



THE MISSION AND VISION OF THE CHURCH



© 2022, 2025 Bryan Heller and Gospel Life Church

Revised edition.

All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



gospellifetchurch

1006 New Lenox Road
Joliet, IL 60433
815.727.3130
glcjoliet.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Church Mission.....	5
A Brief Explanation of the Mission.....	6
Church Vision.....	7
An Explanation of the Vision.....	9
Connecting the Gospel to Everyday Life	9
Connecting Everyday Life to the Local Church	12
Connecting the Gospel Message to Every Person.....	14



CHURCH MISSION

The mission of the church at its very core is not something Christians collectively came up with. It is not our idea. Jesus Christ, as the head of the church, authoritatively mandates his church, in every local expression, to fulfill his mission and his vision for his church. This mandate encompasses three tasks: the assembling for worship, the edifying of one another, and the evangelizing of the world. While each church may word this mandate differently, the fundamental tasks are still the same, that is if they are a true church that submit themselves to the authority of Jesus Christ.

"In worship, the members of the church focus on God; in instruction and fellowship, they focus on themselves and fellow Christians; in evangelism, they turn their attention to non-Christians. It is well for the church to keep some separation among these several activities. If this is not done, one or more may be crowded out. As a result the church will suffer since all of these activities, like the various elements in a well-balanced diet, are essential to the spiritual health and well-being of the body."

Millard Erickson, Christian Theology, 1066

"We can understand the purposes of the church in terms of ministry to God [worship], ministry to believers [nurture], and ministry to the world [evangelism and mercy]. All three purposes of the church are commanded by the Lord in Scripture; therefore all three are important and none can be neglected. In fact, a strong church will have effective ministries in all three of these areas. We should beware of any attempts to reduce the purpose of the church to only one of these three and to say that is should be our primary focus. In fact, such attempts to make one of these purposes primary will always result in some neglect of the other two. . . All three purposes must be emphasized continually in a healthy church."

Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 868-869

The Mission of the Church:

Assembling for Worship

Edifying of One Another

Evangelizing of the World

A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE MISSION

1. Assembling for Worship means the Lord is our primary devotion, so we commit to gather with our church to worship our God.¹
 - We worship God by making much of God, by making much of his Word, and by making much of his people.²
2. Edifying of One Another means the church is our primary community for spiritual growth, so we commit to nurture one another in the faith and encourage one another to live out God's truth in everyday life.³
 - We nurture and encourage one another by affirming the responsibility of every Christian to attend, love, serve, and submit to a local church, by helping members pursue holiness and fight sin, by correcting sin in the life of the body to the point of exclusion from the Lord's Supper and ultimately membership because of unrepentant sin, and by equipping and exhorting members to grow in holiness.⁴
3. Evangelizing of the World means the proclamation of God's name is our primary commission, so we commit to evangelize the lost both locally and globally.⁵
 - We evangelize the lost by proclaiming the whole gospel, even the hard news about God's wrath against our sin, calling people to repent of their sins and trust in Christ, and by making it clear that believing in Christ is costly, but worth it.⁶

¹ Psalm 22:22, 25; 26:12; 35:18; 89:5; 107:32; 111:1; 149:1; Hebrews 10:24-25

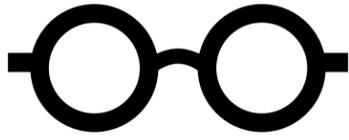
² Ephesians 5:18-21; Colossians 3:15-17

³ Luke 8:19-21; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:4-5, 10, 13, 16; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13-14; 10:24-25; 1 Peter 4:8-10; 1 John 4:7

⁴ Matthew 16:16-19; 18:15-19; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 14:23; Ephesians 4:11-32; Philippians 2:1-18; 4:9 2 Corinthians 2:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 2 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 13:7

⁵ Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; Mark 13:10; Luke 24:46-47; Romans 10:15; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 5:20; Colossians 1:2; 1 Peter 2:9

