

Slide 1 (Series Slide - Mission)**Slide 2**

Skating Away On The Thin Ice Of The New Day - Jethro Tull

Meanwhile back in the year One, when you belonged to no-one
you didn't stand a chance son, if your pants were undone.
`Cause you were bred for humanity and sold to society
one day you'll wake up in the Present Day
a million generations removed from expectations
of being who you really want to be.

Skating away..
Skating away...
Skating away on the thin ice of a new day...

Slide 3

And as you cross the wilderness, spinning in your emptiness:
you feel you have to pray.
Looking for a sign
that the Universal Mind has written you into the Passion Play.

Well, do you ever get the feeling that the story's
too damn real and in the present tense?
Or that everybody's on the stage, and it seems like
you're the only person sitting in the audience?

Slide 4

We are going through this series of 6:8@Six:Eight about our core statements. We have addressed our purpose statement, to follow Jesus, and our vision statement, to live as Jesus did, and today we want to look at our mission statement; to be the hands, feet, & voice of Jesus' in the Ardmore/Havertown area & beyond - To manifest Jesus. Again, these are not statements which stand alone, they are interdependent.

Slide 5 You don't need to sit in the audience, God has written you into the Passion Play. You are not skating on thin ice, you are on solid foundation. You can be who you were meant to be, although that may not look like what you expected.

Slide 6 When we talk about manifesting Jesus, being His hands, feet & voice, we are speaking in Kingdom terms. "...The kingdom of God as a dynamic reality, now present in the world." (Bert Waggoner). God's sovereign rule breaking in over all Creation which you can participate in. It includes the active role of the Spirit & Word addressing all the social/spiritual ills of the world. It acknowledges the tension of the spiritual battle we live in, as well as our own personal salvation & spiritual transformation. God's rule embraces all aspects of life, spiritual & physical; a holistic biblical reality going

beyond just personal salvation. Since when we as God's children manifest Jesus, we manifest this Kingdom - we participate in ushering in His healing power.

Slide 7 Did you ever play a game like Monopoly with a hot-headed child? Halfway through the game the child realizes they've lost even though the game isn't over? What do they do? They overturn the game & get mad. Because they know the game isn't finished, but it is over. You've monopolized the board, and own so much property, you are just slowing bleeding them dry. In the end you will take all their property & they know it, but they still have to go around & around the board as you slowly take away any lasting properties. Methodically crushing their little hopes as they watch their monopoly money taken away one dollar at a time. Competition is only fun when you are on the winning side of an unevenly matched game. It's why I have kids.

Slide 8 God's Kingdom has come, but not fully come. It's playing monopoly with a child. The game is won, Satan is defeated, but it's not over, he's not yet destroyed. Faith life is living in the tension of what has already come, but will be fully established in the future. That explains to us why all who are evangelized are not converted. Or, all the sick prayed for are not healed, or why some are healed, but still get sick & die. It explains our triumph in Christ, and our continued struggle in the flesh. "If we break that tension, we are left with 2 choices, God does not work miracles today (the position of Cessation on one extreme), or God always works miracles if we have enough faith to believe him." (the Prosperity Gospel on the other) (Don Williams, PhD). Remember Jesus is always in the middle of the extremes.

Slide 9 In Matt 10:7-8 Jesus urged his disciples (and likewise us); '*As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give'.*

Slide 10 And Paul notes, "...the end will come, when he (Jesus) hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has *destroyed* all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."

1 Corinthians 15:22-25

We are to live in the already/not yet tension, which Paul lived in, furthering the work of Jesus, manifesting Him to the world. **Slide 11** Paul said, ²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church¹ So, victory is won, yet the game continues. Paul is not saying that Jesus' work on the cross was not enough, he is saying that Jesus frees us to participate in ushering in God's kingdom rule now. **Slide 12** There is still work to do; a Luke 4:18 work in which *the good news is preached to the poor, prisoners are set free, the blind receive their sight, and the oppressed are released.*

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Col 1:24). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

A friend of mine attended a small church growing up which only focused on the spiritual aspects of life; evangelism, conversion, personal sanctification, prayer & the spiritual disciplines. This church had classes all the time on evangelism, but never anything was said about the poor, social injustices, or the available power of the Holy Spirit. Yet when this person went to a certain Christian school they found themselves in classes addressing poverty & social injustice, but never a class on evangelism, or personal spiritual growth - a liberal theology or the social gospel. Both had aspects of the Kingdom expressed in their theology, however they were both incomplete. Six:Eight wants to walk away from this tendency towards selective obedience where we focus on one extreme or the other.

