

Obeying the Great Commission - Part 1

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[0 : 00] I want to begin this morning by saying that this sermon is very important.! And that's not to say that all the other sermons aren't important, they are.

But I think this morning's sermon is important in a different way. And it's important because it will call us to answer the question that is a very important question and the question is this.

Is our Christianity biblical? And by our Christianity I mean in a primary way how we live our lives as Christians together as a church and also how we live the Christian life individually for those of us who have professed faith in Jesus Christ, those of us who claim to follow him.

And then the secondary way we are wanting to answer this question for Christianity in general. Now this message is not so much about whether we are true Christians or not.

It's not about that. Although I believe the question will arise for some of us. Instead this message is really just about whether the lives we live as Christians, how we serve God and Christ is biblical.

[1 : 50] That's what I want us to consider this morning. Almost 2,000 years ago, after his resurrection, Jesus Christ left this earth and he ascended back to heaven.

But before doing so he gave instructions to his disciples. He gave them instructions about the mission that they should be engaged in.

And over time this body of instructions that Jesus gave to his disciples has come to be called the Great Commission.

And we find the Great Commission in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Each of these Gospels is an inspired account of the record of the life and ministry and teachings of Jesus.

And we have them from the perspective of each of these men. So if you could imagine three cameras in this room taking a video of the proceedings this morning, they would all have a different angle, a different view of what is taking place.

[3 : 09] That's pretty much what we have in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We have three camera views of the life of Jesus that each of these men presented. The Gospel of John is different.

The Gospel of John focuses more on the person of Jesus Christ and the aim of John. John wanted to communicate that which will help people to see that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God and that he indeed is the source of eternal life.

John does not include the Great Commission in his Gospel account. So I want us to begin this morning by considering the Great Commission from the Gospel of Matthew.

And I hope to allow for questions at the end of the sermon. Matthew's Gospel, beginning in verse 28, verse 18.

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.

[4 : 43] And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. I also want to read the Great Commission accounts from the Gospels of Mark and Luke.

You don't have to turn there. They'll be projected for you. Mark 16, verses 15 and 16. And he said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation.

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. But whoever does not believe will be condemned.

And then in Luke's Gospel, chapter 24, verses 45 through 47, Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you this morning once again that we have the privilege to gather in this place. We thank you for your redeeming work through Jesus Christ.

We thank you for transforming our hearts and lives and saving us from the wrath to come. And Lord, this morning we ask that as we consider these last words of Jesus before he ascended back to heaven, we ask that you would speak through our hearts.

[6 : 36] But help us to understand the Great Commission and more than that, help us to understand the implications for our lives as a local church and individually.

I pray, Lord, that you would grant me the grace to be faithful to proclaim your word to your people. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. So what is the Great Commission? When we consider these three accounts of the Great Commission that we've just read, I believe that we can say that the Great Commission is the means by which Christ calls his followers into his mission to call others into his mission.

I think that is a faithful summary of the Great Commission. That it is the means by which Christ calls his followers into his mission.

And their role is to call others into that mission as well. And Christ's mission is to reconcile sinners to God on the basis of his perfect life and his atoning sacrifice.

[8 : 19] Now when we summarize the Great Commission or we synthesize the Great Commission in these three accounts, I believe that we'll see that there are three main activities that are involved in the Great Commission.

And they are number one, proclaiming the gospel, number two, baptizing believers, and number three, discipling believers. Those are the three activities that we find in the Great Commission. So one is to consider each of these activities and what they involve. So first, proclaiming the gospel. Proclaiming the gospel is sharing the gospel with all people everywhere, calling them to repent from sin and to believe the gospel.

And the gospel is the good news. The good news is that through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, sinners can be forgiven and they can be accepted by a holy God.

proclaiming the gospel is more than preaching the gospel. It's more than an official task that ministers have.

[9 : 39] Proclaiming the gospel is much broader than that. It certainly includes preaching the gospel by ministers, but it also includes sharing the gospel with people in all kinds of different ways, verbally and in writing, and it includes what we sometimes call witnessing.

