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## Mission Motive

### 1. Mission Dilemma

- At our Vision Sunday last November
  - I said I wanted our two areas of focus this year to be Heart Transformation and Mission
  - That is
    - We want our hearts melted by the grace of the gospel so that unbelievers come to know Jesus and believers grow in godliness
    - We want the grace of the gospel to move us to be missional in reaching our community with the good news of Jesus
- Delighting in the Lord series the first step towards helping us to have hearts transformed by the gospel
  - Now in the lead up to Easter, it's time to turn our attention to mission
- When we talk about mission hear at C@P we're talking about anything that helps a person move one step closer to becoming a disciple of Jesus
  - Having a BBQ with neighbours > coffee with a work colleague > inviting a friend to Christianity Explored / church / parenting seminar ... anything that moves a person one step closer to Jesus
  - Imagine a stream ...
    - A person getting from one side to the other ... is like a person coming from death to life > from unbelief to belief
    - For most ppl its too far to jump in one step ... they need to take a series of steps
    - Mission is like helping someone God has put in your life across a series of stepping stones in a stream ... so they can move at their pace and under God's sovereign hand ... to the other side
- Mission is something we do corporately as a church and in growth groups and also individually
- Over the last few years at C@P we've chosen to deliberately steer away from lots of events
  - That's because we want each and every Sunday to be a day where
    - you can invite someone to church to church
    - if you're a visitor, you can come and visit church
    - you know they're going to hear the gospel and hear how Jesus makes a difference to people's lives
- At C@P we have three key areas for mission

- The first is church ... and the two obvious occasions we have to invite ppl to church are Easter & Christmas
  - These are two days were we want to go all out and invite people to hear the good news of Jesus clearly spelt out and an invitation to find out more
- The second key area of mission here at C@P is growth groups
  - We started this last year and we'll be seeking to continue to same this year
  - The idea is ... GG are like mission teams
  - Aim is for each group to have some form of mission activity they do together
- Third key area ... and without a doubt the most important ... is personal mission
  - That is ... individuals, seeking to be real and authentic with people around you about your faith ...
  - As we intentionally and prayerfully seek opportunities to connect and share the good news of Jesus
- Often when it comes to mission, Christian leaders (like me) can stand up here and exhort and urge and encourage a church until their blue in the face to be missional
  - But unless you and I have a heart for mission
  - Unless you and I are self motivated for the gospel to go out ...
- What can happen is
  - Congregations can become resentful towards those who always seem to banging on about mission
  - They know they should tell others about Jesus, and so they feel guilty when they don't
- Often they'll find reasons why they can't
  - "I'm busy, got a family, work is crazy, I'm not very good at it"
  - Talking about myself as much as anyone!
  - If I resist my own urging to do mission, why would anyone else listen!
- Other ways leaders can try and spur people on to mission is through
  - Emotional hype
  - Telling amazing stories
  - Pressing our wills and creating a sense of guilt

- We can even be missional for our own self-centredness
  - "If I get out and do mission ...
    - "Church will be bigger" ... and we'll feel good about ourselves
    - "If I can get someone to church / If someone I know is converted > then I'll feel I'm being a good Christian"
  
- In the end ... none of those things will last
  - We'll lose heart when people reject the gospel
  - The appeal will be lost
  - We'll give up
  - Feel guilty because we're not doing it
  
- Of course, that's not what we want
  - It's not what God wants
  - And it's not going to be very effective
  
- What we need is a mission motive
  - We need a reason, an imperative, something that spurs us on to joyfully want to do mission
  
- Need something more ... something more powerful ... something more reliable ... something more joyful than any of that
  - Because God wants his people to do it
  - Christians know they should do it
  - But there needs to be a motive that is going to consistently move believers to want to be mission minded
  
- Three things
  - Mission motivators
  - Mission de-motivators
  - Mission activators
  
- Aside > acknowledge unbelievers
  - This is what we believe here at C@P
  - Show you what we're passionate about
  - See this good news of Jesus is something we think is worth talking about
  - Give you a greater understanding of the gospel we sincerely hope you will in your own time come to challenge, question, understand and believe