⁶ Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 10:14-17; 1 Peter 3:15-16



CHURCH VISION

Just like with the mission of the church, the vision of the church comes from Jesus Christ through the Word of God. He desires every one of his people to connect every moment of their life to the gospel. The first part of this vision can be summarized this way: *connecting the gospel to everyday life*. And at the center of the gospel, the very essence of the gospel is God himself, specifically revealed to us in Jesus Christ. He wants our everyday life to be connected to him, because he is the only provider of our greatest need: freedom from sin, he is the only satisfier of our greatest longing: a worthy object of worship, he is the only supplier of our greatest hope: a king to be followed that brings perfect justice and mercy. The Christian life is a Christ-centered, Christ-filled, Christ-dependent life. That last descriptor really summarizes the Christian's essential response to the gospel. Christians are dependent people—in our salvation, in our sanctification, in our glorification, and throughout eternity—entirely dependent on God. This vision of a dependent eternity instructs our pursuit now. If dependency is our future reality in the perfection of eternity, then how much more necessary is dependency in our present reality? Absolutely necessary! And since the essential response of the gospel is dependency, and since we absolutely need dependency now, we are to be connecting the gospel to our everyday lives.

Bob Kauflin summarizes this vision well in his song, “O Great God”.

*O great God of highest heav'n
Occupy my lowly heart
Own it all and reign supreme
Conquer ev'ry rebel pow'r
Let no vice or sin remain
That resists Your holy war
You have loved and purchased me
Make me Yours forever more*

*I was blinded by my sin
Had no ears to hear Your voice
Did not know Your love within
Had no taste for heaven's joys
Then Your Spirit gave me life
Opened up Your word to me
Through the gospel of Your Son
Gave me endless hope and peace*

*Help me now to live a life
That's dependent on Your grace
Keep my heart and guard my soul
From the evils that I face
You are worthy to be praised
With my ev'ry thought and deed
O great God of highest heav'n
Glorify Your Name through me*

The second part of this vision can be summarized this way: ***connecting everyday life to the local church***. The Christ-centered, Christ-filled, Christ-dependent life is a church-centered, church-filled, and church-dependent life. Christ and his church are interconnected and inseparable. Christ is the head of his body, which is the church. Christ is the Chief Shepherd of his flock, which is the church. Christ is the cornerstone of his building, which is the church. Christ is the bridegroom of his bride, which is the church. These pictures point to the universal reality of the church, and yet they also point to the local reality of the church. The local church is God's body, flock, building, and bride. Each local church is a fully functioning representation of these pictures. Each Christian is meant to be connected to a local church. This includes helping professing Christians connect their lives to a healthy, faithful local church, either to our church or to a church of like faith.

The third part of this vision can be summarized this way: ***connecting the gospel message to every person***. The Christ-centered, Christ-filled, Christ-dependent life, which is also a church-centered, church-filled, and church-dependent life, is a gospel proclaiming life. How can it be otherwise? We talk about the things we center our lives in, fill our lives with, and depend on. The significant role of the Author (Christ) of the gospel and the product (church) of the gospel in our everyday lives should lead to us talking about them with those around us. And people who spend any amount of time with us would not be surprised at our sharing the gospel with them when they see our lives so connected to the gospel. Love for the people in our lives also motivates us to share the gospel. We believe every person will spend eternity in heaven or hell. Only those who trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior, Lord, and Treasure will enter heaven. They only trust if they have heard, and they only hear if we share with them. Such a reality compels us to share. Knowing this truth, we cannot be indifferent and be truly loving. Obedience to God also compels us to share the gospel. Every believer has been commissioned to go and make disciples. We cannot glorify God with our lives without evangelizing the people around us.