Manifesting Jesus lies in the middle in balance & completeness. **Slide 13** We can see this selective obedience of going to spiritual extremes happening in various situations in the world. It happened with the churches involved with Apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid completely divided the witness of the church. Churches associated with the South African Council of Churches almost succumbed to neo-Marxist ideology in their swing towards a social gospel & liberal theology. The Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Churches refused to confront the system & withdrew into inner 'spirituality'. Eventually, the Rustenberg Confession became a cathartic moment where the whole church, "left" & "right" repudiated the system, confessed their own sin, and committed themselves against the ideology & its socio-political agenda. The theology of the kingdom proved to be a wonderful source of sanity in a turbulent time.' (Derek Morpheu, a Vineyard writer, theologian, and director of Vineyard Bible Institute). In other words they came back to the radical middle to be the true hands, voice, and feet of Jesus in South Africa & healing occurred.

Slide 14 Martin Luther King said, "time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. *Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be coworkers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right." (p99)*

He was obviously addressing racism, but the sentiment is applicable across the board. Time is always ripe to do Kingdom - to be the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus! **Slide 15** *"The kingdom of God is not simply about having "Jesus in your heart" or having his Lordship "within you" (a popular definition based on Luke 17:21). Neither is the kingdom of God merely about the eternal rule of God 'up there' somewhere. **Slide 16** The kingdom is an event which can be manifested now. It is about God "coming" in the (eschatological) moment when the powers of the coming age break into the present, in Jesus..." Jesus is the personified focus of this kingdom event. He ushered in the kingdom and demonstrated its power & enacted the kingdom through his death,*

resurrection & ascension.' (Derek Morpheu, *The Kingdom: Healing the Dualism of Personal and Social Ethics*). He invites us to participate in that Kingdom power.

Jesus rejects the extremes & separation, of personal & social ethics, or the physical & spiritual realm. **Slide 17** When John the Baptist sent his delegation wondering if Jesus was 'the one' Jesus reply was to evoke the language of Isaiah. *"Go back and report to John what you hear and see (now): The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me" (Matthew 11:4-6)*. The kingdom had broken into our reality.

Slide 18 It's frightening to live the Kingdom life - it means reliance, tension & risk with the Holy Spirit. It means, like we said last week, an overturning of our world view. Jesus says, don't fall away on account of me, because the Kingdom affects our lives, relationships, and the world. It invites us into healing, breaking free, and transformation. But 'we are not social activists, we are followers of Jesus' (Ron Sider). To follow Jesus means to reject a false spirituality which does not account for the reign of God breaking into all areas of life. To embrace not only the idea of personal salvation for the believer of sanctification & transformation, but also the holistic thought of the beatitudes as a way of life, of combatting injustice, of loving our environment, and of caring for the poor. It is God's Kingdom come now, as a very real thing. It's finishing the Monopoly game even when Satan tries to overturn the board. It's looking past all your own stuff & starting to minister in the power of the HS to those right around you in real & practical ways. **Slide 19** It is partnering with God in the *Missio Dei (Divine Mission)* - the restoration of God's rule over all creation. It is paying attention to what you say you pay attention to...those right in front of you (expound). It's not just going to church, it's being the Church. It's not just saying I follow Jesus, but actually following Jesus in obedience.

Slide 20 Matthew 12:28-29 reveals some essential qualities of manifesting Jesus/kingdom: 28But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29"Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.

Slide 21 There are six dimensions of the Kingdom in these two verses (according to Rick Love in his book, *Muslims, Magic, and the Kingdom of God [pp41-42]*). Firstly, we see God as Ruler & Rescuer - before God can rule and reign he must rescue; Satan must be deposed. The expulsion of demonic forces and the binding of Satan are all signs that the Kingdom of God has broken in via the person of Jesus Christ. Satan is defeated at the Cross (Colossians 2:15) and forever destroyed at the second coming of Christ (Rev 19:11-20:10).

Slide 22 There are Present & Future dimensions. Matthew 12 shows us that there are present aspects of the Kingdom that are shown now, demonic powers are driven back; yet Scripture drives us to the understanding that there is a fulfillment of the Kingdom of God coming in the future (Gn 3:15; Nm 14:21; Is 11:2-9; 65:17-25; 2 Pt 3:13-31; Rv 21:1-7). Therefore, we can experience it now amidst the tension & the suffering of the

battle we're engaged in, and hold onto hope for the future (Mt 5:10-12; Ac 14:22; Phil 1:29, 2 Tim 3:12).

