

# The Good News and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)

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Preacher: Evan Alexander

[ 0 : 00 ] Amen, amen. Thank you, praise team. At this time, children, you are dismissed for children's church. You can head back with Miss Savannah to our children's room.! Parents, you can get them right across the hall as soon as we finish today.

Way back in December of 1999, back when I was a wee little lad, Clay, back many years ago, I was seven years old, December 1999. I was sitting in our living room watching some Saturday morning cartoons while my mother was trying her best to get me and my three sisters ready to go to town. We were likely doing some last-minute Christmas shopping, unbeknownst to us. But all of a sudden, as my mother was trying to put my boots on me, my father rushes in, and he informs us that the roof of our house is on fire.

And he tells us to get out quickly. Apparently, birds had built nests in our chimney, and it had caused that day, December 18, 1999, for our house to be burned to the ground. So while the rest of the world was preparing for Christmas being a week out, and others fearing for Y2K and the end of the world as we know it, our family was sifting through what remained of our worldly possessions in the ashes.

We are grateful that we weren't found among them. We are grateful for our father that identified the urgency of the situation. And out of a love and a compassion for each of us, he rushed in and shared with us the words that we needed to be brought to safety.

[ 1 : 20 ] I'm reminded of another time of urgency in my life. Years later, I was with my mother, and I was beginning to wrestle with my salvation. I'd prayed prayers.

I'd walked an aisle. I knew lots of things about God. I was a Bible driller. I knew all of my books of the Bible. I knew verses of Scripture memorized. I knew John 3, 16, and many others. But I slowly settled into this realization that I did not have a personal relationship with God.

And I became very personally convicted that if I were to die during that season, that I would spend an eternity in a place called hell, forever separated from a God who loved me and created me for a purpose of knowing him.

This time, it wasn't my father. It was my mother who sensed the urgency. And I have a genuine concern for my well-being. And out of love, she shared with me words that would bring me to safety and rest in Christ Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, this morning, I feel that same sense of urgency when I think about the gospel and the Great Commission. When I think about you, when I think about the work that is before us in the church today, the good news and the Great Commission are things that should be of utmost importance for us in the church and as followers of Christ.

[ 2 : 31 ] My prayer for each of us this morning is that in studying God's word, God may grant each of us a sense of urgency, an understanding of the lost, and a desire to make disciples among the nations.

So if you have your Bibles, I want to encourage you to join me in Matthew chapter 28, verses 16 through 20. These are the capstone verses of Matthew's account of the work of ministry, earthly, at least of Jesus.

And as Pastor Brett often quotes, last words are lasting words. These are important verses for us. And I think oftentimes when we think about Easter, we think of Easter as this big exclamation point or a period saying, it is finished, but friends, I want to remind us today, I want to set the pace a little bit for the coming weeks at least, that I agree with one commentator that said, Easter is less of a period and more of a comma.

It should cause us to pause. It should cause us to reflect. It should cause us to stay a bit in there. But it should prompt us and push us forward as the story progresses and how God intends to use the church and how he intends to use you and me.

So this morning, if you have your Bibles, we'll be in Matthew chapter 28. And join me as we read these verses. Verse 16. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

[ 3 : 49 ] And when they saw him, they worshipped him. But some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

This morning, the first thing I want us to see from this passage is that the gospel is good news. The gospel is good news. The eleven disciples went to Galilee, as Jesus had instructed them to do, to the mountain Jesus had directed to them.

And what did they find? Jesus! A risen Lord and Savior. He's there. If that doesn't seem like startling to you or important to you, consider what happened in the previous chapters.

In chapter 26, Jesus had been arrested, betrayed by the twelfth disciple, Judas Iscariot. Caiaphas, the high priest, argued for his death. In chapter 27, guards threw him before Pontius Pilate, and the crowds chose to release Barabbas instead.

[ 4 : 57 ] Jesus was led to be crucified. He'd been whipped, beaten, marred. Nails had pierced his hands and his feet. A spear had pierced his side. He struggled to breathe, hung his head, breathed his last breath, and died.

He was lowered from the cross, wrapped in a cloth, and placed in a tomb. And a great stone was placed in front of the tomb. Then guards were ordered to secure the tomb, to seal the tomb, and ensure that it was undisturbed.

Friday and Saturday passed. But in Matthew 28, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary approached the tomb on Sunday morning. The earth begins to rumble.

