

All In: Live the Commission

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Date: 15 March 2026

Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] Well, welcome here for this Sunday, March 15th, 2026. My name is Kent Dixon and it is my joy to be the pastor here.

! So just a couple of quick things before I gave you an announcement before. here's a couple more. So I will be away next Sunday and we'll be welcoming our friend Dr. Jerry Shepard who will be coming as our guest preacher.

And I've been pestering him saying, oh, I need to know your sermon, Dr. Shepard. I need to know. And he was, as many of you know, he was one of my profs in seminary and he's also a friend that I've known longer than I've known my wife.

So, but I pestered him a little bit and he said, yeah, sorry I didn't get this to you sooner. So he is going to be talking about David and I believe it's Psalm 41, if memory serves.

And so that message will be next Sunday and it's titled Betrayal. So tune in and show up for that because I think that'll be quite interesting.

[1 : 08] It's going to be a Lenten message. So as we're in this season of Lent, he's going to be reflecting on that as well. So then I will be back to bring a Palm Sunday message on March 29th right here at Braemar.

Then Good Friday, hear this one, and this will be in the newsletter as well to remind you. But Good Friday, April 3rd, we will be joining the congregation at Highlands Baptist, our sister church.

So they are right across the river and hang a right. And so Google will tell you exactly where that is. It's really easy to find. So we'll be joining the congregation there for their service.

And that service starts at 11 a.m. on Good Friday. So we'll be worshiping with them. Then we'll be having Easter brunch here at Braemar on Easter Sunday morning, which is April 5th, followed by our Easter service at 11.

So watch for more details in the days ahead on that. This morning we're wrapping up our series, which has been called All In. And it's been grounded in the three directives we hear from Jesus in Matthew 16, verse 24.

[2 : 19] So we're going to read it together for one last time. That doesn't mean you can never read Matthew 16, 24 again. You can read it whenever you like. So we're going to pause.

Remember, we did this a bit last week. So we're going to pause. And I want you to fill in the blanks. So don't charge right through. We'll just do a section to the blank, fill it in.

Then a section, fill it in, and so on. So let's do that together. Matthew 16, 24 says, Then Jesus said to his disciples, Whoever wants to be my disciple must...

Yes. And... Yes. And... Perfect. I saw some people with Bibles open, and that's okay.

But you nailed it. Jesus said to his disciples, Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me.

[3 : 17] So believe it or not, we're in our final week of this series, All In. And we've been talking about Jesus' message from Matthew that we just heard for these last three weeks.

And I hope it's brought some new insight and encouragement to you as you've heard it, and as we've explored it together. Jesus' directive to us to follow him doesn't really matter to us much, or it's hard to apply in our lives if we only understand part of it.

I think that's probably common sense, right? If you only understand part of something, how do you follow it? How do you apply it? And as some of you may have heard me say over time, I believe at times we forget the end goal of being invited into God's family.

We've been welcomed into God's family so that he can send us out into the world to invite others into the family as well.

Maybe you recognize that Jesus didn't say, stay, and I'll be back, right? That's not what he said. But I think we sometimes view it that way, perhaps.

[4 : 32] So maybe to this point, you've generally thought of pastors and clergy as the ones who seek to lead people to Jesus, right? That's not my job. That's their job.

So today, my hope is that we see, come to see, that God called every follower of Jesus to live a life with a go perspective.

People as people of God who are being sent into the world. Not sent to stay, but to go. So our sermon this morning is titled, Live the Commission.

And what I want to do first is to help frame this sermon for us, I need to take a moment to talk about the Great Commission. What exactly it means to give or be given a commission.

The Great Commission, most of you know, refers to Jesus' introduction to his disciples to spread the gospel message to all nations. And it's found in Matthew 28, 18 to 20.

[5 : 40] In that passage, Jesus tasks his disciples to go, to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything he has commanded.

Being given a commission typically means that you're being authorized or assigned to perform a specific task or service for someone else.

Sometimes you also hear of a commission being given to a real estate agent or something like that. That's not what we're talking about here. So we're talking about being given a task or responsibility.

So with those things in mind, we understand that Jesus called us to deny ourselves, to pick up our cross, follow him as we live out the Great Commission.

See, these concepts are connected here. And we're called to do this in the day-to-day events of our lives. Living on mission for Jesus means a lot of different things.

[6 : 47] Not the least of which means that we will encounter people that we meet for the first time, or people that we know well in our lives, who actually oppose this message of life that we're bringing.

The reality in life is that when we choose to follow Jesus and make ourselves available to be sent out to him, we'll very possibly encounter hardship.

We talked about this quite a bit in the second week of this series. Jesus calls us to take up our cross and follow him.

And as we've recognized, he doesn't gloss over the fact that when we make that commitment, life may not be easy. I think you can probably all relate.

