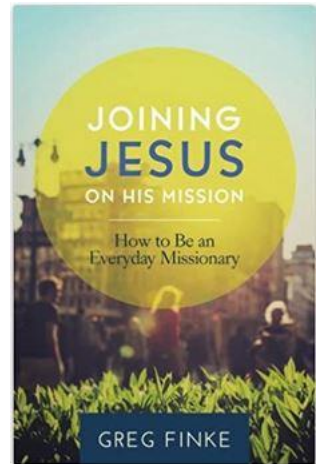


Salvation & Purpose

Joining Jesus on His Mission – Part I

When we think about evangelism most of us draw back. Not me! Many of us grew up at a time when religion and politics were the two subjects to be avoided in public. The world has changed. Politics is one of the first topics in everyday conversation, and everything seems to have political overtones. Religion, however, still can be a touchy subject. Yes, the world has changed and is in need of a Christian perspective. But, often, we feel inadequate to introduce a discussion about faith. We fear rejection. Our world is pushing back as all mention of God has been removed from public places. Many people avoid the topic, and we let people charge ahead with trying to run their own lives. How is that going? Everyone's life is full of challenges, even those who look like "they have it all together." Chances are: deep down, they don't have it all together. They are struggling, too. If you engage in a private conversation with them or listen for clues, you may find out areas of their lives where they need help.

Our church is engaged in a 10-month series called "Joining Jesus on His Mission." The concept is based on the idea that we can all be missionaries in our circle of friends, our work place, and our community. It is not a scary proposition. It doesn't involve preaching on street corners or going door-to-door with a bible in our hands. We're not forcing "religion" on others. It is much simpler than that. It is merely expressing love and a caring attitude towards others and being attentive to signals when people need support. It is not being an advocate *for* Christ but being an advocate *with* Christ. It is joining Jesus on *His* mission, not forging our own. Jesus is already at work in our circle of friends, family, workplace, and community. He is bringing to light the opportunity to be a blessing to others when people bring up the problems and challenges they are facing. Jesus' work includes placing you in the right place to hear and understand the needs of others. Your role is to listen and then respond as you can. Jesus empowers you to show your love for others, *for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).*



What God wants us to do is not complicated. It is more listening than talking. When we talk with others, we let others do most of the talking. We listen to understand their needs more fully. And then, what we do is help others to experience God's love through us. God does the hard part. We are not there to convert people to faith. We just open up the possibility by establishing a relationship and letting God do the rest. We plant the seeds of faith and let God make them grow.

In a video discussion with author Greg Finke, Finke used two key words – Salvation and Purpose. **Salvation** is the result of a personal relationship a person has when they accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Because of our relationship with Jesus, He wants us to be a blessing to others. Saving people is well beyond our "pay grade." Salvation only comes from God. Our **Purpose** is how we utilize our lives to plant the seeds in others. It is helping people experience God's love through us. God offers us a purpose in life to plant the seeds. It has the potential to lead to the salvation of others. Let's not get ahead of ourselves. It is not our role to save the world, but it is our role to be loving, caring Christians, helping people in their time of need. Plant the seeds. Only God makes things grow. Just spread the seeds on all the soils in your life travels, and let God do the rest.

Question: What good can we do for others because of our faith?

Prayer: We thank you, Lord for the opportunities you give us to respond to other people's needs. Amen.