

III. The Jubilee in Biblical Perspective
The Jubilee and the Great Commission
“The Great Commission and The Great Co-missioned”
II Timothy 3:1-13
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February 7, 2010 – Morning Sermon

The text for our study is found in 2 Timothy 3:1-13 says, *1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. (What will that look like?) 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 6 For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. 9 But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.*

The grass withers. The flower fades. God’s Word abides forever. By His grace and mercy may it be preached for you.

You can keep your Bibles open to this text. We’ll be referring back to this text throughout. We are in our year of jubilee. God has blessed Briarwood with the privilege to serve the Lord for 50 years. So we want to do what the jubilee says to do and that is to give thanks to the Lord and renew the commitment for the next 50 years. We also went back and looked at Leviticus 25 to study what the Year of Jubilee was. The Year of Jubilee was an extension of the Sabbath. God had a weekly Sabbath where you work 6 days and rest 1 day and then to rest unto worship to be renewed and refreshed. Then God has a yearly Sabbath every seven years in which you would learn to depend upon the Lord and rest that year in the Lord and for the Lord. Then there was a Sabbath year of Sabbath years called the Year of Jubilee. So at the 49th year which was a Sabbath year there would be another to follow in the 50th that was the Year of Jubilee. In that year all the land would be returned, justice would be affirmed, indentured servants and slaves would be set free, kinsmen redeemers would redeem their kinsmen from their debts and this was a great year of mercy, grace, rest and renewal of blessing of the Lord but being a Sabbath extension, like the weekly and yearly Sabbath, this Sabbath, this Jubilee pointed to Jesus.

So Isaiah 61 says the Year of Jubilee and that which it is pointing to, is a day in which the Messiah will come. When the Messiah comes the year of God’s favor, His grace and mercy, has now come. The Redeemer, the One who redeems us from the bondage of our sins, from captivity to sin, the One who sets us free from the prison of our rebellion against God who redeems, forgives us, and transforms us, has come. Isaiah 67 says He will be anointed by the Spirit of God, affirmed by the voice of God and then He will proclaim the Year of Jubilee and He will proclaim the Day of God’s judgment. So Jesus, after He is baptized, affirmed, anointed, the Messiah, stands in the synagogue in Nazareth. He finds the text in Isaiah 61 and He reads it. He doesn’t read the whole text.

He doesn't read proclaiming the Day of vengeance. He stops at the Year of favor, the Year of Jubilee. He sits down and says, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled." The proclamation of God's grace has now come. He purposefully stopped and didn't say the Day of Judgment has come. That will come when the Messiah comes again.

In between the two is the day of grace in which the church has been given the Great Commission and in the name of Christ as the Body of Christ to take the year of favor, the proclamation of the day when He comes in judgment, will be the day of the final verdict that is inescapable under the judgment and wrath of God for all eternity in a place called the lake of fire in the judgment of God. But until that Day comes there is a day of escape through Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life and we are called with a Great Commission to go and take that to the world. We are called to go and make disciples.

We have a Great Co-mission and that Great Commission has one single objective and that's to make disciples. Then it tells you three ways to do it. One is to go and evangelize. Two is to baptize and enfold. Then three is to teach them to observe all that I have commanded them and equip them. So that's what we have been called to do. We make disciples by going, baptizing and teaching. Then what happens? Disciples raise up whose life is there to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever and to make His glory known throughout all of the earth. That's a Great Commission and what God has called us to do.

Now God has allowed us for 50 years to do that. Here is something that is very practical that I want to make as clearly as I can. Briarwood is a Great Commission church, not perfectly but on purpose, it has been and will be a Great Commission church not because we have a mission's conference every year, not because we have an extraordinarily gifted missionary staff that we send out. That certainly is apart of it but not simply are we a Great Commission church because we give our faith promise giving, we pray and we send out cross cultural missionaries around the world. That's a piece of it but we're not a Great Commission church unless every member understands that each one of us has been commissioned.

I've invented a word here so bear with me. It's not the first one and it won't be the last one. We won't be a Great Commission church unless each of our members understands that we're all called to be co-missionaries. Every one of us has been called. We are not giving a faith promise to someone to go out and do what we're not doing here. We are co-missionaries to reach our Jerusalem, our Judea and our Samaria and praise the Lord for our world mission's conference and I look forward to it this year. I look forward to what God's going to do in our faith promise giving. In this year of economic difficulty what is God going to do through the sacrificial trusting lives of His people in faith promise. How is God going to divide us up in terms of our prayer burdens for each and every missionary around the world? I'm looking forward to all of that but I do know that does not make us a Great Commission church. We are a Great Commission church when we all understand that we are great commissioned and we are co-missionaries.

