



## The Real Mission of Jesus

At the high school where I teach, I'm always impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of our students. You can feel it in the hallways, in classroom discussions, at social events. These kids are passionate. They want to storm out into the world and transform it for Jesus Christ. It's an exciting atmosphere, and as teachers, we wouldn't have it any other way.

But what does it really mean to go out and impact the world for Jesus? My students and I often wrestle with this question in class. And as I talk with these aspiring world-changers, I've noticed how easy it is for us to focus on the big, "top-down" sorts of goals—the same principles and priorities the world values.

### Serving God

They talk about getting into the right college, securing the right career, being able to influence the right people — this is how they will serve God. Haven't we all thought such things? It is so tempting to believe that if we could have the right political power, the right economic power or the right media power, that somehow we would advance the kingdom of God.

I remind my students that Christians have long wrestled with this temptation. Even in Jesus' day, many Jews looked for such things in a messiah. They wanted political deliverance and a political kingdom. They wanted someone who could physically rescue them from Caesar's rule, and they weren't all that interested in the Messiah who offered forgiveness and deliverance from sin and ushered in the kingdom of God by sacrificing His own life.

### Really transforming the world

I'm not suggesting we shouldn't encourage our kids to dream big, to consider how we can use our gifts and talents to best transform the world for Christ. Christians should absolutely seek to reclaim politics, to reclaim media and economics — these things should all be used to honor His name. But as I look at the heart and history of Christianity with my students, I challenge them to consider the real mission that Jesus spoke about, the mission He actually modeled for us.

Jesus taught His followers about the kingdom of God, and how that kingdom is extended on earth. In Western minds, the concept of a kingdom tends to refer to territory and power. Great Britain, the Roman Empire — power expanded by violence and blood and power. This is how we usually view the idea of a kingdom. But Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God was very much in keeping with the Jewish understanding of the word.

Kingdom, in the Jewish mind, usually refers to a place and a situation where the king's will is done. That distinction is key to understanding what Christ's mission is for His followers. Jesus wants to extend His reign on earth, to extend it through His sons and daughters. But His will is not for us to pursue power and influence and territory. His will is for His followers to do the will of the King, to put God's Word and love into flesh, just as He did.

### The challenge

Almost daily, I present two challenges to my students. The first is to try to obey God in every way — to reclaim one situation, one moment, one inch of territory whenever the opportunity arises. The second challenge I give them is to not give away something that is part of God's kingdom. Every time we succumb to the will of the evil one instead of the Lord, we give away one situation, one moment, one small piece of the kingdom of heaven. Every day, regardless of our position, we have the choice to extend the kingdom or contract the kingdom.

And as these students prepare to head out into the world, I say to them, "So, you're going head out to college. And when you get there, you'll face choices every day. You must decide whether you will do the will of God in class, in the dorm, at the weekend party. And you will either give away a square inch that belongs to the King by refusing to do His will, or you will take back a square inch that the evil one now has as you do the King's will."

This is the real mission of Jesus that we must help our young people see, to be the presence of God in a broken world. The kingdom is extended not through the positions we hold or the power we wield, but by doing the will of the Father. By loving our neighbors, by loving our enemy, by caring about sinners.

Each time we put into practice the will of God, His kingdom is extended by a small amount. How much territory will you give up? How much will you gain?

By Ray Vander Laan Via [www.focusonthefamily.com](http://www.focusonthefamily.com)

## PRAYER LIST

- **Lauren Babb** (health)
- **John Beiler** (health)
- **Jane Brady, Elsie Clements, and Jorja Clements** (health)
- **Dawn Clarke** (Shirley Kuchynka's daughter)
- **Betty Cox** (Brent Barnick's sister—homebound, rheumatoid arthritis)
- **Dixie** (Debbie Faires's mother—Alzheimer's)
- **Leon Giesecke** (Jan Moerbe's father—throat cancer)
- **Herbert and Nelle Hahn** (health)
- **Sandra Jetton** (health)
- **Debbie Jalufka** (recovering from surgery)
- **Edward Jungbauer** (Moerbes' friend—health)
- **Kuchykna Family**
- **Lovie Lewis** (Kevin Johnson's grandmother—health)
- **Junior and Ada Powell** (Sharron Mason's brother-in-law and sister—health)
- **Deborah Rhoades** (health)
- **Jocelyn Seals** (Hallettsville—cancer)
- **David Taylor** (Cody Chrismon's uncle—cancer)
- **Adrienne Zingrich** (Susan Barnick's cousin—cancer)

If you have any announcements or prayer requests you wish to have included in the bulletin or to sign up for weekly e-mail updates, please contact Victoria Johnson: 325-518-9205, [victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org](mailto:victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org).

