

SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

SERIES 1: FOLLOW ME

LESSON 1.3: THE GOOD NEWS

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

Jesus commissioned His disciples to take the gospel everywhere to everyone.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will proclaim the gospel to everyone I can.

LESSON TEXT MATTHEW 28:16–20; MARK 16:15; LUKE 24:44–53; ACTS 1:1–8

KEY PASSAGE MATTHEW 28:19–20

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

TEACHING OUTLINE

ICEBREAKER: When was the last time you felt totally unqualified to help someone, but you did it anyway?

TEACHER TIP: Connect the group's answers to show that disciples are called to minister to others whether we feel qualified or not.

CONNECT: Share the Connect segment. **(I)**

I. JESUS REMINDED THE DISCIPLES OF HIS PURPOSE

A. Jesus' Need to Suffer, Die, and Rise (V)

DISCUSS: *How should reflecting on Jesus' necessary path reshape the way we view our own unavoidable hardships?*

B. Jesus as the Good News

C. I will remember the purpose of the gospel.

DISCUSS: *How do you share the gospel through your everyday life?*

II. THE DISCIPLES' PURPOSE

A. Preach the Gospel to Every Creature

B. Teach All Nations

DISCUSS: *Think of the person who has most shaped your walk with Christ. What specific habits or characteristics did that person model?*

C. Baptize

D. I will proclaim the gospel to everyone I can.

APPLY: Share the Apply segment.

PRAYER FOCUS

Lead the group in prayer for God to help us not only to believe the gospel, but to live it.

CONNECT

(I) DISPLAY IMAGE NOW

IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY Chicago, a young Persian (Iranian) immigrant named Andrew Urshan felt the stirrings of a deeper purpose. Having fled persecution in his homeland, he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost in 1908 and couldn't contain the fire burning in his soul. By 1910 he had gathered a small flock of Persian-speaking immigrants who were hungry for truth.

Urshan journeyed to Russia five years later to refugee-packed cities, amid whispers of danger and laws forbidding foreigners from preaching. Persian exiles and Russian seekers gathered in hidden Baptist halls, their hearts opening as Holy Ghost fire fell. Revivals sparked—the first recorded Pentecostal flames on Russian soil—and with them came urgent pleas from the new believers. Urshan wrote, “In Tiflis and Armavir the first Pentecostal revival on record came to Russian territory . . . leading to water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.” One group of converts echoed the Ethiopian eunuch's cry in Scripture and urged him: “Be baptized now, and baptize us also.” They believed the preaching on Holy Ghost baptism, and as they were baptized in the Spirit, soon they were baptized in water in Jesus' name.

Eventually Urshan made his way to his homeland during the horrors of genocide. There he preached in secret gatherings, his voice a beacon for families fleeing slaughter. In hidden pools and rushing rivers, he baptized them—whole households dipped beneath the surface and emerged with their eyes fixed on eternity. “Amidst much persecution,” he reported in letters home, “I helped to establish an enduring Pentecostal church.” One testimony tells of a blind woman being plunged in faith and coming up out of the baptism waters seeing clearly. “Since we have received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost,” Urshan shared, “there is a spiritual magnetizing power that draws us toward each other.” In those perilous times, survivors became evangelists, venturing into hostile territories with stories of resurrection power and planting seeds that bloomed into lasting communities. Their steps echoed Urshan's own—answering a divine call to not just believe the gospel, but to live it out.

Andrew Urshan's journey was one of quiet courage from Chicago's immigrant neighborhoods to Russia's frozen frontiers and Persia's bloodied soils. Each baptism was more than water—it was a doorway to the role of minister of the gospel. In their shared testimonies preserved in his writings (*The Life of Andrew Bar David Urshan*), we see lives intertwined as a chain of faithfulness passed from person to person, from generation to generation. Decades later, those ripples still touch shores worldwide, reminding us how one person's surrendered heart can help turn others toward the God who has always loved them.

LEARN

I. JESUS REMINDED THE DISCIPLES OF HIS PURPOSE

A. Jesus' Need to Suffer, Die, and Rise

No one lived a more surrendered life than Jesus. Although He was gaining popularity and His fame was spreading around the world, He somberly explained to His disciples that all things written in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning Him must be fulfilled. He was not only referring to His miracles and wonders; He also referred to His suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus taught His disciples, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day" (Luke 24:46). The Greek word translated *behoved* in the KJV means "necessary." That means Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection were all necessary parts of Jesus' mission.

DISCUSS: *How should reflecting on Jesus' necessary path reshape the way we view our own unavoidable hardships?*

His anguish brought the mercy and justice of God colliding on the Cross, making a way for sinners to be forgiven. Jesus' death provided atonement for sin and satisfied the righteous demands of God's law. Several New Testament passages discuss the concept of the need for Christ's blood to be shed. The writer of Hebrews explained, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" for sin (Hebrews 9:22), reflecting the Old Testament truth that sin required a blood sacrifice. As the perfect Lamb of God, Jesus offered Himself once for all. His selfless sacrifice made reconciliation possible and broke Satan's power over humanity.