So this got me thinking about who the best co-missionary is that has ever lived. I know the answer is Jesus but after Him who is it? For me it's Paul. There he is in Jerusalem. Then he's converted and goes to Judea and Samaria. There he is at Antioch and then he goes and takes the Gospel to the whole world. He's turning the world upside down and the book of Acts records it. So I look at him and say, "There's a co-

missionary.” Not only is he a co-missionary but how does he hand it off? As he approaches the end of his life how does he hand off to make sure it doesn’t stop with him? How does this co-missionary do his work of making disciples so he leaves behind co-missionaries, like Titus, like Luke, like Aquila, like Priscilla, like Timothy (his favorite son)?

I go to the text in 2 Timothy and in this study Paul is speaking to you from death row. He is in prison in Rome on death row. Death is eminent. Right above him in his prison is a certificate that states his offense and under Nero he will be put to death. Now I have a little book that I record last words of people before they step into eternity. I love to listen and go back and read last words because I know when people get to their last breath where they don’t have many more, what they say is important. I’ll promise you when you get to your last breath you’re not going to be talking about the Super Bowl or the weather. Paul is in his last breaths. He is just moments or days away from losing his life for Jesus Christ and here is his most trusted disciple. What does he say to him?

In 2 Timothy 3:1-9 he warns him about something. He says, “Timothy, out here in this world are false teachers but they don’t stay out in the world. They get into the church.” He describes the effects of their ministry. The effect of their ministry is they create people that are swollen, lovers of self and lovers of pleasure instead of lovers of God. They are ungrateful, arrogant and conceited but notice he’s not saying this is what is taught out there. But this is what will make its way into Christ’s church. He gives two examples from the Old Testament of Jannes and Jambres who were in among God’s covenant people teaching false things and opposing the true teaching of God’s Word through the one called of God which was Moses.

Paul tells Timothy that out there are false teachers teaching false doctrine that brings despair, destruction and destroys people. It doesn’t stay out in the world but it comes right into the church and there it does its work of havoc in lives, marriages, and it does so with the appearance of godliness even though it’s denying the power there of. So that from pulpits and small groups are false teachers who in the name of Christ are leading people away from the Gospel of saving grace into Jesus Christ, into another gospel that’s defined by this world which is self centered instead of God centered.

Now here are the verses I want to look at specifically in this study. Paul tells Timothy he is different in that he doesn’t listen to false teachers with false doctrines. You are different and here’s what you do. 2 Timothy 3:10-13 says, **10** *You, however, (meaning in contrast to those people who fall prey to false teachers) have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

Paul says, “Now listen Timothy, you are going to be a co-missionary because you are going to follow Christ by following true disciplers and not false teachers with false doctrine. You’re different because you are choosing the right people. You chose, by God’s grace through what He had done in me and I am what I am by the grace of God, not to follow the false teachers that tickle your ears and tell you what you want to hear, but you have come to hear that which God has said from me.” Then he gives nine features of a discipler of co-missionaries.

Number one is you followed my teaching. Number two you followed my way of life or today we would say one who has a lifestyle. You followed not only what I said but you followed what I did which means what he did matched what he said. We say his walk matched his talk. Number three you followed my aim in life, my purpose in life. He says, "I have a purpose in life." You either have a purpose in life or you will become some one's purpose in life. You either know where God's leading you in which you have a purpose in life or the next commercial, the next toy, the next event, the next thing will then control your life. You'll either become an instrument for someone else's purpose in life or you'll have purpose in life. Just like David when he served God's purpose in his own generation fell asleep and was laid among his fathers.

Number four you followed my faith. Number five you followed my patience. Number six you followed my love. Number seven you followed my steadfastness. Number eight you followed my persecutions and number nine you followed my sufferings. By the way, his persecutions and sufferings all happened and when Timothy was a little boy he saw Paul being persecuted and his sufferings at three places – at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra. What else did he see? You saw my endurance that the Lord delivered me through all of those persecutions. Then he declares, "Listen Timothy, follow me, see my persecutions, you're going to have them too. For all who live Godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But the Lord will deliver you through them, not from them."

Please do not listen to any teacher who tells you if your faith is strong enough you'll never have suffering or persecution. The Bible says in Philippians 1:29, "*For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake...*" Jesus said, "If they persecuted Me, how much more will they persecute you (John 15:20)." Jesus also said in John 16:33, "*I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*" The Lord does not deliver us from the presence of persecutions but He does deliver us through suffering and persecution making us more than conquerors. Then He gives another promise. The Lord will deliver you. Evil men will continue to do their work and it will grow increasingly evil in the last days as we approach the coming of Christ but you will be delivered for as your days are so shall your strength be.

