

## The Great Commission

### Opening Prayer

This morning I would like to talk about a subject that some will find uncomfortable. In prayer this week, the Lord has laid on my heart to bring his message of the great commission.

Some of you already know what the great commission is, others will not. It is my goal this morning for each of us this morning to know and understand what this is and what our role is in his plan.

Let's turn in our bibles this morning to:

### **Mark 16:15-18**

New International Version (NIV)

*<sup>15</sup> He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup> And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; <sup>18</sup> they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."*

### **Luke 24:44-49**

New International Version (NIV)

*<sup>44</sup> He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."*

*<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."*

## **Matthew 28:16-20**

English Standard Version (ESV)

### **The Great Commission**

*<sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in<sup>[a]</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

We can see here in Matthew, Mark and Luke (the synoptic gospels – three viewpoints) how Jesus laid out his plan.

To be clear I will be breaking this down into three areas and showing how these areas affect us, depending on where we are at in our walk with the Lord.

#### **#1 - The Role of the Unsaved in the Great Commission**

If you are unsaved here this morning, your role is simple. Listen to your heart and respond to the call of Jesus on your life. You are the focus of the great commission. Jesus came to earth and went through everything he did to make a place for you specifically. This morning he is calling you by name and he wants you to be in his kingdom. Your role is to give your heart to him and see the wonderful changes that he will make in your life. He died and rose again for you. Are you willing to live for him. I will be talking more about this later.

#### **#2 - The Role of the New Christian in the Great Commission**

Your Job is to learn about the good things of Jesus and his kingdom. To soak in the fellowship of his people and learn what it means after giving your heart to Christ what being a disciple of Christ actually means. As you learn about Jesus and what he has for you; share with others around you both Christian and non-Christian what he is doing in your life. The exciting changes, the joy and the experiences you are having. Your role is to plug in to the church and connect with others.

### **#3 – The Role of the Seasoned Christian in the Great Commission**

Notice here that I use the word seasoned... I am not referring to how long you have been a Christian. Some are Christians their whole lives and don't press in beyond their first experience in Christ. When I say seasoned, I mean those who have not been complacent, those on fire for God; Those to whom a relationship with Jesus means everything; those who have pressed into his Word. Those who pray faithfully and those who are dedicated followers of Christ. I am not talking about someone who is self-righteous or believes that for them the process of sanctification is done.

#### **1 John 1:5-8**

New International Version (NIV)

#### **Light and Darkness, Sin and Forgiveness**

<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. <sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all<sup>[a]</sup> sin.

<sup>8</sup>If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

I am not talking about perfect people, I am talking about those who believe and are faithful and love the Lord with their whole heart.

Your role is to be Fathers and Mothers in Christ. You help lead and guide and equip those within the body for sharing Gods love and grace. But it goes beyond that doesn't it, because we can get so focused inwardly on what is happening in our four walls that we forget what Jesus told us to do...

#### **He said "GO" and make disciples.**

I have noticed that many times we share the good news and walk someone through the sinner's prayer, turn the new Christian over to the Holy Spirit and celebrate another person in the kingdom. I really don't know where we as the Church in North America have gotten into this habit. Jesus didn't say to simply go and make converts, he said go and make disciples. This means that our responsibility as seasoned Christians is not to just bring people to Christ to mentor and guide them along the way. Why have so many of us decided to abandon the messiness and work of our personal responsibilities to the new believer?

When a mother gives birth to a new baby, does she celebrate and walk away from the child or does she feed, care for and nurture the child?

How much is the great commission a priority in your life? This morning could be the day that you accept his mission to make disciples. We all participate in different ways, but we all are required to be a part of this mission.

## **The Role of the Church**

The church is not a building. It is a living breathing entity made up of the people of God. Its purpose is to bring people to a place where they can find God. Where they can learn about God and be equipped for fulfilling the great commission.

## **We are equipped by Jesus for this mission**

My three main sermon points this morning are related to how we fulfill his great commission.

### **Point #1 – We have been given complete authority**

Let's look at Matthew 28 verse 18 again:

*<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"*

In this verse Jesus clearly is stating his authority to do this. Since Jesus has authority over everything, it might be a good idea to listen to his commands. He told us to Go and make disciples. He is not making a suggestion. He says in John 14:15 (ESV) "*If you love me, you will keep my commandments*"

In Acts 1:8 we read:

### **Acts 1:8**

New International Version (NIV)

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

## **Point #2 – We have a very specific assignment**

Verse 19 and 20 tell us:

*19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in<sup>[a]</sup> 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."*

Making disciples is more than praying the sinner's prayer with someone; it is about teaching, molding, developing and coming alongside the new believer. It is about teaching them how to become a follower of Christ. And... we don't have to do it alone. "... and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Many times I have heard Christians pass off their responsibility to stating that the Holy Spirit will lead them and guide them into all truth. While this is true and the Holy Spirit draws us to Christ, illuminates his word and takes each of us through the sanctification or cleansing process, it does not relieve us of our personal responsibilities to one another. If we love God we need to honor our community of believers because everyone matters. Jesus shows us in this discourse with Peter in John 21:17 his opinion...

### **John 21:17**

New International Version (NIV)

<sup>17</sup>The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Jesus wants us to take care of his people; bringing them into the kingdom is not enough. We need to be people of his word and of prayer. This is our example and our strength. This world needs us. We cannot afford to place our faith on the shelf until we next need it. We need to place our faith and trust in God for each step we take. We cannot do it alone.

### **Point #3 – We have an eternal assurance**

The last half of verse 20 tells us:

*And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

I understand this to mean until Jesus comes back. He has given us his promise to be with us in our assignment of making disciples.

The reality is many people are afraid, don't have the confidence or are simply too complacent to take up the great commission. Are we going to fall short of our goal because we could not find the strength within ourselves to do what he has asked of us?

I would remind us of Philipians 4:13

#### **Philippians 4:13**

New King James Version (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Christ<sup>[a]</sup> who strengthens me.

People, we have been given complete authority, a specific assignment and eternal assurance to complete it. We have been given the strength through Jesus.

When I think about his great commission in my life, the scripture in Isaiah 6:8 comes to my heart

<sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

#### **Conclusion:**

We have talked about what Jesus wants us to do this morning. We have talked about the role that each of us has to play in his great commission. If you have not accepted Christ this morning I urge you to talk with me, pastor Susan or one of our prayer team this morning, If you want to embrace Christ in a deeper way to move from the new Christian stage to the season believer this morning, or if you just need strength to carry out his plan, the prayer team will be with here this morning to pray with you.