The Vision of the Church:

We desire to see each follower of Jesus
connecting the gospel to everyday life
connecting everyday life to the local church
connecting the gospel message to every person

An important interconnection exist between our mission and our vision. Our corporate commitment to the Assembling for Worship is shown by each individual member connecting everyday life to the local church. Our corporate commitment to the Edifying of One Another is shown by each individual member connecting the gospel to everyday life. Our corporate commitment to the Evangelizing of the World is shown by each individual member connecting the gospel message to every person.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE VISION

CONNECTING THE GOSPEL TO EVERYDAY LIFE

God has given his people certain means of connecting the gospel to everyday life. These have historically been called the Means of Grace. These means are properly understood as The Baptist Catechism summarizes: “The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, are his Ordinances, especially the Word, Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and Prayer.”⁷ While this list is clearly not exhaustive of every command given in Scripture, these are the predominate means given in Scripture. And historically the church has recognized these four means as primary for the growth of each believer and for the building up of the church. This vision is truly lived out as all of God’s people corporately and individually pursue and practice the Means of Grace.⁸

These connections cannot merely be actions. Actions alone have never been acceptable to God.⁹ A heart of love for God, desire for his presence, hunger for his pleasure, enthusiasm for his person must not simply accompany the actions, but fuel them, drive them, motivate them.

The following are some ways God’s people can implement this vision:

A. Commitment to connect God’s Word to your everyday life

1. **Connect the reading of God’s Word to your everyday life.** The daily reading of Scripture is your listening to God speaking to you. There is no way of overstating the importance and privilege of this reality. Eternal, Almighty God speaking through his revealed Word as you read it. So, you should read your bible. Read it for comprehension, for understanding, for knowledge. Read it for relationship, for communion, for fellowship. Read it for guidance, for direction, for wisdom. Read it for life, for satisfaction, for enjoyment. Read it for conviction, for correction, for rebuke. Read it for encouragement, for strength, for sustenance. Read it for your soul, for your soul to know God, for your soul to know God so that you might glorify and enjoy him.
2. **Connect the preaching of God’s Word to your everyday life.** In order to connect preaching to you life you should, first and foremost, faithfully attend the God-ordained, weekly preaching of God’s Word unless providentially hindered. This weekly practice should primarily be pursued in your local church, but if this is not possible every effort should be made to sit under the preaching at a church of like faith. Added to this, the Word must be applied. This is not always by addition. If you were to add a minimum of fifty-two actions to your life each year, one for just each of the Sunday morning sermons you heard in a year, then you would likely be overwhelmed. Rather, the preaching should mainly be applied as an alignment to your current efforts in godliness, with occasional additions. The preaching is like a stop at the shop to align

⁷ *The Baptist Catechism*, answer to question 93. Also see *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, answer to question 88.

⁸ The Means of Grace actually function as major headings for various spiritual disciplines. The Word includes under it such disciplines as listening to the preaching of God’s Word, reading God’s Word, meditating on God’s Word, and applying God’s Word. Baptism includes such disciplines as living in submission to God and pursuing personal holiness. Communion (the Lord’s Supper) includes such disciplines as giving/serving, fasting, and fellowship. Prayer includes entering God presence through personal conversation in awe of the opportunity and responsibility to converse with God.

⁹ Psalm 40:6-8; 50; 51:16-19; Hosea 6:6 [Matthew 9:13; 12:7]; Deuteronomy 7:6-9; 10:12-11:1; Joshua 22:5

your tires so that your daily driving is productive and effective. But unlike vehicles, humans need weekly alignments per the manufacture's guidelines.

3. **Connect the singing of God's Word to your everyday life.** The Apostle Paul connects the singing of the saints to the Word of God when he wrote, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."¹⁰
4. **Connect the meditation on God's Word to your everyday life.** Don't just read your bible or listen to preaching and then forget what you read and heard. Meditate on the Scriptures. Think deeply about what God is communicating and deeply about how this connects to your everyday life. Not everything in Scripture is easily understood or enjoyed or applied. Most of the time study will be required for you to grow in your understanding, enjoyment, and application of God's Word. Make time to study, to think deeply. Redeem time that is available like the time commuting to work, folding laundry, or waiting in line. Avail yourself of group studies at church or start one in your home. Take advantage of all the excellent study resources available (if you're not sure which resource is good, ask your pastor). The practice of memorizing Scripture is connected to meditating on Scripture. Memorization allows for meditation when the text cannot physically be right in front of you.
5. **Connect the application of God's Word to your everyday life.** Be doers of the Word and not just hearers only. Respond to God's Word with worship, repentance, faith, obedience, and service. Your primary application should be worship: glorifying God and enjoying him. The other applications should be the necessary overflows of worshipping God as you should.

