



Sent by God: His People on His Mission

LESSON 8: Values that Guide Us and Give Us Identity

Reviewing our Mission

For several weeks we have explored the vision and mission of this church. We have asked how hopeful people share hope. What does God send us forth to do? What is God's plan for this church? We identified concepts that summarize our mission. God sends us forth to fly on wings as eagles and to **ASCEND** to the heights: **Adoring, Sharing, Connecting, Evangelizing, and Nurturing faith as Disciples.**

Our Values

The second part of this series explores our core values. What values support the vision and mission of this church, shaping us and giving us identity? What values guide us as we seek to develop a 'mission-shaped' church? We focus on six values that reflect our mission and shape us as a church.

Truth. Because we value truth, we value the Bible as the Word of God and biblical teaching. We want to know and apply the Bible in real and relevant ways. Our commitment to truth reminds us that God calls us to be *approved workers* (2 Tim. 2:15).

Unity. Because we value unity, we seek peaceful harmony. We maintain unity in the Spirit of God because we are *spiritual brothers* (Eph. 4:1-6).

Touch. One indication of God's presence is TLC—touching, loving care. God touches our world through us. Because we are *ambassadors* (2 Cor. 5:17-20), we value caring evangelism.

Christian Living. We seek to live like Jesus, believing that he calls us to be like him, as his *disciples* (Luke 6:40).

Love. We seek to love like Jesus in the relationships of life. This love shows first in the way we share our

lives as Christians, reflecting our commitment to be the *family of God* (Eph. 3:14-20) and calling others into the family.

Ministry. Because we desire excellence in ministry, we are committed to equipping and empowering one another, recognizing that all are called to be *servants* in the likeness of Jesus (Mark 10:45).

Truth and Unity

Historically the two great pillars of the restoration plea are truth and unity. Commitment to the truth of God's word, and an intense desire for unity have characterized the faith throughout the centuries, from New Testament times to the present. Unfortunately, these two commitments at times have seemed mutually exclusive. A strong commitment to unity has often lessened the commitment to truth. A strong commitment to truth has made unity less probable.

As a result, many today have given up on one or the other of these foundational values. Some seek unity with little regard for truth; others hold strongly to truth and give little more than lip service to unity. Some unity-seekers seem to say, "Unity at any price." Some truth-seekers seem to say, "Unity only on my terms," or "truth only as I define it."

These tensions must be discussed by any church committed to being a church for all people. What is the source of genuine unity? What does it mean to be committed to truth?

Truth

Jesus claimed to be truth, and life, and the (only) way (John 14:6). In his Gethsemane prayer, he acknowledged that the word of God is truth, and thus the only power for holiness (John 17:17). Have you noted that sometimes contemporary commitments to truth are divorced from any emphasis on Jesus? Certainly, the Bible is truth, but that is not exactly

