

## Session #4: Missionary Life

By Rev. Craig Schweitzer

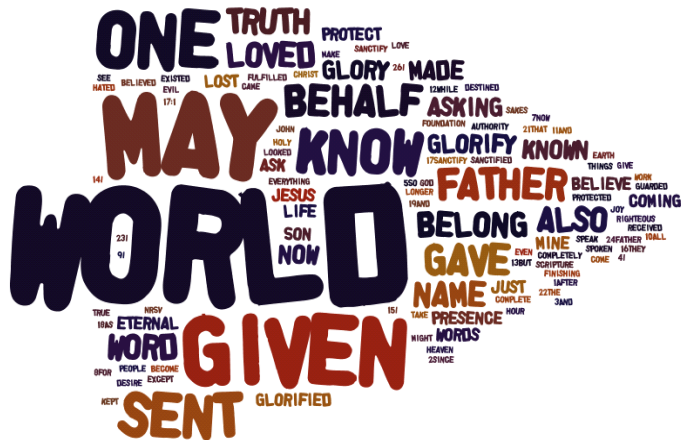
### Read John 17

**Overview:** As you reflect upon your prayer life, how does this practice affect and engage your life as a missionary? We are called to be missionaries not as individuals, but as children of God connected very intimately together as brothers and sisters in Christ, alive in community. Living in community we are sent to care and walk with our neighbors in every aspect of everyday life. How does prayer impact your journey as a child of God serving as a missionary in this way? May Jesus' prayer in John 17 serves as one guide in your prayer, reflection, study and conversation.

### Questions for reflection & discussion:

- What are some passages from Scripture that center on Jesus' time of prayer?
  - \* What are some things that happen after these times of prayer?
- What are the three sections of prayer in John 17?
- How or why do you think Jesus is praying here?
- What is Jesus saying here about you?
- Do you pray for protection? When? How?
- What is unity to you? How do you pray for unity?
- How would you describe the relationship between you and Jesus?
- What difference does that make in the world around you?
- What if we were to approach our mission as missionaries by first grounding ourselves in prayer?

Below is a wordle.net image of John 17. The more often a word is used in the text the more prominent it becomes. Enjoy the image.



## Session # One: Love God; Love Neighbor; Serve Neighbor

By Rev. Renee Splichal Larson

### MISSIONARY ME? Acts 9.10-20

There are 3 'Ananias' in the book of Acts: A man named Ananias (Acts 5); High Priest Ananias (Acts 23-24); A certain disciple, and devout, well-spoken of man Ananias (Acts 9 & 22)

### Read Acts 9.10-20

Missionary Me with a question mark: The question mark can mean many different things for a variety of people. For Ananias, the question mark is first and foremost, fear (Acts. 9.13-14).

What prevents you from being a missionary or what might be excuses to not live out discipleship and mission?

Examples: Fear, Rumors, Not being equipped or ready, "Anyone but me," no concept of being a missionary, Busy-ness, Apath, Becoming vulnerable, Doing uncomfortable things, Don't know enough (i.e. Scripture), Don't know what to do or say, God might ask again, Unworthiness

SAUL BECOMES PAUL: What might be the question mark(s) for Paul?

### Look Up: 1 Cor. 2.3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:8-10; Ephesians 3.7-8

Are we terrified that we are carriers of the Gospel? This question has responsibility attached to it, but also great joy and excitement. Notice Ananias' first encounter with Saul in **Acts 9:17**.

Ananias enters the home that is housing an enemy, physically lays his own hands on Saul, and addresses him as "brother." Ananias worked his way through the Missionary Me question marks, trusting that God had great purpose in sending him. How could Ananias have known the depth of mission and ministry that would be fostered by his own discipleship and obedience?

"God has no hands but ours, no bread but the bread we bake, no prayers but the ones we make, whether we know what we are doing or not (Barbara Brown Taylor. *An Altar in the World*, p. 201, take from *Luther's letter to Peter the Barber*).

## Session # Two: Calling All Ordinary People....

By Rev. JT Burke

### Read Mark 1:14-20

This story details Jesus calling the first disciples into God's Mission. It is a call the disciples respond to immediately. They do not ask any questions. They simply drop everything and follow Jesus, and by following Jesus, these four disciples become the first missionaries.

1. If you were to try and describe what a missionary was to someone what would you say? What is the "who, what, and where" of the word missionary.

When my daughter was 4 she attended a preschool in Chicago. One day, after we had picked her up from school, my wife Erin and I asked her "What was the craziest thing that happened today?" And after a moment of thinking, she said, "Jack and Will don't believe in God, so Ramona, Hannah, and I decided we need to get them to believe in God."

Who is a missionary? A missionary is an ordinary person living out each day who God calls him or her to be. The first four missionaries were fishermen. They were four ordinary guys and we, like these first 4 missionaries, are ordinary people; farmers, ranchers, retired folks, cashiers, lawyers, truck drivers, oil drillers, politicians, coaches, stay at home moms and dads, called by God to share the good news. Where do we live out this call? It is often in the ordinary places of our lives that we fulfill our calling as missionaries. The barber shop; the teacher's lounge; morning coffee at the diner; these are our mission fields. These are places where God calls us to live into and live out his mission.

1. Where is a place in your life that could become a place of mission?

What does a missionary do? Being a missionary simply means scratching people where they itch. It is about meeting needs through helping hands, listening ears, calming voices, and loving hearts. These missionary moments happen each day of our lives in the ordinary actions of love we take in our lives.

1. Who is someone you have been a missionary to?
2. Who is someone who has been missionary to you?

It is into this life, this missionary life that Jesus calls us, ordinary, everyday people, smelling of diesel fuel and manure, of classrooms and kitchens, of laundry detergent and baby spit up, people from all walks of life, discovered and called by Jesus, to bear Jesus' word and continue Jesus' mission. Ordinary people, in ordinary places, doing ordinary things.

## Session # Three:

By Rev. Pauline Crowder

*Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"*  
John 4.28-29

God's mission is centered in God's promise for you—a response that wells out of the unexpected life-giving relationship God makes happen with us, and the surprise, delight and relief of it.

### Read John 4.1-15 and look these up together:

Find the surprising who/what/when/where in verses 3-9.

What does Jesus promise? (vv 10-14)

What does the woman ask for? (v 15)

Jesus comes to us first, often by surprise in ordinary places, crossing all kinds of boundaries to meet us and presenting us with an astonishing gift. His life-giving promises grow trust in us, so that we are set free and then moved to do mission.

In between these readings (verses 16-24), Jesus and the woman engage some deeply personal topics, all part of how Jesus meets her where she is. The surprise and delight of the encounter with Jesus changes the woman and it changes us too, each time it happens to us.

### Read John 4.25-30, 39-42.

How has joy or delight come to you lately?

What does that joy do to you? What does it move you to do?

That she leaves her water jar standing next to Jesus and runs off to share something with those whom before now she been avoiding, signals that she has received a mighty and surprising gift of living water. "Could this be the Christ," we ask with her. The the gift of God makes all the difference in our being sent forth at all. We spend our whole lives being surprised and delighted by it again and again as we live in God's mission. Missionary me...

*God, grant us this gift each day we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.*