I want to give you five practical things. One may say, "Harry I have come to Jesus Christ. The Great Commission has been given. I'm not going to sit on the side lines. I want to be a co-missionary." If that is you then here are Paul's instructions to you through Timothy and that is to leave here and do these five things.

Number one is to secure a personal relationship with a Christ-centered and Gospel-driven disciple maker(s). You never should have just one disciple maker. You need more than one. One might think that Timothy only had Paul but wait until we get to 2 Timothy 3:14, 15 which says, **14** *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it* **15** *and how from **childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*** Before Timothy ever had Paul he had his grandmother and his mother which were Lois and Eunice. So you and I need Christ-centered, Gospel-driven disciple makers. One might think, "Harry I don't get any teachers." Yes you do. Either celebrities of this world through the media of this world is

calling the shots in your life or you have made a decision that I'm going to find those whom God has equipped to lead me in the way everlasting. The Christian life is not intuitive. It is informed. That means I need God given informers and teachers. Christ teaches through those whom He has gifted to teach me His Word. The Christian life comes from the Word of God. I need to be taught the Word of God so I want to secure it.

If I came to you right now and said "Who are your disciple makers that are leading you to be a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven disciple maker of others?" I can tell you about mine. One being Harold Jones. Some of you met him the day I was installed here at Briarwood. Harold was the elder from Christ Covenant who did my charge. He was the elder when I started going to church because I wanted to marry Cindy. I wished I could tell you I was going to church to get saved but I wasn't. I was going to church because she would only date a Christian so I went to church. Harold Jones saw me and he decided was God's bloodhound from heaven to track me down. When I came to Christ I can't tell you how much it meant on those Sunday nights that he would see me and say, "I think you need to talk to somebody so come on over and we'll have a cheese sandwich." He would just see that I needed to talk with someone. I can't tell you the years and the amount of times that wonderful ruling elder disciplined me in truth and the majesty of Christ and through the difficulties of life in following Christ.

I would love to tell you about my granddaddy and my wife's wonderful patience when I would say on a Saturday, "Honey I need to get in the car to see granddaddy" and we'd drive two and a half hours to Augusta, Georgia just so I could go talk to him. I'd go down to his carpet shop and he'd be manning the carpet shop. There I was and I'd be praying, "Lord, don't let any lady come in here to buy carpet because I need to talk to granddaddy." Of course I'm sure he is praying for somebody to come in since he needs to feed somebody. I just wanted to listen to my granddaddy or my daddy.

I wished I had the time to tell you about my uncle Edgar who disciplined me in evangelism. He was the most unbelievable evangelist I had ever seen in my life. There we were in Harrisburg, Georgia and he'd walk through this place where all the down trodden and people just out of jail were and he would take them by the shoulder and say, "Do you know Jesus?" If I did that I would have gotten hit right in the face. He led so many to Christ we ended up seeing the Harrisburg Gospel Center put in place right there in Augusta, Georgia. I had the chance to see that. I got the opportunity to see how you can be bold and courageous in evangelism yet quiet and compassionate in dealing with the people that are lost and in need of Christ. I wished I could tell you about JR and Eloise Harland when I first was converted.

There I want a new Christian and I was putting Cindy through school. I married a high maintenance woman. I had to have three jobs. There I was loading freight on Friday and Saturday nights at Johnson's Motor Lines, umpiring baseball games and I was a package car driver for United Parcel Service. I had the brown uniform with the bow tie and hat. I would stop at Dixie Road to have lunch and Eloise found out I stopped there and knew I was a new Christian and needed encouragement. She said to me, "You need to come over after lunch." So I would go to this older lady's house, sit and talk and it didn't hurt that at noon she always had a slice of a seven layer chocolate cake there. That was a great incentive to disciple making in my life.

I could tell you about Frank Barker when I came up to him right after I first went into the PCA. I had observed him, how he cared for people, how he ministered and how

he cared for the church and I said to him, "I'd love to learn from you, can I buy your lunch twice a year and just ask you ten questions and can I call you twice a year just to ask you a few things every once in a while?" He looked at me and said, "Yep, sounds good, Harry, call me." So I had the chance to learn from him throughout all of these years.

