

The Great Commission: Tell the World the King Has Come!

Matthew 28:16-20 | (ESV)

Matthew 28:16-19a

Notes

When & To Whom Was The Great Commission Given? (v16-17)

V16 THE FIRST THING WE NEED TO SEE ABOUT THE GREAT COMMISSION ARE 3 ASPECTS OF ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT & ORIGINAL AUDIENCE.

1. **THE GREAT COMMISSION WAS ISSUED TO TRAINED DISCIPLES.** (V16) (IT WAS GIVEN IN MATTHEW 28, NOT MATTHEW 4, OR 10, OR 20)

- When Jesus first called his disciples he said, *“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”* These words clearly imply that his disciples were NOT yet ready for this work from the start. (Matt. 4:19)
- There was a process of learning, growing, & training that needed to unfold so that when they went out into the world they would represent Christ faithfully. **We cannot forget this critical historical context of the Great Commission.**
- **Now, I do not want to be misunderstood: It is true that the Great Commission applies to all Christians. It is also true that God can use any person, regardless of their training or spiritual maturity, to accomplish his holy will.**
- But that does not change the fact that God’s ordinary method for raising up witnesses for his name—whether laymen, pastors, or missionaries—is that, *before they step into a role of any spiritual authority, they first receive thorough training in doctrine & demonstrate proven godly character.* (Mk. 3:14; Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Jm. 3:1)
- **The fact is: People who do not rightly understand the Christian faith cannot rightly spread the Christian faith.**
- And sadly, history bears overwhelming witness to the fact that when this is ignored, confusion & false doctrine abound, which stifle the advance of the gospel, hinder the Church’s purity & unity, & bring dishonor to God.

2. **THE GREAT COMMISSION WAS GIVEN TO WORSHIPING DISCIPLES.** (V17A)

- The point I hope to draw out is simple, but critically important. Christianity involves growth in our intellectual understanding of the doctrines of our faith (v20). This life-long training is absolutely essential to every believer.
- **But that does not mean that Christian maturity is a matter of knowledge alone.** Indeed, there are many people who are thoroughly “trained” in knowledge who, nevertheless, fail to meet the description given here.
- **A Christian witness not only knows the truth about Christ & his Word, but they personally worship the Christ they know!**
- They *love him, bow before him, fear him, adore his majesty, & submit to him as their God, King, Ruler & Lord.*
- **We are not merely people who agree w/ the information of the Bible, but people who worship the God of the Bible!**
- **If Jesus is not worthy of your personal worship, why would anyone believe your message to forsake all & follow him?**
- **It must be our personal love for Christ that initiates & sustains our participation in the work of the Great Commission.**

3. **THE GREAT COMMISSION WAS GIVEN TO IMPERFECT DISCIPLES.** (V17B)

- In the first two aspects, I have been aiming to set the bar for the Great Commission high, where God places it.
- However, in this third aspect I want to *counterbalance* that with the fact that *while we must ever-maintain a very high view of our calling, we must also remember that God only uses ordinary & imperfect people to fulfill it.*
- Even the Apostles continued to face “doubts,” fears, & sins throughout their Christian lives, and so will we.
- But *this did not disqualify them* from being powerfully used by God, & *it does not disqualify you & I either.*
- **We need to ever-remember that the calling we have been given is very high, but the mercy God has promised us in our weakness is also very great. We must ever-strive to grow, while ever-resting in his power to use the weak.** (II Cor. 4:7; 12:9)

On What Basis Was The Great Commission Given? (v18-19a)

THE WORD “THEREFORE” IN V19A IS IMPORTANT. IT MEANS THAT THE DECLARATION OF V18 IS WHAT STANDS BEHIND THE EXHORTATION OF V19-20.

- The reality of Christ’s ultimate, unquestionable, & unimpeachable authority over all things in heaven and earth has two powerful implications for how God’s people are to understand the Great Commission:

1. **THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST REQUIRES THE WORK OF THE GREAT COMMISSION OF EVERY BELIEVER.** (IT IS YOUR CHRISTIAN DUTY!)

- Christ’s authority means the Great Commission is not a suggestion for the zealous, or hobby for our free time, but rather a command from our God & the central purpose of our lives around which all else must be ordered.
- **As our Maker, Savior, & everlasting King, Jesus Christ has every right to tell us how our lives are to be ordered.**
- **And this he has done in the Great Commission, beloved.** Your purpose in this life as a Christian is to glorify your God and Savior through faithful personal participation in the ongoing work of the Great Commission.

2. **THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST ALSO STANDS BEHIND, UPHOLDS, & IRRESISTIBLY ADVANCES THE WORK OF THE GREAT COMMISSION.**

- Jesus’ authority does mean the Great Commission is a command of God. But the primary point of his words is not about communicating a command, but rather giving confidence, comfort, & courage to his people.
- **Jesus wants his people to know that when they obediently order their lives around the Great Commission all the power, wisdom, resources, defense, and love of the Ruler of Heaven & Earth stands behind them.**
- Because the one who commissions us is the Almighty God, we can step onto the battlefield of the Great Commission knowing that he who is in us is greater than he who is in the world, that the gates of hell are not capable of prevailing against the Church, & that no weapon shall halt the irresistible advance of the gospel.
- **Why? Because the one who sends us into the world to be his witnesses holds “all authority in heaven & earth.”**

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...