Without the Resurrection, Calvary would be just another tragedy told of unrequited love. He loved us; we crucified Him. But Jesus' resurrection on the third day was the triumphant culmination of His redeeming work, fulfilling Old Testament prophecy and affirming His identity as the God of the Old Testament, manifest in the flesh. All men suffer and all men die. Neither of those things proved anything about Jesus. But His resurrection is a different story.

David prophesied of Jesus, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm 16:10). David may not have fully appreciated what he wrote, but he prophesied that Jesus' body would not be left to decay. In this way, His resurrection proved He was more than just a man. Before He was even crucified and rose again, Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25). He could not fulfill that promise unless He lived it out.

(V) PLAY VIDEO NOW

B. Jesus as the Good News

Jesus didn't just tell the disciples about the gospel; He *was* the gospel. He was the living embodiment of good news. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises, the conqueror of sin and death, the source of eternal life. Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach this glorious gospel to the nations.

In 490 BC, the larger Persian army invaded Greece, trying to conquer the entire region. The Athenians met them near a city named Marathon and the battle began. During the battle, the Athenians flanked the Persians on both sides. The Athenian army dispatched a messenger named Pheidippides to carry the good news of the Greeks' victory. As the runner appeared in the distance, watchers on the city walls in Athens likely could tell whether the news was good or bad by how the runner carried himself.

The Battle of Marathon is a great story to illustrate how New Testament writers used two key Greek words to convey the gospel of Jesus Christ. The messenger may have been known as an *apostolos*, which means “one sent forth” and was usually translated as “messenger” or “ambassador.” This messenger came with a message: the *euangelion*—good news. Often translated “gospel,” it refers to a joyful announcement of victory or salvation. In Mark 16:15, Jesus commanded: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Jesus is the good news because He fulfilled God’s promises to redeem humanity and restore fellowship with Him.

C. I will remember the purpose of the gospel.

The good news is both personal and missional—personal because Jesus has saved us, and missional because we must share this abundantly good news with others. “For the love of Christ constraineth us; . . . that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (II Corinthians 5:14–15). When Paul said the love of Christ constrains us, he meant it literally “leaves us no choice” but to live for Christ and share Him. The same love that drew us out of darkness now drives us into a broken world as messengers of hope.

DISCUSS: *How do you share the gospel through your everyday life?*

II. THE DISCIPLES’ PURPOSE

A. Preach the Gospel to Every Creature

Perhaps one of the greatest surprises for His Jewish hearers was Jesus’ call to preach the gospel to every creature: sharing the message of salvation with all people without distinction. The disciples knew Jesus had come to give good news to the Jews, but Jesus called them to go into all the world. This reflects God’s desire to save all humanity, no matter where we come from. The gospel crosses every cultural and social and language boundary.

When we read the Scriptures, we read of God’s covenant with Abraham to bless “all families of the earth” (Genesis 12:3). God’s covenant invitation to the Canaanite Rahab and the Moabite Ruth, and Jonah’s mission to call Nineveh to repentance displayed God’s mercy to all nations, calling us also to “teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

This Great Commission addresses the universality of sin—“For all have sinned” (Romans 3:23)—and the universality of the invitation to salvation—“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Timothy 2:4). The gospel is not a private belief or a personal comfort; it is a public declaration of victory through Jesus Christ. Now that we are empowered by the Holy Ghost, we are called to proclaim this message boldly just as the early church did.

To preach to every creature is to see everyone as loved by God, no matter how far a person may seem from Him. Each conversation, each act of kindness, and each word of truth becomes a seed planted in eternal soil. Preaching the gospel to every creature is not only a command; it is a divine privilege, entrusted to everyone redeemed by God’s grace.

B. Teach All Nations

Twice in one commission, Jesus called us to teach. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19–20).

Teaching often refers to nurturing spiritual growth—helping disciples grow in their faith and walk in a way that honors God.

The word *teach* means “to make disciples” or “to instruct as learners.” It describes a continuing process of shaping believers through instruction and example. Teaching builds upon preaching, turning converts into devoted followers who live out Jesus’ commands. Our call to teach others is no new command, but one that echoes through history, tying us to the faithfulness of patriarchs such as Noah, Abraham, and Moses—men who heard God’s voice and taught His truth to the next generation.

Ultimately, the command to teach all nations unites the church’s mission across time and culture. Teaching and preaching both have their prime places in God’s church. We are incomplete without both. Teaching fulfills Abraham’s blessing and Christ’s Great Commission. Empowered by the Holy Ghost, let us disciple others through teaching, modeling obedience, and extending God’s truth to all people and every tongue—anticipating that day when a multitude “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” will worship Jesus in Glory.