B. Commitment to connect Baptism to your everyday life

1. **Connect the allegiance symbol of your Baptism to your everyday life.** Remember your baptism as you make decisions, as you choose who/what to follow in your decisions, and as you reflect on your decisions afterwards. Who has your allegiance? Are your decisions consistent with what you proclaimed at your baptism? Ask yourself the baptism questions: (1) Are you now trusting in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins and the fulfillment of all God's promises to you, even eternal life? (2) Do you forsake Satan and all his works and all his ways? (3) Do you intend with God's help to obey Jesus's teaching and follow him as your Lord? Make your allegiance clear: that it is not in yourself, this worldly system, or Satan, but Jesus Christ. Your baptism is clearly connected to your living in obedience and pursuing of godliness, for it is only through your union with Jesus Christ that you are able to live in obedience and pursue godliness.
2. **Connect the washed clean (holiness) symbol of your Baptism to your everyday life.** Remember your baptism as you fight against sin and temptation. Are your actions consistent with what you proclaimed at your baptism? Are you living as you really are,

¹⁰ Colossians 3:16, also see Ephesians 5:19

one who has died to sin with Christ on the cross, one who was buried with him in his death, and one who has risen with him to newness of life? Let your baptism motivate you in sanctification as it reminds you to pursuit holiness and to actively be killing sin everyday.

C. Commitment to connect Communion to your everyday life

1. **Connect the sustenance symbol of Communion to your everyday life.**

Communion should remind you that Christ is sufficient sustenance for your ultimate wellbeing. The symbols of bread and wine provide this picture. As food sustains you physically, so Christ sustains you in all ways. This should influence how you view your dependence on other things in life which in turn should guide your approach to giving, both of your money and your time. The practice of fasting is connected to dependence and sustenance as it is meant to strengthen your dependence on Christ as your only eternally necessary sustenance by the removal of other physical dependencies (most often food).

2. **Connect the union symbol of Communion to your everyday life.** Communion should remind you that in Christ you are united with the Triune God and have fellowship with God. Therefore, you should pursue the means by which fellowship is enjoyed: the Word and Prayer. Communion should also remind you that in Christ you are united to your brothers and sisters in Christ, specifically your local church family as you partake of communion together, not separately. Therefore you should pursue opportunities where this fellowship is enjoyed: like conversing on a variety of topics, sharing life together, eating together, serving together, studying Scripture together, and praying together.

D. Commitment to connect Prayer to your everyday life

1. **Connect the personal conversation of Prayer to your everyday life.** God is a personal being and should be addressed as such. It is not that God needs personal conversation, he does not—more specifically he does not need it from you or anyone. Rather, you need personal conversation with God. Religious conversation, yes. Rote conversation, no. Real conversation, yes. Repetitive conversation, no. Father-and-son conversation, yes. Genie-in-a-bottle conversation, no. Heart-expressing conversation, yes. Check-off-the-list conversation, no. The point is that prayer is a major part of the relationship. You hear God speak through God’s Word. You speak to God through prayer.

2. **Connect the awe of conversing with God by Prayer to your everyday life.** God is a being not like us. The Baptist Catechism summarizes: “God is the first and best of beings.”¹¹ No other being exists who is like God. “There is but one only, the living and true God.”¹² God is far greater and higher than any other being. “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice,

¹¹ *The Baptist Catechism*, answer to question 1.

