

May 17 - Chapter 4. Incarnation: The Sacred and the Soccer Games
- p.79-102 Women Only

“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried.”
 G. K. Chesterton

Community Building: Get to Know You Bingo

First Reading: So what does it mean that we are sent in the same way Jesus was sent? How are we to understand this? How are we to live it? The chapters to come will be our playbook for mission, based on the historical life of Jesus that is revealed to the church through the Gospels. We'll begin with the bedrock of our calling—the very model of our mission itself—the incarnation of Jesus. To live at Godspeed is to do mission based on the person and work of Jesus Christ, God become flesh. To live at Godspeed is to practice incarnational Christianity.

1. What does incarnation mean?
2. What is the incarnation of Jesus?
3. What do you think it means to practice incarnational Christianity?

Second Reading: Today Christians in America are known as antihomosexual, judgmental, and hypocritical. That should hit us like a ton of bricks. Not a single attribute of Christ—loving, compassionate, generous, generous, kind, merciful, humble, caring, or self-sacrificial—makes the list. The world thinks we're antihomosexual because we're combative. We fought some of the wrong battles on the wrong fronts for the wrong reasons. They think we're judgmental because we cocoon away from them in our little Christian enclaves. They think we're hypocritical because they watch us eventually conform to culture and end up looking like everyone else. The incarnation of Christ, Jesus in the flesh, must shape the way we live in the world. The reason we're not to cocoon away from people is because Christ came to people. The reason we're not to combat people is because Christ labored to reconcile people, to God and to one another. The reason we're not to conform to this world is because Christ was otherworldly in His character and holiness. The incarnation of Christ is the model for mission, the example for the Christian living at Godspeed. When Christ took on humanity, He was fully man and yet fully God. “In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells” Colossians 2:9 says, and yet He took on flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14).

4. What does it mean to cocoon as a Christian?
5. How do Christians become combative?
6. How do Christians become conforming?
7. How does these traits work against the Gospel?

Third Reading: Peter called the church a royal priesthood that offers up spiritual sacrifices (worship) and a holy nation that proclaims the excellencies of God (witness). This is what John Stott labeled the double identity of the church, or incarnational Christianity. Incarnational Christianity means that we're called out of the world in worship to God while being sent into the world as witnesses of God. The church is a worshipping and witnessing community, and Christians are worshipping and witnessing people.

7. How is the incarnation of Jesus Christ a dual identity?
8. How do Christians have a dual identity similar to Jesus?

Fourth Reading: If you've ever boated, you already know the simple logic of this: you want your boat in the water, but you don't want water in the boat. The same is true for Christians: God wants them in the world, but He doesn't want the world in them. Maybe this is you right now. Perhaps you're far more committed to humanity than you are to holiness. Or maybe you err in the opposite way: you're far more committed to holiness than you are to humanity. Perhaps you're a boat that's forgotten why it's a boat. You're not of the world; you're out of this world, so much so that you're not in the world at all anymore. You're too heavenly minded to be of any earthly good for mission, because you've made personal holiness and purity your gods. Some people in the New Testament did this. They were called Pharisees. Whether we're overly committed to holiness or overly committed to humanity, going too far in either direction is an error because our commitment is to Christ. Jesus, our model, struck the perfect balance.

9. What are some indicators that you've become too removed from the world?
10. What are some indicators that you've become too involved in the world?
11. What are some examples of Jesus showing us the perfect balance?

Fifth Reading: Religion, properly defined, is humanity's efforts to reach and to please God. This is what going to church means for many people. On the other hand, the incarnation is God's continuing effort to reach and to save humanity. Incarnational Christianity ought to be alive and at work in our world through the people of God, through the church. We ought to be scattered on mission, not gathered all the time. When we try to get people to Jesus, instead of bringing Jesus to people, we are approaching our faith fundamentally backward. We're being more religious than Christian. True Christian mission is bringing Jesus to people wherever people are, outside our church buildings.

10. How does this change our world view, when we are out there in the workplace, at the baseball field, etc..

Share with your spouse or a close friend in the Lord: What does it mean to be an incarnational Christian, and one thing you want to change in your life to be an incarnational Christian. **Pray together.**

Next Week: May 24, p.103-122 5. *Seek: You Need to Be in Need - Men and Women*

Related Messages: <http://realitycarpinteria.com/sermons/missio-christi-seek/>

Bonus Reading:

We must become satisfied with and saturated in the love of Jesus. Only then can we go into the world to give love instead of receive love. Only when we do it this way is it the mission of Christ, because the Bible tells us that God is self-sufficient and needs nothing. He did not create us out of need but out of His nature. He did not create us to get love from us but to give love to us. Our goal is the same. We must be so satisfied in the love of Christ that we're free to go and give love to others. That doesn't mean that we don't need love. We do. It simply means that we won't be doing mission out of a need to get love from people. Rather, we'll do mission from an overflow of our identity in Christ and the fact that we are the beloved of God. With all of our failures, all of our fissures, all of our brokenness, all of our battles,

Merrick, Britt. *Godspeed: Making Christ's Mission Your Own* (Kindle Locations 1283-1289). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.