

Ephesians 5:1

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[0 : 00] Our text this morning is Ephesians chapter 5. Two weeks ago I had the privilege of going to the Social Security office to get a new Social Security card.

! I walk into the office and the Federal Security guard calls me over real politely. He quietly tells me that the knife in my pocket needs to go back to my vehicle.

I was shocked for a number of reasons. First, for his request. Second, that I actually had my knife in my pocket. I don't usually carry one around. And third, it's only about two inches long, so I don't know.

He saw the shock on my face and he proceeded to tell me that weapons are not allowed on Federal property. If you've never been to the Social Security office, the new location in Gainesville, it's in an office building.

Below it is a doctor's office. The law office next to it is a law office. So how in the world am I on Federal property? Because I'm pretty sure the law office and the doctor's office are not Federal offices.

[1 : 09] When I walked through the door into the Social Security office, I was stepping into and onto Federal grounds. That moment, I was on Federal ground.

I was told by the Security guard and there was nothing I could do about it. I had to abide by his laws. In all honesty, there's probably signs posted that I didn't see.

I'm sure there are signs posted. I would make an argument this morning that the same effect should occur when people come in contact with us. That when they come in contact with us, we should have signs up figuratively that people know exactly who we are, where we stand, and that we are Christians.

We are adopted sons and daughters of the King. So friend or foe, enemy or acquaintance should know exactly where we stand.

I'm afraid that too often our signs aren't even up. I'm afraid too often the doorways aren't marked in our lives. And there's no difference between us and the world, between Christians and the world.

[2 : 20] A couple of weeks ago, Nathan talked about six things to look for in a healthy church. One of the things he mentioned was missional church, to find a church that is missional.

A church that believes that everyone, as Christians, are ministers sent into the world to build the kingdom of God for the glory of God.

I would argue that living missional lives is how the signs stay out. It's how everyone knows where we stand. Our doorways are marked. And people will know exactly where they are and who they are in the presence of.

I am not advocating prideful arrogance because we are adopted kings, adopted sons and daughters of the King. I'm advocating a sincere life changed by the Gospel.

I would also argue that being missional is not this one thing we do. It's not this event that we put on or this outreach that we do or this particular Bible study that we study.

[3 : 26] It isn't the specific way that you talk or the clothes that you wear or the way that you choose to live a certain time.

Being missional is life. It is a life that has been changed by the Gospel and is now compelled to love all. Friend and foe, neighbor and family, enemy and companion.

Missional is our subject this morning. My goal is for all of us to be moved, convicted and compelled to put up a sign and make ourselves known to the world.

Ephesians 5.1 is our text this morning. One verse. And it reads, Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children.

Let's pray together. Amen. Gracious Heavenly Father, hallowed be Your name.

[4 : 30] Your kingdom come. Your will be done this morning. I pray that You would speak through me. That the words that are spoken would not be my words, not my opinions, not my thoughts, but be Your words to us this morning.

That we would hear Your words and we would follow Your words with obedience, whatever that requires. Repentance. A step in being a little more bold.

Whatever that is, God, we would be moved by Your word this morning. The Gospel has already changed our life. It's already made us new creatures.

God, I pray that it would change our actions as well. We would not hinder that from happening. We ask that You move this morning. That You would speak to our hearts.

Your Holy Spirit would continue to move in this room and in our gathering. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. So let me define missional for you.

[5 : 32] The definition I want to use is from a book entitled Community by Brad House. He says, Missional is to participate in the mission of God as a response to the Gospel through proclamation and practice.

So, participate in the mission of God as a response to the Gospel through proclamation and practice. Before we dig any deeper into the ground of missional living, we must look at the Gospel. The end of the definition says, As a response to the Gospel through proclamation and practice. A missional life lives in response to the Gospel.

The life-changing act of the Father sending His Son to earth to live a sinless life. Romans 8.3 For God has done what the law we can by the flesh could not do.

By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. God the Father sent His Son to earth to be sin, to bear the wrath of God for us, His body, the church.

[6 : 41] We are undeserving and in fact we did not desire Him. He showed us favor for His glory. He showed us grace. His grace. Because He is a merciful and gracious God.

Now, as children of God, we sit here. We sing songs. We go to work during the week. We sit in a classroom. And because of Jesus, our standing with God is as if no sin had ever been committed. Because our sin was taken away and given to us was Jesus' righteousness. Some may say that we were neutral recipients of the grace of God.