We are one-to-one or on an individual basis we share with others about Jesus Christ. All of that is gospel proclamation.

All of that is proclaiming and communicating this message about Jesus Christ. Who he is, what he has done, and what it means to follow him.

It's important to see that this is not moralism. This is not calling people just to reform their lives, to stop doing that bad thing and start doing these good things.

It's not getting them involved in church and getting them involved in religious activities because quite frankly, if that deception will keep people away from Christ, the devil has no problem with it.

[11 : 02] Proclaiming the gospel is not moralism. It is not a message of behavior modification.

It is a message that through Jesus Christ, lives can truly be transformed from the inside out. That he can do a work within us that will cause our lives to be radically different.

To cause our affections to be reformed and reshaped and changed. Proclaiming the gospel is the call to sinners to repent, to turn from sins, to believe in the good news of Jesus and to know that they can be reconciled to God.

Second, the Great Commission includes the activity of baptizing believers. First, proclaiming the gospel and second, baptizing believers.

All those who believe the gospel are commanded to be baptized. baptized. We see this in scripture. We see this that water baptism is an expression of genuine belief in Christ and it is the believer's first act of obedience.

[12 : 34] It is the first act that we are called upon to obey. on the day of Pentecost we read in Acts chapter 2 where the gospel was preached by the apostle Peter and what we what we see in Acts chapter 2 is that many people heard the gospel but what the Bible tells us in verse 41 is that only those who received the gospel were baptized.

This is what we read in Acts chapter 2 verse 41 so those who received this word were baptized and there were added that day about 3,000 souls.

So the evidence of believing what Peter preached the evidence of receiving what Peter preached was being baptized. It would have been illegitimate that day to say yeah I believe him I believe everything he said and refused to be baptized.

That would be illegitimate. They asked Peter on that day what shall we do and Peter said to them repent and be baptized every one of you.

that's the that's the proper response to believing and receiving the gospel. We are baptized. Those who believed that day were baptized.

[14 : 15] But largely today what of baptism is optional for many people and many churches. What of baptism has become an optional part of the Great Commission.

And brothers and sisters the truth is when we have made what of baptism optional we are not being faithful to the Great Commission. What we are doing is we are saying to Jesus we are wiser than you.

What of baptism is not that important we can get by without it. People who repent and turn from sins are to be baptized.

And you know what we don't put them on some kind of a probation. We don't say well let's see if your profession of faith in Jesus is legitimate and in a year's time we'll evaluate and see or six months or whatever the period of time is whether you truly are converted.

No we are called to baptize all those who put faith in Jesus Christ. We are to instruct them about the importance of baptism and then we are to baptize them.

[15 : 32] It is quite startling when you take a quick survey of what of baptism in the book of Acts and consider the way what of baptism is neglected in the church today.

I want to look briefly this morning at two accounts from the book of Acts the first one is the account of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts chapter 8 it's in verses 26 through 39 and in this we see the importance of water baptism connected to the gospel so if you would turn there in your Bible Acts chapter 8 and I'm going to start at verse 34 but the background to this is that there's this Ethiopian eunuch who came to Jerusalem to worship he was a proselyte he was not a Jew he had converted to Judaism and so he religiously comes to Jerusalem to worship and he is leaving and the Holy Spirit speaks to Philip and tells him to go to this desert area and he's going to see this man in this chariot and he is to join him and so Philip goes and it's exactly the way the Spirit told him he sees this Ethiopian eunuch and the man is reading his Bible and we pick it up in verse 34 and the eunuch said to Philip about whom I ask you does the prophet say this so the Ethiopian eunuch is reading and from what we see here it's from Isaiah 53 and so he asked Philip about whom I ask you does the prophet say this about himself or someone else and Philip opened his mouth and beginning with this scripture he told him the good news about Jesus and as they were going along the road they came to some water and the eunuch said see here's water what prevents me from being baptized and he commanded the chariot to stop and they both went down into the water Philip and the eunuch and he baptized them and when they came up out of the water the spirit of the Lord carried Philip away and the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing now here's what's very interesting about this account that I want us to see we don't know exactly what the eunuch in verse 35 all it says then Philip opened his mouth and beginning with this scripture beginning with Isaiah 53 he told him the good news about Jesus that's all we have we don't know specifically what he said to him but here's what we can conclude based on verse 36 based on verse 36 we can conclude that Philip's gospel presentation to this eunuch included water baptism because the eunuch says you see this in verse 36 and as they were going along the road they came to some water and the eunuch said see here's water what prevents me from being baptized he knew that he was supposed to be baptized

