

Core Mission

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[0:00] Luke 19 verse 10 For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

! The Lord Jesus encapsulates his life's ministry here in this verse. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Our Lord is on a mission and he still is on a mission. Seeking those souls, the winning of souls. And we share this mission. We are his church. We are his hand extended.

We are to seek and to save that which was lost. There's a lot of talk these days. There's a song that goes, save the world. You know, there's all manner of political persuasions that think they can somehow save the world by turning off numbers of lights or whatever it might be.

We can save the planet, as it were, by our own intervention. As if it's somehow up to us to save the world. But truly it is our responsibility.

[1:16] It is our task to save the world. To seek and to save that which was lost. What our Lord came for, he sends us to do. We are to be men and women on a mission.

I know sometimes I can be striding along doing something and people say, there goes a man on a mission. And wouldn't it be good for that to be said of you and of me?

That we're a man, a woman on a mission. There's something that makes a difference. It makes an enthusiasm. It makes a drive in us that we are on a mission.

And we truly are. We ought to be. The church of God ought to be on a mission. The same mission of our saviour. As we know it was the core mission of the church.

To be faithful to that call of reaching out and extending his hand to the lost. A preacher, Leonard Ravenhill, said this.

[2:15] The church used to be a lifeboat rescuing the perishing. Now she is a cruise ship recruiting the promising. We should be rescuing the perishing.

We should be a rescue boat. Out on the dark and dangerous waters where the souls are glug, glug, glug, glug. It needs to be the lifeboat.

Casting out the lifeboat. C.T. Studd said, Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell. I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.

And that ought to be what we want to do, brothers and sisters. We ought to go to the gutter most. We ought to go to the furthest from him and reach out in love. Reach out in that mission that he calls us to be about.

That one mission that is still his mission. And it ought to be our mission. And another quote.

Evangelism is not a professional job for a few trained men.

[3:15] But is instead the unrelenting responsibility of every person who belongs to the company of Jesus.

That's the man held some true blood. It's not a professional job. It's the work of all who trust him. All who are saying. It's our corporate responsibility.

Our individual responsibility. Sadly, we're witnessing a lack of maturity that seems to be endemic in the church of God.

And believers, it seems, across the board, a rise of paganism. Even within church folk. There's a biblical illiteracy. And most of all, there's a neglect of souls.

A neglect of souls. You know, it's almost like, take the armchair kind of cozy Christianity ride. You know, ride the glory train. And don't think of others that need the message.

[4:18] And we've lost the mission, friends, today. The church of God, it seems, has neglected the mission of lost souls. We've lost sight of our true mission.

Leonard Ravenhill again, he says this. Could a mariner sit idle if he heard the drowning cry? Could a doctor sit in comfort and just let his patients die?

Could a fireman sit idle, let men burn and give no hand? Can you sit at ease in Zion with the world around you damned?

It ought to make us awake.

It ought to make us take stock and be about the work of mission. Mission. We think of mission. We think of missionaries.

[5:31] We know that some go elsewhere in needy places. But there's likewise a needy place right here, right now, where we are. And think of this term mission and what it means to us.

You know, when I think of mission, I sometimes reflect on space flights. And the rocket ship blasts off.

But behind, there's a whole team of people in mission control. The team in mission control are monitoring and keeping in communication. And with space flights, it's a problem if astronauts lose contact.

It's a problem if astronauts lose communication with mission control. We need to maintain continual communication with mission control.

What am I talking about? Prayer. Prayer. I was in heart of that while summer away, there were still four people came to the prayer meeting Thursday night. I mean, I'm in heart of that some people gather for prayer prior to the service.

[6:40] And it's not often me because I'm occupied at the present with the bus ride. But it's good to pray. It's needful to pray. And not just in corporate prayer times, but in personal prayer times.

Keeping in contact with mission control. Mission control, as it were. Leonard Ravenhill again, he says this. Praying men stop sinning, and sinning men stop praying.

There's truth there, isn't there? If we would pray more, we'd sin less, etc. Vice versa. Let's be more prayerful. And God will grow that godliness in your life.

William Booth said, Work as if everything depended upon your work. And pray as if everything depended upon your prayer. Do we pray like that, brothers and sisters?

Do we pray for lost souls? Do we pray for that? Rekindling again of that soul-winning heart. Do we pray enough for the lost souls?

[7:44] I know the youth leaders have been telling me how they've been praying. And much more than their work. And they do work hard. But the people who are doing the youth group, the various youth ministries in our church, as well as the Sunday school, they pray for those young ones.

They pray individually, one by one, for those souls that are in their care, that are in their circle of influence. What about the people in your circle of influence? Do you pray?

We must pray. And most of all, keep that prayer contact with that mission control, with HQ, as it were, with heaven, where we get our orders from, mission control, from our mission commander, from our saviour and lord.

