

## Mission

*Matthew 28:8-10 & 16-20, Acts 1:1-8*

As church we are called to live out of our missional identity, witnessing to the glorious life of Jesus and inviting others into a relationship with God.

We've recently had a whole sermon series on mission, so today we are going to concentrate on our Matthew and Acts Bible passages.

In both our passages Jesus is reminding the disciples of the mission of God: to be witnesses of Jesus, baptising people into God's family and, making disciples of all nations by teaching them to obey and follow Jesus. When we boil it down, mission is bringing people back into relationship with God.

Nothing more nothing less. That's our identity as church! Being filled with the Spirit and following the pattern of Jesus - sent to share the love of God. As we do that all the goodness of God begins to manifest through his disciples: healing, forgiveness, reconciliation, casting out the demonic and darkness, making disciples, bringing hope to the lost and caring for the poor and vulnerable, looking after the earth he created.

But why are we finding this so hard?

Firstly, on our sharing Jesus course, we discussed what makes it difficult to do this, and a common theme was that people just don't want to know Jesus anymore. Our culture has changed, and we

are incredibly secular. Fear of rejection and the reality of rejection when we've tried to share Jesus are very real, and I have faced it many times.

But when we look at Jesus' life, I'm not sure that many of the people living in Israel 2,000 years ago wanted to know him, in fact even some of those people who were patiently waiting for him rejected him and put him on a cross. If Jesus was scared of rejection, I'm certain he would not have listened to his Father and come to rescue us.

Do we trust that even when it's difficult, God's plans for us are still good? Especially in a world that is so far removed from our loving saviour, we are called to live in God's love, and to be his disciples through

our witness, inviting others into relationship with our good good God. And when we get rejected, which at times we will, trusting not in our own efforts but in his great plan for each person.

Secondly, many of us cannot fathom why people are no longer coming to church. I often talk to people who don't attend church, and ask them why. They say, Church is boring, irrelevant, there's nothing engaging for my children, Sunday mornings are tricky, and I have even been asked where are we helping those with less?

If the way we gather as a church is creating barriers to sharing the love of Jesus with our neighbours, I believe we have lost sight of our identity as a

missional Church. Church is not *just* a space for us to gather, but in following its saviour, we are people who offer the love of God to those who do not yet know him...

If those who do not know him are letting us know why they are struggling to do so, surely, we should learn to adapt, taking down any barriers and creating space where they can.

I want to thank you for releasing Wild Church and our family's ministry to do so. We are slowly growing and people are beginning to become part of our community and curious about God again. There are many places across the country and the world that are doing the same; keeping Jesus central, being

creative, adapting church and seeing people build a relationship with God and becoming disciples. I want to encourage you that the narrative on church attendance is not the same for these creative church communities. God has been and is creating spaces where the lost generation are coming back to him, and it's an absolute joy to hear their stories. You may have your own stories of where you have seen God at work, and we would love to hear about them at our day away. We need to learn from these stories and discover how we can be church in our villages, enabling others to develop a relationship with God.

As church we are called to live out of our missional identity, being filled with Spirit, witnessing to the

glorious life of Jesus and inviting others into a relationship with God. Where are we doing this well? Where would we like to see more of this? How can we be encouraging each other to invite others into a relationship with Jesus?