Philip communicated that to him and he says what prevents me from being baptized this is the response of someone who has received the word and who's been told that those who believe are to be baptized and we see the importance of it that he wants to be baptized and that day he was I think we should see that water baptism therefore is not a choice but it really is a command it is not something that is optional it is something that is actually required the next passage I want us to consider is in Acts 16 verses 25 through 33 and this one is to point out to us the urgency of water baptism is an act of obedience that we ought not delay Acts chapter 16 starting in verse 25 it reads about midnight

[20 : 37] Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them and suddenly there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were

shaken and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bonds were fastened when the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open he drew his sword and was about to kill himself supposing that the prisoners had escaped Paul cried with a loud voice do not harm yourself for we are all here and the jailer called for lights and rushed in and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas and he brought them out and said sirs what must I do to be saved and they said believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved you and your household and they spoke the word of the

Lord to him and to all who are in his house and he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds and he was baptized at once he and all his family now what we see in this is the urgency of water baptism remember Paul and Silas would have been beaten prior to midnight they were severely beaten so badly beaten that this jailer had to wash their wounds and we see in verse 25 that it was about midnight that they were singing and praying so this happened very late at night and when this man was no doubt overcome by their singing and no doubt overcome by their resolve to serve the Lord in the midst of all the hardship he cried out to what must I do to be saved and they said believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved they were so badly beaten he washed their wounds and still they didn't say oh you know we're too painful it's too late scripture says that same hour of the night they baptized him there is an urgency with water baptism and the reason that we should approach it with urgency is that it is a command of the

Lord it's not an optional thing it is a command of the Lord now please don't hear me as I say this to think I'm saying that it is essential for salvation I don't believe that I don't think scripture teaches that but we also see that scripture does teach that water baptism is a command of the Lord he commands those who believe the gospel to be baptized so we see this urgency in this example of the Philippian jailer despite the condition of Paul and Silas despite the lateness of the hour they baptized him and his household and again I believe this is so important because if indeed water baptism is a command the only appropriate response to that is to do it promptly

I'm sure you may have heard that delayed obedience is disobedience and the last person we should seek to disobey is the God of the universe so that's the first two activities of the great commission preaching the gospel and baptizing believers the third and final activity of the great commission is discipling believers let's turn back to Acts sorry to Matthew 28 discipling believers discipleship is the process by which believers in Christ are taught to follow and to live out the teachings of Christ in a nutshell that's what discipleship is believers in Christ are taught to follow and to live out the teachings of Christ in a central way when we look at the first disciples that Jesus called one of the things that's very obvious in all the calls is the radical transformation that took place and how this following of Jesus became central in their lives now this looks differently for every one of us in terms of whatever station and circumstances we are in when the Lord calls us but whatever those circumstances are whatever the station is it becomes central in terms of how we seek to follow Christ in light of those circumstances and light of our station Christ is to be central in the midst of all of that and I think this is the part of the great commission and the part of discipleship that I think we must take yet another look at it is not that when we come to

[26 : 19] Christ Christ becomes another part of our lives I was supposed to bring a visual illustration to help you to see this and I forgot to do so but let me explain or try to explain what I'm thinking imagine a wheel like a bicycle wheel that has spokes in it so there's the hub of the wheel the wheel is around that and then there are these spokes going out like that I think it is fair to say that largely in the Christianity that we know serving Christ being a part of the church and all that we do in the name of Christ is a spoke in that wheel it's a spoke right alongside work and being a husband and being a father and a mother and wife and whatever else we do all the different things that we do that's one spoke in the wheel and we allocate time and effort and energy and we apportion some part of our lives to that aspect that's the

