

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matthew 28:16–20— **16** Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. **17** When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. **18** And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

I. A Great Authority; 16-18. - Jesus had once invited the disciples to go to a mountain in Galilee where He was transfigured and His glory was manifest. Now, He again called them away from where His major ministry had occurred in order to reveal Himself post-Resurrection and present His mission to them and ask them to commit the rest of their lives to its completion.

Verse 17 tells their response to seeing Him: “they worshiped Him; but some doubted.”

We need to see Jesus as the Risen Lord of Life who has conquered the humanly impossible foes of sin, the devil and the grave. He is worthy of all glory and honor. If our heart and mind will fathom who Jesus Christ really is, it will evoke worship within us.

Notice that the doubters could not keep Jesus away from those who worship Him.

We need to see Christ for who He is now as Risen Lord! We must worship Him in spirit and in truth that He might be welcome to come and minister His Word among us. We invite Him to draw near and do His work in our personal life, our family, our Bible study class, and our church.

God, we want You to draw near and speak to us and strengthen us and give us the necessary unction we need to complete the task that You have called us to.

Only God could make the claim that all authority had been given to Him in Heaven and on earth. God does give power but only after we have received authority. Jesus holds it all in the heavens and on earth. If we are going to receive legitimate authority, we must receive it from Him.

Let's distinguish between power and authority:

Luke 7:1–10— **1** Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. **2** And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. **3** So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. **4** And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, **5** “for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue.” **6** Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, “Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. **7** Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. **8** For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” **9** When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, “I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!” **10** And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.

He had authority because he was under authority. We too, if we reside under the authority of Jesus, will have the authority to carry out the task He assigns us to do.

II. A GREAT COMMAND; 19-20A - “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”

The 1st command is go. We are not to wait for people to come to us, we are to go to them. Jesus practiced this. He carried His campaign for the hearts of men into the villages, the marketplaces and the open countryside. We, too, must go if we are to accomplish our mission. If we fortify ourselves within our church buildings, we will lose the battle for the souls of men.

We are commanded (#2) to make disciples. What is a disciple? Jesus Christ defines this:

Luke 9:23–24— 23 Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. **24** For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

The third element of Jesus command is baptize which means to immerse. It represents cleansing-purification from sin and sin’s power. It points to our death to fleshly dominated appetites and our resurrection to a Spirit controlled life. It is also a statement of loyalty and devotion expressed by following Jesus’ example found in Mt. 3.

The next portion of the command is, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” The Book of Acts both shows and specifies that the Kingdom of God advances through preaching and teaching of God’s word, and no other way.

III. A GREAT PROMISE; 20b - “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Such a challenging command demands a great promise, and so it has. Jesus promised to be with us all the days of our life.

David Livingston was a world-renowned doctor/missionary by the time he returned to his native Scotland to address the students at Glasgow University. The previous sixteen years had been spent in the service of God on the continent of Africa.

As he stood before those young people, the tremendous price exacted of Livingston was plain to see. More than 27 fevers had coursed through his veins, leaving his body emaciated and ravaged. One arm hung useless at his side, the result of being mangled by a lion.

The core of his message: "Shall I tell you what sustained me amidst the toil, the hardship, and loneliness of my exile? It was Christ’s promise, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end."

What Christ promised to the disciples nearly 2000 years ago is yours today! The companionship of Jesus is offered to every believer as he or she makes their pilgrimage through this world.

Always means days of strength as well as days of weakness; days of success as well as days of failure; joy-affliction; liberty-temptation; health-sickness; laughter-sadness; wealth-poverty; obedience-disobedience; youth-old age. The day of new life and in the day of physical death.

You will be with Him and He will be with you all the days of your life. You are not alone! Jesus promise sustained David Livingston, and it will sustain you.

The text in Matthew closes with the simple “Amen” - let it be, so be it, it is unwavering, it is unchangeable and steadfast, let it come about! Can you say, “Amen”?

Just suppose that these last words of Jesus recorded in Matthew are the first words Jesus will address to you after your death. How would you respond if He were to ask you if you obeyed His command to make disciples? Who could you present to your Lord?

To join God in His mission, I need:

1. A Global PRIORITY: I understand that the focus of the risen Lord Jesus is on the kingdom of God - Acts 1:3 He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many

infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Two predominant value systems: “The church is for me.” “The church is for the world.”

2. A Global PERSPECTIVE: I see history and the world from God’s point of view.

Acts 1:6–7 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

3. A Global POWER and PLAN: I receive and release through my church. Acts 1:8

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

John 14:12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

John 16:7–8 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. **8** And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

4. A Global PARTICIPATION: I actively help my church spread the gospel... ..to the

Ends of the Earth - There are people groups in the world that are waiting for our church to bring them the gospel.

Psalm 86:9–10 All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall glorify Your name. **10** For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God.

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

...In My Church’s Samaria - For us, as for the early church, Samaria is “a close-by place that we rarely visit,” and Samaritans are “those who live relatively near us, but who are not like us.”

John 4:9–10 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. **10** Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”

God calls Christians to personalize the gospel for the diverse peoples in and near their home. It is estimated that in North America 7 out of 10 people do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. North America’s lostness is as deep as the world’s is wide.

...In My Church’s Judea - If Samaritans are “those who live relatively near us, but are not like us,” then Judeans are “those who live relatively near us, who in many ways ARE like us.”

1 Thessalonians 2:14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,

God calls Christians to nearby people who may share regional identity or religious familiarity but not real fellowship with Christ.

One great challenge of the Judea mission field is the familiarity that people have with the gospel. Those who were lost in a works-based religion in the first century were likely to declare

“I’m Roman” or “I’m Jewish” just as those lost in the Judea mission field of the church today might declare “I’m Baptist” or “I’m Catholic.”

...In My Church’s Jerusalem - The Jerusalem mission field is the surrounding community where you live, work, shop, play, and go to school. And it requires just as much intentionality as the mission fields of Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

God calls us into our local communities to people who need Christ or even a new church...

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few, therefore beseech the Lord of the Harvest to make you a laborer in His harvest. Begin by bringing someone to our Birthday Sunday!

Maybe you don’t know the daily presence of Jesus. He is here and extending Himself to you. Step out in faith right now. Come to Him. Find rest for your soul and eternal direction for life.