The stone rolls from the mouth of the tomb. An angel appears as though lightning. Guards fall to the ground as though dead. And the angel declares, do not be afraid. This crucified Jesus you seek, he's not here anymore.

He's risen indeed. Go tell the other disciples. Go tell them that he's back, and he'll meet you in Galilee. They go and tell the news to the other disciples. They all gather together, and they approach Galilee.

[ 5 : 56 ] And what do they find when they approach the mountain? Jesus, he's alive. He's alive. He's risen from the dead. This is good news. This is good news that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has laid down his life as a sacrifice, as a substitute to bear the weight of sin for your sin and for mine.

And he's not only died, he's risen indeed. This is good news, friends. I don't want us to miss this. In the coming weeks, you're going to be tempted to get distracted by matching outfits for your family to be picture-worthy at church.

You're going to be trying to figure out who's bringing the green bean casserole to the family potluck. You're going to be trying to think through all these things on Easter, but don't miss the point of it. There's good news in that Jesus is alive.

He's alive. Don't miss this or grow numb to the beauty of the resurrection. He's alive. In the next few weeks, there will be lots of things to distract us, but forgiveness of sins, life everlasting, peace with God is possible because Jesus Christ has died and he's rose again.

The gospel is good news. And how we respond to this resurrected Jesus matters. You see, when they approach Jesus, there's two different responses they have.

[ 7 : 06 ] One, some of the disciples begin to see him and they worship. It's the appropriate posture. That's what we are created for our hearts when we see Jesus, or to bow and worship to the Almighty God, yet some did what?

They doubted. They continued to doubt. So some respond in worship, some respond with doubt, and some, many, have yet to ever even hear the good news of Jesus.

So while the gospel is good news, it's incredible news, we're also reminded here the gospel is urgent news. Carl F.H. Henry famously wrote, the gospel is only good news if it gets there in time.

We see a reality present here that not all believe the good news. And some, as Jesus taught in the parable of the sower, the gospel begins to take root. It begins to flourish. They begin to bear fruit as a fruitful follower of Christ Jesus.

Yet for some, the gospel see, the gospel is heard, and they doubt. Yet we may see momentary change, but the weeds of life begin to choke it out to where instead of spiritual life, we see instead death.

[ 8 : 08 ] Jesus would further say that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. There are so many in our world today that desperately need the good news of Jesus, yet there are so few that are willing to actually take it to them.

There's a sense in which many in the church today seem to reduce the urgency of the gospel message. The urgency of the gospel message. We forget what's at stake for those apart from Christ Jesus.

We forget the value of the human soul that was knit together on our mother's womb to reflect the intent of our creator. We forget the eternal agony that awaits for those that do not rest on the promises of God and salvation.

William Carey, he was a missionary to India. He spent most of his ministry in Sarampore, India with two other missionaries, the Sarampore Trio, and they drafted what's known as the Sarampore Agreement. It was a founding governing document that would dictate kind of the, it would set the pace for future missionaries that'll be sent under their charge.

And in this Sarampore Agreement on the very first page, he writes these words, and I pray that this may be something that we keep in mind today. They write, It becomes us to fix in our minds the awful doctrine of eternal punishment and to realize frequently the inconceivably awful condition of this vast country lying in the arms of the wicked one.

[ 9 : 48 ] He tells future generations of missionary that would serve in India and other places that we need to keep two things at the forefront of our minds when it comes to our missionary work, and that is the infinite value of the immortal soul and the awful realities of hell.

And this morning when we consider the good news, I want us to keep these things in mind. First, each of us, Carrie argued, have an immortal soul, a soul that will last for an eternity. We may have a starting point when God knit us together in our mother's womb, but we will spend our lives forever in eternity somewhere.

We don't cease to exist. We simply go elsewhere. We change locations. When our physical bodies begin to pass, we then spend an eternity in one of two biblical realities, either with God or apart from him forever.

And there are many ways that we defend ourselves from these striking truths. First, we forget the value of the immortal soul. We forget the value of the immortal human soul.

We spend so much of our lives in conflict. We spend so much of our lives bickering and arguing and warring against one another, and Satan is greatly pleased with that which we spend our lives devoted to.

[ 10 : 57 ] Satan is greatly pleased when we're distracted from this. While we devote our time to bickering over political agendas or taking up arms in a plethora of social issues, innumerable eternal souls are ushered into hell while we pat our backs and say, we won that one.

Friends, at what point can we push through the conflict of the world and see that human beings created in the image of God, who are created for eternal purposes, are dying without the good news of Jesus?