## 2. Mission Motivators

- To get the right motive we need to turn to the word of God
- Passage we are going to look at to help us develop that right motive us 2 Cor 5
- The background to 2 Cor 5
  - There are some unhelpful people who have appeared in Corinth who's ministry is shallow but popular
  - And Paul's ministry seems pretty weak and dull by comparison
  - But Paul knows the gospel is the only way that God saves people for eternity
  - So even if it seems weak and is unpopular, Paul won't drop it
- In Ch 5 Paul spells out his motives for ministry
  - One is a healthy fear for the judgment day that is future
  - And the other is a deep gratitude for Good Friday that is past
- **Judgment Day**
- First reason Paul gives ... is that he looks forward and considers the day that all people will appear before the judgment seat of Jesus > v10
  - <sup>10</sup> *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad*
  - It will be a day when believers will meet their saviour and receive pardon and welcome
  - But a day when unbelievers will meet Jesus and have no hope with eternity in front of them
- Paul says we ought to know this reality
  - <sup>11</sup> *... What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.*
  - What Paul's saying here is
    - Our brokenness, our sin
    - The pain we've inflicted
    - The selfish ways we've lived,
    - The hurtful things we've said and done ...
  - It's all plain to God ... and it ought to be plain to us too
    - Not just what we've done ... but the consequences those things deserve

- It's a fixed day in God's diary and we are moving towards it ... and because of the judgment day that's coming ... Paul says in v 11
  - "we try to persuade men"
- That is ...
  - he wants to warn people
  - he wants to let them know danger is coming
  - there's a day when we will all need to give account to our maker and our judge ... and everyone needs to be ready
  
- He can't just stand there and say nothing ... knowing what is coming
- The day of Jesus return when all men will have to give account ... means Paul is urgently telling people of what's coming and here's the way to be saved that they desperately need to run to
  
- **Illustration – Penn Jillette**
- Penn Jillette > illusionist and comedian > he's also an atheist
- Youtube clip where he talks of an interaction he has with a Christian man after one of his shows
- Man turns up after the show who had been to the show the previous night and really enjoyed the show, but he's come back
- And when he gets a chance to chat with Penn he says
  - "Listen, I've come back tonight because I really wanted you to have this" ...and he hands Penn a Bible
  - "I've written in the front of it and I'm kind of proselytising you. I'm a business man, I'm sane, I'm not crazy, I just want you to know about Jesus"
- And this was Penn's response
  - "It was really wonderful. I believe he knew I was an atheist but he was not defensive and he looked me right in the eyes and he was truly complimentary."
  - "It didn't seem like empty flattery, he was really kind and nice and sane and he looked me right it in the eyes and talked to me and then he gave me this Bible"
  - "And I've always said that I don't respect people who don't proselytise. I don't respect that at all. If you believe there's a heaven and a hell and that people could be going to Hell or not getting eternal life or whatever and you think "well it's not really worth telling them about it because I would be socially awkward" ...

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- “How much do you have to hate someone not to proselytise? [his words, not mine!] How much do you have to hate someone ... that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?”
  - “If I believe without a shadow of a doubt that a truck was coming at you and you didn’t believe it, that that truck was bearing down on you, there’s a certain point where I tackle you.”
  - “And this is more important than that”
  - Penn, even though he’s an atheist ... like the Apostle Paul, gets that the judgment day that everyone must face, ought to move us to want to tell others
  - That's our first motive for mission ... that judgment day is in front of us
  - **Easter Day**
  - Second reason is not just the day that's in front of us ... but there’s a day that lies behind us ... which is Easter day
    - In 5:14 Paul remembers how Jesus died for his people
    - And it compels him / it presses him to tell the message
      - *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.*
  - What this verse tells us is that us is that behind the universe is a loving God and that our maker has a big heart for people
    - He tells us in his word and he proves it in history
    - He did so by giving up his son Jesus to the deep terrors of the cross
  - It also tells us that the world that ignores Jesus and thinks it can remove him ... is actually deeply loved by him
    - In the midst of the mess we have made of this world and our lives ... in his love ... Jesus was willing to go to the cross and die in your place and mine
    - And what news is better than that?!
  - Jesus motive for doing this and taking people who are perishing from death to life ... is love
    - **He** came to us > **He** gave up His life ... we didn’t bring him down to us
    - He did it ... not because we are
      - worthy, or
      - better than others
      - deserving of being rescued
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- He came to us for no reason but his grace, mercy and kindness
- And his motive ought to be our motive – a heart for the lost is in all real believers
- And the death of Jesus is not just some mythical story that society vaguely recalls each Easter
  - The impact and the consequences are massive
- Paul says there in 17-19
- Through the cross ... God was reconciling himself to mankind
  - Because of our sin, we are by nature alienated from God
  - We're not in his good books
  - We need the broken relationship restored
  - And by dying in our place ... Jesus enables that reconciliation to happen
  - He pays for sin ... he covers over our faults and failures ... he appeases God for the judgment we deserve
  - Because Christ died in our place ... God no longer counts people's sins against them
- And as Paul remembers the cross ...
  - he sees the sacrifice of Christ in all its power ...
  - just as we who look back to the cross should see God's answer to all our sins and fears ...
  - and long for people to receive the reconciliation and forgiveness that God has provided through Christ's sacrifice for us
- **Illustration – Girl dies saving others**
- Last week a 10-year-old girl died in California as she pushed two toddlers out of the path of a runaway SUV
- Kiera Larsen was playing with two young girls, aged 1 & 2, when a Mercedes Benz SUV started rolling down the hill towards them
- Kiera is said to have instinctively pushed the girls out of the way ... saving their lives at the cost of hers
- The California Highway Patrol Officer said
  - "... she sacrificed herself for another small child,"
- The mother of two girls that were saved, said she would be forever grateful
  - "She saved both my daughter's lives. She is truly a hero"

