

MISSION:
~~IM~~POSSIBLE

WEEK TWO

The *missio Dei* and
the work of Jesus





The Diocese of Toronto seeks to become shaped for mission and faithful to God's call to serve all in a post-Christendom context. This Mission Possible course has been provided as a resource to parishes to help people begin to think about who God is, what is the mission of God and how does church need to be shaped to respond to that call.

I strongly commend the program to you as it has been developed by Jenny and Stephen, both of whom know what it means to serve in inherited churches that seek to be shaped for mission. My hope is that this course will begin a fruitful and lasting conversation on what it means to be missional in your own context.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Colin: Toronto".

The Most Reverend Colin R. Johnson
Archbishop of Toronto
Metropolitan of Ontario



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada



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Next week

Leader: See you next week when we will begin to look at the issue of “sightedness.” How do we “see” where God is at work in people’s lives?

God’s mission awaits if you choose to accept it.

A Note for Leaders...

You came back for week two, that’s great!

Our hope for **this** week is for participants to see that the *missio Dei* is seen in its fullness in Jesus’ work of restoration, recovery and redemption; the **restoration** of people into right relationship, the **recovery** of the prophetic mission and the **redemption** carried out by Jesus on the cross. This is heady stuff, no doubt, and theological. It could be simply framed as this: whole, free and forgiven. But as you know your context best, please use language that you know will resonate, and still have theological integrity.

Recap last week....

(Take some time to discuss these questions among the whole group.)

What is the *missio Dei*? _____

Leader: The *missio Dei*, God’s mission, is to bring humanity and creation back into right relationship with God.

What was God’s intention at Creation? _____

Leader: For humanity and creation to live in unbroken relationship with God.

What went wrong? _____

Leader: Humanity disobeyed God and, as a consequence, now finds itself and all of creation in the natural state of being separated from God.

What is God's mission now? _____

Leader: The same.

Your homework!

(Have your participants share their pictures and let them comment on why they chose them.)

Share your pictures of
Creation
Fall
Redemption

and explain why you chose those pictures.



Homework!

Because of the work of Jesus, that same restoration, recovery and redemption is possible in our lives.

(Hand out three cards to each participant and have them write one R word on each card. Encourage them to stick the cards on their fridge or on their bedside table (wherever). Over the course of the week whenever they have experienced one of these moments ask them to write it down.)

On the cards provided, look for ways this week that you can practise/experience all three of these words.

On one of the three cards write each of the three words. Over the course of the week when you discover that you have practised/experienced restoration, recovery and redemption in your daily life, write down your experience to be shared with your group next week.

Closing prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you loved us and your creation so much that you would go to any lengths to draw us back into right relationship with you. Thank you that you sent your Son Jesus to take our human nature, to live and die as one of us, so that we may be restored and redeemed. Give us eyes this coming week to see you moving in our lives and in the lives of others, bringing healing, freedom and wholeness. We pray this in the name of the crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.



Leader's Notes

There are three things to draw attention to here: first, Jesus' statement, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." God's mission is forgiveness, no matter what we have done and to draw us back into a renewed relationship, both now and for eternity.

Second, however we understand "paradise," the point is that we will one day be restored to perfection. As the criminal acknowledges Jesus' innocence, and thereby unknowingly acknowledges his sacrifice, the way is now open for his redemption and restoration.

Third, we see the inclusiveness of the *missio Dei*; it is the centurion (non-Jew, reviled soldier/torturer, outsider) who also acknowledges Jesus' sacrifice, alongside the criminal, implying that the centurion too comprehends Jesus' mission. Again, the implication is that the *missio Dei* is for all. Anyone has the potential to see and grasp it.

Redemption: God wants to rescue us from the consequences of our brokenness, of our sin.

In this story who is doing the rescuing, the redeeming?

Who is being redeemed? Why?

How do you sense your own broken relationship with God?

(You can, if you wish and have time, now bring the group back together and have people share together what they discovered about one of the three R's.)

Leader: Last week we looked at the incarnation of God coming to earth as Jesus of Nazareth. We began to talk about how Jesus is related to the *missio Dei*. Read the words as you listen to this song about the incarnation.

(You can either play the CD if you have it or listen to it on YouTube.)