That we do good and we do bad and it just kind of evens out. The law tells us that we were actually in overdrive, driving the opposite direction of God.

Running from Him as sinners in rebellion of Him. We weren't just undeserving. We were guilty and deserving of the full wrath of God.

[7 : 45] And He showed us grace by sending His Son for us. God the Father has sent His Son. And in John 20, 21, it says that Jesus then sends us.

He says, as the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. Not just His apostles. Not just the disciples. But all Christians are sent.

We are sent in the world, as Romans 8 tells us, as ambassadors of Jesus, as ambassadors of the Gospel. This is missional living.

In response to the Gospel. From the Gospel. Out of the Gospel. Because of the Gospel. This is missional living. Ephesians 5.1 says, Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children.

I want to unpack the second part of the verse first. As beloved children. We are beloved children because of the Gospel. Romans 8.15 says, For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba, Father.

[9 : 01] Ephesians 1.5 says, He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1.5 says, Through Jesus Christ.

For what part? His entire life. Sinless. Perfect sacrifice for us. Turn to Hebrews 9.10. I'll show you something really quick, and then we'll come back to Ephesians.

Hebrews 9.10. Chapter 9, verse 11.

But when Christ appeared as a high priest for the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, not made with hands, that is, not of His creation, He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of His own blood, thus to securing an eternal redemption.

For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works, to

serve the living God.

[10:21] Now, what I want to show you is, in verse 12, He says He entered once for all. Once and for all. Look at verse 12. Or, I'm sorry, not verse 12.

We just read that. Verse 26 in chapter 9. For then He would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world, but as it is, He has appeared once for all.

Verse 28. So Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many. Chapter 10. Verse 10. And by that, will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And again, in verse 12. But then Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins. You have been adopted once and for all. It is over.

You're always part of the family. You will not be let go. You will not be discarded. Once and for all. It is finished. You are a child of God. And Ephesians 5.

[11:24] 1 says, A beloved child of God. And nothing will change that. We are children of God. And we are to imitate God as children of God.

I started thinking about my kids and the imitation of me that they do. They do it. If you don't have kids yet, here you go.

I've got an experiment for you. Parents, try this at home. See how long it takes. Siblings, older siblings, try this. And then when you have kids, try it.

Do some goofy dance move and see how long it takes them for them to add it to their repertoire. It will happen. I've seen it. It will happen. It won't take long.

Kids and children imitate their parents for the good and for the bad. Children also trust their parents and are in complete dependence of them.

[12:24] They're dependent for all their needs. You don't see a four-year-old shopping for groceries, but they have them. You don't see a ten-year-old shopping for insurance, but they have it.

You don't see a fourteen-year-old shopping for a house, but they live in one. Guys, we are beloved children of God. We must be dependent on Him and Him alone.

Children also are nurtured by their parents. The love and support they need is there from the parents. The touch and feel they need is there. Let me take a moment here.

Some of you don't have parents. Some of you haven't received nurture from them in a really long time. Maybe your dad has never said, I love you. Maybe he's never hugged you.

Maybe your mom has never complimented you or told you that she loves you. Maybe you never have had real parents. Be comforted. Be comforted because this verse is for you.

[13:24] As beloved children, He loves you and He wants to nurture you. He wants to hold you and take care of you. Your Heavenly Father can and will fill that void.

Allow Him to heal you. Allow Him to be your nurturing Father. Allow Him to heal you. Let go of whatever is hindering you from that happening. Children are taken care of by their parents.

and we are taken care of by our Heavenly Father as beloved children imitate God. So how do we imitate God? Without digging down deep, we know there's some things that we just can't do.

We can't redeem a people. We can't forgive sins. That is where the Gospel comes into play. That is where the Gospel works.

I looked at just the book of Ephesians. Just one book. And I went through and I marked what God does.

[14:33] If we're going to imitate Him, let's see what He does. So real quick, kind of a quick run through of Ephesians. Six chapters. In chapter 1, verse 3, God blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.

chapter 1, verse 4, He chose us in Him to be holy and blameless. Chapter 1, verse 5, He adopted us as sons.

Verse 7, He redeemed us and He forgives us. Verse 11, He has given us an inheritance. Verse 17, He gives us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

He makes it possible for us to know Him. In chapter 2, verse 4, He is rich in mercy. He is merciful. Also, verse 4, He has great love.