What a great blessings these people have been in my life and I could go on and on to tell you about more people but what I know is that Christ has led me through those whom He has put in my life and I had the opportunity to secure Christ-centered, Gospel-driven disciple makers. Who are yours? Don't sit around and wait for them to call on you. Go get them. You have the features which are people who teach sound doctrine, my teaching, people whose lives match what they teach, people who have purpose in life and more. You know what to do.

The second takeaway is realize Satan has highly seductive, deceptive and destructive false teachers within the professing church and all around armed with false doctrine growing in number and influence. Satan has put false teachers in this church. All around you in churches there are false teachers. They know how to tickle your ear. They know how to use the Gospel Bible words in such a way but it's still a self centered religious message and not a call to die to self for Jesus Christ. So realize that they are there and they're not just out in the world where you can avoid them there. Paul says they even appear as angels of light. They occupy pulpits, teaching positions and they are all over the place but they have abandoned the Gospel and teach another gospel. What ever you do don't secure them but secure Christ-centered, Gospel-driven disciple makers in your life. Realize that there are those there that would bring destruction and are doing Satan's work in these last days. There are more now than there were in the days of Paul. It's multiplying.

The third takeaway is know that a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven disciple maker has markers. They are evident. Here are some things that you look for. When you want to be effective as a Christ-centered disciple maker and a co-missionary then I want to say 'no' to false teachers and 'yes' to true teaching and true disciple making in my life. So what does that look like? All we need to do is boil down what the Apostle Paul said. First of all you look for people that teach sound doctrine, not things that tickle my ears but things that are true to God's Word. Secondly, to some degree their life matches what they teach. They have a walk that matches their talk. Thirdly, they have a significant purpose in life.

Do you realize the extraordinary gift to you? God made you. You have been designed by God and then when sin would throw you on the trash heap of eternity God sent His Son and has saved you. God has done it for a purpose. Here is your life. You are either a tool in the hands of the world or you are in instrument in the hands of God. When you get to the end of your life what will your life have built? What will you have built in your life? God does not exist to give you and me purpose in life. We exist for God to be our purpose in life and that is to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever. God, here I am. When I get to the end of my life what did You do with my life to build something for Your glory? Otherwise the world will use you to build something that will soon wash away, just like sand castles when the tide comes in. So what is it that God would do through you?

Do you remember who Charles Schultz is? He is the author of Peanuts and the Peanuts characters. One of my favorite comics he wrote was about Linus and Snoopy. In this comic Linus is throwing a stick for Snoopy to go get because Snoopy is a dog. Snoopy looks at Linus and says, "I'm not going." Snoopy happens to be a dog that can talk. Linus said, "Go get the stick." Snoopy said, "I'm not going. I don't want to get to the end of my life and all somebody will say is 'he went and got sticks.'" What are people going to say when you get to the end of your life? Is there some idol out there or counterfeit god that has dominated our life – sports, technology, our own advancement, our own aggrandizement – or will they say he served the purpose of God in his life?

So you look for that person that has sound teaching, sound living, a Divine focus, and fourthly a significant life purpose that displays Spirit filled virtues like faith, love, patience and steadfastness. Fifthly you're looking for a person that when the adversity comes they endure with steadfast consistency. They are dependable in life. When someone comes to me and says, "Pastor I just can't wait to serve the Lord" and there's this high emotional charge, I'm not opposed to emotion, I'm all for it because the older I get I'm almost an emotional basket case but I know when people are coming to serve the Lord purely out of some emotional experience I know what's true spiritually is what is true physically. What goes up will soon go down. What I love to see are the people that are just drinking in the Word of God and they are growing day by day and step by step because I know they stay the course. When the adversity comes the Anchor holds. You will see that steadfast consistency in them. I will promise you that adversity will come but I also promise you that the saving grace of Christ will make you an overcomer. So find people who can disciple you who are overcomers which is the sixth mark.

I asked a man once, "How is it going?" He said, "It's not going so bad, under the circumstances." So what are you doing there? We are not to live under the circumstances. The Lord has made us more than conquerors through Jesus Christ. Paul is very specific about that. He tells Timothy, even prior to Timothy's conversion, when Paul was on his first missionary journey, "Do you remember at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, the persecutions and sufferings that I endured right there?" We don't have time to go through all that but at Antioch Paul was going to be lynched and God delivered him. Paul is run out of Iconium where they want to kill him and then he gets to Lystra where they put hands on Paul. They take him out and stone him. Timothy saw him when they were going to lynch him and kill him. He saw Paul getting stoned outside of Lystra when Paul stood firm for Jesus Christ. Timothy saw Paul getting mocked, taunted and as they were hitting him. He saw the stones bring blood to his skin. He saw him so battered and bruised from stoning and the people thought he was dead so they stood up and walked back into the city but he was not. His eyes opened and he stood up and walked right back into the city. That's who Timothy saw. That's the man he would follow because in that man he saw the grace of God that delivers us, not from persecutions but through them and above them and that God uses them.