God peace in our lives that I believe is the way largely we live as followers of Christ but there's another picture the other picture is think of the hub from which all the spokes go as our relationship to Jesus Christ and our call to be disciples and all those other spokes are embedded into that hub which is the central part of our lives and we see ourselves and we identify ourselves primarily as disciples those who follow Jesus Christ and everything else fits into that so for example thinking about your work I think a lot of times we identify ourselves in our work and we see ourselves as a teacher or as an accountant or as a carpenter or whatever the profession is we see ourselves in that way and

I believe that a more biblical view of ourselves is to see ourselves as a person who follows Jesus Christ who is a teacher who does carpentry or who does whatever they do but central to who we are is that we follow Jesus Christ following Christ is to be the center of our lives it is to be what we are about and who we are and everything else fits into that and when we live our lives that way our lives look differently we don't apportion some piece over here for God it is all about God and everything that we do then is shaped by and influenced by us being disciples and followers of Jesus Christ discipleship is the heart and soul of the great commission it's not enough to proclaim the gospel it's not enough to baptize people who profess faith in Christ the ultimate goal of the great commission is for believers in Christ to become disciples of Christ and what this means is that the ultimate goal for every baptized believer in Christ is to be involved in the great commission I have no way of knowing this for certain this morning but I firmly believe that most of us when we read the great commission we don't think of ourselves though we're following Jesus Christ we don't think of ourselves in terms of being actively involved in this process we may think of ourselves as being the recipients of it the beneficiaries of it but not being involved in it ourselves but if we properly read the great commission and properly understand the great commission it means that every believer every believer every follower of

Jesus Christ to whatever degree their circumstances allow every one of us is to be involved in proclaiming the gospel baptizing those who believe and making disciples just as we ourselves have been disciples I know some of you may be surprised to hear me say that believers can baptize other believers but there's nothing in scripture that prohibits it and if you can lead a person to Christ you can baptize that person now some would object to that based on the way things have been practiced in the church but there is no compulsion to believe what we have seen practiced in the church over and against scripture there's nothing that warrants dissecting baptism out of the great commission to be the responsibility of particular people now the reality is that

[32 : 44] I think the bulk of baptisms will probably be done in official capacities by some individuals but it does not preclude an individual who is a Christian who brings another person to faith in Jesus Christ to baptize that particular person and quite frankly I believe that this is one of the reasons that there's been so much disobedience in this area of the Great Commission that we lead a person to Christ and we say well somebody else has to baptize you if it even comes up you know as much as we parents love our children every single parent longs for the day for their children to mature and grow up and the Lord willing marry and have children and have their own families we all want that we don't want to see our children not mature not grow up not take on responsibilities we want to see them mature and take on responsibility and have children and be grandparents you know the same should be true spiritually the same should be true spiritually maturity in the

Christian life is not best measured by how well we know the Bible it's not best measured by how faithfully we attend church and how faithfully we serve and how faithfully we give and we need to do those things but I believe that the most overlooked measurement of Christian maturity is discipleship and discipleship has two wings discipleship has the wing of being disciplined on the one hand and then discipling others on the other hand and you know the truth is the truth is that to whatever degree discipleship is started in our lives we can be faithful to give that to somebody else and I don't buy the general view that oh before you can go disciple someone you need to do these hundred things before you can disciple someone no discipleship is simply being faithful with what has been entrusted to you and give that to somebody else and hopefully you're one or two steps ahead of them and

I think a lot of us know who have been parents it's on the job training you don't learn every single thing you need to know about being a parent before you can be a parent a lot of it is on the job training and God gives grace to be able to do it and here's what I find I find that when we are committed to doing a particular thing and we know there's a responsibility on us we tend to get down to doing what we need to do to prepare and so imagine whatever whatever your life looks like now in terms of investing in people whether it is talking to unbelievers whether it is trying to help a younger Christian to grow and to develop discipline in the Christian life whatever that looks like right now I can tell you that if there is a demand on you to do in an ongoing way the work of discipleship in somebody else's life it will cause you to be in