So we forget the value of the immortal soul, but we also forget or reduce the eternal punishment. We avoid the uncomfortable realities of hell. Some argue that Jesus is love.

Surely his sacrifice is effective. Surely a good, loving, and perfect God wouldn't actually send someone to hell. Yet these universalists conveniently skip over the clear and constant teaching that hell is a real place and real people will go there.

The apostle John writes in Revelation 20, verse 15, that if anyone's name was not written in the book of life, written down in glory, then he was thrown into the lake of fire.

[ 12 : 12 ] Others argue that while hell may be eternal, our suffering isn't. These annihilationists believe that after a time, suffering will end as we simply cease to exist. But Jesus himself stated in Mark 9, 47 and 48, if your eye causes you to sin, tear it or pluck it out.

It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes be thrown into hell. And he notes this, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

Friends, if a worm is unable to experience the release through death, then friends, humanity won't either. Hell is a place for eternal suffering. The rich man in Luke 19 describes it as a place of fiery agony and eternal conscious torment.

Jesus describes it in Mark, Matthew 8, verse 12, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The prophet Daniel describes it as a place of everlasting contempt.

Jesus calls it an eternal fire and eternal punishment. And in Revelation 14, 11, 19, 3, and 20, 10, all of these passages, John describes it as a place of eternal suffering and duration, stating that it lasts forever and ever.

[13:28] It's as if forever didn't describe it enough. John felt that he had to add and ever to fully help us wrap our minds around the eternal natures and suffering of hell.

Thomas Watson, a Puritan, wrote of this truth. He writes, thus it is in hell. They would die, but they cannot. The wicked shall be always dying, but never dead. The smoke on the furnace ascends forever and ever.

Oh, who can endure thus to be ever upon the rack? This word ever breaks the heart. Friends, we cannot let wrong theology and the severe implications of the gospel help us to miss that anyone created in the image of God with an invaluable human soul.

For those that do not know Jesus, they'll spend an eternity in a place called hell. The gospel is an urgent message. Verse 20 serves as an encouraging reminder that Jesus promises to be with us, but it also serves as a present reminder that this age will end.

This age will end, and those who have not trusted in Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives will forever be separated from a holy, almighty God. The flames of hell await them.

[14:48] So do we sense the urgency? Do we have a compassion and a love for others that will allow us to rush towards the flames and share with them the words of Jesus, the good news of the gospel, that can usher them into safety of Christ Jesus?

Will we be a part of this? The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time. Hudson Taylor, a missionary to China, he wrote this prayer that I hope will become ours. He writes, would that God would make hell so real to us that we cannot rest.

Heaven so real that we must have men there. Christ so real that our supreme motive and aim shall be to make the man of sorrows, the man of joy by the conversion to him of many.

You see, some have heard the gospel and believed, but some have doubted, and some will never hear unless we go and tell them. So Jesus, in his divine wisdom, gives us a mission.

And we pick up in verse 18, where Jesus says to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

[16:07] And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. So Jesus, in this passage, gives us the Great Commission. And friends, the Great Commission is a big task.

The Great Commission is a big task. There are four specific commands that we seem to be given in the Great Commission, but they essentially can be summed up in the second one, make disciples. If we're an English lesson for you, in the original language, go, baptize, and teach are written as participles.

Which means that they're not really imperatives or things for us to do. They simply describe the ways in which we are to fulfill the imperative. So the imperative, what we're told to do is make disciples. And we do that by going, by baptizing, by teaching.

We make disciples by going, baptizing, and teaching. And that's a much more full command than just to go and share the gospel. To make a disciple is a big task. Just because there's an urgent need for the gospel doesn't mean that we treat this task lightly or neglect the full task of making disciples.

Our task is to make disciples, not merely decisions. To make Christ followers, not merely converts. The Great Commission is a big task.

[17:14] And not only are there obvious barriers, such as distance and culture and language and finances and resources that make sharing the gospel initially difficult. But further, we've been called to make disciples.

To actually baptize them and graft them into the family of God and hold each other accountable to teach them the things of Jesus as they grow and are sanctified. So what does this task look like for us?

Well, first, we make disciples by going. We make disciples by going. In fact, the word translated to go in this passage is actually in the passive sense, which means less of us going and more that we are sent.

It's almost as if Jesus assumes that we're going to be going. And as we are going, these are the things in which we do. To make disciples of all nations. That's another clarifying here, of all nations. That phrase in the original language is *panta to ethne*, which essentially can be better described as not necessarily geographical borders like countries, but of different ethnic groups, different ethnicities.

