

## 5 Marks – The Agenda of God

8/23/20

Matthew 28:19-20

Sunday AM

Have you heard the phrase – *famous last words*? It reminds me of the young man who lost his wise elderly father. A friend said, “I have to know, what were his last words?” The son replied, “Dad didn’t have any final words. Mother was w/ him until the end.”

Often, people consider Matthew 28:19-20 to be the famous last **recorded** words of Jesus to His disciples:

*...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and H.S. and teaching them to obey all I have commanded you.*

This is the G.C. The mandate Jesus left His followers to accomplish so that every person, from every tribe and nation might hear/receive the good news that *God so loved the world He gave His one/only Son.*

If you’re just joining us, we’re in what I believe is the most critical series every Christian must understand if they’re to successfully live a life pleasing to the Lord.

- A readiness to be **AVAILABLE** to God
- A heart that has an **AFFECTION** for God
- A desire to submit to the **AUTHORITY** of God
- An ambition to live for the **AGENDA** of God
- A willingness to rest in the **ASSURANCE** of God

We find these **5 Marks** in **Matthew 28:16-20** where Jesus offers a final word of instruction to His disciples.

*The disciples <sup>1</sup>went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, they <sup>2</sup>worshipped Him; but some doubted. Then Jesus said to them, “All <sup>3</sup>authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me., therefore, go and <sup>4</sup>make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and H.S. and teaching them to obey all I have commanded you. Surely <sup>5</sup>I am w/ you always, to the end of the age.”*

As we dive deeper into this **4<sup>th</sup> mark** – the G.C. is the **activity** of genuine faith. It’s *who we are* and *what we do* – we’re **disciples called to make disciples.**

Yet if we’re not careful, we might miss understand the G.C – and choose to live the Great **Omission.**

I want to begin w/ somewhat of a trick question – How many commands are in this commission? Count them!

*...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and H.S. and teaching them to obey all I have commanded you.*

**How many did you count?** Most people think there are (4) commands – *go, make, baptizing, and teaching.* But that’s inaccurate. In the Greek – there’s only ONE. Can you guess it? It’s not GO! It’s **MAKE disciples!** The only verb here in the Greek is **matheteuo** which translates – *make disciples.* All of the other words are **participles** explaining how to make disciples.

**I have some good news and some tough news.** The good news is Jesus is crystal clear in His choice of words about what is a *disciple*. The tough news is, it's not what many people have made it today. In our world of *easy believism* and *conversion theology* – we have accidentally pedaled a definition of **Christian** that's less than God's expectation. *Let me explain...*

**disciple** (*matheteuo*) refers to one who trusts/obeys. It speaks of a person who believes/follows as they put into practice and live the faith they profess. A disciple receives Jesus as Savior and follows Him as their Lord.

This means a disciple is more than a *convert* – more than a person who goes to church, prays a prayer, walks an aisle, gets dunked, takes communion, and then lives however they want to live independently of God. A disciple is a person who so genuinely believes Jesus was who He said He was and did what He said He did, that they trust Christ as their Savior/Lord and then abandon their life to live on mission w/ Christ.

**Did you know** – the Bible knows nothing of receiving Christ as Savior but not as Lord, as if we could take God piecemeal as it suits us? *To be a disciple requires faith that results in action. It requires belief that leads to obedience, and trust that results in fellowship.*

This is the story of the rich, young ruler in **Luke 18**. This rich, moral guy came to Jesus wanting to make sure he had eternal life. Only he wanted enough of Jesus to be saved, but not enough to relinquish control of His life to Jesus. He wanted Jesus as Savior, but he didn't want to follow Him as Lord. So, when Jesus laid down the gauntlet of genuine faith/fellowship – the Bible says the man turned/walked away b/c ultimately, He wanted Jesus on his terms w/out surrender.

**I'm going to be blunt.** Our church rolls are filled w/ people like the rich, young ruler – they want enough of Jesus to save them, but they don't really want Him to be the Lord of their lives. They'll follow so long as it is convenient/comfortable, but when it requires that they have to deny themselves and take up their cross to follow – that's when they turn/walk away.