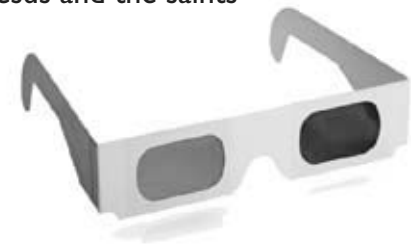
What if God was one of us?

(Joan Osborne/Alanis Morissette)

If God had a name, what would it be?
And would you call it to his face?
If you were faced with him in all his glory,
what would you ask if you had just one question?

Yeah, yeah, God is great
Yeah, yeah, God is good
Yeah, yeah
yeah yeah yeah
What if God was one of us?
Just a slob like one of us
Just a stranger on the bus
Trying to make his way home.

If God had a face,
what would it look like?
And would you want to see
If seeing meant that you would have to believe
In things like heaven and Jesus and the saints
and all the Prophets....



Incarnation



God *did* become one of us....

Jesus was sent as God in the flesh.

How is that “sending of Jesus” related to the *missio Dei*?

Leader: In Jesus, God hopes to bring us and creation back into right relationship with God. Jesus, by becoming one of us and by his sacrifice on the cross, creates a way for us to be connected with God, each other and creation.

**Now read together Colossians 1:13–22
and as it is read ask yourself the question,
“What was Jesus sent to do?”**

Incarnation: Jesus was sent...but sent to do what?

(Have one of your group read the passage.)

Colossians 1:13–22

¹³He has **rescued** us from the power of darkness and **transferred** us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have **redemption**, the **forgiveness of sins**. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to **reconcile** to

Redemption

Jesus dies on the cross (Luke 23:32–47)

³²Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.” ³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴²Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” ⁴⁴It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last. ⁴⁷When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, “Certainly this man was innocent.”

Recovery

Jesus in the synagogue (Luke 4:14–21)

¹⁴Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. ¹⁶When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” ²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Leader’s Note

Here we see Jesus return to his home synagogue, read the lesson and then audaciously claim that he himself is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. He was claiming that, through him (wow), it is now possible to recover the prophetic notions of justice and equity in people’s lives in real and practical ways...wholeness and healing for all people.

Recovery: God hopes to recover that original intention of beauty and wholeness in the lives of humanity.

What aspects of that wholeness is Jesus recovering in this story?

Where do you see a lack of beauty in your life or that of your neighbourhood?

Where in the life of your friends do you see a lack of wholeness?



himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by **making peace** through the blood of his cross. ²¹And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now **reconciled** in his fleshly body through death, **so as to present you holy and blameless** and irreproachable before him—

Take 10 minutes to discuss the highlighted words in Colossians.

How do we understand these words in light of the *missio Dei*?

Which of these words resonates the most with you?

- rescue
- transfer
- redemption
- forgiveness
- reconcile
- make peace
- make holy

Jesus did all this and other things as well, but we can summarize Jesus’ recovery of the *missio Dei* with these three words:

- Restoration
- Recovery
- Redemption.

Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus we can come to a fuller understanding of these words.



(Break your participants into three groups and each group take one of the following stories from the life of Jesus and explore the “R” that can be found in it. They can write down their answers in their booklets and share them with the large group at the end.)

Have each small group take one of the stories from the life of Jesus and explore the R that can be found in it.

Restoration: Luke 7:11–17

Recovery: Luke 4:14–21

Redemption: Luke 23:32–49

Restoration

The Widow of Nain (Luke 7:11–17)

Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. ¹²As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother’s only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. ¹³When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, “Do not weep.” ¹⁴Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, rise!” ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen among us!” and “God has looked favourably on his people!” ¹⁷This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

Leader’s Note

This is a story about restoration. The widow of Nain is a woman (obviously) who no longer has a husband and therefore no means of financial support. Widows in Jesus’ day were given over to the care of their sons. The sons would assure her continued stature in the community. However, now this woman had, with the death of her only son, lost her stature, her means of financial support and her place in the community. It would be assumed, by her fellow townsfolk, that she was under some sort of curse, so great was her misfortune. The raising of her son from the dead is of course a miraculous event, but we are focusing here on the fact that through that raising, the widow herself is also restored, primarily into her place in the community.

Restoration: God wishes to restore us into right relationship with God, with our community and with our creation.

How has Jesus restored this woman?

What aspect of restoration do we see in this story?

Are there ways in which you see a need for restoration in your life?

In your family maybe, place of work or in your neighbourhood?

