

The Primary Ministry of the Church

By Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam

The Lord gave me some clear direction in answer to what the primary ministry of the church is, while I was reading the story of the lame man in Acts 3:1-10:

“One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer – at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going to the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John was about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”

What is the Primary Ministry of the Church?

The primary ministry of the church is missions. This means reaching the people in your community and those abroad. Biblically, missions should begin in Jerusalem and then Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. To understand this ministry, it would help greatly if we look at the story of the healing of the lame man. This story is an illustration of what the primary mission of the church ought to be.

The lame man typifies helpless humanity. The crippled state of man is a good example of what sin does in one’s life. The Bible tells us that the man was lame from birth. Significantly, David in talking about man’s sin, says this in Psalms 51:5, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” Paul echoed the same plight of humanity, in Eph. 2:1, “As for you, you were dead in trespasses and sin.”

The lame man was outside the temple. Sin keeps us out of God’s presence. We cannot come to God if remain in our state of sin. Therefore, we remain outside and hurting because of sin. Sin has robbed us of the true sense of spiritual value. So, like the lame man, our concern is only materialistic. The lame man hoped for silver and gold, thinking it was an answer to life and life’s problems. There are many who are living this way today. They may not be physically lame, but spiritually they are incapable of helping themselves. They are looking to the things of this world and what this world can offer them. They need to meet Jesus through our testimonies in just the same way as the lame man met Jesus.

So then, the primary mission of the church is to take the gospel to the lost, hurting and dying humanity. We read that Peter and John offered not silver or gold but Jesus Christ of Nazareth to the lame man. Jesus not only came to save sinners but was anointed for this primary purpose. (Luke 4:18, 19).

The lame man was also helpless and destitute; it was Peter and John who gave attention to him. They healed him in the name of Jesus. The testimony of this man’s healing was: “He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God” (Acts 3:8). Man cannot save himself. Man cannot find God out of his own effort. The Bible declares that Jesus came for this purpose. “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners – of who I am the worst” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Today, Jesus does that through you, just as he worked through Peter and John. Jesus said, “I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” To this church, He commissioned, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of age” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

You have been chosen and sent by Jesus, “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18). “Again Jesus said, Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). That’s why we have a missions programme; that’s why we are evangelistic and that’s why we challenge you to make a faith promise for missions. We must share the gospel with the world. If we, the church, lose sight of this primary business of missions, our existence is in vain. Jesus said to the church in Sardis, “You have a reputation of being alive but you are dead” (Revelation 3:1).

What is the Power or Might of the Church?

First of all, let me say what our power is not. It is not material power, that is, not building, finance, nor the size of the congregation. Neither is it personality power, the charisma of or how charismatic the church is. I believe they can be contributing factors but our power to reach and save the lost does not come from these things.

The power of the church is super natural, i.e. the church is divinely empowered. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed” (Luke 4:18). Jesus spoke of the Spirit’s anointing that enables Him to be effective in His

ministry. Jesus said to the 120 – “On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promise, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4, 5).

The Bible says, “All authority I own in heaven and on earth has been give to Jesus” (Matthew 28:18). Jesus said, “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father” (John 14:13).

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