

## **JOINING JESUS ON HIS MISSION**

### **SESSION 2: Chapters 3-4**

**Warm Up: What is your favorite water-based activity and why? (swimming, fishing, ice skating, skiing, etc.)**

Dear Friends,

Last session we were asked to consider how is Jesus trying to get our attention, and how we need to reconsider our assumptions on what it means to follow him. We also reflected on his mission or “grand adventure to redeem and restore human lives to the kingdom of his Father”; how he does

not ask us to go on a mission *for* him but instead *join* him on his mission. We join the mission by engaging our neighborhoods or circles of influence with the message of Christ’s redeeming work.

This week we continue this study together by looking at how the church and cultural landscapes have changed around us as well as looking at what might cause us to stall in joining Jesus in his mission. Let’s begin by reading and reflecting on these scripture passages:

#### **Adjusting to a Changing Landscape**

*<sup>1</sup>On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. <sup>2</sup>Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. <sup>3</sup>But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. <sup>4</sup>Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. <sup>5</sup>Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. <sup>6</sup>When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. <sup>7</sup>For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. <sup>8</sup>So there was great joy in that city. (Acts 8:1-8 NIV)*

#### **Jesus’ Followers Uniquely Equipped to Engage the Culture**

*<sup>16</sup>So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. <sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup>Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup>Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. (Galatians 5:16,22-26 NIV)*

#### **Stop Stalling and Do Something**

*<sup>11</sup>Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup>Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup>And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. (John 14:11-14 NIV)*

#### **DISCUSSION GUIDE: The River Moved Are You Stalling?**

“Jesus is inviting me to join him on his mission.”

This is an important mindset change for most U.S. church members. Jesus does not give me a mission to do for him. Jesus is on a mission and he invites me to come with him. I’m not a Jesus-salesperson. I’m a Jesus-follower. The U.S. has become one of the largest mission fields on the planet. The river has moved. The odds are very good that right now, wherever you live in the U.S., people in your neighborhood and workplace are largely unconnected to a local congregation and may not be connected to Jesus at all. We are no longer a church who is servicing a community filled with a variety of Christians. We are now a church who finds itself needing to be on mission in a mission field.

As Neighborhood Missionaries, we have a simple mindset:

In order to join Jesus on his mission all we really have to do is enjoy people and then seek, recognize and respond to what Jesus is already doing in the lives of the people we are enjoying.

1. Stats: Millions have left the church; only 18-22% of “churched people” go to worship; <10% of adults under 30 regularly engage in a local congregation. Do these seem like realistic statistics to you? How do you think that the ‘church’ should respond? In our response what is the difference between being a Jesus follower and a Jesus salesperson?
2. What makes sense to you about the metaphor of the river moving?
3. What challenges do you (and your congregation) face now that the river has moved? What gives us hope in spite of these challenges?
4. Respond to the following quote from Greg Finke on page 41 of his book, “Because I am a Jesus follower living in the mission field of the U.S. that makes me a missionary, whether I realize it or not.
5. If we as Jesus followers are truly missionaries by the simple reality that we live in the U.S. (one of the largest mission fields in the world), what keeps many believers from living this out and joining Jesus in mission?
6. Do you struggle to move forward in mission out of a concern that you don’t know enough; do you still need to read more about missional living? If so how might you, or others, overcome these concerns?
7. Respond to this quote on page 47, “it’s not what you know that will change the world, but what you do with what you know that will change the world.”
8. How does the quote by Mark Twain: “*Anyone who has grabbed a bull by the tail knows five or six more things than someone who has not*” apply to joining Jesus on his mission?

**With all this in mind take another look at the scripture passages from the beginning of this lesson:**

How did the mission landscape shift for the early church in Acts 8? How did the church adjust and respond in faith? What can we learn from their example?

Read the list (pages 42-43) of things on that the culture is looking for that Greg Finke believes that Jesus followers are uniquely qualified to provide. How might the “fruits of the Spirit” that Jesus has given the church from Galatians 5 relate to these cultural needs? How might we respond to the reality that many in the culture no longer believe they will find these in the church?

In John 14 what does Jesus promise to his followers that believe in and join him in his mission? How do his words encourage you to stop stalling, simply learn about being a missionary, and start doing something missional?