Verse 13 of chapter 2, He gathers His children close. Verse 14, He is our peace. He unites. Verse 16, He is peacemaker.

[15:41] Verse 22, He continues to work. In chapter 3, verse 2, He is the giver of grace. Chapter 3, verse 8, He is bearer of unsearchable riches in Christ.

Verse 19 of chapter 3, He has love that surpasses knowledge. Chapter 4, verse 1, He calls. Verse 7 of chapter 4, He is the giver of grace.

Verse 16 of chapter 4, He is the head of the body and He makes it grow. This is what God does.

Verse 21 of chapter 4, He is truth.

Verse 32, He forgives. Chapter 5, verse 2, He has made a sacrifice for us. Verse 8, He is the giver of light so that we can walk in light.

Chapter 5, verse 23, He is the Savior. Verse 29, He cherishes the church. Chapter 6, verse 4, He disciplines and He instructs.

[16:45] Verse 8, He is the giver of good. Verse 10, He is strong and mighty. Verse 24, He has an incorruptible love. Now there's 65 more books in the Bible that we should go through and figure out what God does.

Because that's just one of them and it's a daunting list. How in the world can we imitate God? The answer is by being missional.

In response to the Gospel. Missional. The definition is to participate in the mission of God as a response to the Gospel through proclamation and practice.

See, our message, it can redeem. We can forgive because of the Gospel. We can love because of the Gospel. And when we do so, we live in response to the Gospel.

So that list there that I just ran through, that's what God does. That's what God does. So then, what is His mission? In other words, why does He do those things?

[17:49] God's mission can be summed up by, God's mission is to be glorified by making Himself known. So how does He accomplish this? God's mission, be glorified by making Himself known.

Well, He accomplishes this by sending Jesus to redeem His people, to build His clean kingdom and to glorify the Father. And then by Jesus sending us.

Jesus sending us, as we read in John chapter 20. Matthew 28, verse 18 through 20, is the Great Commission. These are our marching orders.

Verse 18 of Matthew 28 says, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. These are our marching orders. We are sent into the world. And this go here is in our going.

[19:02] Or as we go, as we walk, as we work, as we sing, as we talk, make disciples. The good news here is we see this list.

We've read through that list of Ephesians of what God does. We see this Great Commission. The good news is that we don't have to do anything new. We don't have to create a new program to reach the lost.

All we have to do is join God in what He's already doing. Join Him on His mission. He's already working. He's already making Himself known.

We have been invited to join Him. We join God by living missional lives. By imitating Him out of the Gospel and not for the Gospel.

Out of the Gospel, not for the Gospel. The definition was in response to the Gospel by proclaiming and practicing the Gospel.

[20:06] The church is the messenger. The universal church. Not Christ's family church. Not Church of Dahlonga. Not First Baptist of wherever. The church.

The big church. Capital C. Is the messenger of salvation. Not the means of salvation. So we proclaim the message of salvation to the world.

God sends us. Jesus has sent us. And we proclaim the message of salvation. In Luke chapter 4 verse 43, Jesus says, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well.

For I was sent for this purpose. Jesus was sent to preach the good news. The good news about Himself. And we then are sent to preach the good news of Jesus.

As John chapter 20 verse 21 says, As the Father has sent me, Jesus speaking, even so I am sending you. So as the Father has sent me, I then am sending you out.

[21:09] We are to imitate God by joining Him in His mission. By joining Him. See, missional is not this new idea. Missional is not this new buzzword, although it is a buzzword.

It is a popular word to speak in Christian circles. Missional is the command of God. It is the way that we must, must, live our lives.

So then, how do we live missional lives? How then do we live missional lives? First of all, by being intentional in proclaiming and practicing the Gospel.

Here is why I chose the word intentional. See, we have been given a new life as Christians. But as Romans 7 taught us, we still have the same corrupting thoughts and desires.

And Romans 8 tells us that we have, we no longer are condemned, but we still sin. So we have the sin and the corrupting thoughts and desires still in us.

[22 : 16] We're battling it in us. So missional living requires intentionality. We have to be intentional and determined to live it out.

We have to make a point to be missional. have to be disciplined, to be determined and to be devoted to being missional. We have to continually remember that we are the sent ones.

We are sent with a purpose. We are invited by God to join Him in what He is already doing. That He's already doing.