Slide 23 And lastly, there are Physical & Spiritual dimensions. When Satan is deposed & sin is dealt with, sickness is often cured (Acts 10:38; Luke 10:17-18; Luke 13:11). Jesus & his followers advanced the Kingdom of God by pushing back the Kingdom of Satan both physically & spiritually since we cannot separate this physical life from a spiritual life.

Slide 24 Most evangelicals talk a lot about a personal savior, being saved, and being born again, but they skip over the Kingdom of God which is the overriding theme to the Scriptures. Rather than talking more of the rule of God, our emphasis tends to be on reconciliation with God - which is biblical, but incomplete (Rick Love). Yet, everything Jesus did centered on the Kingdom (Mk 1:14, 15; Mt 6:9-13; Lk 17:21). The Kingdom was the subject of his sermons, the point of his parables, and the meaning of his miracles (Mt 5-7; 11:1-5; 12:28,29; 13:1-52; Mk 4).

Our emphasis has been on the relational dimension of the Kingdom - we stress our personal relationship with God, forgiveness, and fellowship with him, which is all good and soundly biblical, just incomplete. **Slide 25** Jesus not only came to save us, but to destroy the works of Satan (1 Jn 3:8). Jesus has defeated Satan & ushered the Kingdom into our physical reality (Mt 12:28; Acts 10:38; Eph 1:20-21; Col 1:12-14; 2:15; Heb 2:14, 1 Pt 3:21-22), which allows us to view life through a holistic lens, giving us the tools to do battle in the midst of our current tension.

Slide 26 Therefore, we must, Preach the good news that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (Truth Encounter). Confront the powers through prayer & healing (Power Encounter). Model the values of the Kingdom (Moral Encounter). Express the reality of the Kingdom through culturally relevant rituals (Cultural Encounter) - (Rick Love p16-17). And it is interesting that this coincides well with what we heard from Barna last week that the truly transformed person is changed 4 dimensionally; intellectually, emotionally, spiritually & behaviorally.

Manifesting Jesus calls us to engage in issues of poverty, aide, social justice, & combatting human trafficking - the sexy cool issues. Yet in that, the temptation is to forget that God calls us to live this out in our personal walks and with our neighbor in the Ardmore/Havertown area; those right before us. To engage them 4 dimensionally & have a powerful healing & prayer ministry towards them & each other. To see the kingdom break into our reality & theirs. **Slide 27** The point is you will not do ministry someplace else if you do not do it here (you are the hands, feet & voice of Jesus wherever you are). There should be a healthy humility & balance between striving towards personal salvation & sanctification, as well as engaging in the issues which are on God's heart. Not one of these things takes priority over the other, they are practiced in the radical middle with balance.

So, what does it mean to manifest Jesus? It's simple, practical, and scary. **Slide 28** Remember a few things today.

1. Jesus is more than just personal salvation.
2. He invites you into kingdom ministry (4 dimensionally; intellectually, emotionally, spiritually & behaviorally) which means you can participate in the defeat of Satan and his works.
3. Pay attention to what you say you pay attention to (integrity - you are not just who you say you are - who you are is intimately tied with what you do, remember listening + following = obedience).
4. Prayer in the Spirit is your ultimate power. You can manifest Jesus by asking others one question, "Can I pray for you right now?"
5. Familiarity breeds contempt - push through the feeling that this is just rote.
6. Freedom to make mistakes

Asking others that question (can I pray with you right now?) says we believe that God is active in our reality; that we do not live in a dualism of physical & spiritual realities. That He is willing and able to break through with power to heal & to help us now. We partner with God in seeing his kingdom come now; to heal, to defeat Satan, to save, and to overthrow the works of evil in this world. **Slide 29** That is why Jesus said, 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."² So, like raindrops on a lake, our circles of influence emanate outward overlapping - as we reach our Jerusalem. In the process some of our people get experience and God calls them out to Judea, or farther out into the world at large (and we will hear from one of us who was called out farther from this church in a few minutes).

Slide 30 Every time you are in conversation with someone, and they express a struggle, or a joy, ask them, "Can I pray for you right now?" and do it (Dave Harding-Taste of Ardmore). Invite the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God will break through and you will be a part of something extremely special - and our vision will flourish as we co-labor with God.

Slide 31 You don't need to sit in the audience, you can be on the stage. God has written you into the Passion Play. You are not skating on thin ice, you are on solid foundation. You can be who you were meant to be in Jesus if you will co-labor with Him. Because God is in an uneven matched game of monopoly with Satan, the game is moving towards his destruction.

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Ac 1:8). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.