**Listen** – by Jesus' own words, He said, "If you say you have faith, yet you're unwilling to follow... If you say you believe but you don't have a desire to obey or the actions to support it, then you're not a Christian. You might be religious. You might go to church. You might acknowledge there's something different about Jesus – but you don't know Him! *B/c a disciple is so convinced Jesus was who He said He was and did what He said He'd do – they trust/obey.*

*A true convert is a disciple – a person who has accepted and submitted their life to Christ – whatever that may mean or demand. MacArthur*

*Salvation is free... and the gift of God is eternal life. It's not cheap for it cost God His Son and the Son His life, but is free to those who believe. However, when we become true believers, we become disciples – and that'll cost everything we have. Lest we forget, our Lord was after disciples – not mere joiners. Havner*

**Bottomline** – belief w/out transformed obedient action and behavior toward the way of God, is no belief at all – yet we're called to be *disciples who make disciples*.

So, how do *disciples make disciples* – 3 requirements:

I **SERVE** the World

The G.C. begins w/ **going** – *as you are going...* we **go** w/ the intent of serving others to Jesus to earn the right to speak w/ them about the hope that's w/in us.

**go** – is a participle of assumption – as in, b/c you have believed/trusted Jesus as your Savior/Lord and had your life transformed by His grace/mercy... *as you are going* into your life, crossing paths w/ the nations, you should be ready to jettison your holy huddles to venture into the highways/byways of everyday life to live on mission for Jesus by using your life/influence to make disciples of everyone you meet. **The idea is to live moment-by-moment, in the normal traffic patterns of your life, consciously aware that you're a witness to the love/grace of God.** So, how you live matters!

So, *serving the world to make disciples* is so much more than going on a mission trip – **it's living on mission in the everyday aspects of your life.** At work. At school. At home. At church. At the ball field. On an airplane. At the store. In your car. On vacation. It's living to for someone/thing greater than yourself.

*For Christ's love compels us, b/c we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.* 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

**I've heard it said** – we go to the nations to **BE** the hands/feet of Jesus – to meet people at the point of their need – so that we might earn the right to speak the name of Jesus and to share of His love/grace.

**Remember** – we don't go in our name, or in our power, ability, or adequacy – we go in His name and under the influence of the H.S. We go listening for the H.S. to lead/guide us to show us where God is at work and how we're to engage and minister in His name.

**Point** – the G.C. begins w/ a go/tell mentality and not a come/hear mentality. We go to serve others to Jesus. Or as the old adage goes – *Share Jesus always, when necessary... use words!*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> aspect of the G.C. is *baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and H.S.* – that is – **Share the Word**

## II **SHARE** the Word

The aspect of the commission is that *as we're going*, we're to **introduce** people to Jesus. We're to engage in spiritual conversations to tell them of God's love.

Several yrs ago, I was traveling w/ a young man from Richmond, VA to the New River Gorge in WV to go whitewater rafting on the Gauley River. As we were traveling, unsolicited, he shared w/ me that he had no belief in God. In that moment, I remember having an overwhelming sense the reason he had no sense of God was b/c he had a skewed view of who God/Jesus were. After he spent a few min. describing his view of God, I said to him, "I've been a Christian for a while, and what you just described was not the God I knew. Would you allow me to introduce you to the God of the Bible?" So, I started at the beginning and took Him to the cross and the empty tomb. When I finished, before I could ask him if he wanted to know Christ as His Savior/Lord, he said – "Wow! Now that's the kind of God I'd like to know and have a relationship w/. Can you help me to know Him?" I said, "Why yes... yes I can!" So, we pulled over onto the shoulder on I-81, and he prayed to accept Christ as His Savior/Lord. Soon after, he was baptized at our church.

**baptizing** – the term means to wholly immerse or submerge in fluid or to stain w/ a dye. It's a symbolic gesture used by the church to identify someone whose life had been fully transformed by the grace of God.

**In this instance though** – it's referring not just to the act of baptism but to the **entire transaction of salvation.** From the moment a person hears the good news, until they believe unto salvation, and then follow in believer's baptism. Jesus was calling His disciples to participate in living and speaking the salvation of God.