## PRAYER UPDATES

We rejoice with **Brooke Bertling**, Haley Ratliff's friend, who successfully completed breast cancer treatment. Brooke's lab results have all come back good and she is cancer free!

**Herbert and Nelle Hahn** are home now as Herb continues to progress in his recovery. The doctors did notice an aneurism in his latest rounds of testing and he will return to Houston for an appointment on Wednesday in regards to that.

Haley Ratliff requests prayers for their sweet six-year-old friend, **Parker Robertson**, who was diagnosed with Leukodystrophy last year, **and Parker's family**. The disease affects the Central and Peripheral Nervous Systems. Parker lost his vision, hearing, ability to walk, and ability to swallow, so he is on a feeding tube. His prognosis is grave and he may only have only about a month or so left to live.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Youth Sunday: Palmetto State Park

Youth and their families are invited to join us for a cookout and devotional at Palmetto State Park **next Sunday, Sept. 11 from 12:30-3 p.m.** Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided. Please bring a side or dessert to share. Please also bring a lawn chair, your favorite lawn games and your friends! Admission for children 12 and under is free. Admission for ages 13 and up is \$3 per person.

### September Calendars

September calendars are now available in the foyer. Be sure to pick one up to take home with you.

### Wednesday Evening Meal & Bible Study

Please join us at **5:15 p.m. this Wednesday** for dinner in the annex. This week's entrée is lasagna. Anyone who is able is asked to bring sides to share, but please do not let that prevent you from joining us.

### Volunteers Needed: Wednesday Night Meals

Volunteers are needed to prepare the entrée for meals on Wednesday evenings. **If you signed up to prepare a meal, please send your menu to Victoria by Wednesday the week before your turn.**

### Sunday Night Small Group

There is a small group that meets in the annex each Sunday evening from 6-7 p.m. The Lord's Supper is available.

### Tuesday Morning Men's Prayer Breakfast

All men are invited to the annex each Tuesday morning at **6:20 a.m.** for a time of breakfast, prayer and fellowship.

### Smithville Ladies' Day

Smithville Church of Christ invites you to join their Ladies' Day: "Quilted by Grace for His Glory" on **Saturday, Sept. 10 from 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.** at Buescher State Park Recreation in Smithville. For more information, please pick up an invitation in the foyer.

### Youth & Family Outing: ACU Football in Houston

Join the ACU Wildcats as they take on Southland Conference rival Houston Baptist on **Saturday, Sept. 17**. Before the game, hang out at a pre-game party sponsored by the ACU Alumni Association. Registration for the party is free and the first 200 people to register receive a free Chick-Fil-A boxed dinner. **Sign up in the foyer to register for the party.** The pre-game party begins at 5 p.m. and the game kicks off at 7 p.m. Game tickets are \$13 for adults and \$5 for youth under 18.

## YOUTH ZONE



WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 7  
TEAM TENNIS

GONZALES HIGH SCHOOL @ LA VERNIA, 4 P.M.  
JUNIOR HIGH VOLLEYBALL  
GONZALES 7TH "B" V. CUERO, 5 P.M. (GHS OLD GYM)  
GONZALES 7TH "A" V. CUERO, 6 P.M. (GHS OLD GYM)

THURSDAY, SEPT. 8  
JUNIOR HIGH FOOTBALL  
SHINER V. BRAZOS, 5 P.M.



Caden Chrismon—Shiner Jr High Football  
Jacy Chrismon—Shiner Jr High Cross Country & Volleyball  
Cole Hendershot—Gonzales HS Team Tennis



SATURDAY, SEPT. 10  
JUNIOR HIGH CROSS COUNTRY  
SHINER @ MOULTON  
JUNIOR HIGH VOLLEYBALL  
SHINER @ SCHULENBURG TOURNAMENT



Coach Kevin Johnson—Gonzales 7th Volleyball  
Carly Pustka—Shiner Jr High Cross Country & Volleyball  
Hannah Pustka—Shiner Jr High Cross Country & Volleyball