only exist in Jerusalem."

The apostles and the early church did not wait until all of Palestine accepted Christ before sending Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles. The Methodists of the 17th century did not wait until all of England was evangelized before sending missionaries to other continents. We can say the same about the countries that send missionaries today.

It is time for Christians who come from countries that have received missionaries in the past to send more and more missionaries to other parts of the world. Acts 1:8 says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus made it clear that evangelism should occur in a simultaneous fashion. In other words, the disciples were instructed to evangelize Jerusalem at the same time they evangelized Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the known world of that day. This must be the model we use today.

Our mission is to “go and make disciples.” The mission given to the church does not end with the proclamation of the gospel. It also involves making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them the Word of God.

1. **Baptizing** – Just as the command to “make disciples” is not optional, the command to baptize is also not optional. The sacrament of baptism is a person’s public testimony of being born again and deciding to re-orient his or her life by following Jesus Christ, who is Lord.

2. **Teaching** – It is important to note that Jesus did not tell us to “teach them everything.” Jesus told us to “teach them to obey” everything He had commanded. Jesus’ followers must not only learn the doctrine, but practice it as well. The Bible tells us that when someone accepts Christ, he or she is a new creature who needs to learn to walk in holiness, to love, to obey, and to serve God and others with all of his or her strength.

*“He said to them,
‘Go into all the world
and preach the gospel to
all creation.... And these
signs will accompany
those who believe: In my
name they will drive out
demons; they will speak
in new tongues; they will
pick up snakes with their
hands; and when they
drink deadly poison, it
will not hurt them at all;
they will place their hands
on sick people, and they
will get well”
(Mark 16:15-18).*

Christ’s Promise to His Church

What did Jesus promise to those who make disciples?



There are two promises which should encourage those who disciple others. The first is found before the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18) and the second after (28:20).

The first talks about the authority Jesus Christ gave to His disciples. When we preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God we are not fighting against “flesh and blood” but against “the authorities, against the powers.” It is a spiritual battle, and that is why we need spiritual weapons. Jesus knew this, so He gave His children the same authority He received from the Father, the authority to teach others about the Christian life.

The second talks about the promise of His presence. To those who committed to making disciples, God promised to always be there, continuously, without any interruption, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, “to the very end of the age.” What a blessed assurance. Obedient disciples who undertake the Great Commission can depend not only on the authority of Christ, but also on the permanent presence of the Lord.

The task the Lord has given to us is not easy. It requires commitment and a lifestyle that constantly gives witness to Jesus. This is not a task reserved only for professional ministers, pastors and missionaries. This mission gives meaning to every disciple of Christ and to the Church. Emil Brunner said, “The Church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning.”

*Not only are you to be like
Christ; you are to represent
Christ! As a disciple, you
have a responsibility to
represent Christ in the
unbelieving world
(Willis, 37).*

*Are you just a Christian?
or are you a disciple of
Christ?*

Embracing New Strategies



New times call for being creative with the mission.

Doing missions in creative access areas is a way of responding to the challenge of making Christlike disciples in areas or countries that have restrictions or are closed to the gospel. These areas must be accessed through creative means; traditional methods of evangelism cannot be used in such places. You also cannot apply for a visa as a missionary, and those who identify publicly as Christian missionaries can be in serious danger. Missionaries gain access to these countries through their profession or line of work, which allows them to legally work there. At the same time they witness about Christ, evangelize, and disciple new believers.

What is the 10/40 Window?

- The area located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator.
- It includes northern Africa, the Middle East, and southern Asia.
- 60 countries are included. Christians are persecuted in 43 of those.
- The majority of people have not heard the gospel.
- 90% of the poorest people in the world live there.
- These countries are the centers of all non-Christian religions.
- You find rampant terrorism and exploitation of children.
- Only 1.2% of all giving for Christian missions are sent to these countries.

Writing about the implementation of the Great Commission in our day, Dr. Jerry D. Porter (General Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene) said, *“The mission of the Church of the Nazarene is to make Christlike disciples in the nations. This is our mission. It is more than preaching or evangelizing. It goes beyond the formation of workers and planting new churches. We accomplish our mission as we make disciples, who in turn make disciples, who in turn make disciples....”*

The Lord gave us a Great Commission, not a “Great Suggestion!” The command has not changed, but it does require new strategies. What would happen if we let go of the traditional methods that have stopped being effective or productive? Why is it so hard to embrace new strategies given by the Holy Spirit that would allow us to accomplish the mission Christ has given us?

