

## Episode 6 Mission

**Matt Troupe:** [00:00:07] Welcome to episode six of the free Grace Church membership podcast. In this episode, we're going to talk about the topic of mission. And that is a hot topic, a buzz word, in Christianity today and whenever something becomes a buzz word it almost is guaranteed to lose its meaning. So we're gonna unpack exactly what we mean by mission.

[00:00:32] Just as a way of review, in the last couple episodes we've been talking about some important things. I said in the beginning that when I try to explain in most simple form what our church is about, it is Gospel, Community, and Mission. We've explained what the gospel is - the work of Christ for our redemption on the cross and his death and resurrection that we receive by faith and repentance. Then we talked about community, how once God comes into our heart he changes us and then brings us together to live in a new community, a new life together as the church. And both of those things together push us toward mission. Now we have created a mission statement for Free Grace Church, and I think it is important. The mission statement is,

[00:01:21] "We exist to glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commission in the Fresno area." And really that mission statement is just an expression of what the Bible says. Our job as a church is not to figure out what our mission is or come up with a cool mission statement. It's really just to believe and respond to what Christ has already said. And so that's our mission statement. Now scripture expresses this idea of mission in a number of ways.

[00:01:48] One of the most common ways is the Great Commission which I already mentioned, and that is in Matthew Chapter 28. We've read that in a couple of other podcasts and we're gonna look at it here again. After Jesus has been raised from the dead, and just before he is about to ascend to the Father, we read this in Matthew 28:18,

[00:02:10] "Jesus came and said to them, "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 even to the end of the age.".

[00:02:34] The mission of the church is really clear in this passage. And it's actually expressed in some form in all four Gospels and the book of Acts. We're told that the church very much has this outward facing mission and this is important because a lot of times in the church we pit God's purposes against them.

[00:02:58] And so some people would say "well our purpose is worship and so worship is this thing that we do that doesn't really have any effect on mission" or "our purpose is shepherding" or "loving one another" or you know you list any number of those things, and then we try to separate that from mission, but really none of them can be separated from mission.

[00:03:18] They are all part of how we make disciples and how we spread the gospel to the nations, and not just to the nations but even to our own cities and families. Now if you have the church membership booklet that is linked here, in the copy I have it's on page 7, but it's towards the end of the church covenant. And it says "My commitment to the mission of Free Grace Church" and this is important because if you become a member at Free Grace you are saying that you want this mission to be your mission. This is this is

what God's doing in the world. And you want to be a part of it. This is what that section says,

[00:03:57] "Free Grace Church exists to glorify God by the fulfilment of the great commission in the Fresno area. I have read the mission statement of Free Grace Church, and commit to live out this mission as a diligent, faithful disciple of Jesus. That my identity would be in him, my worship would be for him, my fellowship would be through him, and my interaction with the culture would be for his glory. I understand that this covenant obligates me to the members of Free Grace Church and is an acknowledgment of my submission to the elders of the church. I accept the responsibility to notify free Grace Church leadership if at anytime I can no longer commit to this covenant...".

[00:04:35] And it goes on there but what we want to make clear is that we want every person who becomes a part of free Grace Church to be a part of this mission to see disciples made to see more people come to faith in Jesus. Now let's look at one other scripture here that I think is very important and that's in Matthew Chapter 5 verses 14 through 16 and this is in the Sermon on the Mount. It's actually a very famous passage.

[00:05:05] Jesus says, "You are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hidden." That's the church, the church is the city set on the Hill, the church is the light of the world. We are the light because Christ lives in us and he has given us his truth right. So we're this city, this lighted city, that broadcasts its light to a dark world. Jesus continues, "Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but put it on a stand and it gives light to all in the house." This is actually sort of a funny remark as if you would have a candle or a light of some kind and that you would completely shade it to make sure that nobody would see it. That's not what we're supposed to do. Jesus says this, "In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven."

[00:05:58] God's design is that our lives would be so transformed by His truth and His grace, that our lives would be full of good works. We would live differently, we would give generously, we would sacrifice, we would forgive, we would put others first, we would, we would see the needs of others and we would serve them. And we would speak the truth in such a way that people see that. Now, if you do a lot of good works, but you never open your mouth, people will see your good works and they'll glorify you. They'll say, "What a great guy", but Jesus says people will see your good works and give glory to your father in heaven.