DISCUSS: *Think of the person who has most shaped your walk with Christ. What specific habits or characteristics did that person model?*

C. Baptize

Jesus further directed His disciples to baptize those who believe “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19). The wording of this command is significant: Jesus identified one name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Obviously those designations are not names, but titles or roles that describe the one God who reveals Himself in different ways.

Throughout Scripture, *Father* refers to God as Spirit; invisible, omnipotent. *Son* speaks of God manifest in flesh—the incarnation of the Father Himself, the invisible God made visible who came to redeem humanity. *Holy Ghost* describes God’s indwelling Spirit, who empowers, sanctifies, and comforts believers. These manifestations reveal the various ways the one true God works for and within His people, yet they all point back to the same divine identity.

The apostles who understood and obeyed Jesus’ command consistently baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ.” When all the disciples are shown standing together after Jesus’ resurrection, Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). The Samaritans “were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16), Cornelius’s household was commanded “to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:48, ESV), and the believers at Ephesus were baptized “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:5). These examples show how the disciples obeyed Matthew 28:19—by invoking the singular name that embodies “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”: the name of Jesus Christ.

Baptism is more than a ritual—it is a response of faith, a burial of our old life, and a joyful identification with Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3–4). Through baptism, Jesus washes our sins away. We publicly declare

our allegiance to Jesus and enter into His covenant community. His name is called over us. Sometimes the person being baptized would profess “Jesus is Lord” before they were baptized. Although some may argue that baptism is a work, Jesus does all the work of washing our sins away; we simply step into the water.

D. I will proclaim the gospel to everyone I can.

Thank God He has saved us, but He saved us and filled us with His Spirit so we will be witnesses unto Him. It is not enough for us to hear and believe the gospel; we are called as His church to faithfully share the good news with others. We must rely on the Holy Ghost for boldness and guidance, trusting that He will lead us to hungry people and help us know what to say to reach them. Let us proclaim Christ in every place we go—our homes, workplaces, schools, and communities. When we speak His name, love His people, and serve His purpose, we become living testimonies of His grace.

TEACHER OPTION: *Tell the story below, or share one of your own to illustrate someone sharing the gospel with everyone, regardless of their background.*

APPLY

(I) DISPLAY IMAGE NOW

Born in 1880 in Greencastle, Indiana, to freed-slave parents, Garfield Thomas Haywood was a cartoonist by trade. He sketched caricatures for newspapers before the hand of God rewrote his story. In 1908 the power of Pentecost drew him to a revival in the city’s rough edges where Black and White voices mingled in rare harmony. Three years later, Haywood founded Christ Temple Church in Indianapolis. The church plant swelled from a storefront prayer room to a bright beacon drawing souls from the city’s rough sides.

In addition to pastoring, Haywood was a prolific songwriter. He penned hymns we still sing today. In 1915 Glenn Cook arrived from the West Coast’s Holy Spirit-filled meetings, carrying stories of baptisms in Jesus’ name. Haywood listened in his modest study with his Bible spread wide, and he acted on the truth of Acts 2:38. He had been studying this for some time.

That summer he led his flock—over four hundred strong, a tapestry of Blacks, Whites, and immigrants—to the river’s banks where they followed the biblical call for baptism. One by one, they were submerged. Healings rippled like the current itself: A lame man straightened, a child’s fever broke upon rising. In Haywood’s own words from later writings, it was “a mighty outpouring,” where Spirit baptisms confirmed the water baptisms.

Those newly born again fanned out like seeds on fertile ground. Christ Temple became a hub of outreach, hosting tent meetings that drew thousands from Indiana’s cornfields and urban alleys where the gospel’s simplicity cut through prejudice. Haywood mentored young preachers, teaching not just doctrine but the art of living it—visiting jails to baptize inmates in makeshift tubs and sending teams to rural areas where sharecroppers gathered under the stars. In the 1920s a Ku Klux Klan resurgence targeted his interracial gatherings, but Haywood stood firm and

rebaptized hundreds more in Jesus' name. Haywood traveled by train and Model T, immersing converts in Ohio's streams and Kentucky's creeks. His leadership birthed assemblies that crossed color lines when few dared.

Haywood's legacy lingered in the lives he touched. A widow, after her river baptism, opened her home as a mission to disciple neighborhood children. A former gambler turned evangelist carried the gospel and Acts 2:38 message to Chicago's stockyards. Haywood worked for the Kingdom until his health faded in 1931. Yet his footsteps echo still: in churches worldwide, in hymns sung in hidden revivals, in the quiet courage of those who, like him, heard the summons and stepped forward into the waters of baptism.