¹² *Ibid.*, answer to question 8.

goodness, and truth.”¹³ And because God has graciously revealed himself to humanity you can know him and have a relationship with him.¹⁴ You can speak to God. You get to speak to God. Amazing! And when you speak to God, you are speaking to the One and Only Being who is Infinitely Powerful and Good, Eternally Wise and Just, Unchangeably Holy and True. You speak to him personally, but also with awe. Awe is your heart and mind being filled with wonder, amazement, and love.

CONNECTING EVERYDAY LIFE TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

God does not intend his people to live merely individual Christian lives. His expectation and requirement is that his people connect themselves to a local manifestation of his people. Each person who claims to be a Christian is claiming to be part of God’s family, body, flock, building, and bride. And while these exist universally, they also exist locally. The local church is God’s family, body, flock, building, and bride—not just a part, but a fully functioning representation of these—visibly on display. The Bible emphasizes these local, visible manifestations more than the universal. Most of the New Testament is written directly to specific, visible, real local churches. Consequently, the Bible does not allow for Christians who are disconnected from a local church any more than it allows Christians who are disconnected members of the body. Christians are not the ornamental jewelry of the local church body, there but not connected. Rather Christians are presented as members of one another within the context of a local church, connected body parts of the local body. Disembodied organs or limbs are useless. God intends for his people to be connected to a local church. This vision is truly lived out as all God’s people connect to a healthy, faithful local church, either to our church or a church of like faith.

The following are some ways God’s people can implement this vision:

A. Commitment to connect your week to the church gatherings

1. **Connect your weekly plans to the church gatherings.** Simply plan to be at the church gatherings, but additionally plan to be involved in the church gatherings. Put effort during the week toward participation: whether it be leading, helping, assisting, coordinating, or preparing. Be a participator. Church gatherings are not like spectator sports...if that is your experience then you are missing out. If you prioritize church because you prioritize Jesus and the mission he has given you as a member of his church, you will not regret it.
2. **Connect your everyday friends to the church gatherings.** You probably don’t invite your friends to go to Sam’s Club or Costco with you. This is because membership in the church is not like membership to those stores. As a member of the church you are a citizen of God’s kingdom. And as a citizen, you live under the authority of Jesus, who places demands and responsibilities on you. You are meant to make disciples (see the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20). It’s your responsibility as a citizen to be introducing people to the kingdom of God. And while only God can produce the end result of salvation, God ordains the means as well as the end. You are one of those

¹³ Ibid., answer to question 7.

¹⁴ Ibid., “Question 3. How may we know there is a God? Answer. The light of nature in man, and the works of God, plainly declare there is a God; but his word and Spirit only do it fully and effectually for the salvation of sinners.”

means and the church gatherings are one of those means. The experience of a church gathering is an amazing way to introduce someone to the kingdom of God, but not in the ways we often think. It's not the flashy band since people gather to hear flashy bands all the time. It's not the fun activities since people gather to do fun activities too. It's not the programs, or building, or the lighting, or the sound. I could keep listing things, but hopefully you get the point. You don't need to be Christian to gather for these things. What makes the church gathering amazing is that people who naturally would not belong together are together because of Jesus, his gospel, his Word, his worship. This is the uniqueness of the church gathering. And this is why you need to invite your everyday friends—not just to a church picnic, since people gather for picnics—to the regularly scheduled gathering of God's people as the church for the worship of God, through the singing of God's praises, the seeking of God's face in prayer, and the preaching of God's Word.