God's word more it will cause you to pray more it will cause you to do whatever you believe you need to do to be faithful to that person and this is what we need to do as I thought about the thinking that pervades much of us in the church the best I could think about was colonialism you

know I think we underestimate how much colonialism has conditioned us to think in certain ways we underestimate it I say to you this way imagine a situation where you have a child living at home parents meet the needs and do whatever the child needs to do versus a child who is to fend for him or herself

I can guarantee you those two children think very differently about everything very differently very differently about the things they have how they value them how resourceful one is over the next one the experiences that we have had they tend to condition us to think in certain ways and I really believe that for many of us the exposure that we've had in church the experiences that we've had in church those experiences those exposures are constraining us to think about the Great Commission in particular in unbiblical ways and we need to change how we think about it we need to think how we change about it because largely

[38 : 53] I think what has happened is the Great Commission has kind of like been put on a shelf that's taller than most of us and you almost can't even reach it if you stretch you need something to get to it that's the visual of what has happened with the Great Commission but the Great Commission is supposed to be on that low shelf where every single person who's come to put faith in Jesus Christ can be involved in it and must be involved in it and this is something that has been an ongoing burden for me and in the last two years in particular I've been spending a lot of time thinking about discipleship and what we can do as a church to help those who have professed faith in

Jesus Christ to be disciples and to make disciples and that's really what discipleship is about discipleship is about being disciples and making disciples and to borrow the words from Matthew in his Great Commission account discipleship is teaching those who believe and have been baptized to observe all that the Lord commanded his disciples now in a nutshell this would be primarily the New Testament we have the Gospels where we have the epistles but it also includes the Old Testament as well rightly understood in light of the New Testament because God's word is a unified story it is one grand story of redemption and that is what we are supposed to be involved in doing and so to summarize the

Great Commission preaching the gospel baptizing believers discipling believers until the day that Jesus returns is the primary work of believers in Jesus Christ this is what God has left us to do and I think we all know that we can be doing many good things we can be involved in many good programs many good activities that would never get us to doing this essential work now when we consider the Great Commission again as I said before it's easy to think that it applied exclusively to the apostles to whom the Lord spoke but consider that for a moment when you consider these words of Jesus 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 to the end of the age do you really think that Jesus had in mind that the eleven apostles that he spoke to would do this that they would from Jerusalem go to all the world eleven of them all the world preach the gospel to every nation to all people and they will do it until the end of the age until Jesus returns it's just humanly impossible they wouldn't live long enough they weren't strong enough Jesus never intended that they would do it alone and this is why he said to them make disciples I hope to look at this next week but in the opening of the book of Acts

Luke tells us that Jesus he tells us about the things that Jesus began to do the ministry of Jesus was the beginning of his mission it wasn't the end of his mission he did accomplish the most important part of his mission which was to enable men and women to be reconciled to God through his atoning sacrifice but it was only what he began to do and he now calls those who would follow him into that mission to help to extend that mission and he says the way the mission is extended is you make disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples and immediately when you consider this you realize that the church is better suited for the great commission when it decentralizes the mission not that it centralizes the mission and largely what has happened in churches is we have centralized the mission we have centralized it around pastors and around leaders and we have professionalized it around them and so much of the work that is done is to be paid work but that's not what

[44 : 36] Jesus had in mind Jesus had in mind that these men would do the same thing he did with them that they would make!

discipleship and they would say to them true discipleship means making disciples you're not a true disciple if you're not making disciples then you got to be disciple you got to make disciples but that's only when you have those two working together that you are truly engaged in discipleship and so the Lord never intended that these eleven men would do the full work of the great commission he intended that those who they would reach would help to reach others who also would help to reach others and one of the things we should see immediately from this this is not a quick work this is not a hurry work this is not microwave Christianity like we see today where you heard thousands of people together and you say repeat after me and you repeat the sinner's prayer and send them on their way and tell them to invite Jesus into their heart that that is foreign to scripture the whole idea of making disciples communicates personal involvement it communicates some level of relationship and the

