**1st Century Church connecting with a 21st Century World Part 1: JESUS**

**\*\*VID Cortez Home Invasion**

**<1st Century TITLE>**

Welcome to week 1 of our new series. We are so excited about this series.

It’s a vision series and over the next 6 weeks we are going to solidify the vision & Mission of Redemption Church. I along with pastors Scott, Marshal, and Robert are going to share our heart and our dream and cast the vision that God has given us.

**Mission vs Vision**

**<Mission>**

Mission = Purpose

All hospitals have a mission that is almost exact… something like…

To bring health and healing to the community…

Same thing with schools… To educate students and prepare them for the next stages in life.

**All churches should have the same mission.** Jesus himself gave us a clear mission!We will come back to this point later in this series.

Our Mission at Redemption Church (Invite them to say it with me)

**<To declare the good news of Jesus and see others become followers of Christ.>**

This mission statement comes from 2 scriptures…

Mark 16:15 (NIV) …Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

We are to declare the good news of Jesus!

Matthew 28:19 (NIV) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations…

The word disciple means ‘one who follows the teachings’ We are called to make disciples… that is to say… Followers of Chirst.

**This Mission is our Purpose. Having a clear mission helps us make decisions around here.**

* Should we help this lady who wants to share the gospel in Asia?

 Does it fulfill our mission? Does it declare Jesus and lead others to follow?

* Should we spend a large amount of money of a laser light show so we have a cooler worship experience…

Does it fulfill our mission… maybe not… Our mission isn’t “to be a cool church.” Don’t get me wrong… We aren’t setting out to be an uncool church or boring church… We figure there is nothing more exciting than Knowing Jesus and making Him known… We think a cool church preaches Jesus and sees people taking new steps in faith.

* Do we need to spend a few hundred dollars to upgrade our camera gear at Redemption?

 Does that fulfill our mission? Would it help us declare the good news?

* Should we hire someone to join our staff?

Is it the best way to help us accomplish our mission?

**Not everything that comes our way should be our mission…**

Mission = Purpose. Again our purpose is…

**<To declare the good news of Jesus and see others become followers of Christ.>**

That’s the Mission… so what is the vision?

**If Mission is the purpose… Vision is the best way to fulfill the Mission.**

Vision is often more complex than the mission.

While all hospitals have almost identical missions… their visions differ greatly…

 A children’s hospital still wants to bring healing and health but has decided to do it differently than the cancer clinic.

In the same way… **All churches should have identical missions but should have different visions.**

**This point is important.**

What is the best way to fulfill our mission. The answer to that question is our vision.

We have a church mission we support in Maykop, Russia. We share the same mission as this church, however we have different visions. Both Churches are in different cultures and face different challenges. They have found a different way to accomplish their mission….

They take wilderness retreats. They have held Youth services upon mountain tops. We have seen the pictures of baptisms in beautiful nature settings…

They face large cultural struggles of atheism, islam, and government corruption. They have found it helps them accomplish their mission to take urban people into rural environments.

Should we do the same? Not necessarily..

The American Church has put more emphasis on the Method rather than the Mission. Choose whatever method works but make sure you stay focused on the Mission.

**Our Vision…** (Invite them to say it) To be a…

**<1st Century Church connecting with a 21st Century World>**

The best way for us to fulfill our mission… Declaring Jesus and making followers… is to be like Jesus’ original Church.

We want to act like, talk like, walk like the 1st Century Church.

And we want to do it in such a way that it resonates and is effective within the 21st Century.

Starting today and over the next 5 weeks we are going to be looking at the Church of the book of Acts. We are going to pointing to 6 things that 1st Century Church did to accomplish their mission. We are going to do our best to apply their passion, focus, and willingness to our world in the year 2013.

**The 1st century church was <all about Jesus.>**

Often overlooked is the fact that Jesus is alive and well in the 1st century church.

The Church is not a museum… Museums are for important historical figures who have passed away are remembered. The church is a place where a very alive Christ is remembered. We don’t just remember things that He once said but this Christ still speaks!

Christ died upon the Cross. He was buried. He was resurrected…. But did you know… He wasn’t the only one resurrected!

Matthew 27:50-53 (NIV)

**50**And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

**51**At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. **52**The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. **53**They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

The truth of who Jesus was, is so important… it is so powerful…. That it raises people from the dead. They went into the city and their very appearance testified of the good news of Jesus.

Can anyone relate to that? Has the truth of who Jesus is brought anyone to life? Is there anyone that can say the fact you are standing here today a testimony that He is Lord.

So there is this very alive Jesus and before He ascends into heaven he is talking to His disciples in Acts 1.

Acts 1:3-4(NIV)

After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

**4**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 promised

 **A first century Church is acquainted with a Live Jesus! And a 1st century Church listens to Him.**

They did indeed wait in Jerusalem and in Acts 2 the Holy Spirit was poured out and this marks the birth of the New Testament Church. They were born of the Spirit just like Jesus said in John 3….

But there was a problem… or so it seemed… They started speaking in tongues and rejoicing in such a way that some people thought they were drunk. So they are being accused of being drunkards…

What should they do in light of this accusation? They didn’t get into a shouting match… they didn’t say oh yeah… well your dumb and you’re a sinner… they didn’t become defensive and go into hiding… They didn’t tone down in order to appease the masses… What did they do?

Peter stood up and began to preach Christ!

It’s all about Jesus! The first sermon ever preached was all about Jesus! After he spoke people asked how they can be saved… Peter replied

Acts 2:38 (NIV) Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Your bible says 3000 souls were added to the Church that day.