B. Commitment to connect the church gathering to your week

1. **Connect the sermon to your week through application.** Listen, learn, and then live it out. Be doers, not hearers only. The living out, the doing, is just as important if not more important than the listening and learning. Listening and learning are indispensable parts, but what good are they if you do not live what you have heard and learned? James tells us it is no good, without the doing there is no benefit.¹⁵ Rather, he says that we will find blessing in our doing, in our living out. Your worship is not complete until you apply God's truth in your everyday life.
2. **Connect the worship to your week through perpetuation.** Embrace the God-given cycle. The God who created you and knows you better than you know yourself has given you Sunday to prepare you for your week and your week to prepare you for Sunday. This does not deny the importance of the rest of the week, but clearly declares a priority to the Lord's Day. Your Sunday worship through praise, prayer, and the Word should fuel your worship on Monday through Saturday. And your Monday through Saturday worship influences your Sunday worship.
3. **Connect one another to your week through Bible study, followup, and prayer.** God did not save you to be an island unto yourself. Christianity is not a solo sport or a Lone Ranger kind of life. The imagery that the Bible uses to describe us as a church (family, body, flock, building) points to a relational life. Christians are to be connected to one another within the local church. The biblical imagery does not envision or even allow for a Christian to live a disconnected life from the church in general, or more specifically from the other members of the church. The images also help us be realistic in our approach to relationships within the church. Some family members are closer to each other than others while they are all still part of the family. Some parts of the body function closer with certain parts than other parts while they are all still part of the same body. Some bricks in the building rest more on certain bricks than others while all the bricks are still part of the same building. Relationship in the church functions the same way. You are connected to every member in your local church, you are expected to be connected to other members of your local church, but you will not be

¹⁵ James 1:22-25

connected to every member to the same degree. In light of this reality we must be careful though to still affirm that the degrees to which we are connected to the other members, closely or less closely, are based on our placement by God into his church. The bricks next to you are not next to you because they are like you and have the same interests as you. You need people who are unlike you, different from you, but connected by Jesus Christ. Look at who Jesus has placed next to you and reach out.

C. Commitment to connect church members to your everyday friends and events.

1. **Invite fellow members to volunteer/interact with you in your community.** Many communities around a local church and the makeup of a local church itself can be very decentralized geographically. People often have no problem driving across town to shop at a specific store or attend a particular function. And while certain cities/towns have their own events and activities it often includes/cateters to/employs people from the surrounding cities/towns. Communities are often not very compartmentalized geographically and people seem quite comfortable with this reality. So much so, that it is not uncommon for people to know people from other neighborhoods better than they know their own next door neighbor. Relationships are not confined by geography. And since the members of a local church live within this culture, it is not surprising to see this as a reality in the church as well. This means you do not always share geographical nearness with your fellow members. So as you seek to reach out to your city/town, community, or neighborhood you will need to intentionally and strategically invite other members to pursue gospel opportunities along with you. You are stronger together. You should also consider making yourself available to your fellow members to join them as they pursue gospel opportunities in their city/town, community, neighborhood.
2. **Invite fellow members to evangelism with your friends.** Another aspect of this is that your daily gospel opportunities are more likely to come through relational contacts verse geographical contacts. Your work friends, your school friends, your kid's friends, your kid's friend's parents, and so on. These gospel opportunities could also benefit from interaction with people from your church family. Living out your mission as a Christian should spur you on to seek to intertwine your relationships inside and outside the church as much as possible. The church body, even seen in two of its families serving together, is an amazing apologetic for the power of the gospel.

CONNECTING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO EVERY PERSON

God has entrusted the spread of the gospel mainly to his people's proclamation of this good news. The Apostle Peter wrote, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, *that you may proclaim* the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."¹⁶ Proclaiming is part of our purpose as God's people. The Apostle Paul wrote, "How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without *someone preaching*? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How

¹⁶ 1 Peter 2:9

beautiful are the feet of *those who preach the good news!*¹⁷ News must be told in order to be known, and in the case of the gospel to be believed. Again Paul wrote, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what *we preach* to save those who believe.”¹⁸ We should not get hung up on the word “preach” thinking it is only for the pastor on Sunday as the word could be translated “proclaim” in both passages. The word includes the formal preaching which mostly happens during the Sunday gatherings of the church, but it also includes all the more informal proclamations by God’s people on a daily basis. Each member of God’s church is responsible for the dissemination of the gospel message to those people they come in contact with on a daily basis.

