

**Core Values**  
***Outreach: Getting on God's Agenda***  
Part 3

**Intro:** When I went to college and attended what is now called Multnomah University (formally MSB), they had two days each year they set aside academics for what was called “A Day of Outreach”. The entire student body was mobilized to go door to door throughout Portland. (explain) I understand what they were trying to do, but is this really the way to get on God’s agenda for impacting the world?

- One of my classes was entirely on outreach...an entire semester! I remember we had to go into shopping malls / secular college campuses and try to talk to people about Jesus. I remember going to Reed college!
- Instead of getting students excited about reaching our world, I think this approach traumatized most students. Then, because you felt like an epic failure, (WHY? Because you hated outreach!) you began to doubt that God could even use someone like yourself.
- I think there are a lot of followers of Jesus who avoid this topic like the plague. Today, I want to begin redeeming this issue. Outreach is God’s heart and it’s not as scary as you think it is when we see it more holistically.
- If we are going to follow Jesus, then this means we have to get on His outreach agenda for this world. What does this look like?
  
- What does it look like to live God’s outreach agenda?

**1. I am living God’s agenda when I care about the unchurched**

*John 3:16 “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” (NLT)*

*II Cor. 5:18 “And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.” (NLT)*

- We must care about more than ourselves

We must move beyond this mentality that it is simply about Jesus and me. For so many believers in Jesus their spiritual world only revolves around their life / their needs / their immediate issues / their immediate family / their stresses / their pain.

- If we make following Jesus merely into a self-focused pursuit, we are off God’s agenda. Of course He meets our needs, but this isn’t the only reason I follow Jesus. Jesus meeting all my needs isn’t the end result we pursue.
- This is an example of how we have allowed our culture to re-define Christianity. We have set aside God’s agenda and God’s heart for the world and replaced it with a self-centered version where now Jesus just supports me.

Listen to this message at [foothillsonline.com](http://foothillsonline.com)

Page 1

- If we are going to get back on God’s agenda, it begins by allowing Him to change our hearts so we care about what He cares about. What does He care about? He care about people!
  - How can my heart change? Ask Him to!
- We must love the people of this world not condemn them  
If God loved the people of this world so much He sent His Son, then shouldn’t we love them as well? It’s pretty tough to be effective at this assignment of reconciling people to God if the church is always condemning them.
    - It’s as if the church has embraced a strategy of reconciling through condemnation. We’re going to reconcile the world to Jesus by constantly condemning their behavior and showing them how evil and wrong they are.
    - Jesus loved people. Jesus cared about the brokenness of humanity.

*John 3:17 “God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.” (NLT)*

- Loving people of this world is not condoning. Loving is not giving permission. Loving is not ignoring God’s word. Loving broken people is not denying Jesus. Loving people it is what following Jesus looks like.

*Luke 15:1-2 “Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach.  
<sup>2</sup>This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!” (NLT)*

- What is exciting about this passage is not that the religious leaders were mad at Him, but that it implies that after listening to Jesus, Jesus would often hang out in a relational environment with these people. (eating with them). In this culture, that meant going over to their homes.
- Condemnation is just not a very effective outreach strategy; but love is.

## **2. I am living God’s agenda when I meet tangible needs**

*Matt. 25:40 “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’ (NLT)*

- Loving people compels us to meet needs – This is why we have the ministries that we do. (Share statistics) Sharing this information is so you can praise God.
  - Resource Center
  - LHP – Meeting parental and the needs of children
  - Adult Community Center
  - Backpack buddies – 237 kids per week
  - Guatemala – 160 kids in a sponsorship program
  - Developing a Counseling Center – Cindy Cox
  - We are constantly looking for more ways to meet needs.

Listen to this message at [foothillsonline.com](http://foothillsonline.com)

Page 2

- Meeting needs is what Jesus said defines loving people
  - Story of the “Good Samaritan” – share context and story.
  - If we ignore the needs around us Jesus would say we do not love people as we love ourselves. This is why we love our community in this way.
  - Our philosophy as a church is to discover community needs and meet as many as we can in the name of Jesus. This is God’s agenda.

### 3. I am living God’s agenda when I witness for Jesus

*Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (NLT)*

#1 most avoided practice of the Christian experience. WHY? We do this in our own strength.

- Witnessing without power is fruitless, frustrating and fearful  
Notice the order of this verse. You will receive power...THEN you will be witnesses. When we try to witness without God’s power then our attempts will usually be fruitless, frustrating and filled with fear.
  - It was the reality of God’s power in the disciples that made them effective witnesses. It wasn’t their strategy, programs or slick full color brochures they handed out in Jerusalem that made the difference.
  - What made the difference was the reality of Jesus IN them. Their lives had been personally changed...personally transformed.
  - Anyone can witness about something that is real. Anyone can witness about something they have experienced. It’s simple to talk about something that had a major impact on your life. The power of that experience makes it easy.

