

# Your Commission

## *Understanding Your Impact:*

Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 115:16

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Do you and I understand the impact we make? Jesus challenged his followers about it. He marveled at how little faith they possessed. At times, torrents of words burst from his lips in anger:

***“O unbelieving and perverse generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?”*** (Matthew 17:17, NIV)

Jesus was responding to his disciples’ inability to heal a little boy, and he explained to his followers why they couldn’t heal. He said:

***“Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, “Move from here to there” and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.*** (Matthew 17:20, NIV)

That statement is so hard to relate to. We spiritualize it. We think of spiritual mountains. We can’t imagine human beings with such authority, yet Jesus exercised that kind of authority. Observing this, the apostles asked him to increase their faith, and he replied:

***If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea,” and it will obey you.*** (Luke 17:6, NIV)

That statement is difficult to spiritualize. Jesus points to a mulberry tree, not one of life’s challenges. We spiritualize these teachings because we cannot fathom human beings exercising that kind of authority.

When his disciples observed how a fig tree he had cursed shriveled, Jesus explained:

***I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, “Go, throw yourself into the sea,” and it will be done.*** (Matthew 21:21-22, NIV)

Jesus is not speaking figuratively, and he does not mention God. He doesn't tell us to ask God to move the mountain. He doesn't tell us to ask God to uproot the mulberry tree. He doesn't even say if you have faith in God as small as a mustard seed. He doesn't say any of that, and I assure you that Jesus is careful to say everything the Holy Spirit gives him.

Do you understand what Jesus is telling his listeners? He is teaching them and us about our "*authority in*" and our "*impact on*" this world. When Jesus spoke of his authority, he referred to himself as the Son of Man, which in Hebrew could be translated, the Son of Adam. Some 78 times in the gospels, Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man or Adam. Why was this title important? Listen again to the Bible.

***The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man.***  
(Psalm 115:16, NIV)

The Bible tells us that God put Adam and his children in charge of this earth. God as king has given Adam and his children the right (or authority) and the responsibility (and therefore accountability) to rule the earth. The Bible teaches that we were created in the image of God and given the task of ruling the earth. The Bible says:

***God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*** (Genesis 1:28, NASU)

God's created intention for his righteous children, which is you and me in Christ, is to be fruitful in our work, multiply in numbers, fill this earth and subdue it. Jesus acted like this world is really to be subjected to us. He acted as if we actually have authority over the forces of this creation. He multiplied bread and fish. He cursed a fig tree and it shriveled so that the disciples noticed it a day later. He rebuked the wind and waves as if they opposed him. He healed people in various ways, and at times commanded defiling spirits to come out of them. Jesus modeled a

son of Adam ruling the earth and prevailing against enemies who hold Adam's children in bondage. When the time was right, he submitted to the established human authorities, who acted under the influence of evil spiritual principalities and consequently mistreated him.

Interestingly, the aim of war is not to destroy enemies; it is to break their hostile will. It is to use force, propaganda and whatever else is at one's disposal to subdue the will of an enemy. World War II was not about destroying Nazi Germany and imperialistic Japan; it was about breaking their will to colonize. The Korean and Vietnam wars were not about destroying communists; they were about breaking their will to rule. America succeeded in Korea but not in Vietnam. In our national fight against terrorism, our aim is not to destroy people who wish to terrorize, but to break their will to terrorize; so that we can live in peace.

Based on the biblical worldview, do you think our spiritual enemies try to make us lose sight of our identity in God and knuckle under their dominion?

Faith doesn't lose touch with reality; instead, it sees reality from a different vantage. It sees reality with God present and a future promised. Consequently, that vision puts us on a journey of believing and doing what others think is impossible.

When God met Moses in the burning bush, He didn't discuss the past. God didn't talk about the good old days before slavery. God didn't tell Moses how to improve the present. He didn't tell Moses how to make slavery more bearable for his Hebrew family. God had one focus – the future. Moses had spent 40 years in luxury and privilege, but that wasn't important. Moses spent another 40 years in hardship herding sheep, but that wasn't important. What was important was what God wanted and what Moses could become if he walked in faith. This is a key truth for you, for me, for this congregation, for the church of this community and for this region:

**“It is not what you are now that is important, but what God wants you to be and what you can be with faith.”** (Dick Wills – *Waking to God's Dream*)

Moses' commission to lead his people out of slavery into a promised land was not based on what he experienced. It was based on what God desired for Moses and his people, and what Moses could become with faith.

It is not important whether you've failed at this or that, or what others think of you, or what trouble you see. The only important thing is what God wants for you and what you can become acting in faith. For years it was believed that no human being could run under a 4-minute mile. Scientists offered logical reasons, but then one day someone did it. A runner broke the unbreakable limit and many followed.

Someone said that God created our eyes so that we look forward, and so that we get a stiff neck if we look back too much. God intends to change this world from dark to light, from despair to hope, from judgment to blessing through people who believe that the Lord, not the god of this age, the Lord, not the spirit of our times, but the Lord is our shepherd and bread.

A person who becomes what God desires does not live by eating bread and reading newspapers, books, magazines and blogs. We make the impact for which we were designed when we actually live by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Our commission does not call us to lose touch with reality. It calls us to go beyond it. What is important for Bethany is not what we are right now. What really matters is what God want us to be, and what we can be if we walk in faith. That's what is truly important with you as well. God foresees us as a people of faith, who are fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Is that what you foresee? Is that what you believe? God created you and redeems you in Christ for a Christ-like impact! That is what Jesus believes. He said:

***Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things...*** (John14:12, NIV)