How did this growth happen? In today’s church world Peter would have immediately written a book on church growth. He would have scheduled a book tour and spoke at numerous conferences describing the secret to his success. Many pastors and spiritual leaders would take notes hoping to have similar success…

But there is no secret to the success of the 1st Century Church.

All they did was Preach Jesus!

As our Scripture memory verse says…

Acts 2:47 (NIV) And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

It was the Lord Jesus who added to their number daily!

REDEMPTION CHURCH! If you will preach Jesus he will add to your number!

Acts 3 – There is a lame man at the gate of the temple… Peter tells him about Jesus – He’s healed

Acts 4 – Peter and John and taken into a back room by the pharisees where they are beaten and asked to never talk about this Jesus again… Peter says…

Acts 4:12 (NIV) Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 5 – More people are healed in the name of Jesus

 The Pharisees again took the apostles and beat them and…

Acts 5:40 (NIV) ….they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus

But they didn’t stop!

Acts 6&7– Stephen preaches to the Pharisees about Jesus. They kill him making him the 1st martyr…

Acts 8 – Phillip is running for his life and passes through the area of Samaria…. He has a message for Samaria… What do you think that message is?

Acts 8:5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ**[**[**a**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%208&version=NIV1984#fen-NIV1984-27171a)**]** there.

He preached Jesus Christ and the entire city was radically saved!!

Acts 9 - Saul is traveling when all of a sudden he gets smacked to the ground, a great light shines and blinds him… and he says…

Acts 9:5 “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

A voice answers….

“I am Jesus…

The 1st Century Church is all about Jesus! Every Chapter every verse!!

Acts 10 – The gentiles receive Jesus!

Acts 11 – Peter tells Jerusalem the news of how Jesus is saving Gentiles!

This changes everything!!! The 1st century church decides it’s not enough that they have Jesus in Jerusalem… We need to tell the entire world about Jesus!

They send out the very 1st missionary team – Barnabas and PAUL… You know him as Saul in Acts 9… but Jesus has saved him and changed his name!

They go to a city called Antioch and they receive the message of Jesus! The transformation of the city is so great that the rest of the surrounding area takes note…. They come up with a word to describe these people…

What word could possibly describe these people… these disciples who preach Jesus, heal people in Jesus name, baptize in Jesus name…. they are all about Jesus Christ so they call them…

Acts 11:26 (NIV) …The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

 Christians!

That’s the first 11 chapters of Acts! It’s all about Jesus! There are a total of 28 chapters in Acts… We don’t have the time to tell you about every chapter so let me summarize the rest…

**<IT’S ALL ABOUT JESUS>**

Acts 28 ends with these words... speaking about Paul….

Acts 28:31 (NIV) Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The book of Acts ends like it started… with a very alive Jesus!!

There is no the end at the end of the book of acts. There is no Amen signifying the end of the book.

It is the Acts of the Apostles… and there is a very alive Jesus in our midst still today that is still looking to add to our number as we preach Him!

REDEMPTION CHURCH! IT’S ALL ABOUT JESUS!

We are going to sing and worship Jesus!

 A lot of churches get hung up on the method of worship… Traditional vs contemporary, hymns vs praise and worship tunes, rock & roll, gospel, or country….

WE WILL NOT get hung up on the method of worship. We are focused on the object of our worship – The Lord Jesus Christ!

We are going to preach about Him. You can count on that! Even on days when we are teaching about biblical disciplines like tithing, humility, and purity… we are going to take the opportunity to preach Jesus!

Galatians 3:24 (NIV) So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ…

The old testament, the law has one purpose… to lead us to Christ. So when we look within the world of God the end purpose should always be leading others to Christ.

We aren’t focused on building the latest and greatest church building… Nothing wrong with a nice building… but it’s not our focus. Jesus is!

We aren’t about building up the name of those that do ministry around here. There is 1 name that should be lifted up around here! The name of Jesus.

In fact let’s not do anything in our own name…. Let’s do everything in the name of Jesus…

Colossians 3:17 (NIV) And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus

A church so in love with Jesus it couldn’t contemplate its focus being on anyone else!

A church that gets its identity from Jesus! Not a denomination but a savior defines us. Like the Christians of Antioch we are defined by Christ.

A Church that is not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!!

A church where the simple presentation of the Gospel changed lives.

A church where people who have heard the Gospel presentation 100s of times but are still excited like it’s the first time they have ever heard it.

A church that understands it is the bride of Christ and is madly in love with Jesus.

* **MUSICIAN**

John described Jesus like this…

John 1:3-5 (NIV) Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4**In him was life, and that life was the light of men. **5**The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood**[**[**a**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john%201&version=NIV1984#fen-NIV1984-26040a)**]** it.

Redemption Church, I want you to think about when you 1st came to Jesus.

Think about that moment where you understood who he was and how he loved… he made ALL THINGS… he made you and me…

The life within Him is the light of mankind.

That light shines into dark places but the darkness doesn’t understand…

The Lord God almighty has always been there… shining into darkness… but darkness hasn’t understood. We did not understand…

John 1:14 (NIV) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,**[[d](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john%201&version=NIV1984" \l "fen-NIV1984-26049d" \o "See footnote d)]** who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

That light that shined into the darkness and we didn’t understand… has robed himself in flesh and now…. We have seen…

I am about to open this altar. This altar isn’t about the greatness of the sermon. By coming to the altar you aren’t voting… “what a great sermon.”

This altar isn’t about being a member of Redemption Church.

This altar isn’t about being the world’s most awful sinner so you really need to come pray… nor is it about being a spiritual giant…

This Altar is all about Jesus. When you come to this altar you are saying “I want my life to be all about Jesus.” Jesus I want to declare your good news and see others become your followers. I want to be your follower.