**Mission Series: Commissioned**

**Date: Nov 10th**

**Speakers: Grant Wright & Santos Espinosa**

**Sermon Title: Gods Not Done Yet!**

**Intro Sermon Time**

[6 Minutes]

Today we are continued in our series “Commissioned”. November is a month we like to take here at First Colony to step back to reflect & Celebrate the works God has done and then dream and pray about how we can be a part of His work again next year.

One unique fact about First Colony missions is we support 9 fulltime Missionaries. These men and women have been commissioned by God and feel a part of the First Colony family because of the care and support we give them.

We are blessed to partner with these men and women for our mission work and God is doing great things through them. I wish I had time to tell you more about each one of their stories as they are all doing extraordinary things for God’s Kingdom. There stories like:

* ***Sandip*** in Nepal who has personally shared the gospel over 5,000 times this year and has seen over 200 people from the Untouchable Social Class come to know Jesus as Lord.
* ***Richard Kweyamba*** who is working to bring our 17 Uganda churches under a united vision to impact their towns and villages thought starting schools and Christian education.
* ***Roolite Religieux*** who has written a Bible curriculum that is not getting used in our Thomazeau school we support as well as 9 other HFHC schools in Haiti.

Lets not just think of Mission Sunday in terms of giving money but let’s make a push to commit to giving prayer. These are real people with real stories and they need our support and prayer.

You have in the Order of Worship our Mission Insert. When I say, “Refrigerator Moment” what do you think? I have been working hard to make you an insert that would be worthy to hang on your fridge. Every time you walk by your fridge you are reminded to be praying for all those we have Commissioned. This creates what I like to call a “Refrigerator Moment”! Let’s embrace these moments.

So when you get home, put this on your fridge and allow yourself to have refrigerator moments thought your day and week! Let this help you stay engaged in our mission.

Speaking of real people with real stories, Today we have a real treat in store for you. My good friend & brother in Christ ***Santos Espinosa*** and his wife ***Jessica*** are with us. would you both please stand. Lets give them a warm welcome!

**[Call Santos on Stage]**

Santos you can come join me on stage.

Santos is who we partner with in San Marcos Honduras as the Lord has commissioned him & Jessica to share the gospel, make disciples and plant churches.

Santos & Jessica have 3 beautiful children, ***Levi, Josue & Abigail***.

Santos is a student of the Word and a Theologian but is never arrogant about his knowledge level and background.

Bachelor Theology- 2002 – ***Baxter***

Bachelor Education – 2017

Working on Master’s Degree in Child Psychology

He is never shy to share his personal story and hardships growing up. He is 1 of 8 kids in his family. He has worked hard and taken advantage of all the opportunities God has giving him. After finishing college, he went home to lead and preach at his church. They were not able to pay him so for 6 years he Drove school bus for income.

His humility is an incredible sight to witness in his ministry. He is very Kingdom minded and is willing to submit his life to Christ and follow him no matter what. The strength of the health and multiplication of churches in Honduras starts with Santos, Jessica and their family. As they multiply themselves, we see Christ Kingdom multiplying.

[2:30 Minutes]

Santos tell me what a normal day is like for you and your family when no Texas are there visiting. Answer in Spanish for 30 seconds…

cada mañana trato de tomarme un cafe con mi Dios y con mi esposa. Ella me da un beso y yo salgo para las oficinas de misión lazaro a enseñar la palabra de Dios en un devocional. apoyo a los niños del refugio de mision lazaro orando y dándoles a ellos consejos. por la tarde regreso a mi casa para salir con mi esposa a visitar hermanos de la congregación que están enfermos o necesitan apoyo pastoral.

Grant: How many people here understood that? How many people was this a barrier for you to understand Santos?

This is one of the awesome things about our partnerships in missions. We partner with men and women who can speak the local language, understand the local culture and effectively share Gods message the people around them.

As you listen to Santos and his stories today, I want you to hear how God uniquely uses him in his country to reach a people, culture and langured that we are unfamiliar with but he can bridge all those barriers.

Santos, one more time in English for us… tell me what a normal day is like for you and your Family.

Every morning I try to drink coffee with my God and my wife. She kisses me and I go to Lazarus mission offices to teach the word of God in a devotional with 60 staff members. I support the children’s home of Mission Lazaro praying and giving them Christian council. In the afternoon I return to my house to go out with my wife to visit brothers in the congregation who are sick or need pastoral support.