Normally, we prefer to use the same methods that we have seen before. New strategies seem risky. We do not know if these tools will really be better, and we fear that the message will be lost. *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”* (Joshua 1:9b). In obedience, Joshua left his comfort zone to do things for God that he knew he couldn’t do by himself! Fear and anxiety can be signs that we are finally entering the missional zone of maximum obedience.

Let us learn from the “missional Joshuas” of today who, with prayer and courage, serve in creative access areas, risking their lives as they witness about Christ. They teach and challenge us to be bold and creative in our work for the kingdom. We must not change the essence of the message, but it is necessary to embrace new God-given methods to make an impact in our ever-changing world. This means being willing to learn with humility, and being flexible and creative in our obedience to accomplish the mission our Lord has given us, *“To make Christ-like disciples in the nations.”*

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer the following questions:

What mission has God given me?

Am I fulfilling that mission?

What does God have to change in my life for me to better fulfill this mission?

2. Use your imagination to fill in the following phrase:

“If I were given the power to help people live according to how Christ wants them to live...”

3. Read Acts 1:8 and answer this question: What does “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth” mean for me? To answer this question, think about the places you spend time in your daily life. For example: your workplace, your neighborhood, stores you visit, your school, your college, the local hospital, etc. Then use the following chart to categorize these places according to how often you visit them. Lastly, answer the question in the last row: How can I be a witness in these places?

My Jerusalem (places I visit daily)	My Judea (places I visit once a month)	My Samaria (places I visit occasionally)
How can I be a witness in these places?		



LESSON 7

The Holy Spirit and the Work of Mission

Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

Objectives

- To understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- To learn to value the Spirit's role in our sanctification.
- To understand how the Holy Spirit drives the work of missions.

Main Ideas

- The Holy Spirit guides, prepares and cares for the Church so that it can accomplish the mission Christ has given.
- The Spirit comforts, guides, restores, reorients, and gives passion to God's children.

What do we know of the work of the Holy Spirit in leading to our salvation?

"So let me say it again, this truth: It's better for you that I leave. If I don't leave, the Friend won't come. But if I go, I'll send him to you. When he comes, he'll expose the error of the godless world's view of sin, righteousness, and judgment: He'll show them that their refusal to believe in me is their basic sin; that righteousness comes from above, where I am with the Father, out of their sight and control; that judgment takes place as the ruler of this godless world is brought to trial and convicted (John 16:7-11, The Message).

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come" (John 16:13, NIV).

Just as Christ came with a redeeming mission, the Holy Spirit was also sent to guide and help the Church to accomplish God's will.

In the Gospel of John 16:5-15, we find Jesus' promise and teaching about the mission of the Holy Spirit. John wrote that Jesus Christ's return to the Father was necessary in order for the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to come to our world and accomplish the following mission:

1. To convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment.
2. To guide believers in all truth.
3. To glorify Jesus Christ.

In this lesson we will study the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit, who guides the Church to accomplish the mission.

The Holy Spirit's Mission

Without the Holy Spirit, no one could become a child of God.



The Holy Spirit knows our hearts. The Spirit sees our motivations, desires and struggles, and at just the right time He speaks to and convinces us of our sins. Only the Spirit can do this:

A. The Holy Spirit shows us our sin and its consequences (John 16:8). For example, can a child who grows up drinking and bathing from muddy waters understand what clean water is like? Yes, the child can learn, but only if someone takes the time to show the child the clean water. Of course, the child will immediately notice the difference. The child will not only drink and bathe in the crystal clear waters, but also they will bring their friends to enjoy the pure and clear water.

This is what the Holy Spirit does in us. The Spirit reveals the condition of our present life, showing us what being far away from God looks like. In other words, the Spirit "proves" or "convinces" us that life with God is better than life without Him.

B. The Holy Spirit is our Helper. This is why Jesus call the Spirit “Advocate” (in Greek, *parakletos*), because it describes someone who is at our side, ready to guide and defend us. This is someone who defends, helps and consoles us in every circumstance.

C. The Spirit guides us into all the truth (John 16:13). In his commentary on the Bible, Matthew Henry explains John 16:8 in the following way: “*To be led into a truth is more than barely to know it; it is to be intimately and experimentally acquainted with it...it denotes a gradual discovery of truth shining more and more.*” The ministry of the Spirit is to guide people to Christ, not to Himself.

