



Bethany Assembly of God

May 17, 2020

- Let's get to the heart of the issue; what is the heart of Bethany's mission, or more generally, the Christian mission? (Here's our mission statement, in case you've forgotten ☺: "Bethany exists to glorify God by advancing the Good News about Jesus so that lives are transformed as they are filled with the Spirit, marked by baptism, connected in community, and mature in worship.")

Psalm 67:1-4

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah

- How does Psalm 67:1-4, and passages like it, help us understand the heart of our mission and why we should "renew heart"?
- When Andrea and I (P. Stephen) began dating, she took a sudden interest in football, particularly watching my favorite team, the Green Bay Packers. This was particularly striking because she was born and raised in Minnesota (the Packers and the Minnesota Vikings are rivals). That's when I first knew she loved me! When you love someone, you take a genuine interest in the things they are interested in. If our heart is to glorify God, we will begin to want what He wants. What does the Bible say that God wants?

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing that any should perish**, but that all should reach

repentance.

Main Idea: We should expand our heart in pursuit of God's mission.

1. We can be an inviting church.

- When you are searching for a mechanic to work on your car, for lawn care, or for a new hair stylist, are you more likely to find one online or to take the recommendation of a friend?
- Have you ever invited someone to church? What was your experience? Did they come? What was their experience?
- How can you help make invitation part of the culture and expectation at Bethany?
- What will help make us a church that not only invites, but that is inviting when guests do come to a service?

2. We can give in a way that indicates priority.

- Bethany is known as a missions giving church, but “there is more!”

Matthew 6:19–21

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

- According to Jesus, how does your use of money indicate where your “heart” is at?
- Do you think that it's possible to lead your heart to a new place? How?
- Bethany has a big heart for missions giving, but we don't want that to be a presumption. We need to be continually renewed in our willingness to participate in Jesus' mission through the use of our “treasure.”

3. We can pray for laborers.

Luke 10:2

“And he [Jesus] said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”

- Our renewed hunger for God both produces and encourages prayer. We join hunger and heart when we pray for laborers in Jesus’ harvest of souls.
- Do you “pray for laborers?”
- What does it mean to “pray for laborers?”
- How can you incorporate this kind of prayer into your regular time with God?

4. We can be a going church?

- Have you ever been on a short term missions trip? Have you ever spoken to someone who has? What was your/their experience?
- Short term missions trips can incorporate many different opportunities. Some focus on building. Others focus on relieving poverty or supplying material needs while at the same time, offering the good news about Jesus. Some are directed toward children or outreach in schools. Most incorporate various kinds of outreach.
- An element of renewing heart at Bethany is increasing the number of short term trips we take and the number of people we send on these trips every year.
- Would you ever consider taking a short term missions trip? Why or why not?

5. We can be a telling church.

- Have you ever heard the expression, “Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words.”? It’s often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, which tends to give it some credibility. However, this idea is not found in any of St. Francis’ writings!
- What do you think about the notion that people could come to know Jesus simply by watching you live a good life?
- Should “good works” be a part of the Christian’s witness?

Romans 10:14

“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?”

- What does Romans 10:14 tell us about the necessity of using words when preaching?

6. We can be a worshipping church.

- How are worship and the mission of the church inseparable?
- What does it mean to call something or someone “worthy?”

Psalm 67:1–4

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- Psalm 67:1-4 says that all the nations should praise the Lord. That means God is worth the love and worship of every person who has ever lived.

- Do you think suggesting that all people should praise the Lord is heavy handed or tyrannical? Does God need the nations to praise Him? Is this a degrading demand from God that is no good for people?
- Notice, Psalm 67:4 says, “Let the nations be **glad and sing for joy...**” God’s glory and your (or the nations) good are not at odds!
- How can you worship in such a way that you are reminded that God is worth honoring and the good news is worth sharing?

Conclusion

Expanding our collective heart means being an inviting, giving, praying, going, telling, worshipping church. Will you be part of increasing the size of our heart?