In a sense, my role as a disciple is to live on mission ready to share w/ others the good news that God so loved them He gave His life to rescue them from the consequences of their sin. But I'm to do more than just convey the message, I'm to participate in their spiritual growth/maturity. I'm to walk alongside of them to spur them on in the faith.

**In the context of the G.C.**, baptism refers to a person hearing the Word from a disciple, then after believing it, they align their life to following Jesus thru the displaying of their faith in the act of water baptism to give testimony that their life has been changed by God.

**Meaning** – the physical activity of baptism is intended to declare a person's genuine belief/commitment to follow. It's a physical gesture to illustrate/testify to the spiritual transaction that has taken place at salvation.

*Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? Thus, we were buried w/ him thru baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead thru the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Rm. 6:3-4*

Lest we forget, in the early church, a person didn't get baptized if they didn't believe, b/c to get baptized was to identify w/ Christ – and this was to sign your death certificate. **If you didn't mean it, then you wouldn't have done it b/c of what at stake.**

The G.C. begins w/ a disciple's willingness to go into their world, under the leading of the H.S., to live/speak the message of God's love/grace so that others might hear the message and believe the truth of God's love.

Which brings us to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final aspect of the G.C. – *teaching them to obey all I have commanded you...*

### III **SOW** the Way

*As we go*, we're also called to **plant** the truths of God in others by investing the lessons Jesus has taught us into others until they're able to feed on God for themselves. We're to teach others how to trust/obey – how to see, hear, and experience God thru the H.S. so they too can live on mission and share God's love.

**teaching them to obey** – refers to our charge to assist people in walking in obedience to God's will/Word by living in alignment w/ the H.S. so He can guide/direct their lives and direct their steps.

The word used here for **teaching** means *to cause to know or to help others to learn the content and intent, and also how to put it into practice.*

It refers to a choir director who trains a choir over a long period of rehearsals until they know the music/cues by heart and can perform the piece flawlessly from memory. **Meaning the music has become a part of them.**

Teaching people in the faith to obey requires ***incarnational*** and ***informational*** instruction. A mentor of mine would say *teaching people to obey all that Jesus commanded* requires ***intentional relational interaction*** and ***intentional revelational instruction***. In other words, to help someone to know and walk w/ Jesus requires life-to-life, personal alongsiding where truth is shared, discussed, processed, and practiced.

I think of Paul's words to Timothy – *The things you have seen and heard in me – these entrust into reliable men who will be qualified to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2*

And this is our commission – to go into our small part of the world, ready to be used of God, to share w/ others the hope that is w/in us so that others might also follow Him. It is a call to participate in helping the world to hear/receive the good news that God loves them and gave His life to rescue/redeem them.

Whenever I think of the G.C. I'm reminded of the story of the Coca-Cola Company. In 1886, a pharmacist by the name of Dr. John Pemberton, concocted a caramel-colored syrup in a brass kettle in his backyard that he began selling on May 8, 1886 at Jacob's Pharmacy in downtown Atlanta. For nearly 90 yrs, Coke was an American drink. But in the early 1970's, the executives of Coke decided they wanted every person, on every continent, in every nation to taste the drink.

Since then, Coke has become the most recognized brand/beverage in the world. I find it interesting that in their first yr in 1886, they sold just **25 bottles** – today they sell **1.8 bil. bottles per day** w/ a market value of \$203 bil. And Coca-Cola is sold in every country in the world but one – North Korea.

In less than 50 yrs – Coca-Cola has reached the world. Prompting one pastor to say, “If Jesus had given the G.C. to the Coca-Cola Company, the Gospel would've already been presented to every person on earth!” **Only that is not what He chose to do. He gave it to His disciples – to His church – to you and to me.**

**The question is** – will we go into our corner of the world – into our everyday lives – to the places where we live, work, and play – to make disciples of each/every person our lives intersect. Will we serve our friends/neighbors, our colleagues/customers to earn the right to share w/ them the good news that God loves them and desires to have a relationship w/ them. And then, will walk w/ them to assist them in growing up in their faith so that their lives also honor God.