We can all relate to that. We'll very likely meet people who, at best, have no interest in doing things the way Jesus modeled or the way the Bible outlines.

[7 : 51] Right? I'm sure we all have people in our lives, I hope we have people in our lives, who are currently close to this message. But that doesn't mean we give up. So here's what Jesus says in Matthew 10, 16 to 18.

You can turn to that or listen as I read. Matthew 10, 16 to 18. I am sending you out like sheep among wolves, Jesus says. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

Be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues.

On my account, you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.

So Jesus starts there by saying that he's sending us out. He's talking to the apostles, to his early followers. But by association, he's doing that to us as well.

He's calling us for the same reason. He's sending us out, he says, as sheep among wolves. Wow. So have you ever thought about how intense that imagery is?

[9 : 04] Pretty intense, right? And so for an agrarian culture, like the first century would have been, they were connected to sheep, right?

We know that. Jesus uses the illusion or the metaphor of sheep and shepherds all the time. We call him the good shepherd, right? So here, it's not too surprising that we get this idea of sheep again.

And who's their primary predator? Wolves. I mean, lions as well, but wolves. So does that mean that we'll just get devoured by the world around us, right?

As soon as we leave our comfort zone, it's all over. Well, no. But it does make it clear that the world will do and try its best to shake us, to shake our convictions, and that the world will ultimately even be hostile to our message.

Maybe you know people like this, but human nature, people don't like a message that challenges their current lifestyle. Is that fair?

[10:18] Jesus even takes this a step further, as we just heard, and he tells the disciples what will happen to them when they choose to follow him. They're going to be flogged.

They're going to be brought before authorities. But then Jesus reveals the ultimate opportunity that they're going to have to tell rulers and Gentiles, Jesus says, unbelievers, people who don't know Jesus, to tell them about him.

How often is that at the front of our minds? Are we actively looking for opportunities to tell people about Jesus? Hopefully you also recognize that doesn't include standing on a street corner screaming about fire and brimstone, because I don't think that's a hugely effective method.

But generally speaking, the most effective way to share about Jesus is to have, you've heard me say this before, have an existing relationship of mutual care and trust with someone.

because then you can pray that that leads you to an opportunity to share about Jesus. Maybe you've heard this phrase before, this quote, people don't care what you know until they know that you care.

[11:45] You see that? Care and love is such an important gateway. But even in an existing relationship, don't think for a second that it won't be difficult.

And thankfully, Jesus makes it clear that we're not being commissioned and then sent out alone. It's not a solo journey. Let's take a moment to focus on this well-known verse from the book of Acts. We've talked a little bit about the Holy Spirit in this series, and then we talked a lot about the Holy Spirit in our series on Acts. And so here's the initial call that Jesus gives to those who would follow him.

In Acts 1 verse 8, Jesus says, But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Did you catch that there? Jesus says that we will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on us. And only then will we be sent out.

[12:58] So I think it's a huge comfort. I know it is to me that we don't have to do this on our own. We'll have God at work in and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus made this declaration to his disciples as he was about to return to heaven. And we know the disciples were afraid, right? We know that.

God's spirit lives within us when we decide to follow Jesus.

Earlier in this series, we talked about the role of the Holy Spirit in our own lives. The Spirit convicts and rebukes of the rebellious and sinful things that may be going on in our hearts and minds, right? He shines a light on those things. So that God can then lead us, continue to lead us on the path towards everlasting life.

[14:09] But the Spirit also, his role is to call us to go beyond our comfort zone. Right? Right? How often are we in our lives, I can speak for myself, a little froggy in a lukewarm pot of water, and I won't jump unless the heat gets turned up a little.

But in calling us to go beyond our comfort zone, Jesus actually also refers to the Spirit as comforter, right? We know that's one of the names the Holy Spirit has given.

So let's hear the words in John 14, 26. And now I wanted to use the King James translation here, and I'll explain why in a second. John 14, 26 from the King James.

But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Why the King James? Well, the King James translation refers to the Holy Spirit, your Holy Ghost, right? But the King James translation refers to the Spirit as the comforter in that translation.

[15:25] And that's a really important aspect of the Spirit's identity and role. If we have a comforter within us, I believe we can better leave our comfort zones behind.

When we set out on the commission that Jesus has given to us, having a comforter sure seems like a good idea. The Holy Spirit will give us what we need to do the work of the kingdom here on earth. We just need to take the first steps of faith and step into our calling. Have you ever had to help move a car that wouldn't start or was stuck?

Did you feel it the next day? Probably. It's challenging to say the least, right? Once you get your car moving, though, at least a little bit, things always seem to get better, get a little easier.

And I think it's the same with us. God can better steer and direct our lives when we have started down the road.

