

Theme: Jesus Revealed – By His Mission

Mark 1:35-39

³⁵ Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. ³⁷ When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." ³⁸ But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." ³⁹ And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

Nearly every organization and business has what they call a **"mission statement."** It's usually a summary of the main purpose for which that organization exists, or a summary of the goals and standards that particular organization wants to meet. Most companies and organizations post these mission statements in an area where their members, employees, or customers can see them so that they are always reminded of what their purpose and goals are. For some reason, one of the places I've often noticed the **"mission statement"** is at some of the auto repair shops I've taken my vehicles to over the years. I've always found this somewhat ironic because auto repair shops tend to have a reputation for coming up a little short—to say the least—in the "customer service, honest workmanship, and fair prices" for which their "mission statement" claims they are striving!

Well, how about the Church? Does Christ's Church have a **"mission statement?"** Yes, it does, and it was given to us by Jesus Himself. In fact, Jesus had a **"mission statement"** when He came to this earth. In a number of places throughout the New Testament we hear Jesus' **"mission statement"** summarized in different ways. Our text for today is one of those places.

In this final sermon in our Epiphany series we see **Jesus Revealed By His Mission**. After all, knowing what Jesus' Mission was—what He came to this earth to do—is just as important as knowing *who* He is. Many people might know that Jesus was a historical figure, but they really don't know *Who* He is, and certainly don't know Him by faith as their Lord and Savior. In the same way that it is necessary to know that Jesus was more than just a "good man," a "great teacher," or even a "god," it is also necessary to know that Jesus' *main* mission in coming to this earth was not to physically heal or work miracles, not to lead a political or social revolution, not even just to show people how to love each other and live a good life by His perfect example.

In our text we hear Jesus clearly state His **"mission statement,"** and then we see Him act and speak to accomplish that mission. In fact, all that Jesus is, all that He has said and done worked toward completing that mission. All the miracles, healings, teachings, and acts of love were not an end to themselves, but were done to help accomplish His mission. Jesus said in **v. 38**, **"...for this purpose I have come forth (v. 38b)."** What was that purpose? We are told earlier in that verse that it was **"to preach" (v. 38a)**. Not just to preach in general, but Matthew tells us in his account of this incident that He was **"preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matthew 4:23)**. That means Jesus was preaching the "Good News" (Gospel) about Himself and how He had come to save mankind by His perfect life and His eventual sacrifice on the cross. At other times in His ministry Jesus clearly stated that this was His mission. Listen to a few of Jesus' **"mission statements:"**

- ✠ **"...for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." (John 18:37b)**
- ✠ **"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)**
- ✠ **"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:38)**

As true God Himself, Jesus' mission was of course the same as God, His Father's mission. Jesus, as true man, prayed to God the Father, as we read in our text. Jesus sought His father's will and was devoted to *His* mission. Jesus Himself said in John's Gospel, "**For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me**" (John 6:38). How did God the Father summarize His will? What is His "**mission statement**?" The Bible tells us, "**God our Savior...desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth**" (1 Timothy 2:3-4). It was God's "mission" from eternity to save mankind through His Son Jesus. He knew in advance that Satan would ruin His perfect creation; He sent Jesus to restore it. That was the reason for Jesus' *Epiphany*; His "*revealing*," or appearance, as the Son of God on this earth. The Apostle John tells us, "**For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil**" (1 John 3:8b). That's exactly what we see Jesus doing in our text, isn't it? "**Destroy[ing] the works of the devil**" by preaching the truth of the Gospel of peace, forgiveness, and life against Satan, death, and hell: "**He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee;**" and, as our text tells us He was defeating Satan, by "**casting out demons**" (v. 39).

The fact that Jesus was completely devoted to His mission of mankind's salvation does not, of course, prove He was true God and God's Son—but the fact that He accomplished His mission exactly and completely as the Father intended certainly does! Jesus crushed Satan once and for all and destroyed sins power when He shed His blood—the very blood of the Son of God—by His death on the cross, and then defeated death itself by His victorious resurrection from the grave on the third day.

Jesus' "**mission statement**" is now a "mission accomplished." But He still is doing more saving work because there are more souls to be saved. Now don't get me wrong, His blood and His righteousness is enough—completely and totally enough—to cover all sins and make payment for the full salvation of all people. That mission *has been* accomplished. But not all have heard, and not all have believed. And so in that sense there is still more saving work to do; still more souls to save. He has given this work to us and all Christians. He has given us His powerful saving word to preach and drive out Satan and has given each one of us a "**mission statement:**" "**Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature**" (Mark 16:15).

How have we been doing at keeping this mission Christ has given to us? How much have we devoted ourselves to this "**mission statement**?" Completely? Mostly? Some? Very little, or none at all? Too often we are like the "bad" car repair shop, aren't we? We've got the "**mission statement**" that Jesus Himself laid out for us right in front of us all the time, and yet often times we do a very poor job of even *trying* to support and accomplish this mission.

I can remember working across from a young man on an assembly line in a cabinet factory one summer back in college. I found out very early on that he was an atheist, and he found out very early on that I was a Christian and was studying to be a pastor. One day early on in the summer he asked me, "You're a Christian right?" I answered, "Yes." "Well," he asked, "Aren't you supposed to be trying to 'recruit' me?" Needless to say, I had many, many "recruiting" conversations with that young man that summer.

Yes, we are supposed to be "recruiting" others by sharing the Good News of forgiveness and salvation in Jesus. He wants to see us and many others with Him eternally in heaven. He completely devoted Himself to that purpose and that mission to the point that He came to this earth and became one of us and even gave up His own life and suffered hell for us to accomplish that mission.

Are we completely devoted to the mission that Jesus has given us to share that salvation with others? Like Jesus did in our text we can set aside time alone for prayer with our heavenly Father and pray that "His will be done" and that His mission of saving souls would be accomplished among us and around the globe. Like Jesus we can "**preach the gospel of the kingdom [of God]**" (Matthew 4:23) to the many souls who are dying and in need of hearing this saving "Good News." We may not be able to go from town to town preaching and teaching like Jesus, but we all have people around us—even among our own families and friends—who need to hear of Jesus' love and need to see His love reflected in our lives. That means that

we back up our words of love with compassionate actions of love, just like Jesus, who was healing people and casting out demons well into the night (**Mark 1:32-34**). At the very least, all of us can give of our offerings to help support those who are carrying out Christ's mission. We know that there is a great need for these offerings here, locally; in our country, the United States; and overseas.

Telling of God's saving love in Christ to others and then *showing* them His love in our lives, let that be our **"mission!"** Where will we find the motivation and strength to carry out this mission? By reading from our **"mission statement"** every day: **"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again"** (2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NIV).

We pray: Dear Father in Heaven, help us. Prepare us on our "mission." Give us the words to speak—Your Words—and give us the strength—Your strength—to carry it out. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.