

Make Disciples

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 February 2017

Preacher: Pastor Bart Leger

[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning again. If you have your Bibles, we will be looking in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 28 and verses 16 through 20. And I can't wait to get started into this text this morning because I trust that as we are reading this after we've been in this series for the past, I believe, around five weeks, that we would read it from a whole different perspective as we...it's really no longer reading about the Great Commission or, as it has been called, the Great Mandate.

What we're reading is the very mission of our lives and the very mission of the Church of Jesus Christ, the body of Christ. And what does it mean to be disciples? We've been asking ourselves so that if anybody asks you, what is a disciple? And what does it mean to make disciples that we would all have the exact same answer and we would all be on the same mission? So with that understanding, let's go ahead and dive right into our text this morning. Matthew, chapter 28 and verses 16 through 20.

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee to the very...or to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw him, they worshipped him. This was after he had been risen. After he had died, rose again from the dead and had appeared to his disciples. And this was before he would go back up to heaven. And then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 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 things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you even to the end of the age.

Amen. And what I want us to do this morning is look in this text as we wind down this series and look at this from the perspective of a covenant. A covenant that we make before each other, that we make before God and as the body of Christ together, that we would be covenanting together to be a church that is making disciples. A church that is not just about us being here, enjoying our time together, enjoying one another, and just being encouraged and being built up. But all of these things that we do as the body of Christ are done for a particular purpose. And it's for the purpose of that we would follow the mandate of Jesus and go out and make disciples and replicate ourselves. And in turn, train others who can replicate themselves. And so the Christianity does not die out within a generation. It is up to us to be training others to be following Jesus. And so as we look at that, the first part of that covenant together that I would propose this morning is that we will be a church that trusts in the authority of Jesus Christ. That we will be a church as we see that Jesus left his disciples and ultimately he left us the same mandate, is that we would trust in his authority. He says, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. And really this is the key statement of the Great Commission. Everything in the Great Commission hangs upon this statement that all authority had been given to Jesus Christ. This is a theme we see all throughout the Gospel of Matthew.

We see it emphasized over and over again. Jesus saying that power had been given to him. Authority had been given to him to heal the sick, to forgive sin. And over and over again, we see that Jesus Christ has the authority. And what we need to understand is power without authority doesn't get you anywhere. Jesus said, not only do I have the power, but I have the authority to use that power. And ultimately we see that Jesus Christ has given us the authority to claim the power that he has as we are making disciples. And so Jesus comes to his disciples and he's about to ascend back up into heaven. And he says, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth and for you all to use as well. Now we're going to get to that in a second. But first of all, I want us to stop and think about what does the authority of Jesus Christ or the realm of Jesus's authority, to see a list of a few things over which Jesus has authority. Now this is by no means an exhaustive list. But first of all, if you're taking notes, it says we will trust in his authority. But the first thing that we see is his authority is universal. His authority is universal. He has authority over everything. And

there's nothing over which Jesus does not have authority. Though sometimes people question, well, Satan appears to be in control right now. And couldn't Jesus, if he wanted to, take over? Well, the thing is, he doesn't have to take over. He's already in control. He is allowing Satan to go out and roam about and see what he can accomplish.

[5 : 33] And his mission is still going to be accomplished. And he has chosen to use us. But it's universal. So we see, first of all, that he has authority over disease. He has authority over all diseases.

Jesus said to the lame, walk. And they walked. Jesus said to a blind man, see. And he saw. So Jesus has authority over disease. And we even think today, isn't it great that Jesus has authority over cancer? He has authority over our colds. He has authority over the flu. He has authority over every disease. He may not choose to heal in every case. But if that were part of his will, he has the authority over that. He has authority over demons. This has really been a big point that we see in the Gospels. Jesus, all the demons trembled at the name of Jesus Christ because he has authority over them. Evil spirits flee from him. They run from him. He has authority over demons. Whether we realize it or not, there is an unseen battle going on all around us. We don't see it. We may not even be aware of it. But it's going on around us. He has authority over that. Jesus has authority over sin. Amen? He has authority over sin. As we look through the

Gospels, we see how Jesus talks about he has the authority. John 5, he has the authority to judge sin. And that's great. But if it stopped there, we would all be in a terrible mess. Because it's one thing to judge sin. It's another thing to have the authority to forgive sin. Jesus has the authority to forgive our sin. Why? Because he died on the cross in our place. He conquered sin, conquered death. So he is the Lord over sin. He has authority over suffering. He has authority over suffering. Come to me, all you are weak and heavy laden. He says, I will give you rest. When you're burdened about the things of this world, we can come to him and take that burden as a pack and take it off of ourselves and lay it at his feet. And he says, bring it to me. I'll take it. And in turn, I will give you comfort. I will give you rest. He says, I'm the bread of life. He says, I am the living water. He has authority over suffering. He has authority over nature. Remember when the disciples were in the boat,

Jesus was asleep. They were afraid. A storm came up. He gets up in the bow of the boat, lifts his arms, and he says, peace, be still. And the waves listened to him. His disciples were in the boat. Jesus was on the bank on another occasion. And Jesus wanted to go to his disciples.