Christian, you are meant to play offense in this life. It can easily feel like the church is meant to be on defense in a world that is hostile toward the gospel. In some ways it is meant to hold the line, but defense cannot be the only play if the church is to be faithful to its calling. Jesus said the gates of Hell will not prevail against the church.¹⁹ Gates are defensive not offensive. So if Hell is on the defensive then that means the church is on the offensive. Therefore, the church is meant to storm the gates of Hell.

Christian, you are meant to play offense in gosselly dark and gosselly unflavored places. Jesus said that his people are “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” meant to provide gospel flavor and shine a light before others.²⁰ While the salt analogy does not provide multiple categories the light analogy does indicate both an individual and corporate responsibility. Corporately God’s people are to shine as a city on a hill, while individually we are to shine as a lamp on a stand. The lamp illuminates the house, which in turn is one of the many houses that make up the illuminated city. The principle here is that the individual proclamation enables and support the corporate proclamation. If the houses are lit then the city will be lit, but if the houses are not lit then the city will not be lit. A church is only as corporately gospel proclaiming as its members are individually gospel proclaiming. This principle is applicable whether it is a church event or your own neighborhood or family event. If the Sunday gathering is to be viewed as gospel proclaiming then it does necessitate the preacher proclaiming the gospel, but it also necessitates the presence of unbelievers which most likely occurs because an individual member invites them. If an Extended Event is to be viewed as gospel proclaiming then an individual member must proclaim the gospel when the opportunity presents itself. The corporate church cannot do the proclaiming, rather it facilitates opportunities for individual members. But the corporate church cannot, should not, and does not facilitate every gospel opportunity for its members. Rather God, in his wisdom, puts the individual members of the church into various places around our cities, towns, and neighborhoods in various businesses, schools, stores, and events, living in relational community with unbelieving employers, co-workers, staffs, teachers, students, customers, neighbors, and families, in order to proclaim the gospel as representatives of the church where the church has no ability to be represented corporately. As salt, each member gosselly flavors their relational community. As light, each member gosselly lights up their relational community. So that together we saturate our area with the gospel.

¹⁷ Romans 10:14-15

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 1:21

¹⁹ Matthew 16:18

²⁰ Matthew 5:13-16

Christian, you are meant to play offense in dependence on God's work. The aim of gospel proclamation is to persuade the unbeliever to believe. Yet this belief ultimately takes the work of God. Therefore, it is not a sales pitch, but the faithful sharing of your faith. You are proclaiming in light of God's sovereignty, which includes whether the unbeliever believes and the fact that you are the one proclaiming. You should be aware that God has uniquely placed you in this specific situation with this specific person so that you might uniquely proclaim the gospel. You don't have to be an extrovert or a theological prodigy. You just need to share the gospel message faithfully and lovingly to the person with you.

Christian, you are meant to play offense with urgency. We do not know how long God will make his appeal to a lost world through the proclamation of the gospel by his people.²¹ What we do know is that right now God is making his gracious offer of salvation²². Therefore, you must pursue and utilize gospel opportunities. You must implore unbelievers to respond to the gospel in repentance and faith before the day of salvation passes them by and they face an eternity under the wrath of God for their sins.

The following are some ways God's people can implement this vision:

- A. Commitment to connect the gospel by faithfully speaking the gospel to everyone in your relational community.²³

How should we measure faithfulness when it comes to speaking the gospel in your relational community? You must be faithful to present the full content of the gospel in a loving and winsome way.

1. **Connect the gospel by faithfully speaking the full content of the gospel.** Content deals with what specific details must be spoken in order to be considered faithfully speaking the gospel. The full gospel must be spoken for it to be even remotely considered faithfully proclaimed. No partial gospel will do. Your relational community must hear about God, Sin, Jesus, and Response. They must hear of Creator and Judge, of Rebellion, Death, and Wrath, of Incarnation, Sinlessness, Cross, and Resurrection, and of Repentance and Faith.²⁴ These categories are simple headers to help ensure you proclaim the full gospel. Often you will not cover all the categories in one conversation, so you revisit the topic multiple times: speaking truth, listening to their questions, and providing biblical answering. In order to be faithful you must be committed to ensuring that your relational community hears the full gospel.
2. **Connect the gospel by faithfully speaking the winsome content of the gospel.** In addition, your content should be presented in a loving and winsome way.²⁵ The goal in speaking the gospel is not merely to win an argument nor is it to just spout off all the gospel facts. Motives and manners matter. You should speak out of love for the unbeliever who remains dead in sin, destined for hell. You should also speak to