[18:14] We simply cannot make disciples of all nations without going. I think it was Saddleback Church, a pastor by Rick Warren years ago. They sought to fulfill the Great Commission by just simply having missionaries in every country.

But friends, it's not just getting people to every country. It's actually reaching every ethnic group in the countries. Every ethnic group represented in that country. In each nation, you'll find different ethnicities, different languages, cultures, religious backgrounds.

And we know this. This isn't some sociological class. We know the difference here. We know the difference between some of the mountain folk of northeast Georgia and those city folk of Atlanta.

We know the difference between those swamp people of south Georgia that say washed.

Like, we know the differences that come between different places and languages and belief sets.

And all these different things that cause differences in ethnicities, cause different ethnic groups.

And different ethnicities, they form different ethnic groups. And because God has placed an infinite value on immortal souls, he's called us to go and make disciples in each and every one of them.

[19:16] The Great Commission is a big task. But friends, we serve a big God. And that even in our disobedience, when we say, no, God, I'm not going to go, and we throw our hands in the air and say no to him, and we refuse to do as we've commanded, God in his absolute sovereignty will bring the nations to us.

And he'll allow us opportunities even here to be a part of the Great Commission. God is faithful to bring the nations to us. It's Acts 17, verses 26 and 27. It says, And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth.

All people came from one man. And having determined, allotted periods, times, seasons, and boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God. And perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.

So in God's sovereign plan, he'll allow conflict. He'll allow seasons. He'll allow difficulty and hardships to take place in people's lives. Well, they'll relocate to a different place, not to preach the gospel, but to hear the gospel.

That in their movement, they might be able to seek after God, feel him, and find him through us.

Friends, there are people that have relocated to Georgia.

[20:31] And it may be that God has relocated them here, not so that they will preach the gospel as missionaries, but that they may receive the gospel from us. Josh has been beginning work on the mission trip to Clarkson.

And that's not just for students. That's for anyone in the church. If you feel called to go, that's a trip and that's an opportunity for you. Clarkson's a beautiful picture, though, of what it looks like for people from all over the world to come to a place and for people of the gospel to be faithful, to share the gospel with those people who've relocated as refugees to that area.

And it's not just in Clarkson. Even here in Toccoa, there are people who are here from all over the world, Turks, Hispanics, and people from all over the world that desperately need the gospel, that desperately need the good news of Jesus, that will spend an eternity in hell apart from the gospel. And God has brought them here so that because he doesn't will that anyone should die or perish, he's brought them here so that we may share the gospel with them, that they may feel their way to God through us.

So we make disciples by going. And whether that's to a different nation or across the street, that's to be decided by God. We must simply be faithful to do and to go wherever he has sent us, to allow ourselves to be sent wherever he may lead.

[ 21 : 48 ] So we make disciples by going. Further, we make disciples by baptizing. Baptism is commanded by Jesus here, and it's an important ordinance of the church. In Romans 6, Paul gives us the picture of baptism, and it is a public demonstration of a private reality that we are identifying in our union with Christ.

And in baptism, we are being buried with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life. Baptism doesn't wash away our sins. It doesn't save us, but it's a public declaration of a reality that's already taken place in our heart that we have been crucified with Christ and is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me.

Baptism is an important part of discipleship. For the person being baptized, they are declaring that they are new creations in Christ, that they've been born again, that their life is new, that they have a new life in him.

And in the context of the church, we're also making a declaration when someone is baptized. We are celebrating and declaring that we recognize the difference that God has made in their lives. We are recognizing and affirming that Christ has made them new, and we're celebrating that new life with them and committing to walk alongside them. Baptism may not be what saves someone, but it's far from unimportant.

[ 23 : 07 ] It's far from unimportant. It is a command from Christ himself. It is one of the ways in which we declare, demonstrate, and show that we identify with Jesus.

It's how we celebrate and affirm the salvific work of God in another's life. But there's a temptation in the church that because it's not a matter of salvation, baptism seems to be optional.

Friends, how in the world can we rationalize a private commitment in our hearts to say, Jesus, you're Lord. You're on the throne of my life.

It is you who lives in me. God, I commit and surrender my life to you as Lord. For us to do that, and then one of our first steps to be, but not in this. But not in this.

Not publicly. It's private, God. I don't want to do it in front of everyone. It's private. To choose, to forsake a command of Christ is not a good place to start or walk with the Lord.