Conviction of sin:
the result of the Holy Spirit’s work in us. In this process, we see sin for what it is, feel remorse and regret, and are led toward repentance for our sins (Taylor, Taylor and Grider, 355-7).

The Holy Spirit’s Arrival

The Holy Spirit drives the mission of the Church.



The coming of the Holy Spirit was prophesied since Old Testament times (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Zechariah 12:10; Joel 2:28-29). The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit came during Pentecost and that on that day it inaugurated a new era of God’s harvest which will end at the time of Christ’s second coming. The Holy Spirit descended on the disciples, and He also wants to enter our lives to give us a new and victorious life.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus told His disciples that they would receive power (in Greek, *dunamis*, which is related to the word “dynamite”). This is what the Spirit’s presence produces in the life of Christ’s disciples. When the Holy Spirit comes on us, besides giving us power, He prepares us so that we can live holy lives and accomplish the mission Jesus gave us.

Many Christians go for years without knowing or enjoying this great blessing. Many do not know that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is not an option for a Christian. It is a command from God. The verb that Paul uses in Ephesians 5:18 for, “Be filled with the Spirit,” means a continuous and repetitive action. All Christians need to be continuously filled with the Spirit. Here is a simple way of explaining the steps that lead to being filled with the Spirit:

1. Give testimony that Jesus is Lord and Savior.
2. Consecrate your life to the Lord.
3. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit through His Son, Jesus Christ.
4. Believe that God has done this in you.

How can we know if we have been filled with the Spirit? We can know this when: the love of Christ is overflowing in our being, we begin to love as Christ loves, we forgive others, and we seek after God’s mission in complete obedience and love for our neighbor. The love of God will “explode” in our lives and

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Pentecost:
Israelites celebrated the Feast of Pentecost in memory of the law-giving at Sinai (Exodus 23:17). It was also called the “Feast of Weeks” since it came 7 weeks after Passover. Lastly, it was also called the “Feast of Harvest” since they gave thanks for the blessings of the grain harvest. Pentecost was a feast of remembering, of celebration, and of thanksgiving (New Bible Dictionary).

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to take people to Christ and not to himself. When the Holy Spirit comes over us, in addition to empowering us, He enables us to live in holiness and accomplish the mission Jesus Christ gave to us (Queiroz).

The Holy Spirit motivates Christians to go farther, to other cities, countries, and continents until we reach the “ends of the earth.” Mission begins in the power of the Holy Spirit. He is the “chief” of all missions because He is the one who directs, motivates, drives, and propels the church to accomplish her missionary work
(Queiroz).

Prejudice:
refers to prejudgment or making a decision before becoming aware of the relevant facts of a case. In recent times, the word has come to be most often used to refer to preconceived, usually unfavorable, judgments toward people or a person because of gender, social class, age, etc.

“The Holy Spirit performs various ministries within the body of Christ; he regenerates, sanctifies, teaches, guides, comforts, illuminates, and intercedes. But the most important ministry in relation to his mission is the filling of Christians for service”
(Willis, 24).

energize us to serve others with love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Filled with the Holy Spirit

The first century Church grew because it was filled by the Holy Spirit.



Acts 11:1-18 teaches us that the Spirit empowers us to live in holiness before God and others and helps us to accomplish Christ’s ministry of preaching the gospel to every creature. In the book of Acts, there are twelve occasions when the disciples could have felt satisfied with the ministry they had accomplished so far, but on each occasion, the Spirit drove them to continue on.

Acts 4:31 states, “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” Just as they were filled with the Spirit and driven to tell the good news, Christians today can be filled with the Spirit.

In Acts 8:4 we read, “Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.” Just as it happened in the Early Church, the Holy Spirit gives us all kinds of opportunities to advance the gospel in the world. The Spirit will always guide us to go beyond, to other cities, countries, and continents until we can reach the “ends of the earth.”

At first Peter believed that the gospel was only for the Jews, but the Holy Spirit showed him through a vision that the gospel was for everyone: Jews or Gentiles, no matter their race, language, religion, economic status, sex, or age. Peter then understood the message of God and applied that knowledge to witness to Cornelius.

The church in Antioch began because of the work of the Spirit. A year later, Barnabas and Paul were sent from that church to other cities. When they returned with the news that Gentiles had accepted the gospel of Christ, the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem wanted to require that the Gentile converts first be circumcised before they could be accepted into the church. At that time, the Holy Spirit intervened once again to show them that they were wrong and to guide them into all the truth.