The fourth takeaway is realize that if I'm committed and growing as a follower of Jesus Christ then I will suffer persecution in the world to some degree but God's overcoming and delivering grace will be sufficient. One may say, "Harry I'm not suffering persecution." Then you are in a season of God withholding it for a reason or we are in a season in which we are not pursuing the Lord because He says those who would live Godly in Christ will suffer persecution. So the promise is that if you follow Christ

then you are going to be attacked by Satan and the world. What is your response? Your response is truth, love and grace. You are more than a conqueror. You just rise back up and walk into the city. God's grace is sufficient.

The fifth and final takeaway is while maintaining this disciple making relationship (never stop being disciplined) with someone who is Christ-centered and Gospel-driven, now you have been called to be a disciple maker of others. Who are your disciple makers and whom are you discipling? Who can I go to today that would say 'thank God for you'? Who are you a disciple maker to? Who are you investing in? Maintain your disciple making. To be a co-missionary you must be a learner and a grower your whole life. Christ-centered, Gospel-driven disciple makers are not people that know it all, they're just people that want to know it all. I am so grateful to see that in the lives of men and women. I'm grateful to see it in the people that I know are serving Christ and they never quit learning. Praise the Lord for them.

I'll come in from some where and I'll see Dr. Barker in the hallway and I'll say, "How are you doing Dr. Barker?" He'll say, "I'm doing fine Harry." Then he'll say, "What are you reading?" We just celebrated his 78th birthday and he's still learning. Are you and I still learning? Maintain those disciple making relationships. Now start giving it away.

I'll close with this because it personally impacts my life in this matter of the Great Commission. There was a shoe salesman by the name of Edward Kimble. A teenage boy went to work for him who he wanted to evangelize and disciple but he was afraid to do it. Finally, one day he went into the stock room and looked at this teenage boy and said, "Could I tell you about Jesus and would you come to my Sunday school class?" It wasn't exactly a smooth plan but the boy said, "Yes." The young boy's name was Dwight L. Moody. Edward Kimble led him to Christ and disciplined him.

Would you like to know all the people that Dwight L. Moody has disciplined? I'll give you one. His name is Frederick B. Meyer. I have some of his books in my library. Moody disciplined Meyer. I bet Frederick Meyer sure was thankful for Edward Kimble. Frederick Meyer then disciplined a man by the name of Wilbur Chapman and out of that came the Youth for Christ ministry. Through that he disciplined a baseball player that was converted by the name of Billy Sunday and I'm sure Billy Sunday was thankful for Wilbur Chapman and FB Meyer and DL Moody and Edward Kimble.

Through Billy Sunday God laid hold of a man who had an unbelievable heart for evangelism and his name was Billy Graham. In 1943 Billy Graham came to Charlotte, North Carolina and no telling how many people Billy Graham has disciplined but I can tell you one and his name was Harry Lloyd Reeder Senior. He was my granddaddy. My granddaddy ended up from 1948 to 1952 on Billy Graham's team. All that happened so I could do to a carpet shop and learn from him. Then Billy Graham comes back to Charlotte in 1948 and Harry Lloyd Reeder Junior, his wife and their two month old baby boy came and gave their life to Christ. I was the two month old baby boy. Man, I am thankful for Edward Kimble. Somebody reached somebody who reached you. Now will it stop with you or will it continue, the River of Life? Be disciplined. Be a discipler. Let's pray.

Prayer:

If for some reason in your life right now there is not an intentional commitment to getting a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven discipler in your life, would you right now begin to ask God to lead you to someone who teaches sound teaching, sound life, significant purpose, the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, steadfastness, and who is an overcomer by God’s grace? Who will God lead you to? Then will you begin to pray ‘Lord, make me a co-missionary?’ I’m looking forward to how I can be supportive of missionaries who leave here but how can I be a co-missionary here? Who will I reach, evangelize, enfold and equip to make disciples? It will not stop with me. I will give this away. Father, will You speak in and through and to our hearts? Thank You for Jesus, whom we fix our eyes upon, who teaches us, who grows us and then allows us to reproduce in the lives of others. Thank You for these people who desire not only to embrace the Great Commission but desires to be co-missionaries for Christ. I pray in Jesus’ Name, Amen.