- How could the mother of those two girls who were saved, not rejoice in and tell others of the sacrifice that Kiera had made for her daughters?
  
- And because of the cross ... and all that it achieves for people ... Paul says this is the thing that moves him to tell others all about it
- He says in v14-15
  - ***For Christ's love compels us, ...*** <sup>15</sup> *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him ...*
  - The love of Jesus towards a sinner like Paul ... means ... he's compelled to live for Jesus and tell others about him too
  
- Notice what else Paul says in v16
  - He can't see people the same any more
  - Paul thinks of people with an eternal perspective
  - He says '*we regard no one from a worldly point of view*'
  - The question now is not
    - "What do they look like?" or
    - "How successful are they?" but
    - "Are they in Christ?"
- Because if they're in Christ ... they're reconciled to God, part of his new creation, ready for the world to come
  
- So here's the motive for mission
  - Firstly, the motive of meeting Jesus to give account
  - Secondly, the motive of the love of Jesus shown to us at the cross
  
- It is hard to see people in between these two days – the cross behind and the judgment ahead ... and not want them realising the first ... so that they are ready for the second
  - For the person who believes in Christ crucified ... is ready to meet Christ crowned

### 3. Mission De-Motivators

- While it's good to be reminded afresh that the
  - meeting of Jesus to give account
  - love of Jesus shown to us at the cross
    - are the motives for mission ...
- They're great and true and you can know it and believe it in your head ... but none-the-less many will remain reluctant



- In your heads you might be saying “yes” ... but your hearts you’re saying “I can’t”
- What holds you back? What’s stopping you telling this wonderful news that so many people urgently need to hear
- Often boils down to three things
  - Lack of courage
  - Lack of compassion
  - Lack of knowledge
- **Lack of courage**
- A lack of courage often stems from fear of rejection
  - We’re rightly afraid of
    - losing influence
    - being persecuted ... especially in the anti-religion / anti-Christian culture we’re in at the moment
  - We’re afraid of
    - losing friendships
    - being penalized professionally
    - ridiculed, mocked or labelled
- There’s no getting away from this – for the Christian who lives their life among non-Christians as well as Christians ... this is inevitable
  - Bible and church history is full of God’s people being persecuted for standing up for and declaring their faith
  - Jesus says in John 15:18-19
    - *“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup> If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”*
  - Christians ought to expect it ... but often when they face it ... they withdraw and the temptation is just to blend in and to pull back from being ambassadors for Christ
- When Christians “blend in” ...
  - They’ll continue to live amongst their non-Christian neighbours, friends and work colleagues ...
  - but they won’t make any attempt to pray, or invite, or speak or share with their friends ... because they’re afraid of the consequences
  - So they just ‘blend in’

- Not deny their faith ... but not stand out
- But gospel gives us courage ... to overcome those fears and persecutions
- Because the gospel reminds us ...
  - We live before an audience of one, not to please others ... and in Christ we are deeply and wonderfully loved
  - Our future is eternally secure in Christ, despite threats of others against us
  - Our sufferings are nothing compared to the glory that awaits
- **Illustrations – Dean at NB**
- Dean, not blending in
  - Christian function at NAB
  - Invited the CEO from Melbourne > Christian
  - Handed out fliers at entrance to building and kitchen areas
  - Coped a lot of abuse
    - Fliers thrown in the bin
    - People complaining
    - Snide comments and conversations
    - Put under pressure to withdraw / pipe down
- Would have been much easier not to have done that event
- But they knew the person who believes in Christ crucified ... is ready to meet Christ crowned
- It's good to remember the same gospel message you proclaim is the same gospel helps you overcome your fears
- **Lack of compassion**
- Second reason why I think Christians are not motivated for mission is a lack of compassion
- This is fairly blunt ... but when I reflect on some of the reasons why I'm not missional ... it's because sometimes I just don't care enough ... I lack compassion
- In my head I'm aware of people's lost-ness ... but I hold back in saying or doing anything ... because my selfishness is greater than my compassion for them
  - My desire not to be rejected<sup>1</sup>
  - My desire not to be inconvenienced
  - My desire not to invest in that person

