

Sermon Title: The Command of Jesus and the Response of the Church

Speaker: Rovel Dunn, Associate Pastor

Date: Sunday, May 23, 2021

Scripture Reference:

Matthew 28: 16-20 (ESV)

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Summary:

Introduction

What is the great Commission? It is the final instruction of Jesus given directly to His disciples to go and make disciples. Jesus' command did not only apply to His 11 disciples but to every disciple who would come after them. This means the Great Commission is a timeless command given to every disciple, every believer, every individual who by faith surrendered their hearts and life to follow Jesus.

The Mission of Christ

In verse 18, Jesus says, "all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me." When Jesus started His public ministry in Matthew 4, this was His message, verse 17 "repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." This remains His message throughout His entire ministry. Jesus came proclaiming to the world that He is God's remedy, God's solution to humanity's sin. He is the fulfilled promise of God spoken and prophesied about throughout the Old Testament. He came to give his life an offering for sin in order that sinner can be forgiven and reconciled to God.

In Luke's account of the Great Commission, he wrote that Jesus actually reminded the disciples of His mission. Luke writes, 24: 44-49, "Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and



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the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.” Jesus came, and by his death and resurrection demonstrated the truth and power of His message and His mission. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, savior, and redeemer. Paul Writes that by his death and resurrection God exalted Jesus and bestow on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, those in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that this resurrected Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2: 9-11). Luke then continues in verse 47, “and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed or broadcast in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” Jesus came on a mission, a mission of redemption. Both as its source and its message. Scriptures makes it clear, repentance is in no other name, but the name of Jesus. This was His mission to the world, and He was now entrusting it to His disciples, both those who were present that day on the hill in Galilee and all those who would come after.

The Commission of the Church

In Matthew 28 verse, 19, Jesus now gives His charge to His disciples, “go therefore,” on the basis of My authority, “go, and make disciples.” The word “disciple” can be understood as pupil, apprentice, or learner or simply a follower. When a person becomes a disciple of Jesus, it indicates that he or she has become His follower. Seeking to learn, obey, and proclaim His teaching as well as become like him. It is interesting that Jesus did not say, “go and evangelize, or go and make converts.” Instead, he said, “go, and make disciples.”

Jesus idea of making disciples is not a single or even a series of events but more a process. It starts with going and evangelizing which leads to baptize, which not only speaks of their physical baptism, but more the idea of discovering and developing intimacy with the Persons of the Godhead. Discipleship is built on relationship. You cannot grow as a disciple of Jesus if your first priority is not an intimate relationship with Him. Continuing verse 20, “Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.” In order to be a disciple, one must totally submit and obey the teaching of his teacher.

Jesus and Discipleship

When Jesus started his ministry, He went to twelve men and says, “Follow me.” It says they dropped everything and followed him. The call of Jesus to follow Him is evangelism. They obeyed the call and followed Him. Now Jesus had 12 men following Him. Men who needed to be taught, trained, and developed. They needed to go through a process that transforms converts into mature and equipped disciples.

Therefore for 3 years Jesus enrolled these men in His school of disciple making, His school of discipleship. For 3 years, they walked with him building intimate relationship, and He taught them the message of the kingdom.



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Jesus poured into them all that He had. Now was the time for them to embark on the mission for which they were called and have been prepared - to replicate in others what He had done in them.

Jesus discipleship process starts with a call. A call to come and follow, and ends with a commission, go and make disciples. That is called the discipleship cycle. We see this cycle being demonstrated by Paul and Timothy. The Apostle Paul who adopts young Timothy as his disciple writes to him in 2 Timothy 2:1-2, "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." The goal of discipleship is to equip disciples to make disciples.

The Response of the early Church to the great commission

The book of Acts is the history of the outworking of the Great Commission. These 12 men empowered with the authority, message, and Spirit of God took the known world by storm. Speaking of Peter and John, it says in Acts 4:13 "now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus."

A Christian that is not engaged in discipleship will struggle to be a true representation of Christ in character, conduct, and service. A Church that does not make discipleship its priority will lack the ability to impact the world as the Church in the book of Acts did. The Great Commission call all believers to be disciples, and the Church not just to make converts but to provide the means by which they grow into the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4 verses 11-16).

The Church is commissioned to make disciples. However, discipleship does not just happen because we want it. It requires intentional planning, resource, and work and commitment. Second, discipleship must be relational. Jesus lived with those He called for 3 years. They did everything together. They forged intimacy as a group to the degree that Jesus laid down His life for them, and later they were willing to lay down their lives for Him and His gospel. Third, discipleship is transformational. Jesus called 12 ordinary men. Men with no formal training and questionable character, men who cared about themselves, and less about the things of God. But at the end of the discipleship process, these men model Christ in word, character, and conduct.

As I close, I pray that this message will challenge and transform your belief and you will come to understand God's ultimate call in your life.

Amen.



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