In Colossians 3:1-3, Paul tells us to set our sights on the things above and not on earthly things, because we have died to sin and our lives are in Christ. Christians must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to distinguish what customs and habits are not honoring our Lord. It does not matter where we are, what country or culture we live in or have been sent to, we must be careful to live as children of God.

A Willing Heart

How does the Spirit move the Church to missions?



The Holy Spirit works in each believer to give a willing heart and a missionary Spirit. But, how does this happen? Roger S. Greenway writes that the missionary Spirit works in the lives of believers to:

1. Awaken in their hearts an interest for missions.
2. Plant in their minds compassion towards people who are lost.
3. Increase their faith in God's promise that the proclamation of the gospel will never be in vain.
4. Create a desire to obey Christ's command to be involved in missions.
5. Break down social and racial prejudices and nurture a love towards people and new believers.

Now, for those who have been called and have left their homes, their siblings, their parents, their children, and their countries for the love of Jesus and His mission, there are some special promises that Greenway highlights:

1. There is a sustaining bond between missionaries and Christians in other lands, and these relationships sustain the mission.
2. The Holy Spirit opens the doors for the gospel.
3. The Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of unbelievers so that they will long for what Christ is offering them. They will develop an interest in the Christian faith, be convicted of their sin and sense the need for salvation.
4. The Holy Spirit preserves and nurtures the fruit of missions.

The Holy Spirit is the steward and initiator of the Great Commission. The Spirit is the engine that drives missionary work, convinces people of their sin, and guides them into all the truth so that they will glorify the name of Jesus. John Wesley described three results of a believer being filled with the Holy Spirit:

A. God gives new direction to life. Where before there was a tendency to sin and a desire to go against God's will, there is now a tendency, an inclination, to do His will. Following God's desires and commands becomes the norm over and against any other alternative! *"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws"* (Ezekiel 3:25-27).

"Some churches say that they have the power of the Holy Spirit, but they do not have a missionary vision – this is impossible.

If they had the power of the Spirit they would automatically have a missionary vision. Other churches want to do the work of missions without the power of the Holy Spirit, and the result is complete failure" (Queiroz).

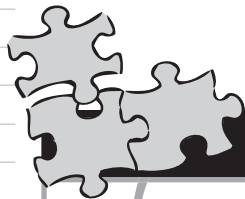
"Jesus Christ knows our floundering and inability to accomplish His mission; that is why every time He commanded us to go to all the world proclaiming the gospel, He also promised to give us the power of the Holy Spirit" (Queiroz).

God wants us to give all material possessions to Him so they will be under His authority. This means that God can use or ask for anything at anytime so it can be used for His work.

B. God restores His own image in the life of the believer. God created us in His image, but the fall of humanity, which began with the sin of Adam and Eve, distorted it. However, the Lord is more powerful than sin and desires to restore us, making us like His own Son, Jesus Christ! *“...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator”* (Colossians 3:10).

C. God gives a passion to love God and neighbor. What God does in the lives of His children through the Holy Spirit cannot remain hidden. God’s vision and passion are incarnated in His children, so that His love is expressed in a tangible way through their lives in this world. *“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart”* (1 Peter 1:22).

The arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost made the difference in the lives of the first disciples. The Spirit will do the same in our lives if we allow Him to reign and revive us so that we might give testimony of the love God demonstrated through Jesus Christ. In addition, He will fill us with His presence and help us to live according to God’s will.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

When Christians have willing hearts and are filled with the Holy Spirit, the Church will be driven to love and serve the world, giving testimony of Christ and making disciples.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Complete the following sentences according to what you studied in this lesson, using the word bank beside the puzzle.

The Holy Spirit came to this world to accomplish the following mission:

To _____ the world concerning sin, to _____ believers in all truth, and to _____ Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to live in _____ and accomplish Christ's _____.

The Holy Spirit is the steward and _____ of the _____ and the engine that _____.

