

OAK HILLS MISSION

Part 3 - In Our Community, Throughout the World

TEXT: ACTS 1:6-11 (ESV)



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Overland Park, Kansas

Oak Hills' Mission

Oak Hills' mission is to proclaim the whole Gospel to the whole person **in our community & throughout the whole world**, equipping individuals and families to:

- learn to know and enjoy God;
- respond to Him through authentic worship and godly living; and
- lead others to do the same
—all by the grace of God and all for His glory.

The Reach of Oak Hill's Mission

Today we focus on the reach of Oak Hills' Mission. Our call is by no means unique. It is the call of every believer in every church to fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. ^(Matt 28:19-20) Christ's charge here has no geographical limit. What I want to focus on today as we see our call to take the Gospel to the closest and furthest reaches is that while there are no geographical limits, there is another limit—time.

Acts 1:6-11

"So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But 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." ⁹When he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

It is Not for You to Know Times

The place where these disciples stood was within the 2nd most marvelous period history will ever know. Christ Jesus has died and then He rose from the grave and appeared to His followers for forty days. Our text takes place on the fortieth day. Imagine the wonder the disciples must have known in that time.

They saw their Savior die, yet there He was, risen, pouring into them His call for them to bear witness to what He had done—to tell the world that Jesus' death was in the place of sinners. And He told them that though He was going up into Heaven, He would come again to restore everything to the way it was meant to be. As any of us would, they wanted to know *when*.

When Jesus will return is not for us to know, He tells them. ^(1:7) That He will return is what matters. In the mean time, we're to testify. And we won't do it by our own strength. God will give us His Spirit, equipping us for everything He has called us to do and be. ^(1:8) And at that, the 2nd most marvelous period in history ended with the risen Jesus being taken up into Heaven in a cloud.

Every Sad Thing will Become Untrue

As they looked up, amazed, two angels appeared to announce the most marvelous period in history we'll ever know: in the same way Christ went into Heaven, so shall He return. ^(1:11) And when He does, it will be to usher in His eternal Kingdom. This era will be over, and with it every heartache, sickness and tragedy. It will also usher in the end of evangelism, because as John Piper said, "Missions exists because worship doesn't."

At the end of "The Lord of the Rings," after the two Hobbits Frodo and Sam reach the end a long, harrowing journey into physical and inner-personal darkness, Sam sees the old wizard Gandalf for the first time since presuming him dead. As they talk, Tolkien pulls the curtain back—if ever so slightly—to offer a glimpse of what awaits God's people when our Savior returns.

"Gandalf! I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was dead myself. Is everything sad going to come untrue? What's happened to the world?" "A great shadow has departed," said Gandalf, and then he laughed, and the sound was like music, or like water in a parched land; and as he listened the thought came to Sam that he had not heard laughter, the pure sound of merriment, for days without count. It fell upon his ears like the echo of all the joys he had ever known... [Sam] cried, "I feel, I feel!" —he waved his arms in the air— "I feel like spring after winter, and sun on the leaves; like trumpets and harps and all the songs I've ever heard!" (JRR Tolkien, The Return of the King)

We live between two advents—two comings of Christ—with the sacraments ever before us testifying that this era will end. Pouring the cleansing water of Baptism to signify our belonging to the people of Christ will cease when He returns to inaugurate His Kingdom on earth, establishing our eternal citizenship with Him. The Communion cup and bread will be replaced by the Marriage Supper of the Lamb—spread like a feast no eye has ever seen, with music no ear has ever heard.

But until then, we're called to proclaim the Gospel in our community and throughout the whole world. It is not drudgery. It is the call to speak glorious words, to advocate hope and healing for every broken, despairing soul. It is the proclamation that we believe something will happen to this world one day—that every sad thing will become untrue and that this will be the life we were meant to live and know and enjoy forever—like spring after the winter. May God make our proclamation of the Gospel less like a job and more like a song. And may it be a song heard in our community and through the whole world. And may He draw many to Himself through it while this lasts.