We need mission control, as it were, to direct us and to be under authority, to be not autonomous in the sense of self-governing of our own self-life.

We use the word, we are an autonomous church, as it were, we're self-governing. But ideally, and more importantly, that we be God-governed, and our lives be God-governed, that we be a theocratic government, as it were, that we are under the control, of mission control.

[8:58] We're under the marching orders of heaven, of our heavenly father, of our heavenly commander. And we need that command and control system, as it were, that it's a command and control that comes from him.

And we're under his chain of command. Some things are what, they use this new fab term, mission critical.

Some things are mission critical. They're vital for our mission. They're essential for our mission. And we can think of that in Christian terms, in spiritual terms. What is mission critical?

Now, we can occupy our lives and time with all manner of things that are not mission critical.

They're kind of, what's the word? They're superfluous things.

They're superficial things that sometimes can occupy our time and energies. And as Christians, we can major on the superficial things sometimes and neglect the most important things, as our Lord said of the Pharisees.

[10:01] But mission critical. What is mission critical? What is going to make us more effective for this work of mission that every one of you are called to? What is it that is going to help you be a more effective missionary?

Where do you live? In this community. Where do you live? In Adelaide. And it surrounds. What is critical for that work of mission?

And I know my wife's given me lots of inspiration. I was just about writing all this down as she was giving it to me. I'm sure it was the Lord using my dear wife, as he always does, to give me lots of wise counsel that I don't always listen to.

But how can we have those mission critical things? It's about being more spiritual. It's about being more spiritual. It's about, as our brother shared, of dying to sin, isn't it?

And of coming alive to God, as this baptism will testify of. Of knowing the Lord. Of knowing His Word. Of our walk with the Lord. These are mission critical things, aren't they?

[11:07] We can get diverted and distracted by all manner of other things and lose sight of what's mission critical for our success as a missionary, as it were.

It's our relationship with God. That's what's critical. It's our seeking of His face. It's our honouring of Him. Our obeying of Him. Andrew Murray, an old-time preacher, said this, there is need of a great revival, of spiritual life, of truly fervent devotion to our Lord Jesus, of entire consecration to His service.

It's only in a church in which this spirit of revival has at least begun that there is any hope of radical change in the relation of the majority of our Christian people to mission work.

It's entire consecration. It's fervent devotion that will set us on that track of mission work. James Stewart, an old-time preacher, said, Revival is the saints of God agonising on behalf of lost souls going to hell.

Agonising on behalf of lost souls going to hell. That's mission critical. That's something that's critical for your faithfulness as a missionary where we live here today.

[12:24] And this is an ongoing mission. It's an ongoing mission. I know I'm quoting a lot of people here, but again, C.T. Studd said this, Let us not glide through this world and then slip quietly into heaven without having blown the trumpet loud and long for our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Let us see to it that the devil will hold a thanksgiving service in hell when he gets the news of our departure from the field of battle. There's a lot of truth in that, isn't there?

Hallelujah. Blow the trumpet loud and long for your Redeemer so that the devil will be glad when you've departed from the field of battle.

Spurgeon said, Brethren, do something, do something, do something. While societies and unions make constitutions, let us win souls.

I pray you'd be men of action, all of you. Get to work and equip yourselves like men. Old Suvorov's idea of war is mine.

[13:37] Forward and strike. No theory. Attack. Form a column. Charge bayonets. Plunge into the centre of the enemy.

Our one aim is to win souls. And this we are not to talk about but do in the power of God. That's Spurgeon.

Brethren, do something, be men of action. These are words that we can say, yeah, that sounds great. And I know there's some saying amen to that but they're not just saying that, they're doing something about it.

There's people responding this morning that are doing it. They're out on the streets of the city of Adelaide. There's folk in our fellowship who do go witnessing in the public place.

And it takes some guts, takes some stamina, takes some spine. And for all of us, find the place you can be a witness. It could be in your neighbourhood, your neighbours, as you're going about your day by day.

[14:39] Be that witness, be that one who's seeking and saving as our Lord commands us to go. It's a divine imperative. It's not a choice, it's a command.

And that should be our mission statement, G-O. Put it in those simple terms, G-O, go. Raise the flag, rally the troops. This is a cause that we need to rally to, to strive according to His working. And I know, I need to do more. I need to do more. Friends, we've got a message that our world needs to hear. It's a message that must come from your lips, from your lips. How else will I hear? How else will I hear? The message of the blood, that nothing but the blood can say. They must hear this message.

There's churches where they scarcely speak of the blood. They scarcely speak about the danger of hell, of the critical nature of these matters that are mission critical, of biblical repentance.

[15:52] Some would scarcely know what that means. It's not about making some glib profession and then just carrying on like nothing happened. It's a change of heart.