**Illustrate:** Lisa and I can both talk with passion and clarity about our trip last year to Europe - share

  - When the power of God has impacted your life in a very real way it is easy to witness about that reality. BUT, if you have not had the power of God impact you like this, then witnessing will always feel forced and not natural.
- Allow Jesus to change your life so you can become a living witness
  - **Be willing to ask** – Be needy for His power – “Lord, I want to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in my life.”
  - **Be willing to follow** – Be obedient no matter what – His power is reserved for obedience. Power shows up when we obey – when we follow. Power shows up when we trust what Jesus is asking us to do.
  - **Be willing to witness your reality.** Only witness what you have experienced. People can disagree with your arguments but they don’t usually argue about

Listen to this message at [foothillsonline.com](http://foothillsonline.com)

Page 3

your experiences. You don't have to have all the answers. Relax. Simply witness about your reality.

**Illustrate:** Let me use our vacation again as an example. I don't have to know all about Venice Italy. Yeah, but didn't you go to Italy?" Yes, but we didn't go to Venice. Why would I try to talk about Venice? Why are you putting expectations on yourself to witness about things you have never experienced? Just witness what is real in you. Witness what you have experience. Witness where you have been.

This is God's witnessing agenda.

#### **4. I am living God's agenda when I behave as salt and light**

*Matt. 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.*

*<sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." (NLT)*

- Salt and light actions are visible

For us to be on God's outreach agenda, we must be engaging in actions the world sees. If the unchurched of a community do not see these actions, then they are not salt and light. They may be good things, but they have no community impact for the Kingdom.

- Actions that are not salt and light

- Going to church
- Going to life group
- Bible studies
- Prayer

These actions may help you become salt and light but because the unchurched do not typically see these actions, they certainly wouldn't qualify for what Jesus was referring to.

- Actions that can be salt and light.

- Believers who care about their community
- Believers who are involved meeting needs in the community
- Believers who develop partnerships with the unchurched in a community
- Believers who demonstrate unity as they accomplish community projects or very public church projects (like our building project)

We will never be on God's outreach agenda hiding behind the walls of our church buildings.

- Salt and light action point people Godward

It's not simply actions that the unchurched see, they are actions that cause them to move in God's direction. They are actions that are unlike what they see in the world. They are behaviors that can't fully be explained away. What do they look like?

Listen to this message at [foothillsonline.com](http://foothillsonline.com)

Page 4

○ **Love without an agenda**

So often in the world loving actions come with strings attached. I'll do a favor for you if you do a favor for us. When we do loving things with no expectations attached, the world takes notice.

- Years ago during Elementary school days – Washed windows / painted gym / put in a parking lot – never asked for favors.
- We continue to love our community in the manner.

○ **Unity beyond the cause**

Even the world can have unity for a moment around a compelling cause. BUT, unity that goes beyond the cause. Unity even when there isn't a cause. Unity even when there is differencing opinions. Unity when things don't go as planned. Unity despite socio-economic issues. This is why our relationships are the greatest testimony we have of the reality of Jesus in our midst.

- Our unity is something so radically different than the world people take notice.

○ **Sacrifice that only benefits others**

This is the example of Jesus. He made tremendous sacrifice for the sake of humanity. The bible tells us that we were bought with a price. Our benefit came at His expense.

Are we willing to make sacrifices for others / our community / even if there is no direct benefit back to us? Will we make sacrifices solely for others?

- We are always quick to ask ourselves what the return is in our investment. What if there is none? What is the return on investment was completely for the community. (Example of Good Samaritan)
- What if our sacrifice didn't benefit us at all but brought great benefit to the city? What if our sacrifice didn't result in more people coming to church / increased finances / growth in a program. What if it simply made Molalla better?
- Selfless sacrifice is so unusual that it is like a beacon in the darkness. People cannot help but notice. This is why it points people to God. This is why it is salt and light.

Are you willing to get on God's outreach agenda?

Let's abandon the old church models and strategies when it comes to outreach. Let's simply be who Jesus called us to be.

- Let's love unchurched people
- Let's meet tangible needs
- Let's witness what is real in us

Listen to this message at [foothillsonline.com](http://foothillsonline.com)

Page 5

- Let's live like salt and light so people see God in what we do

Listen to this message at [foothillsonline.com](http://foothillsonline.com)  
Page 6