Matthew 28:18-20	Notes
<p>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.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>What Are the Mandates of The Great Commission? (V19-20a)</u></p> <p>V19-20A THE GREAT COMMISSION CONSISTS OF ONE PRIMARY COMMAND, AND FOUR ASPECTS WHICH ARE NECESSARY TO ITS PROPER FULFILLMENT. THE PRIMARY COMMAND IS TO “MAKE DISCIPLES”. (THIS IS THE MAIN VERB WHICH GRAMMATICALLY CONTROLS THE WHOLE THOUGHT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: Jesus did not send his Church to <i>“get people saved”</i>. Jesus has not called us to <i>“make converts/fans”</i>. • Jesus sent his Church to “make disciples”; that is, to call sinners to a fully-orbed faith in Christ that includes: genuine repentance, unmeasured submission, heartfelt love toward God and his people, & the pursuit of glad-obedience to all his holy will—and all of this is to take place within the membership of the local church. • Our calling is not merely to invite sinners <i>to pray a little prayer and then tell themselves that they are saved</i>, but <i>to personally know, love, treasure, obey, serve, and worship the King of Glory as his own beloved child forever</i>. • We are not authorized to offer the world a “gospel” that is divorced from the call to obediently follow Christ. • Such a gospel does not exist! It is a false promise & false hope. The one & only gospel of salvation which God offers to the world includes the full embrace of Christ as Savior from our sins & as Lord over the whole life of the believer. • <u>Jesus has told us what his will is in the words “make disciples.”</u> Thus, it is unequivocally clear that he is not interested at all in us watering down his message in order to try to help him be more popular in the world. • Jesus does not need a marketing team, and he has not asked his Church to ever try to be one! (Ashamed of Christ) • Our King has called us to unashamedly proclaim the whole truth of the whole gospel to the whole world for his glory. <p><u>THE FOUR ASPECTS NECESSARY TO THE FULFILLMENT OF “MAKING DISCIPLES” IN THE GREAT COMMISSION:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In order to fulfill the Great Commission we must “go”. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The call to “go” is less about your personal geography, and <u>more about the attitude & outlook you bring with you into the activities of your everyday life.</u> It is about the way you view the divine purpose of each new day. • It is true that for some people, “going” will mean moving to a new city or nation—this is important. <u>But for most Christians, “go” means living each day as a public & faithful witness for Christ right where you presently dwell.</u> • It means waking up each day with this outlook: <i>“I am alive today to live for God’s glory, to be his loving servant, & to bear faithful witness for his name in the midst of all the activities of my home, work, play, chores, hobbies, etc. Everywhere I am & everywhere I go, I am called to be a living witness for Christ, pointing others to him.”</i> 2. Where and to whom are we called to “go”? We are called to go to “all nations”. (i.e. To all peoples without discrimination) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “All nations” does not strictly mean overseas/to other countries. It means <u>everywhere & among all peoples.</u> • It means the mission field is in your living room as a mom & in Liberia; in your workplace as a father & in Washington. • It means that we are called to proclaim Christ to all kinds of people in the hope that through the power of the Spirit, God will use our lowly witness to save sinners from all walks of life, all races, & all cultures.* 3. When God converts someone to Christ, they are to be “baptized” into the membership of a particular local church. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“In the name of the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit”</i> points to our adoption as believers, our being welcomed into God’s household as a beloved child forevermore through the gospel of our salvation. (Eph. 1-1-3; Rom. 8:15; 1 Jn. 3:1) • And what is God’s household? It is the Church. (Which is one globally, but is expressed in the membership of local churches.) • Thus, when a person is baptized, that baptism not only expresses the <u>vertical spiritual realities of their union with Christ by faith</u>, but also <u>the horizontal spiritual realities of their union with his people, the Church.</u>* • Like circumcision before it, baptism is the New Covenant sign which marks out believers & their children as members of God’s covenant people, the true Israel of God, & makes them distinct from the unbelieving world. 4. Within the congregation of the local church, we are to be lifelong learners, continually growing in obedience to God. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being converted to Christ & baptized into the membership of his Church locally is not an end, but a beginning. • Within the life of the congregation of God’s people you are to be faithfully taught God’s Word & called to comprehensive obedience throughout the whole of your life so that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You might grow up to enjoy all the fullness of the riches of the blessings which are yours in Christ! 2. You might be increasingly equipped to engage in the holy work of the Great Commission personally, to the glory of God. <p style="text-align: center;"><u>What Is Jesus’ Promise Concerning The Great Commission? (V20b)</u></p> <p>V20B JESUS’ PROMISE IN V20B IS NOT GENERIC BUT SPECIFIC. IT IS A SPECIFIC PROMISE RELATED TO THE WORK HE HAS JUST COMMISSIONED.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is saying that he will be present with his people, by his Spirit, day by day, <u>to encourage them, equip them, defend them, empower them, and bless them as they are engaged in the work of the Great Commission.</u> • It is in the place of obedient service to God that the blessing of Christ’s presence is promised to his Church.

Proposition:
 This is your charge from God. This is your daily calling and chief purpose dear Christian.