2. Find the words you used to fill in the blanks in the word search:

Word Bank:

Commission

Convict

Drives

Glorify

Great

Guide

Holiness

Initiator

Mission

Missionary

Work

K	J	E	X	N	Y	D	T	U	Y	U	B	W	W	Y
F	C	P	Y	V	R	J	L	A	T	V	M	D	W	C
X	Y	F	N	I	Q	C	P	V	E	Q	R	J	I	A
F	X	R	V	S	D	B	K	C	B	R	S	P	O	C
S	R	E	A	I	B	F	R	O	A	S	G	D	R	F
D	S	Z	D	N	G	C	O	D	E	D	I	U	G	R
P	D	V	B	R	O	Q	W	N	G	A	G	M	Q	O
F	O	Q	X	Q	Z	I	I	Q	K	X	F	I	G	T
G	T	K	Y	I	Y	L	S	S	V	S	E	S	J	A
D	L	G	F	L	O	Q	Q	S	R	H	O	S	Y	I
Y	E	O	Y	H	C	O	N	V	I	C	T	I	S	T
Y	Q	K	R	N	O	I	S	S	I	M	M	O	C	I
E	L	U	P	I	X	J	X	S	K	S	M	N	K	N
H	J	E	T	I	F	H	I	T	G	B	O	O	H	I
N	S	Y	H	S	V	Y	M	X	E	U	W	F	G	U

3. In the space below, draw or illustrate one of the following themes by using images, symbols or words from the lesson: 1. The Spirit-filled Christian 2. The Spirit-filled Church.

When you are finished, share your drawing with the class, explaining the ideas you expressed.

A stylized graphic of a mountain range with three peaks, rendered in shades of gray. The mountains are layered, with the foreground being a darker gray and the background being a lighter gray. The peaks are rounded and the overall style is minimalist and modern.

LESSON 8

Paul: A Missionary Like No Other

Biblical Foundations of Global Mission

Objectives

- To appreciate Paul's preparation.
- To learn about Paul's missionary strategy.
- To apply Paul's strategic model.

Main Ideas

- As a missionary, Paul is a great example because of his preparation, passion and strategy to start churches and train new leaders.
- Those called to be missionaries must be willing to dedicate time and resources to reach the highest level possible in these areas: professionally, theologically and linguistically.

Being prepared was very important to Paul. He realized he needed to prepare himself to take the gospel to other people. After his conversion, his calling and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, he preached in Damascus. However, he knew he needed to learn more about the words of Christ.

"The conversion of Paul marks not only a turning point in his personal history, but also an important epoch in the history of the apostolic Church, and consequently in the history of mankind... The transformation of the most dangerous persecutor into the most successful promoter of Christianity is nothing less than a miracle of divine grace"
(Schaff, cited by Reza, 28).

When did Paul learn to be a missionary? Paul's religious and secular training, his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, and his years in Tarsus after his conversion all prepared him to be a great servant for Jesus Christ.

Tradition says that when he was six or seven years old, Saul (who later received the name Paul) attended a synagogue in his community to receive Biblical training. These schools were called "houses of the book" because boys mostly studied the book of the Old Testament. At the age of 15, Paul left his home to attend one of the rabbinic schools in Jerusalem (a school for Biblical experts), which were also called "houses of interpretation." There Paul studied under Gamaliel, who was known as an expert of the law in Judea. Paul was a faithful disciple and attained the same rank as his master, "in regard to the law, a Pharisee" (Philippians 3:5).

All rabbis had some kind of secular occupation. They could be potters, ironworkers, shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, etc. Paul was no exception. He earned his living making tents, a practical and profitable trade he learned from his father. He made these with goats' hides, which are very common in the Middle East.

Paul's Conversion

What prepared Paul to be such an effective missionary?



Paul probably heard about the great signs and marvels that Stephen was doing among the people. He most likely attended the synagogue where Stephen discussed the Word of God with Jews from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia. No one, not even Paul, could resist Stephen because of the wisdom the Spirit gave him.

Stephen's words caused a great commotion among the Jews, so some people persuaded the council of elders to accuse Stephen of blaspheming against Moses and against God. They also stirred up the people, the elders

and the experts of the law (the scribes), who then seized Stephen and took him before the council. After hearing Stephen's defense they were infuriated, took him outside of the city, and stoned him. The Bible tells us that, "Saul approved of their killing him" (Acts 8:1).

Paul, who was still called Saul at that time, was present for Stephen's stoning. Sometime later he traveled towards Damascus in order to arrest Christians who had fled there due to the persecution that had broken out in Jerusalem. On his way to the city, through a vision, he had an encounter with the resurrected Christ, who he heard and saw in the middle of a bright light which blinded him for several days (Acts 9:6). Paul's conversion was a unique spiritual experience. First, he experienced his new birth and surrendered completely to the Lord. This is reflected in his humble and obedient attitude throughout this experience. Second, he experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:6-17).