[ 24 : 10 ] That public declaration makes us accountable one to another. And it furthers our work in making disciples through our association and accountability one to another. So we make disciples by going, by baptizing, and finally by teaching.

We make disciples by teaching. I love how Paul describes it in 2 Timothy 2, verse 2, where he writes, What you've heard and seen from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men, who will then be able to teach others also.

Essentially, we've lived alongside each other for a while. You've heard the gospel in me. You've seen the gospel in me. And in the presence of others that I've also been teaching, Timothy, I'm entrusting this message to you to go share it with others.

To help teach others to grow in their faith, to be sanctified, to mature in their faith. And then I want you to challenge them to go and teach others. This is disciples that are making disciples.

It is this process of the church. It's the great commission. We make disciples by teaching. And friends, if we're responsible for teaching others the things of Christ, we better for ourselves understand the things of Christ.

[ 25 : 18 ] We better understand the things of Christ. Teaching is an umbrella discipline that includes a lot of things. It can include evangelism, sharing the good news. It's discipleship, which is teaching doctrine or practices of the Christian faith in life.

But even apologetics, where we work through the difficult questions of life. And we seek to help someone further their walk by working through the issues that come from following Christ. We understand the imagery of planting the seed in evangelism.

But we've got to fertilize the soil. We've got to water it in discipleship. We've got to remove obstacles like rocks and weeds and thistles and thorns. With apologetics and remove those obstacles so that someone may grow and flourish in their faith.

And become fruit-bearing followers of Christ. Teach as a part of making disciples. And this is a command for all believers. Not just the spiritually elite. The call and the command, the commission to teach the things of Jesus, is not just for the spiritually elite.

In Hebrews 5, which we're nearing in our study of Hebrews, the author of Hebrews is going to chastise his audience saying, by now many of you should be teachers, but you're not. You should be sharing these things and teaching these things, but you're immature.

[ 26 : 28 ] It's a mark of Christian maturity to be able to help someone grow in their faith and teach them the things of God. In Deuteronomy 6, parents are gifted the responsibility to teach their children the commands of God.

So whether you're a parent, whether you are a teacher, but friends, whether you're even just a Christian, the responsibility to teach others the things of Jesus lands with you.

Are you growing in your walk with Christ? Are you growing in your understanding of Scripture? Are you being faithful to share that Scripture with others and help someone, help others to grow in their faith?

We must be willing to grow deep roots in God's Word through the instruction of others, so that we may in turn teach others to follow Christ.

So the Great Commission is a big task. It's a weighty task. It's not easy work. It's costly work. It's inconvenient work. It requires time. It requires effort.

[ 27 : 28 ] And even in some aspects, it requires our very lives in order to fulfill this Great Commission and see it through. But we can be confident that while the Great Commission is a big task, it will one day be a finished task.

Jesus here, He says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, and He finishes. He says, and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. You see, this age will end.

This age will end. Christ will return. The righteous judge will make a lasting decision. Mankind will spend an eternity in either heaven or hell based on how they responded to the resurrected Jesus.

And in Revelation 7, we see a beautiful picture of this fulfilled where people of every tribe, nation, and tongue are standing before the throne of God saying salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

It will be a finished task. We can be confident in the gospel because Jesus is alive. And we can be confident in the Great Commission because all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him.

[ 28 : 40 ] And He will be with us until this work is complete. His Spirit lives in us, empowering us to do His work. His Spirit's at work in the lives of others, calling them to salvation. And we can be confident in the Great Commission because we are not starting something new.

We are merely joining the work that Christ has already begun. And that which He has begun, He will see it to completion. However, the question remains for us today.

Will we face the task that remains unfinished? Will we face the task that remains unfinished? I borrow that language from Keith and Kristen Getty. They have a song called Facing a Task Unfinished.

And I want to close with these words. They write, Facing a task unfinished that drives us to our knees. A need that undiminished rebukes our slothful ease.

We who rejoice to know You, renew before Your throne the solemn pledge we owe You to go and make You known. Where other lords beside You hold their unhindered sway, where forces that defied You defy You still today, with none to heed their crying for life and love and light.

[ 29 : 50 ] Unnumbered souls are dying and pass into the night. We bear the torch that flaming fell from the hands of those who gave their lives proclaiming that Jesus died and rose.

Ours is the same commission, the same glad message, ours. Fired by the same ambition to You we yield our powers. O Father who sustained them, O Spirit who inspired, Savior whose love constrained them to toil with zeal untired.