Lord himself modeled it for us and so if you're a believer in Christ this morning and you're not reading yourself into the great commission you're not reading the great commission rightly you're not reading the great commission as you should because every single person who believes in Jesus Christ is by virtue of that belief enlisted into the great commission because the truth is this we're all disciples the only question is whether we are faithful disciples or unfaithful disciples and let me be the first to say that the realities that we face in the church where so many are not engaged in discipleship I would be the first to say leaders like myself own the lion's share of the responsibility of the myriads of people who have come to faith in Christ who are not involved in the great commission it is not a pure problem primarily it is primarily a pulpit problem it is how we have built churches how we have structured the church how we have neglected the great commission how we ourselves have neglected this call to make disciples who make disciples you busy people with church life busy them with church activities

God they're more focused on themselves and focused on the world and this is why by God's grace I'm committed to changing and I pray that all of us would be committed to changing to whatever degree we need to change and I'm not making the assumption that this is going to look the same for all of us it's going to look differently for all of us but the important thing is that in our heart of hearts we're able to say I'm involved in the great commission and I'm in Christ's mission and I'm in that mission to the best of my ability this is going to require changes for us require changes for us as a church require changes for us individually but brothers and sisters this mission is important enough for us to make the changes I'm going to be going to a funeral today a cousin of mine is burying at two o'clock and as I think about funerals and what makes this one in particular very contemplated for me is this is a!

cousin I grew up with she is maybe a year or two older than I am and I think when people your age who you are connected to die it causes you to think about life differently and you realize how brief life can be how fragile life can be and you know truthfully I don't think that at the end of life we are lamenting that we didn't do more of the things we did and I think at the end of life we will lament that we didn't do the important things that we should have been involved in and brothers and sisters I don't know of a more important activity that those who profess Christ can be involved in the great commission is important because it is the means by which Christ calls followers into his mission to call others into his mission in the great commission we have this amazing privilege of bearing and sharing the best news ever the good news about

[50 : 30] Jesus Christ the only essential news that people ever need to hear that sinners who deserve God's judgment and God's wrath can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ the good news that sinners who truly repent and turn from sin can know peace with God they can be forgiven of their sins brothers and sisters there's nothing else that we do nothing else in our lives is more important than this the best I can think about it is in many ways we need to detoxify we need a detoxification of many of the ideas many of the activities many of the outlooks we have on life to get us centered on this amazing privilege that we have to!

to communicate the good news to a lost and dying world and to realize how we want to ask the Lord to help us to grow to be faithful to share this news because there are people that we are rubbing shoulders with day in and day out they don't know this the best many of them know is that something is wrong in their lives and left to themselves to try to change it they will do what Adam and Eve did they'll just put on a fig something and try to make it look different because they know something is wrong brothers and sisters we know the solution to the problem the solution to the problem is that they need to put faith in Jesus Christ and we have an opportunity in the providence

of God to share that with them and it's all a part of this great mission of Christ this mission that is so great that it takes this whole church to be involved in it this is the greatest news ever it's the best news ever and we as a church we individually have this privilege of being able to partake in it and so may the Lord help all of us who have put our trust in Jesus Christ to be involved in the great commission whatever that looks like whatever our opportunities and circumstances are let us be involved by being and making disciples as the Lord allows let's pray Father thank you for your word this morning Lord work in our hearts as only you can but the changes we need to make even when we see them only you can truly empower us to make the changes

Lord will you detoxify our minds from ideas and limitations that cause us to not be identified in our hearts with the great commission I pray that you would persuade each one of us who have trusted in Jesus Christ but you have called us into your mission to call others into your mission we ask and pray these things in Jesus name Amen Are there any questions?

Okay do you have a question? When Christian parents raise Christian kids is this part of discipleship?