Before his conversion, Paul had been a passionate missionary for Judaism. Later, his experience and encounter with the risen Christ intensified his missionary passion, not for Judaism but for the gospel of the Kingdom. However, his desire to know and serve God had already been burning in his heart. To the brothers and sisters in Antioch of Syria, where Paul served some years later, it was clear that the Lord had called Paul for a unique mission (Acts 13:1-3). J. Oswald Sanders states, "Indeed, Christ chose him precisely because he saw in him missionary raw material of unusual quality. Other missionaries, such as David Livingstone, have opened continents to the gospel. Paul opened

Paul received his calling after his conversion. Paul received his calling directly from Jesus when He told Paul, "Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me." (Acts 26:16) But before going out on this mission, Paul needed to be filled by the Holy Spirit so that he would be enabled to respond to this calling.

Paul, the Missionary Strategist

How did the Holy Spirit guide Paul to do his missionary work?



The Holy Spirit led Paul, who used three basic missionary strategies:

1. He taught sound doctrine and theology. The apostle Paul preached the gospel of Christ. In the book of Acts and in his letters he teaches clear and foundational doctrines, among them: the universality of sin and judgment, the centrality and effectiveness of the cross for salvation, and the resurrection and second coming of Christ. "Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God" (Acts 20:26-27).

2. He had a simple growth strategy. Paul knew the cultural context where he was going to establish the church. He understood that missionary work would involve human beings from different cultural and social contexts. Even so, he did not limit his missionary efforts to one particular stratum of society. He knew that human relations were a vital part of the work of establishing churches in new and diverse places. This is why the

Paul was sent by a local church.

After his years of preparation and active ministry in Antioch had passed, the Holy Spirit sent him and Barnabas to do ministry in other places. After fasting and praying, the leaders of the church in Antioch received direction from the Holy Spirit. They laid hands over Paul and Barnabas and sent them out so they could begin their first missionary voyage. The calling of this apostle was confirmed by the church that sent them.

It was in the Antioch church where believers first received the name "Christian." However, this nickname was not given as a compliment. As Ken Hemphill emphasizes:

The word "Christian" was probably a term of derision given to the disciples at Antioch by the secular community around them. Perhaps they were accusing the disciples of attempting to be "little Christs," that is, imitators of Christ. We should pray that the secular world at the doorsteps of our churches would accuse us also of being imitators of Christ (Hemphill, 23).

Paul's life was characterized by a sense of urgency and purpose. He was always busy with the work of proclaiming the gospel. "I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome" (Romans 1:14-15).

concept of becoming "all things to all people" (1 Corinthians 9:22) guided his ministry.

Paul established healthy churches. It is important to notice the apostle's strategy. Paul concentrated on the most strategic cities in the empire. He was characterized by a deep pioneer spirit and the firm conviction that the power of the gospel could transform lives and communities. Once there were new converts, Paul would form churches with a simple and flexible organizing principle. Acts 14:21-23 states, "They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. 'We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,' they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust" (Acts 14:21-23).

3. Like Jesus, Paul made disciples on his way. The apostle Paul nurtured friendships with young men and women who would become good leaders, instructing them so that they could become workers for Jesus. He told Timothy, "train yourself to be godly" (1 Timothy 4:7). At other times he made himself the model to follow, saying, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul was setting a very high bar for life and ministry. However, the bar he was setting for his disciples was just as high as the one he set for himself. He taught his disciple Timothy about the multiplication of his own ministry, saying, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Paul followed a program of continuous expansion without neglecting to minister to the new churches. He trusted in young and inexperienced ministers whom he left in charge of each new church. In time, he commissioned some of them to be "bishops" or superintendents, giving them the responsibility to assign and supervise other pastors.

This was the case with Timothy, Titus, and Erastus, who Paul sent out to commission "elders" (pastors) in each city. Paul equipped these and many other disciples "on his way." How did he do this?

1. He taught them through his general epistles. Paul's epistles (which mean letters in Greek) were true distance learning courses. Some believe that various churches circulated these epistles. Passages such as 1 Thessalonians 5:27 and Colossians 4:6 seem to confirm this.

2. He taught them through personal letters. Paul sent these to the pastors and superintendents of the churches. The Pastoral Epistles known as 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are proof of this.

3. He taught in person at the churches. When Paul visited different places, such as Corinth, Troas, and Rome, he had both regular and intensive teaching times.

Paul focused on reaching the most geographically strategic cities that had the greatest influence on the culture and habits of the people.

What is Paul Teaching Us Today?

What aspects of this Pauline strategy can we apply today?