Santos, tell is a little of your story of coming to Christ and some of the obstacles you had to overcome? (3 minutes)

* One day I was visiting a friend in the market of my town, that day a preacher was visiting my friend and the preacher asked me, did you receive Jesus as Lord and Savior? I told him, I really don't know. My friend invited me to church, and I agreed to go. Since that day in 1995, I committed my life to serve the Lord.
* It has not been an easy journey but God has helped me overcome my obstacles. First I had to overcome my fears. I drank a lot of alcohol and I thought I will not win this battle. Another obstacle to overcome was my friends, they were looking for me every day to drink alcohol. They told me you are crazy, leave that church. Each day my friends would come to me with drinks saying, “Here, have some. Remember how good it makes you feel. The preacher is not here. You family is not here. No one will know. It will be okay. “Each day I would have to tell them, “Yes, you are right the preacher and my family are not here but God is here.” It was very difficult for me to stop but God helped me and has given me strength even until today. 3 of my good friends were killed because of shootings that same year. God saved me from this life and gave me a new life.
* God took me out of the mud, gave me freedom from the slavery of alcohol, gave me a beautiful family. But the most important now is that we can see families who love Jesus, and people who have new opportunities. My family and I are now tools that God uses for His Kingdom.

Grant [2 minutes]: Santos work for ML (Mission Lazarus) and we have been partnering with ML in ministry since 2005. Mission Lazarus has many different development initiatives to accomplish one common goal, is to grow the Kingdom. 4 main tools: Individuals, Family, Community & Economic Development. Not a social justice organization even though they do so many good works, but they have one central focus… share the Good News of Jesus and grow the Kingdom. Everything they do has a tie in to this central focus. If there is no tie in, ML doesn’t do it.

This is were Santos come it. He is the heartbeat and put the central purpose and goal into everything ML does.

When you came to ***San Marcos*** in 2017 you started with a church that had almost disappeared because of divisions in the church. There were only about 15 people left. This is the hardest place for any minister to set into. Santos has been able to grow it back, Through humility, through your focus on discipleship and taking people to a deeper more mature level. You have been able to create a leadership to helps lead this church in a healthy way in just a few years. Now they have 74 people. Santos also oversees the church in ***Rodeo***, near ***San Marcos***. When you arrived, there were 8 people and now there are 46!

Santos, tell us about some of your focus with these churches over the past few years and what you and Jessica have done to help bring health and people back? (1 minutes)

* Our focus is to make disciples who love Jesus. Tell people what Jesus has done and what he can do in the life of someone who believes.
* Make disciples that follow Jesus and not men.
* and make disciples that share Jesus with others.

Grant (1:30): If you want to hear more on this topic, Santos will be speaking in more detail during Wednesday night Uplift service.

From 2017 to date we have had 24 baptisms in the San Marcos church.

Santos is not only the pastor for San Marcos and Rodeo church he is also the Outreach & Evangelism Director for ALL of ML so he also disciples 12 other men that also lead 2 churches each Sunday, totaling 23 churches right now. From 2017 to date we have seen 241 baptisms in all these churches under Santos leadership.

Travel is difficult and many people don’t own a vehicle so localizing church is a key to success. One of the focuses this past year was starting ***Casa de Pease***, or ***Houses of Peace*** in these different churches to further help localize the church. A House of Peace would be similar to one of our Connection Groups. They meet weekly and study the bible together.

Santos, God have you this new vision this year, tell us how you have seen God working in this effort to localize church and start Houses of Peace? (3 minutes)

* One of my pastors, ***Louis***, has been working had with his elders and deacon to start new House of Peace. Each week they sacrifice their time, money and energy to go into new areas, share the gospel, gather believers around the Word of God and start churches. I invest my time in discipling Louis and he spends time discipling this elders and deacons and they are carrying out Jesus mission to reach the lost.
* This past year Louis and his leaders have started 3 Houses of Peace. These groups meet 2 times each week for encouragement and reading the Word of God. Just one month again, one of these groups transitioned from a House of Peace into a church and now holds worship services each Sunday.
* Back in March while Grant was visiting, he and ***Keith Rabb*** visited one of Louis’s House of Peace. This group has about 16 adults, 26 children and meets under a mango tree.
* Grant – quick Mango Tree Story…
* Also in March, Grant lead a training for my 12 church leaders and taught us how to start and lead Houses of Peace. 4 new House of Peace started after this training

Grant: So far this year, Santos’s 12 pastors have started over 20 Houses of Peace! 3 of these have been mentored and transitioned into fully functioning churches. That is great leadership & discipleship!

Over the past 3 years FC has been intentional with our partnership with ML (Mission Lazarus) to invest in the Christian School in San Marcos, building latrines in the area and supporting you and your work over the churches.