[16:40] Maybe some of us today have been comfortably seated and planted. Are you waiting at the bus stop of life for the Jesus Express to return?

God really wants us to take an active role in being sent. Proverbs 16.9 says, Have you ever thought of that before?

Maybe you have. Maybe you haven't. God has no problem with us making plans. No problem at all. But we need to hold our plans loosely to be open to God changing our course.

Does that make sense? We must be ready for God to direct our steps as we begin pursuing our own plans.

You've heard me say over time, you know me, I'm a planner, right? I'll be a few months down the road or six months down the road thinking of, okay, and then I want to look at a series on this and I want to do some other things.

[18:00] But I've also told you there's been many times since I've been here that I've gotten a sense from God that or I have a different idea.

And so I just kind of go, okay. Maybe I'll shelve that for later in my own plans, right? But I think as we begin to move down the road on our own, as we begin to start leaning into our journey, I believe that we'll actually meet more and more people the Holy Spirit wants us to connect with.

When we're moving down the path, I think the path opens up even more. We'll begin to encounter people who need to hear the message of Christ, not just through our words, but through our actions as well.

And this is kind of where I want to land today. You're thinking, this plane feels like it's on some crazy trip. Here comes the landing.

There are many statements from Jesus that we've considered through this series, and I'm not ranking them for you in any way, right? I'm not going to, like, for those of you who remember David Letterman, when he had his nighttime talk show, he would always do top 10 lists.

[19:23] So I'm not doing that for you. These are the top 10 most important things from Jesus that I'm ranking. No. But as we begin to close this time together this morning, I want to share another powerful message from Jesus with you.

And maybe you've never heard it before, or certainly never considered it in the context of the way we've been called our commission. In John 13, Jesus had just washed the disciples' feet.

So this was demonstrating an act of humility and serving as a model for his disciples to follow. Then Jesus makes a statement a few verses later to these 11 disciples.

11. Judas had already left. John 13, 35. says, By this everyone will know that you are my disciples. Do you know how to finish it? If you love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.

[20:35] So as a communicator myself, I've often found it interesting that Jesus never seemed all that concerned about finding the perfect speakers to follow him.

He wasn't really that concerned, it seemed, about the communication skills of his disciples. And given the importance of his message, we could maybe see how Jesus would have looked for people who were really good at getting messages across, really good at communicating things to broad audiences.

Nope. Nope. Instead, Jesus tells them that it's their love for one another that will best communicate his message.

my goal today isn't for you to leave feeling worried about your mission or guilty that maybe you haven't gotten moving the way you could have or angry at the world around us that may not immediately see a need for Jesus.

Instead, my goal is for all of us to leave with hearts that are broken for a lost and anxious world that so desperately needs Jesus.

[21:57] Because, friends, if our hearts are broken for the same things that matter to God and breaks his heart, we will be in the right places to love each other and to love people who may be as far from God right now as they could possibly be.

What does Jesus want to see in the world, do you think? God's people loving each other unconditionally.

My friends, that is what draws people to Jesus. And maybe you've had those kinds of interactions in your life with someone you knew who has conveyed back to you that they appreciated that you were loving and kind in a world that can seem so harsh.

It's nothing flashy or fancy, just basic kindness and love towards each other. And we see the model for this in Acts 4, verse 32, which says, all the believers were in one heart and mind.

No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. The apostles and earliest disciples knew what this meant. That's not a message that was foreign to them.

[23 : 21] Jesus modeled it for them all the time. And we can see throughout the New Testament that these guys looked past, tried to, minor differences and disagreements that they had and sought to focus on the things that truly mattered.

Because in the end, we all serve the same God. No kidding. We all want to follow Jesus, I believe, in our hearts. We all want to see the world accept him as Savior and Lord.

So how can we waste even a moment in division? In churches, across denominations, or in the world at large?

I wonder what would shift if we also had that same perspective and commitment. What if we accepted the commission that we've been given?

Accepted the potential costs, as we've talked about? Decided to work in a way that became a unified force for the gospel? And committed to supporting each other along the way?

[24 : 36] Friends, Jesus has invited us to be part of the story. I don't know if you ever think about that, but I'm truly humbled by that at times.

He's actually made a way for us to be directly, actively involved as participants in spreading the gospel. Praying for the sick.

Seeing people redeemed by grace. And he's given us a guide and comforter in the Holy Spirit to aid us on that journey. All that to say, we have all we need to be successful.

We simply need to step out in faith and answer the call. Do you join me in that today? Would you join me as we go all in for Jesus?

In our homes, our church, our community, let's give it all we've got. Our very best.

[25 : 42] And ask God to point us to the people in our lives that we can help to change with the amazing love and compassion of Jesus. Amen.

Amen.