From cowardice defend us, from lethargy awake, forth on Your errands send us to labor for Your sake. This morning, if you're sitting here today and you've never given your life to Jesus, then I want to encourage you, that's your first step.

Romans 10, 9 says that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. That is something you can do and take care of today and I want to encourage you during the invitation.

If that is something you feel you need to do, come and please speak with me then or after the service. But for the rest of us, will we join the cause of Christ to make Him known?

[ 31 : 05 ] In the weeks ahead, you'll have opportunities to support mission work through the Annie Armstrong Easter offering that's supporting missionaries all around our nation and Canada. You'll have a missions auction in April 19th that supports short-term missions through our church.

So you'll have opportunities to financially give to this, but we have a special opportunity with Easter approaching to make Jesus known even in our own community. As you came in, you likely received

one of these invite cards.

We just made these simply to be a resource for you. Maybe you don't feel as though you're the best person for the job of taking the gospel to the ends of the earth, but you can take this to your workplace. You can take this to your neighbor and say, hey, I know you don't go to church.

I want to invite you to come with me. I'll come pick you up. You can come sit with me. You can go to lunch with us afterwards, but invite someone to church this Easter Sunday. That's a small way that you can be a part of the Great Commission.

And if you didn't receive these when you came in or if you want more of these, there's more back there. But others of you, perhaps, feel a pressing urge to serve as a missionary. I was sitting with Forrest Shell at a soccer game a few weeks back.

[ 32 : 05 ] I was watching my wife coach soccer in the girls' play. The Forrest, he simply asked me, he's part of the Global Missions Department at TFC, and he just asked me, so Evan, what's the goal of short-term missionaries at First Baptist?

And I don't get to talk missiology with people, so I was like, okay, someone asked me a good question. I get to talk about this stuff. And then it hit me, he had to ask. I haven't been clear on this. So let me make something else clear. If you, perhaps, feel as though God is calling you to serve as a missionary, whether short-term on a mission trip through our church or even perhaps long-term, our goal with short-term missions is to spur in your heart a desire for God to be made known among the nations and that you may take that same desire elsewhere and bring it here in your everyday life.

But secondly, maybe you go on one of these trips or take one of these opportunities and you feel convicted to serve as a missionary elsewhere for a longer period, for a summer, for a year, for more years. Then that's the goal.

The goal is to take the gospel to make disciples of all nations. And friends, in the coming weeks and years ahead, I want to encourage you to take every opportunity you get, whether it's through inviting someone to church, giving to a missions program or offering, or taking up the gospel for yourself and going to where it's not yet known.

[ 33 : 23 ] Friends, that is our call. That is the work. That is the good news that Jesus is alive. But friends, we've got a big task ahead of us that will be finished one day, but it'll be through the works of you and me.

Let's pray. Father, we want to thank you so much for this day. Lord, I pray that you may be with us today. Lord, the realities that are set before us in Scripture, Lord, you love every single human being in this room today.

There is not a soul in this room that you do not love. Lord, that your son did not come to die and pay the debt for their sin for. Lord, you love each of us, but Lord, there is a responsibility on our hearts to respond when we see you, when we hear the gospel.

Lord, I pray if there's anyone here today that does not know you, may you allow them to take that step today. Not out of a fear of hell, though hell is fearsome, but Lord, out of a love for you and a desire to make you known.

Lord, I pray that your gospel may sit heavy in the hearts of some today that may give their lives to you. But Lord, I pray that the gospel may sit heavy for the rest of us. Lord, the gospel is not the ABCs of salvation, it's the A through Z.

[ 34 : 30 ] It's not the diving board into Christianity. Lord, the gospel is the pool we dive into. Lord, help us to grow further in our love for you, but Lord, also in our love for others. And Lord, may you use us to take the gospel to those who desperately need it.

May we be faithful to be sent, Lord, to our workplaces, to our family, to our neighbors, Lord, across the street and perhaps across the world.

Lord, may you provoke a desire in our hearts to make you known, to further your kingdom, to play our part in the calls of Christ. Lord, we love you.

And it's in your holy name we pray. Amen. We're going to stand together in a verse of invitation during this time. I would invite you to come. If there's a need that you have a response to this message, maybe you feel as though you need to give your life to Jesus and start a relationship with him.

Maybe you feel that you need to be baptized or join this church as a member. I want to encourage you to come forward and speak to me during this time or see me after the service. But as we sing, I invite you to come. Amen.