Santos, how has your partnership with FCCC help your mission of impacting lives? (3:30 minutes)

* First Colony's support has allowed us to bring holistic health to people. Families have improved their physical health through a latrine but have also received the word of God and now they are part of the church. There are 3 families now a part of the San Marcos church because of the relationship started by first building them a latrine. Latrines have been a great open door to sharing the Gospel with my community.
* Second, First Colony is helping young people receive a quality education that they would never receive in their own communities. There are no schools or training centers in small towns and villages, so kids have to walk 2-3 hours one way to get to school. Hondurans are looking for opportunities, but it is hard in these places so many of them leave in search for something more. First Colony has help in providing an excellent school to give kids opportunities to succeed and stay local to continue impacting their own communities and not having to leave. Another huge blessing is these kids hear the Word of God taught each day in this Christian School.
* The third way First Colony has helped has been your support allowing us to build relationships with new communities. Now we have the opportunity to extend the Kingdom of God. One examples of this is our “Other Side of the Mountain” mission. We are currently visiting 8 new communities, we are reaching them through the construction of latrines, In one of these communities called ***Las Delicias*** we are having worship service on Sundays,35 children and 15 adults are coming every Sunday.
* Your support is allowing us to build a leadership that loves Jesus, follows Jesus and shares Jesus with others. A leadership that does not condemn others for their beliefs but shares the love of Jesus with all. We have planted three new congregations this year and will continue to do this.
* First Colony’s support, prayers, and partnership has been key in the success of our work.

Grant: This is truly a partnership and in that we are not just here to send dollars but we also send our people. FC sends 2-3 Short Term Mission trips each year to ML. Our High School Seniors have been traveling there in the summer since 2005. This year we have 42 members that were able to visit. If you have been down ML on a STM trip would you stand?

Lets thank these people for going and making a difference!

Santos, tell me one story of impact that occurred that we may not know about because some of God’s work was done after we left. (2:15 minutes)

* There was a group where Rachel Matthys visited a home in San Marcos, a single mother with several children, her name in Angela. Months ago, her husband died. They received a latrine, we continued to visit them and now Angela’s two daughters and granddaughter have received Jesus and were baptized. Now they are studying their first discipleship class with 8 other new believers at the church.

Grant: Over the past 3 years we have been able to install 70 latrines for this community. Not only does this bring people to Christ but it also serve a very practical need of helping sanitize the city. The local clinic has seen a 75% decrease in illnesses related to disease caused by unsanitary conditions.

Santos do you have a word of encouragement or scripture you want to share with our church today? [5:30 minutes]

* Romans 10:13-15
* [Santos reads in Spanish & Grant to read in English]
* 13 porque todo aquel que invocare el nombre del Señor, será salvo. 14 ¿Cómo, pues, invocarán a aquel en el cual no han creído? ¿Y cómo creerán en aquel de quien no han oído? ¿Y cómo oirán sin haber quien les predique? 15 ¿Y cómo predicarán si no fueren enviados? Como está escrito: !!Cuán hermosos son los pies de los que anuncian la paz, de los que anuncian buenas nuevas!
* **13**for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” **14**How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? **15**And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

It is true, that many people have heard of Jesus, but it is not the same to hear than to believe in the Gospel of Jesus. People need to meet people who have really known Jesus like you and me. When the apostle says to hear of Jesus, he refers to hearing of his love, mercy and His sacrifice.

But and how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Jesus Himself showed us the example by going through villages and distant villages to announce the good news of salvation. He spent time among the people, with the poor, among the rich, among the sick, etc.

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” Matthew 9:35-38

Now each of us are called to announce the Gospel of hope, love, forgiveness, the gospel of Jesus. Maybe our feet do not have a great value like the price of the feet of the great soccer players but our feet have an eternal value because many people will go to heaven because of the message you will give them.

I will finish with this story. In the year of 1999 when I was at the ***Baxter Institute***, they sent us to preach to a neighborhood called ***Bella Vista*** in ***Tegucigalpa***, it was a house-to-house evangelism, Jessica and I arrived at a house, knocked on the door and there were two young people, We talked about Jesus with them and invited them to the church of Christ that was in that neighborhood. We did not see these young people again.

But the surprise was, four years later when we were living in ***Olancho***, there was a biblical seminar for leaders of the churches of Christ in Honduras, I was in that seminar and when I was there, a person approached me and said, hello Brother Santos God bless you. Do you remember me? I said no, who are you? He told me, remember when you walked with your wife evangelizing in a neighborhood called ***Bella Vista*** in ***Tegucigalpa*** and you visited two people, I am one of them.

The word of God never returns empty, it will bear fruit sooner or later, how beautiful are the feet of those who announce the gospel of Jesus. Blessings!

Amen, let’s be a church that goes with the Good news everywhere we go weather here in SL or in Honduras!

[Let’s Pray]

Reminders for Grant: Santos will be preaching Uplift this week and speak next week during our Sunday 9:45am series “Stories from the Field”.