[00:06:34] And that's because if we live our lives the way Jesus intended we eventually will create relationships with people and that will give us a chance to speak up and to tell them about our savior and to tell them about our father. In the end that's an opportunity for them to see that we're not the cause of our good works, that we're not just great people who serve others - that we serve a great God. So we're the light of the world. We want to take that seriously as a church and spread the light to the darkness. We're not just a group of Christians who huddle against the cold evil world and encourage one another. We do that but the end purpose is so that we would take the message of salvation to the world.

[00:07:19] Look over in the book of Acts, Chapter 1 and this is the beginning of the story of what Jesus is doing in his church and in the world after he is raised from the dead.

[00:07:37] His disciples say in verse 6, "Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the father has

fixed by his own authority."

[00:07:49] -Basically don't worry about the end of the world. -

[00:07:51] "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

[00:08:02] This is another version of the Great Commission. And it says we're gonna be witnesses and then he describes this series of circles. If you could imagine a bullseye, kind of like the Target logo with gradually larger circles rippling out. We are to start where we are and let the Gospel go out and live as witnesses for him.

[00:08:25] So we start with those that are geographically and culturally close to us and then gradually work further and further out even to the ends of the earth. Now here's a couple "so what" moments about mission. This means we are committed to love our community and to reach them. Not the community we wish we had, but the actual people in our lives. This means that our gatherings on Sunday and in the middle of week they are open and welcome to lost people who do not know Jesus. In our history we've had all kinds of people come and we're so thankful for that. We've had homeless people and drug addicts and Muslims and atheists and everyone in between come and visit our services. And when they come, we want to do and be what the New Testament calls hospitable. This idea of hospitality means that we love strangers, we welcome them. So when we're in our own homes we welcome them, and when we're together with God's people we welcome them because we were once strangers and God welcomed us in. It's very important. This is this is one way that we attract people. We invite people and we attract them and we love them when they come to our meetings. Now this is not all that we do but this is a very important part of what we do. The second part of mission is not just allowing people to come but also reaching out to them. And so this means we're not waiting for people. We're going out to connect with them to love them to serve them and to share Christ in the end.

[00:10:05] We want see new people come to faith in Jesus. This means that we are trying to create deliberate relationships in our family, in our neighborhood, and our work and our school. This is how I think the average person does most of their evangelism. Most people are not going to have a professional job or a public speaking. They're just gonna love the people in their lives and real practical ways. And when God opens a door they're gonna share Christ.

[00:10:33] We also have a number of outreaches we've had various ones throughout the years. Sometimes we have volunteered at a homeless center or a place where they're feeding the homeless to show concrete acts of love. We have volunteered and served in a halfway house for women coming out of prison. We've done all kinds of things and so you may participate in that in different ways. We would like you, we invite you to participate in that and we want to offer training for that as well. We also desire that new leaders would be raised up for this mission. Those leaders some of them will be Bible study leaders and some of them will be pastors and we hope that some will be missionaries even from our church going to the ends of the earth. We're going to pray for that and try to provide training for that.

[00:11:21] We also want to see new churches planted. We were a church plant and we started in 2008 and we are currently part of a church planting network where we support

financially and pray for other churches and our hope is that one day our church will be a sending church to see other congregations planted, to see other people that don't have access to the Gospel, reached with the love of Christ. We may do that here and in our state, California, or elsewhere in the United States or even to the end of the age. Hopefully we'll be able to participate even in seeing the Gospel go to places where Jesus has never been named. New people brought to Christ, new leaders raised up and trained, and new churches planted.

[00:12:09] What is your role in all this? I don't know but if you become a member at Free Grace Church, we want you to be committed to find out. We want you to be committed to serve in some way, to see that you have a role to play in this big thing that God is doing. And it may just be that you surf, you just surf practically and love people. It may be that you give financially and that helps us to support missionaries and church planters. It may be that you get engaged in outreaches in various ways, that you open up your home in hospitality that you that you speak and you serve. I mean there's so many ways, it might mean that you adopt a child or take in a foster child, a homeless child. There's so many ways but all of this is about us sharing the love of God and the message and the truth of God for the glory of God in the world. This is our mission and if you decide to become a member at Free Grace Church we want this to be your mission.

[00:13:09] If you have any questions about this and I hope that you do, would you write them down and let's talk about them at some point in the future. Thanks again for listening.