

Message Four

Go and Disciple all the Nations

Scripture Reading: Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; 13:1-3; 14:23, 26-27

I. “Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”—Matt. 28:19:

- A. To disciple the nations is to make the heathen the kingdom people for the establishing of Christ’s kingdom, which is the church, even today, on this earth—Acts 26:16-18; Col. 1:12-13.
- B. To disciple the nations is to preach the high gospel—Matt. 28:20:
 - 1. All of us need to study the divine truths in the Bible and the printed ministry to equip us for the preaching of the high gospel—2 Tim. 3:15-17; 4:2.
 - 2. The gospel is Christ, who is the very embodiment of the Triune God, reaching us as the Spirit for our enjoyment—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
 - 3. To preach the gospel is not merely to win souls, but to gain people from different countries and put them into the Triune God that they may become the citizens of the kingdom of the heavens for the establishment of this kingdom—Rev. 5:9-10.
- C. To disciple the nations is to baptize them into the Triune God; baptism puts the believers into the name of the Triune God (Matt. 28:19); into Christ (Gal. 3:27); into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3); and into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), that the believers may enter into an organic union with Christ and His Body.

II. In order to go and disciple the nations, we need certain qualifications:

- A. The Lord’s charge to His disciples took place on a mountain; this indicates that in order to disciple others, we need to be transcendent—Matt. 28:16.
- B. We need to see that Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth—v. 18.
- C. We need to go with the authority of the ascended, enthroned, and glorified Jesus—v. 19.
- D. When we go to disciple the unbelievers, we need to have the faith that we are in the power of the Holy Spirit—Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 1 Thes.1:5; 1 Cor. 2:4.

III. The Lord’s charge to go and disciple all the nations is a corporate charge—Matt. 28:19:

- A. The ones who go are the church in a corporate sense; this means that we need to be fully built together with others in a practical church—Acts 1:15; 2:14:
 - 1. John seventeen speaks of the world believing through the oneness of the believers; our oneness in Christ is the strongest testimony—vv. 21, 23.
 - 2. If we are going to do a prevailing work for the preaching of the gospel, we need to be built up in a local church, in a church which is practical and definite—13:1-3.
 - 3. We should not try to be a leader; instead, by the Lord’s mercy and grace, we should be a member built with others in the church—Phil. 2:1-4.
 - 4. If we are built up with others, whatever we do will be for the producing of the church life; if not, whatever we do will be for the separating, the dividing, of the Body—cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 12:24.

5. In our work there should be nothing personal or individualistic; all our work is from the church, for the church, and back to the church—Acts 13:3-4; 14:23, 26.
- B. We need to pray, “O Lord, I do not need anything but the building. Grant me to be built up with others, Lord. O Lord, I need the building. I need the oneness”—cf. Phil. 1:27-28.

Focus: Our life should be a life of preaching the high gospel to save sinners and baptize them into the Body of Christ for the building up of the church, which requires us first to be built up with others and coordinated with others to fulfill the corporate charge of the Lord.

Ministry Excerpts

The Lord’s charge to His disciples took place on a mountain (Matt. 28:16). This is quite meaningful. To be outside of the temple, outside of the synagogues, outside of the religious centers, and to be on the mountaintop simply means that you have to be on high ground. You have to be transcendent. You have to be on the top of the high mountain to see the nations.

Young brothers and sisters, if you have the intention to go and disciple the unbelievers, you have to be on high. You have to be on the top of the high mountain to look down at the pitiful, miserable situation. When the Lord Jesus was on this earth, no doubt, many times He was on the seashore, on the beach. But when He gave the commandment to the disciples to go and disciple others, He did not do it on the beach. He did it on the top of a high mountain. If we are going to disciple others, first, we have to be on high. If we are on the same level as the Americans, we are finished. We have to be on high to disciple others.

In Matthew 28:18 the Lord Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” Some versions use the word power instead of authority, but the Greek word here means authority. Authority is higher than power. Let me illustrate in this way. On the street, there are policemen and there are cars. A big car driving on the road has the power, whereas a little policeman has the authority. No matter how powerful your car is, you have to come under the authority of the policeman. Thus, authority is above power. Jesus has not only power but also authority. Both in heaven and on earth the authority belongs to Jesus.