He has invited us to join Him. This, right there, that right there should ease some of our fear and our uncertainty. We join God in what He's doing.

We then imitate Him and live missional lives in response to the Gospel. So here, at Christ's Family Church, one of the ways that we are intentional is by meeting in community groups.

[23 : 16] We meet in community groups during the week. The purpose of community groups is not to have a mid-week Bible study. Even though that's good. It's not to meet together and fellowship over food.

Even though that's good. It's not to meet and bear one another's burdens. Even though that's good and that happens. The main purpose of community groups is to reach the community for Jesus.

To minister together to glorify God by making Him known. We have three community groups right now. We have two in Dahlonga and one down in Gainesville.

We want to make the communities we are in better in response to the Gospel. We want all of Christ's family church to proclaim the Gospel and live it out. We want all of Christ's family church, every person in this room, to be part of the community group, so that we can better the community because of the Gospel and for the glory of God.

We want to make an impact in our communities, not for Christ's family church, not for our name, but for His name, for His glory. Each group is praying for ministry opportunities to serve the community.

[24 : 30] We're looking for opportunities to see where God is at work, to see where we can join Him, where can we minister to people who are in need. We want to love the people of Dahlonga, love the people of Gainesville, and surrounding areas of those to make God known.

Big tasks. Big tasks. But we serve a bigger God. And He has called us to join Him on His mission. And He will enable us to do exactly what He wants us to do.

We just have to trust and obey. If I say Metropolitan Tabernacle, you guys know what I'm talking about? No. Metropolitan Tabernacle is the church that Charles Spurgeon preached and was pastor for over 40 years in London, downtown London.

In the 1800s, the Industrial Revolution was coming through. And listen to some of the problems that London faced. The Industrial Revolution began in the United Kingdom in the latter half of the 18th century.

And by the 1850s, its effects pervaded England. In this period of great industrialization, people left their farms and small towns and flocked to London, Manchester, and other cities.

[25 : 53] As people congregated in vast numbers, the old infrastructure of London lacked the capacity and resources to attend to the needs of the new crowds. The influx of people into London meant not only a spike in laborers and factories, but also the number of under-resourced women, children, orphans, and widows exploded in London.

The city was in crisis. The leaders didn't know what to do. They saw the mountain of needs that confronted them from every angle. Thus, in the 1850s, a lot of London churches did what a lot of American churches have done during the last 30 years.

They fled the cities. These churches moved their locations to the outskirts of London. Now, we don't deal with overpopulation here in Dahlonga and Gainesville.

We don't deal with the Industrial Revolution coming through our area. But like Metropolitan Pabernacle, they had a decision to make.

We have a decision to make. Are we going to be intentional and live in response to the gospel, or are we going to ignore the needs of people and ignore God?

[27 : 08] This is our decision to make. We ignore problems. We stub our noses sometimes. When are we going to get involved?

When are we going to live intentional, missional lives? Are we going to fear the growing gay and lesbian culture because we don't know how to love them? Are we going to ignore the growing drug culture?

Or are we going to fight it and love those who are in the middle of it? Are we going to embrace the art culture? Are we going to just be like most churches of the last century and ignore it? These are questions that we have to ask and answer because we are in Northeast Georgia.

Are we going to live missional lives that are intentional, that are in response to the gospel? Read what Metropolitan did.

Metropolitan Tabernacle pastored by Charles Spurgeon decided we're not going to do that. We're going to stay here. We see this as an opportunity for the gospel.

[28 : 20] Metropolitan Tabernacle looked at the needs of the people in the city and began to engage in helping them with their problems. The problems of the desperately poor were the most pressing, so Metropolitan Tabernacle leaders created almshouses for people who lost their jobs and needed time to get back on their feet.

The poor houses in London operated in terrible conditions, but the almshouses of Metropolitan Tabernacle provided a crucial alternative. The church also built a large number of homes for the elderly where they would care for them and help them die with dignity and peace.

The church created an orphanage where they educated, cared for, and fed thousands of orphans. they created homes for single mothers who had lost their husbands and helped them find employment.

Metropolitan Tabernacle started a school for pastors from rural areas to receive a theological education and help clothe and provide books for these impoverished pastors. They started programs for businessmen to use their entrepreneurial efforts to expand the kingdom through their businesses.