²¹ 2 Corinthians 5:20

²² 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

²³ Romans 10:8-15

²⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Luke 24:46-47; Titus 2:11-15;

²⁵ Colossians 4:5-6; 1 Peter 3:15-16

persuade with a gentle spirit that shows a desire to understand the person to whom you are speaking. Unbelievers struggle with different aspects of the gospel and have different questions. It is important to listen along with speaking. You can know you have been faithful when you are confident they have heard the full gospel from you in a way that is loving and winsome.

- B. Commitment to connect the gospel by speaking and living faithful to the gospel with everyone in your relational community.

How else should we measure faithfulness when it comes to speaking the gospel in your relational community? You must be faithful to provide a proper context for the gospel in all your conversations and actions.²⁶

1. **Connect the gospel to how you view life.** Christians live for God, to glorify and enjoy him, and for the proclamation of his glory through the gospel.²⁷ As a Christian, if you can envision yourself living one day not connected to the gospel then something is wrong with your view. Christians do not live for the weekend, not for money, not for success, not for financial stability, not for the American Dream, not for a spouse, not for kids, not for getting out of debt, not for a house, not for a car, not for relaxation, not for a sport or a sports team, not for a hobby, not for education, not for food, not for friendship, and so on. Christians live for God and the proclamation of his glory through the gospel. Life takes on a new meaning when you are converted. You are a child of God. You live in his family, by his rules, with his outlook on life. It is not that all those other things are unimportant, they are important, but they are not what Christians live for. Unbelievers should hear and see that you live for God and his gospel. This view of life will support the gospel message you proclaim.
2. **Connect the gospel to how you handle success and failure.** How do you view your success? Is it yours to boast in or a gift from God? How do you view your failures? Is it yours to bear or a gift from God? Does God receive glory? Is God's grace completely necessary? Is sin an issue to hide and minimize or an opportunity to show that repentance and faith is good and forgiveness is available to those who will humble themselves? How you handle your successes and failures, your righteousness and your sin will help to set a context for those around you to understand the gospel you are speaking to them. You will be able to implore your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors in the greatest and worst moments of their lives much more effectively if they have heard and seen you connect the gospel to the greatest and worst moments of your own life.
3. **Connect the gospel to how you pursue forgiveness and give forgiveness.** Who are you primarily? You are a sinner who by God's grace had your sin debt cancelled through the work of Christ's death on the cross. You are a forgiven sinner. God's will is to have his grace and mercy be imitated by his people. *As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*²⁸ Every sin you commit and every sin committed against you is an

²⁶ Ephesians 4:1-3; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Galatians 2:11-14, 20

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans 11:36; Psalm 73:24-26; John 17:22, 24

²⁸ Colossians 3:13

opportunity to display the gospel. In these moments you have the opportunity to respond in a gospel-worthy manner. Christians should be the most forgiving people in the world and the quickest to pursue forgiveness when they sin. Your view of forgiveness will either support your proclamation of the gospel or conflict with it. Your relational community will be more likely to turn to you in their sin struggles if you are quick to pursue and give forgiveness.

4. **Connect the gospel to how you pursue holiness.** Scripture states that you do not participate in any way in God's justifying work in make you holy in his sight.²⁹ However, scripture does state that you do participate in God's sanctifying work in making you holy on daily basis.³⁰ You are so radically changed by God's grace that you live out the fruit of that grace daily. This daily holiness is not because you are better than someone else or more capable in and of yourself, but because God is working in you. In this way your daily holiness supports the gospel you proclaim.

²⁹ Ephesians 2:8-9

³⁰ Philippians 2:12-13