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<sup>1</sup> In terms of heart idols we have been talking about = approval, comfort, etc

- is greater than my desire for others to know Christ crucified so they are ready to meet Christ crowned
- There's a danger friends when Christians don't share Jesus compassion for the lost ... that they end up living in this Christian ghetto
- It is much easier, less confronting, and more convenient for me as a Christian to just hang out with Christians and not invest in and maintain relationships with those who aren't
- One phenomena you will often see this ...
  - is the longer a person has been a Christian ...
  - they have less and less contact they have with unbelievers ...
  - until they get to the point where their only friends and regular contacts are Christian
- But the gospel overcomes our lack of compassion
  - In the gospel Jesus shows us compassion and mercy by getting out of the 'ghetto' [so to speak] and coming to us and saving us
  - He was willing to inconvenience himself and gave up his comforts to mix with sinners and those who weren't like him
  - He was willing to invest so deeply in people that it took him to the cross
  - He was willing to be rejected ... even by his own
- To the extent you understand Jesus compassion towards you ...
  - it will remove your lack of compassion for others ...
  - so that you too might put their eternal future ahead of your own comfort and approval
- **Lack of skill or knowledge**
- No doubt there will be people here who have a real compassion and the courage to be missional ... but what's stopping you is what you feel is a lack of knowledge
- It may be that you find the questions your non-Christian friends ask about you faith stump you, or even shake you
- You may feel you can't talk about Jesus and Christianity with any kind of attractive force
- In one sense this still comes down to a lack of courage and lack of compassion
  - a lack of courage ... because you're afraid of being "stumped" or

- a lack of compassion... because you feel you really won't be of any real help to them
- But again ... the gospel overcomes our lack of knowledge because
  - It humbles us to remember, is not about us and our cleverness or knowledge ... but God who is sovereign and causes people to respond to good news of Jesus
  - Just like in the parable of the sower ... your role is to scatter the seeds of the gospel > you don't determine the response
  - Paul says in 2 Cor 4, Paul says 'we have treasures in jars of clay'
    - In other words ... humanly speaking we are weak and feeble ... but God works through weak and feeble humans to show this is his power and not ours
- So friends, what is your mission de-motivator?
  - Lack of courage
  - Lack of compassion
  - Lack of knowledge
- Then see how the gospel helps you overcome those things

#### 4. Mission Activators

- So friends ... if you're here this morning and you're a person who believes in Christ crucified ... and so are ready to meet Christ crowned
  - That means God has reconciled himself to you through the cross of Christ
- In v18, Paul says God "*who reconciled us to himself through Christ, gives us the ministry of reconciliation*"
- In other words, the person who has been brought to God ... is able to help others to God
- And the process works like this
  - First, God initiated the reconciliation – 5:19
    - He did it to bring himself and sinners back together
    - He planned it and he initiated it > it was his idea
  - Second, Jesus achieved it, becoming sin for us at the cross – 5:21
    - He shouldered our sin at the cross to unburden his people forever
  - Third, Christians announce it
    - Believers are Christ's ambassador's
    - Paul says in v20 "we apostles are the first ambassadors and you believers are the next ambassadors"

- And see how love is the ultimate motive behind all this
  - God planned the reconciliation out of love for people
  - Jesus executed the reconciliation out of love for people
  - Christians herald the reconciliation out of love for people
  
- With the right motive ... Christians are ambassadors for Christ and heralds of a wonderfully good news message
  - This Easter is a wonderful opportunity for you and I to be ambassadors for Christ and invite people to consider Christ crucified, so that one day they may be ready to meet Christ crowned
- Will you invite people this Easter?
  
- Over the next couple of weeks we will continue exploring what it means to be mission minded
  - Next week – what it means to be a ‘missional community’
  - Then - mission methodology
- For now ... let’s ensure our motive is right
  - The Christian is an ambassador for Christ ...
  - Why ... because they want people to know of Christ crucified ... so they are ready to meet Christ crowned

## **PRAY**