Now listen to this. Metropolitan Tabernacle's influence spread so quickly throughout the poor and all the way up to the class ladder to the aristocracy. It got to the point that if Metropolitan Tabernacle had shut down at any point during that decade of grappling with the problems of the Industrial Revolution, the city of London would have been crippled.

[29 : 49] They would have grieved the loss of the Tabernacle. Can you imagine serving the needs of the city, being so attuned to the common good for the sake of the gospel, that your city would grieve if you picked up and left?

Are we going to live intentional lives in response to the gospel? Another way of living missional life is having ownership of the gospel and the mission of God.

Have you ever rented a car and found yourself treating it worse than you would your own? You get in it and the first thing you look at, and this might just be the guys.

You get in it and you look at it and you look and see how far the speedometer goes. 120, 125, what are we looking at? And then you say, let's see what this baby will do. We do this because it's not ours.

We don't have ownership of it. We don't care as much about it. We don't think about it as much and we certainly don't live for it. It's the same with the gospel and the mission of God.

[30 : 54] If the gospel and the mission of God are just religious activities, if they're just things that we do that just happen on Sunday, there's no ownership. If there's just another activity on our list of responsibilities, there's no ownership.

You abuse it, you ignore it, and you don't live for it. But if, if you have ownership, you take care of it, you love it, you cherish it, like your car, you baby it, and very seldom do you floor it.

You find yourself caring for it, wanting to take care of it, cherishing it, because it's yours. Well, I'm here to tell you that the gospel and the mission of God is yours.

It is yours and it is mine. Ephesians chapter 1. Flip back to Ephesians chapter 1 real quick.

Ephesians chapter 1 verse 3.

It says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of

the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

[32 : 15] In love, He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose which He has set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

It is personal. This salvation, this adoption is personal. It's just not an activity. No one is adopted without it being personal.

Britain, my oldest is adopted and it has been personal. Her life has been affected by her adoption for the good. Let's be honest.

it is personal. But, we cannot believe the gospel without being moved to action by it. We cannot believe the gospel without being moved to action by it.

[33 : 32] See, we know the commandments of God. We know the love that God has for us. And in turn, we're supposed to have for others. We know these things. We know God's mission.

And because we do, we must act. In the book Community that I quoted earlier, it says, when our hearts beat in rhythm with His, we begin to see His mission and are ready to take ownership of it. I see it. Do you see God's mission? Do you see why He's doing what He does? Why He redeems a people? to glorify Himself by making Himself known.

Ownership is marked by a get-to sacrifice and not a got-to out of duty. Ownership is a get-to. We get to be part of God's mission.

We get to join Him. We get to love people. We get to live the gospel out for others to see. We get to be on mission with God. We get to join Him in the work that He is already doing.

[34 : 40] There is not a got-to attitude in ownership. It is a get-to sacrifice for His glory and His name. Own the truth of God and get in the game.

It is real and it is personal. Here's some good news though. Here's some really good news. God has created us for His good work.

Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10. For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared before Him that we should walk in them.

Not only has God created us for His good work, we are equipped for His good work. Chapter 4 verse 11 and 12. And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Not only has God created us for this work, not only has He equipped us for this work, but He empowers us and compels us through the gospel. Again, Ephesians chapter 3 verse 20 and 21.

[35 : 52] Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us. To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever.

Amen. God has created us for His work. He equips us for His work and He empowers us for His work through the gospel. There is no reason to fear.

There is no reason to worry. There is no reason to doubt. There is no reason to question. He has created us for His work. He has equipped us for His work and He empowers us for His work.

It is why the verse 1 of chapter 5 says and walk in love. We can walk in love because He has equipped us, created us, and empowered us to be able to do just that.

Missional is participating in the mission of God as a response to the gospel through proclamation and practice that is missional.

[37 : 00] We join God in His mission, on His mission. We don't create a new mission. We join Him in what He is already doing. That is missional.

When we are living missional lives, by imitating God, people will know. Like when I walked into the Social Security office and I was told I was on federal ground.

Nothing I could do about it. I just knew. I guess. I was told and I knew. I was on federal property. People will know immediately we're living missional lives.

You're a Christian on mission. On God's mission. That is being missional. Being missional begins and ends with the gospel. We are sent from Him for Him.

We have been chosen for His mission, for His glory and His name. God. See, the gospel compels us. It empowers us. And it is the message we share.

[38 : 01] Let us be on mission with God and for God. That is missional. Let's pray together. Let us desde