As we mentioned previously, for the time period in which he lived, Paul received the best preparation available for the ministry to which God called him. He studied in the best seminary of his day: the rabbinic school in Jerusalem led by Gamaliel. The knowledge he acquired there, in addition to his knowledge of several languages, was very useful to him to proclaim and defend the gospel before all kinds of people from different cultures.

While he continued his training, Paul was still spreading the gospel. What was his method for doing this? It was the method most used at the time: verbal communication. Through Paul's teaching and preaching, the Holy Spirit inspired faith into the hearts of people who did not know about God. We can summarize the message of the gospel Paul preached in this way:

1. The gospel has its origin in God.
2. The gospel was promised by the prophets of the Old Testament.
3. The gospel is Jesus Christ.
4. The gospel is to be proclaimed to all people in all places.

Paul communicated this message to many people in many different countries. Paul had a missionary plan that consisted of spreading the gospel throughout the known world, thus extending the Kingdom of God to all the most important cities. After this, the next step was to strengthen the churches, so they could spread the gospel in their communities.

Paul's method for communicating the gospel was successful; history tells us that it spread everywhere and influenced all of the Roman Empire. Here are some of the strategic methods that Paul used to communicate the gospel:

1. He confronted people with the lordship of Christ, letting them know He is the Savior and urging them to give their hearts and lives to Him.
2. In both his evangelistic and social efforts, Paul placed emphasis on the family and everyday relationships.
3. Paul highlighted the importance of planting and nourishing churches and faith communities in worship, communion and service.
4. Paul focused on developing local leaders in the churches and giving them responsibility for the church as soon as possible.
5. Paul used the natural "bridges" of family relationships, friendships, and other close ties to spread the gospel.
6. Paul planted house churches wherever he went. These churches became the living building blocks of the Body of Christ. Paul relied on a

"To argue that Paul was not an ordinary man and for that reason was able to accomplish much would not change the facts.... Jesus did not leave the work of propagating the gospel to Nobel prize winners, nor to the members of a certain aristocratic group. He trusted His whole program in the hands of men and women with average ability and common background—fishermen, tax collectors, housewives, students, and a few professional people. But the common denominator was an all-consuming passion for the lost and a total dedication to God's work" (Reza, pg. 29).

large number of coworkers in ministry (lay people) to spread the gospel and serve in the house churches.

7. Paul taught believers to promote justice, truth and mercy in society and to take care of the world God created.

Without a doubt, Paul, with his gifts and talents, now serves as an example of what a missionary should look like. However, when this young Jewish rabbi became the great Christian missionary and set out to spread the good news throughout the Gentile world, he knew he would need a system to train his ministers, a type of training that would allow them to respond to the needs of a growing church.

The reality today seems to provide quite a contrast to Paul's vision! Some years ago someone from one of the denominations in Brazil determined that it would take seventy years to train all of the pastors that they currently needed for their churches.

In this lesson we have been challenged by Paul's life, a "one of a kind" man who at the same time was (like Elijah is described in James 5:17), "a human being, just as we are." We also see the value of his spiritual and intellectual preparation from his youth. However, we mainly see him as a pioneer, as a missionary who took the gospel message of Christ to a large part of the known world of his time.

My prayer is that God will motivate us as a church to develop the ministries in our congregations in such a way that we will demonstrate these four characteristics from Paul's missionary work: teaching sound doctrine, establishing new congregations, discipling new believers, and delegating responsibility to trained spiritual leaders.

Paul saw new churches as potential launching pads to reach others, planting daughter churches in new places. He wrote to the church in Thessalonica, "And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it" (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

12 KEY ELEMENTS FOR THE "FORMATION OF THE NAZARENE MISSIONARY" (COOPER)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Spiritual maturity· A clear calling· Effective relationships: ability to balance family, friends and ministry· Wellbeing: being physically, emotionally and psychologically healthy· Theological understanding· Global perspective: have a healthy view of the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Experience with other cultures and adaptability· Local church involvement· Professional formation· Academic preparation· Passion for evangelism· Financial responsibility: know how to make wise decisions regarding money

PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

<p>First Journey: Paul and Barnabas' mission (Acts 13-14)</p>	<p>In his first missionary journey, Paul traveled with Barnabas and John Mark, his cousin and helper. Paul departed from Seleucia, a port in Antioch where he had been preaching for one year, for the island of Cyprus and the city of Salamis. This was the first place where they preached to the Gentiles. Paul's ministry to the Gentiles started a dispute over who could be saved and how they were to be saved. Between his first and second missionary journeys, Paul was part of a council in Jerusalem that discussed whether Gentiles could be part of the Christian community. The final consensus was that Gentiles could receive Jesus without being subject to the Mosaic law.</p>
<p>Second Journey: A trip around Greece (Acts 15:36-18:22)</p>	<p>In his second missionary journey, Silas accompanied Paul. From Antioch they went through Syria and Cilicia and arrived in southern Galatia. Timothy joined them in Lystra. They went through Phrygia and Mysia, with Luke the physician joining them in Troas. Paul decided to go to Europe and planted the first European Christian community in the province of Macedonia in Philippi, then others in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. He stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, staying with Aquila and Priscilla, a Jewish-Christian couple who had been thrown out of Rome due to an edict from Emperor Claudius. In the winter of A.D. 51 Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians, the oldest document of the New Testament. The next year he returned to Antioch.</p>
<p>Third Journey (Acts 18:23 – 20:38):</p>	<p>Ephesus, the capital of Asia Minor, was the destination for this journey where Paul remained for three years. There he received news of conflicts arising in the community of Corinth. He wrote his first letter to the Corinthians in A.D. 54 and his second in A.D. 57. In order to deal with conflicts with Jewish Christians, he wrote the letters to the Philippians (in A.D. 57) and the Galatians. He went to Corinth towards the end of A.D. 57 and stayed through the winter, probably writing his letter to the Romans during that time. From there he returned to Jerusalem to give the offering he had collected from the Gentile Christian communities for the poor communities in Jerusalem.</p> <p>In Jerusalem, Jews from Antioch accused him of breaking the law and tried to kill him. The Roman commander, Claudius Lysias, prevented them from killing him and put him in jail. Paul made the case that as a Roman citizen he should be tried in Rome. He arrived in Rome in the spring of A.D. 61 and was released in A.D. 63. It is believed that he wrote his letter to Philemon during his time of captivity between A.D. 58 and 63. It is also thought that Paul visited Spain and the Aegean area before being arrested once again and put to death by Nero in A.D. 67.</p>

Proclaiming God's message is not optional: it is our responsibility. This is why Paul declared, "For Christ's love compels us..." (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Paul the Apostle, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_apostle.
Wood, New Bible Dictionary



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Paul's life and ministry provides a model for all who are called to be missionaries. Paul's strategy is based on four strengths: teaching sound doctrine, establishing new congregations, discipling new believers, and delegating responsibility to trained spiritual leaders.

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Look at the table at the end of the lesson about the twelve key elements for the formation of a Nazarene missionary. Would you be able to check off at least ten of these elements? If not, which ones would you need to work on?

2. Read Acts 17:16-34 and answer the following questions:

a) Which elements can you identify from the list on the table that probably most helped Paul to share the gospel with the Greek citizens of Athens?

b) Which of the elements are you able to use to share the gospel with...

Family members: _____

Neighbors: _____

Amigos _____

3. Answer these questions in groups of 3 or 4:

Before starting to minister to a city, Paul made sure to identify the needs of the people there. How much do we know about our community? Try to develop a "needs evaluation" based on what you know about your community. Once you have identified these needs, write them down:

How can we better know our community? A community's needs can be identified through observation, interviews or community surveys. What questions would you ask to learn the needs of a community?

How can we meet the needs of the community and share the gospel message at the same time? Write down some ideas about a strategy you could implement in your community, using people's needs as a starting point.

Final evaluation

Time



COURSE: "BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF GLOBAL MISSION"

Name of Student: _____
Church or Study Center: _____
District: _____
Instructor: _____
Date of this evaluation: _____

1. *In your own words, explain the church's role in the mission of God.*

2. *Name something important that you learned about missionaries who lived in the times of the Old and New Testaments.*

3. *From what you learned in this course, what things are you going to put into practice in your life and ministry?*

4. *What did you learn from the ministerial practice activities in this course?*

5. *In your opinion, how could this course be improved?*

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About this book

Global Mission Fundamentals is a survey of the history of missions in the Bible. It helps us to value God as the initiator and promoter of missionary work. It is a study of the response of the people of Israel to God's call, and how people chosen and sent like Abraham, Jonah, and Paul responded to the call to be a light to the nations. It also sets out the principles for practical ministry in the church in the ministry of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The authors

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The DNA of the Nazarenes
Worship as a Lifestyle
The Bible and Its Message
Principles for Christian Life

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Christian Discipleship
Evangelism
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Youth Ministry
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