[54 : 48] It's a very good question and the answer is yes yes it is and I hope to talk about that next week you know and this has really been a burden for me recently that often times we can overlook the immediate opportunities we have in our family for discipleship and we are praying God give me an opportunity we are looking far out and meanwhile our kids right around us are not we are not raising them we are not discipling them in the way that we should what we see as we look at the gospels is that the first disciples who Jesus called he would say to them come follow me there is no indication that they had put faith in Jesus Christ as a matter of fact when we look at the accounts the gospel accounts we will see that they didn't know who

Jesus was sometimes they are startled that he would do certain things they would marvel that he would speak to the waves and the waves would stop they didn't know who Jesus was but yet he said come and follow me so I believe that yes in our homes we have an amazing opportunity to disciple our children and to raise them scripture says in the fear and the admonition of the Lord there's no legitimacy to waiting until a child professes faith in Christ and then starting to disciple them as many of us can attest you're waiting for that day you may wait too late and we are to raise our children in the fear and in the admonition of the Lord and I think largely when we do this in the case of many of our children we will not be able to discern specifically the moment that they would have come to faith because when we raise them in the fear and the admonition of the Lord their lives will take on the shape of what it looks like to be trained in the ways of the Lord and so when they own their faith for themselves it will be hard to see a real difference so yes Ashley the raising of our children the discipling of our children taking time with them investing in them is indeed a part of discipleship anyone else I have a question you touched on it briefly and the question is when we have for example crusades we have probably evangelists and they draw thousands and we have mass conversions is the main objection conversion to that sort of logistical one where we don't necessarily know who may have made these conversions and how to get in touch with them how to make sure that they are planted in the church room that they are disciples and I guess is discipleship just mainly best done one on one those are good questions to get to the first one I do think the main objection I would have to those mass crusades is that they tend to make a profession of faith the end all and be all of the Christian life you make that profession of faith you can go home rejoicing the angels are rejoicing and rarely is there talk about water baptism rarely is there talk about how the Christian life is to be lived out in community and you are to be growing and so I think anything on that mass scale you're going to lose the quality of it in that way I'm not saying it's impossible to be faithful to those things but to some extent I think you're going to really lose the quality of it and many people can be misled by it thinking that because

I prayed! think that yes part of it is logistical but a lot of work has to be done in those mass crusades where you have all kinds of people who may be praying and it's just very difficult to nurture them if you think of it this way naturally we don't want to have children like that we don't just want to have children scattered all over the place to even know who you fathered as it were and so while that has been a practice in the church one we don't see it we don't see that attempt in scripture and I think I don't remember the statistics off the top of my head but I have read where they have done follow-up surveys in towns where Billy Graham would have done big crusades and it is a very very small percentage of those people who make professions of faith who actually end up exhibiting any

evidence of saving faith in terms of being baptized in terms of being a part of a local church or even continuing sometime later to still give some kind of credible belief that they really made a true profession of faith so I think those are really problematic in many ways but I think

[60 : 59] Troy it really gets to the way we tend to think about these things we like to do it fast we want to have it mass and I just don't believe that's the way of the Great Commission I think the Great Commission is a slow faithful process that we have to be engaged in in our lifetime and go to our graves knowing that we were faithful and let the next generation who comes up do that until the day that Jesus comes I talked so long I forgot your second question the second one is is is discipling just best on one on one I really do think so I do think that the most effective discipleship is done in smaller contexts one on one or in smaller groups sorry I just wanted to sort of point to Acts chapter 2 verses 37 through 41 41 in particular that speaks to the effect of

Peter's sermon the Bible says that so those who received his word were baptized and there were added that day about 3,000 souls so I think I think that this confirms the essence of the sermon in terms of the importance of baptism but I also think that it confirms what suggests that large numbers of people together in a single setting can receive the salvation all at once people but I think and I really appreciate the fact that what was preached today is that we must be comprehensive in our presentation of the gospel people yeah I'll quickly respond to what Lyndon said about large numbers of people what is unique about this particular situation is that these were not ignorant people these were people who were faithful

