

**Social Justice Biblically Assessed**  
**Week 11: How Does Justice Relate to the Mission of the Church?**  
Holy Trinity Sunday School, Fall 2021

**I. What is the church?** Excerpt from *The Church Mission*, John Murray collected writings

- a. The assembly of the covenant people of God
  
- b. The household of God
  
- c. The body of Christ

*When our thought of the church is governed by these concepts, we are compelled to recognize how God-centered and God-oriented must our conception of the church be. However important is the function of the church in its missionary outreach to the world, we can readily see how deflected becomes our perspective if we conceive of the church in terms of mission... It is apparent that only in this context can the mission of the church be properly understood.*

**II. What is the mission of the church?** (outline from Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church*)

- a. The Great Commission Passages: Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8 (cf. Mark 13:10; 14:9)

Mat 28:16-20 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. (17) And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. (18) And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Luk 24:44-49 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” (45) Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, (46) and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, (47) and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (48) You are witnesses of these things. (49) And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

- b. Objection: Why should we emphasize these “postresurrection, preascension commands?”
- c. First – if entire Bible is a missional book (who can disagree) – we still do well to look for the definition of that mission in explicit commands!
- d. Second – Look to the NT rather than OT for theology of mission
- e. Third – Look to Jesus for our Missiological directive
- f. Fourth –Placement of the Great Commission Passages – strategic importance
- g. Fifth – Sums up many themes of the Gospels

## Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 25

*1. The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

*2. The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*

*3. Unto this catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth, by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.*

### **III. Church Institutional and Church Organic – the broader scope**

- a. There is a difference between the church institutionally and Christians more individually considered.

- b. So What Should We Do, As Churches?

*One thing is perfectly clear - no missionary work that consists merely in presenting to the people in foreign lands a thing that has proved to be mildly valuable in the experience of the missionary himself, which he thinks may perhaps prove helpful in foreign lands in building up a better life upon this earth, can possibly be regarded as real Christian missions. At the very heart of the real Christian missionary message is the conviction that every individual hearer to whom the missionary goes is in deadly peril, and that unless the message is heeded he is without hope in this world and in the dreadful world that is to come. Then, on the basis of those two great presuppositions - the awful holiness of God and a mankind lost under the guilt and power of sin-the first Christian missionaries preached Jesus Christ.*

*-J. Gresham Machen, The Christian View of Missions*