Matthew 28:19 also shows us that when we go to disciple others, we need to have the realization that we are in the Triune God. We not only have the authority of Jesus but also are one with Jesus. We are in the Triune God. We are not going to teach others some religion. We are going to baptize them into the Triune God.

According to the grammatical construction of Matthew 28:19, to disciple the nations is by baptizing them. You have to baptize them into something. To baptize is to dip. If I baptize my eyeglasses, this means I dip them into something else. Likewise, if I am going to baptize someone, this means I am going to put him into something else. When we baptize others, we put them into the Triune God. To disciple the nations is to baptize them into God, to put them into God.

If you are going to put others into God, you surely need to be in God first. Then you can tell others that you are in the Triune God and that you want to put them into the Triune God. You could say, “I have no intention to put you into Christianity. I have no intention to put you into any denomination, any sect, or any group. My intention is to put you into the Triune God, in whom I am. I

am in the Triune God, and I am going to put you into the Triune God, in whom I am.” This is different from the preaching of the gospel in a low way. You need to have the realization and the assurance that you are putting people into God, because you are in God.

The Lord Jesus did not tell us as individuals to go to the nations. His charge was a corporate charge. The ones who go are the church in a corporate sense. This means that we need to be fully built together with others in a practical church. If you young brothers are not built together, that means you are fully defeated. If you are not built together, you are not on high, not on the top of a mountain. Rather, you are in the lowest place, in the valley of Jericho. As long as you are not built together with others, you are low, you are through with the authority of Christ, you are outside of the Triune God, and you do not have the faith to claim the power. Many Christians try their best to preach the gospel, yet their preaching is powerless because they are not built together with others.

You all have to realize that man is the meaning of the universe and Christ is the meaning of your human life. Moreover, the church is the real expression of Christ, and this church life is the real communal life. This communal life is a life with a group of believers built together as one in Christ and with Christ. Can you tell the enemy from your pure conscience that you are really built up together as one in Christ and with Christ? If you lose this, you lose everything. When we are built up as one, we have the power and the authority.

Acts 13 says that in the church in Antioch there were prophets and teachers (v. 1). At that time there was a real building up in the church in Antioch. It was not that Paul and Barnabas were praying in their home, and in their morning watch they received guidance and inspiration from the Lord. Acts 13 tells us, first of all, that Paul and Barnabas were in the church. People may talk about the church, but their talk is something in the air. Paul and Barnabas were in a church in a definite locality, in Antioch. If you are going to do a prevailing work for the preaching of the gospel, you have to be built up in a local church, in a church which is practical and definite.

In the church which was in Antioch, there were five prophets and teachers who were built into the church. The guidance from the Holy Spirit came to them as representatives of the church (Acts 13:2). Verse 3 says that three of them sent out Barnabas and Saul, but verse 4 says that Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. This proves that the three were one with the Spirit in the Lord’s move, and the Spirit honored their sending as His. They were one with the Spirit and had the Spirit’s leading because they were built into the church.

You all need to be built together in the church. Then in the church you will get the guidance, and from the church you will go out, not to do some mere preaching work but to produce and establish the local churches. The two sent ones, Paul and Barnabas, went out to preach the gospel, but their preaching was for the producing and establishing of the local churches. Wherever they went, they preached. Wherever they preached, a local church was established in that locality. So the Bible tells us that Paul and Barnabas, on their return journey, appointed elders in every church (Acts 14:23). They went out from the church, the work they did was for the church, and eventually they came back to the church in Antioch (v. 26). Their work was not separate, independent, or isolated from the church. In Acts 13 and 14 church always means the local church.

The real communal life is a built-up life, a life in which you are built up as one. This is where we have the power. This power is not just to convince others or just to bring others to Christ, but to

produce the local churches. In our work there should be nothing personal or individualistic. All the time our work is from the church, for the church, and back to the church.

Do not try to do a quick work. The more you try to be quick, the more you will be slowed down. By His grace and mercy, just be built up together with others. We need to pray, “O Lord, I do not need anything but the building. Grant me to be built up with others, Lord. O Lord, I need the building. I need the oneness.” We need to have the realization that we are one and take action to go and disciple the nations. (*The Life for the Preaching of the High Gospel*, ch. 7)

References: *The Life for the Preaching of the High Gospel*, ch. 7; *Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans*, msg. 26; *Holy Bible Recovery Version*, footnotes from Matt. 28:19; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3