Jews and faithful proselytes so many of them would have made amazing sacrifices to be in Jerusalem for Passover many of these people would have been those who were looking for Messiah who understood the prophecies who were faithful in Judaism at the time and so as Peter would have been preaching and notice how Peter was drawing on things that they would have known he was drawing on the prophecy of Joel he was drawing on David and his death so these were people who had a certain degree of information but what I will tell you is that when we consider the biblical illiteracy today and we consider the amazingly false ideas that so many people have today we have to be so careful that we don't assume the gospel and we have to be so careful that we don't assume that people know what it means to follow

Christ I was at a service some months back and this was a service to honor my mother-in-law and some other people in the church that she attends and this guy who preached I know him known him for many years he ran him with all kinds of things I mean everything he was from pillar to post talking about this and talking about that except the gospel except the gospel and when he was finished he said is there anyone here who want to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior no gospel but he asked that question and then and Alexi was there I don't know if Sadie was there but Alexi was there in an exaggeration so he did this and I guess people I believe in that if you do that most of the people in the

Bahamas responded to all the calls dozens of times I mean we've done that dozens of times in our lives and so nobody came except this girl this girl came up and do you know the man never prayed with her never prayed for her he left and went back to his seat and the pastor came and the pastor said a couple of words and just prayed for the church and the woman was left standing right then somebody comes and stood with her and it was just bizarre and so we really think that people know the gospel so we can say to them if you want to accept Jesus into your heart you want to accept Jesus your Lord come no gospel no understanding of that so I do think that we have to be ever so careful about the gospel today I know I'm digressing I know I'm going to be late for this journal today I learn a lot from these videos that are passed around on whatsapp and so on one I saw yesterday was just coming fast and furious on all different sites

[66 : 46] I'm a part of groups I'm a part of and there's this one about this guy from Singapore the richest man in Singapore or something and I guess his nephew or someone is interviewing him and asking him about what would he say to young people or something like that and he talks about oh you know I found that I'm broken and we're all broken and we need you I'm thinking why do you need a rich person to say that why much of the gospel that is preached today communicates the idea that if you come to Jesus you're going to be richer and better and that's foreign to the gospel that's foreign the truth is for some of us coming to Jesus will result in amazing difficulty and sacrifice and trials and so

I really think that we can't assume the gospel all right wisdom I just have for persons that share the gospel with an unbeliever at work a family member what would you say would be the post gospel

sharing responsibility of the believer to to I mean okay should there be follow up is there is there should you take that on or should you say okay I've shared the gospel and if given an opportunity I will follow up but other than that I'll just leave the rest to God yeah I think Demetria it really will be a case by case situation depending on the person's response like for example you may share the gospel with someone who is repulsive they hear you out but they don't want you to say anything else to them

I think you'd be overbearing to continue to push that on them but for someone else you may want to follow up and see whether they thought about that I do think though we need to be careful that we don't push people beyond where they are and you know how you go to the food store and your fruit and it's green but everybody feels it and they put it back and they feel it and they put it back and you get to it and you say oh this is ripe no it's not ripe it's soft and you take it home and it's green you can't eat it a lot of times we can do that with people we need to give people time and space I mean you see the Philippian jailer he said to Paul and Silas what must we do they weren't saying to him hey you need to get saved he said what must I do to be saved and so I think we just need to share the gospel be led by the spirit and take people case by case and trust the Lord because the Lord is the one who ultimately is working in the hearts to bring people to himself all right any other questions okay let's let's close there was a time when in the history of the nation of Israel Moses felt that the burden of the people was too heavy for him and the Lord told him I want you to gather these 70 men and I'm going to put the spirit that's on you on them and two of the men didn't show up but it was reported to Moses that they were prophesying back in their tents and Moses said these words he said I would that all God's people would prophesy I said this morning I would that all of God's people would be involved in the Great Commission I would that all of us would be what I would call entrepreneurial stepping out taking initiative taking risks meeting with people sharing the gospel not waiting for someone to structure it for you but just organically trusting the Lord many of you can sit with small groups of people have a discussion have a Bible study talk to them open your life and share with them I would that we would all do that I would that we would all be involved in the Great Commission because there are people that God has positioned every single one of us who have trusted in Christ to reach and I pray that we have reached them