Repentance. It's a change of mind. It's a change of decision. It's a change of life. It's a change of lifestyle. When Christ comes in, something happens.

Oswald Smith said, Oh my friends, we are loaded with countless church activity. Well, the real work of the church, that of evangelising and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected.

Now, we can have all manner, we could fill our church program with all kinds of meetings and activity, but it must be the GO that motivates what we do.

It must be the critical mission. mission. It must be the core mission that Christ had and we ought to have that motivates what we choose to do, how we spend our time.

[17:05] A.J. Gordon, an old-time preacher, said, Whenever in any century, whether in a single heart or in a company of believers, there has been a fresh effusion or outpouring of the Spirit, there has followed inevitably a fresh endeavour in the work of evangelising the world.

Evangelising the world. It's amazing when we see, I know I was doing some research of late and I came across a church growth kind of expert and I was sharing it with my dear wife here, Julie, and it was saying, this preacher man was saying, he was talking all about maximising the revenue stream and all of these marketing terms, because he's a marketing guru.

And I thought, yeah, that sounds quite good. And then Julie said to me, but was there anything spiritual in what he was talking about? It was all about using the marketing techniques of the world and we can do that, we can have coloured flyers and we can have all kinds of distribution channels and all of the worldly machinery of marketing, just like running a business, I mean, there's some value in that.

But when that becomes the total predominating thing, it's all about gathering numbers and about having some kind of a razzmatazz kind of program and some kind of flashy razzmatazz type thing just to draw a crowd, then what's the point?

we've lost the G-O, we've lost that desire that souls would be won, we've lost the go, we're not evangelising, we're not reaching out, we're not trying to reach the loss for Christ, it's all about a marketing methodology that's just worldly, it's not, it's missing the point and that's what we need to be careful about, and again, when there's a real outpouring of the spirit, this man says, there'll be a fresh endeavour in the work of evangelising the world, we'll care about the loss, because Christ will be in us, motivating us, driving us, sending us, that we can't just sit still and enjoy the carefree ride, we want to be a man on a mission, we'll want to be a woman on a mission, we want to employ all our energies, all our devotion at all levels to this end, both strategic and tactical, in the sense that it'll be the overarching thing that we want to be about as a church, that overshadows everything that we do, and tactical in the sense that in the day by day by day, in the lived out life, at the grassroots, that everything that we do and everything that we are motivated by will ultimately be to his glory and to that mission, that core mission, that will listen to mission control, maybe we've lost that link, you know, the technology is not happening there, you know, the link's got broken, we need to re-engage with mission control, we need to unblock our ears, as he says, hear what the spirit says to the church, he says, he that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit says, we need to listen to mission control, we need to pay attention to what is mission critical, and maybe when we do an evaluation of our lives and we see that big long list of things that we do, we can maybe take the biro out and just,

[20:57] I don't think that's mission critical, I'm going to cross that off, so I can focus on what is mission critical, we can do that, can't we, think of that for your life, what is it that's occupying your time, that's not mission critical, I'm going to cross that off my list, so I've got less of the peripheral and the distracting things to do, and I can concentrate more on what's mission critical, pay attention to that, and they will ultimately realise, mission accomplished, mission accomplished, it's not yet, brother, it's not yet, sister, your mission is now, I know I was enheartened by the testimony of a saint of God who's departed, went to, I was privileged to go to a funeral of a dear sister that I never met, but I could see she was a saint of God, I attended a funeral, and her epitaph was that of a life lived well, a life lived well, leaving behind a legacy, leaving behind numbers of family that had trusted

Christ and were following him in different capacities, numbers of souls saved in her extended family and serving Christ, leaving behind a legacy, leaving behind a testimony of God's grace, leaving behind a testimony of lives touched, leaving behind a testimony of a faithful witness, of a life lived, of prayer, of witness, of serving Christ as Saviour.

Will it be when all is said and done that it will be mission accomplished? Or will there be some things in your life you'll think, when you look back in glory and think, wow, I could have made better use of my time, couldn't I, when I was back down there on planet Earth, when I had breath to breathe, when I had lips to speak, when I had a hand to reach out, I could have done more.

Friends, let it be that when it comes to the end, you'll say like Paul did in 2 Timothy 4, I have finished, I have finished my course. He said, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day and not to me only but unto all them also that love is appearing.

Friends, think of it to recap, is come to seek and to save the lost and we ought to be about that mission. It's a mission that is or ought to be our core mission.

[23:42] It ought to be that which makes us a man on a mission, a woman on a mission. It ought to be that which helps us re-evaluate what's mission critical in my life that I can narrow my focus and be more committed and let go of that which is getting in the way.

Friends, let's be about that work of mission. Let us pray.