

## **MISSION | Living Missionally in our Neighborhoods**

### **Adult Sunday Studies**

#### **CPC Spring 2026**

*For more on our theology of mission, see Total Christ class #2, missional - <https://cpcnewhaven.org/sunday-studies/total-christ.html>*

### **Where We're Going**

1. **March 15** - Introduction to a Theology of Mission and Missional Living
2. **March 22** - Practices of Missional Living and Hospitality
3. **April 12** - Special Guest: Matthew Denney
  1. "JMatt" is a member of Trinity Baptist Church and works as Executive Director of Jubilee New Haven, an organization that exists to cultivate holistic flourishing in New Haven through community-building, spiritual formation, and housing justice ([jubileenewhaven.org](http://jubileenewhaven.org))
4. **April 19** - Colleen & Tyler Rice - to lead us in discussion of missional practices in their neighborhood and spheres

### **Introduction to a Theology of Mission**

#### ***The Church as the Mission of God: He Wants to Dwell with Us!***

##### **1. Old Testament**

1. **Eden** - Creation and the garden was the special Temple presence of God, where God dwelt among his creation and his "image." He was later "occasionally" present throughout Genesis to special people of the family of God, their altars, Jacob's ladder, etc.
2. **Tabernacle** - Exodus 40:34-38
  1. Not just anyone could approach it (Exod. 33.4-6) and this was where Moses spoke to God "face-to-face" (Exod. 33.7-11)
  2. This is what set Israel apart from all other nations - Exod. 33.15-16

3. Purpose of Israel - Exod. 25.8-9; 29.43-46 (*"I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God."*).
4. After the heavenly model - Exod. 25.9, 40; Heb. 8.5ff.
3. **Temple** - 1 Kings 8:12-24, 27-30
  1. All the purposes above from the Tabernacle are transferred to the Temple, the 'permanent Tabernacle'

## 2. New Testament

### 1. Jesus "and" the Church!

1. Body of Jesus being the new Temple - John. 1.18 [and the rest of the gospel!], Temple's curtain ripped (Matt. 27.51, Mark 15.38, Luke 23.45), Temple destroyed and raised in 3 days, etc.
2. If Jesus is the new Temple, and we are joined with Him, we too are becoming the Temple of God (Eph. 4.11-16, 1Peter 2.4-9; Eph. 1.22-3 & Eph. 2.19-22) that can now go global because of the Spirit of God (John 14-17)
3. 1Cor. 3.16-7 - divisions in the body led to Paul's rebuke
4. **"On earth as it is in heaven"** (Matt. 6.10) is a guiding principle and motivation throughout Scripture (for another example, cf. Jn. 1.51 based on Jacob at Bethel in Gen. 28.12, as well as Heb. 10.19-20)
5. **Main Scriptural metaphors for the Church:** covenant assembly / gathering, place of mission, people of God, chosen nation, remnant, family, bride, body, building / temple, city, dwelling place of God.
  1. Notice the Church is NOT: a theater; a product to offer consumers; merely the most pragmatic way to grow; something Christians came up with to help each other.
  2. Note: you in plural form ("y'all") is overwhelmingly the use in the NT

**You could summarize God's purpose** in the world as *not* selecting out individuals to get to heaven, but rather as working to gather a community into His presence on earth as it is in heaven! (Cf. Eph. 2.6, Col. 3.1) We need a whole transformation of what it means to be a Christian if this is the paradigm. Rather than isolated individuals who happen to believe something, to be a Christian is

to be part of a unique community with a unique mission. Church life is the “hermeneutic of the gospel,” as Lesslie Newbigin called it.

### *Immediate Implications of the Church as the Mission of God*

#### 1. Holistic Discipleship and Evangelism

1. If the **kingdom of God** has come in Christ, then following Christ demands everything to be new, pointing to him
2. This also means that “**evangelism**” is more (though not less) than simply getting people to make a decision; it includes loving others well, seeking the goodness of our neighbors, fighting against the idols of our culture, etc.
3. **Sacrifice** - if we follow the Crucified Messiah, who calls us “take up our cross daily,” (Lk. 9:23) then avoiding suffering or pursuing comfort are not sufficient motivations. We are called, in **integrity and honesty** before the Lord, to love Jesus with all we are and have (Luke 10:27). We’re invited into the opportunity to be “living sacrifices” (Rom. 12:1) in Christ, so our lives - individually and communally - can be a “**hermeneutic of the gospel**” as consistently as possible.
  1. How should **sacrificial living for the sake of the church** effect basic decisions like:
    1. How we spend our money?
    2. Where we live?
    3. Where we spend our time?
    4. Who we hang out with?
    5. What activities our children participate in?
    6. What jobs we work?

#### 2. In the Church

1. **Missional worship** - is our worship service accessible to our neighborhood, since Christ wants to be present and worshipped in every culture, yet also as “strange” as the gospel is strange to the world?
2. **Missional fellowship** - are our fellowship opportunities open to people in our neighborhood(s)? Are they just like the world’s on the one hand, or too exclusively a Christian “bubble” on the other?

### 3. Outside the Church, with the goal of drawing into the Church

#### 1. Neighborhood presence - How can we start to “see” the people around us in a more Christ-like way?

1. What are the **spheres** that God has placed me in (family, neighborhood, workplaces, hobbies, interests that I have)?
  1. How can I engage people in these spheres with the Gospel? What are first baby steps? How can I involve other local believers in my engagement of non-Christians in my sphere of influence?
2. What things/beliefs/perspectives/fears/wounds/habits **prevent me** from engaging non-Christians with the Gospel?
3. What questions do I have about engaging non-Christians with the Gospel?

#### 2. Cultural presence

1. From Keller’s *Center Church* - Since we can’t assume that people will come to church anymore, a missional church equips and encourages the laity to engage in ministry “within the culture” as “insiders to that culture who express the gospel through how they live.” (277)
  1. “**Every-member gospel ministry**” (279) has these characteristics:
    1. Organic - happens spontaneously, though sometimes around the church’s programs
    2. Relational - builds on natural relationships
    3. Word deploying - around the Bible or biblical truths
    4. Active, not passive - assumes personal responsibility
  2. “Many people process from unbelief to faith through ‘**mini-decisions.**’” - it’s often a process, not a moment or event.
  3. *Living with Relational integrity* - like, unlike, and engaged: Christians themselves are to be contextualized letters of the gospel, reassuringly similar in **culture**, yet startlingly different in **character** (integrity, honesty, transparency, fairness, generosity, hospitality, sympathy, and forgiveness) and **values** (chastity, facing adversity, seeking equity of your neighbors. See examples for engaging neighbors, colleagues, coworkers, and friends on 283-4