He didn't have a boat. Well, guess what? Jesus didn't need a boat. He just walks out on the water and he goes to meet them. So he has authority over nation. And then Jesus has authority over all nations. In the milieu today of our political climate, isn't it great to know that Jesus Christ has authority over all nations? Whether it's North Korea or Russia or China over the United States of America, Jesus Christ has the authority over all nations. Back in Daniel chapter 17 verses 13 and 14, read that sometime when you're concerned about what's going on in America and in the world today.

[9 : 03] And let that comfort you when we see that the Son of Man would come and he would have authority over nations and he would have dominion forever and ever and ever over nations and over everything.

thing. Now that is just a tiny picture of the authority that Jesus says that he has in Matthew chapter 28. All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. And he means it. He's got it all. Psalm 148 sums it up. When you have time, you can go to Psalm 148 and read about the authority that Jesus has. He has the authority over sea creatures. He has the authority over all the ocean depths. The mountains, the hills, the fruit trees, the cedars, the wild animals, all cattle, small creatures, large creatures, flying birds, creeping things, things that fly in the air, young men, old men, maidens, children. He has authority over it all. And that's where we see Jesus is in control. And it changes our approach in the way we look at things when we're concerned about things. We all have things we're concerned about. We all have things that frustrate us. I have things that frustrate me. But you know what? Ultimately, Jesus is in control. You know, and I may remain frustrated, but I have to understand that if something is going to be, and Jesus wants something to be, nobody is going to stand in his way. And so sometimes we just have to realize we don't understand it all, God is in control. We may be praying for healing over a disease. We might be praying for the salvation of a loved one. We might be praying, but you know what? We have to come to the end of it and say, you know what? Ultimately, it's in his hands because he has

authority. He has control. First, his authority is universal, but secondly, his authority is purposeful. We have to see how that relates to the great commission, to the great mandate of our lives. Not only is his authority universal, but there's a purpose to his authority. This is where we see the link between the authority of Christ and the great commission. Because Jesus is not just bragging in Matthew 28. He is not just bragging. What he is saying is, I've got all authority in heaven and in earth. So what I'm about to tell you,

I've got the authority to tell you, I've got the authority to mandate it, but I also have the authority to see you carry it out. So we don't have to worry because he is in control. Basically, he's saying, I have all things in heaven and on earth at my disposal to accomplish this mission that I've given you. And I'm also giving you that power. I'm giving you that authority. And then we're going to see as we end this this morning. He says, we've got the promise of his presence as we carry out this mission. So his authority is purposeful. Now think about it. You have got the authority of Jesus Christ residing in you as a follower of Jesus. As a disciple of Jesus, you have the same authority he has when it comes to the things he's commanded you to do. Because think about it. If someone who has power and authority gives you a job to do, gives you a task, guess what? That task comes with the authority of the one who gave it. So if you go to someone and said, think about it as your children, if you tell one of your children, go tell your brothers and sisters that it's time to come in to get cleaned up and to eat. Do they have authority when they go tell their brothers and sisters? You bet you. Because guess what happens if their brothers and sisters say, well, who are you to tell us what to do? I'm nobody. I'm just your brother or I'm just your sister. But mama said, come in right now. So they're speaking with mama's authority. And so when we make disciples and when we share the gospel, we are really literally speaking with the authority of Jesus Christ as we say, God loves you and he's offering you a brand new life. It's not just our idea. It is him speaking. So it's at this point we need to realize that our success as we make disciples is not based on who we are or what we can do. Because you see, our success in making disciples is not based on who we are, what we can do, or what we can offer. Our success is based on who Jesus is and what he is capable of doing in our lives. And that takes up, takes a whole lot of pressure off of us when we realize that it's not up to us to change people's minds. It's up to the Holy Spirit to bring them to that point. It's just up to us to share. It's just up to us to show. So we'll be a church that trusts in his authority, in his person, in his word. We'll be dominated by his authority, his person, his word in our lives, and being governed by his word. And everything that we do will be staked on the authority that he has. And then secondly, not only will we be a church that trusts in the authority of Jesus Christ, if Jesus said it, that's it. That settles it, like the bumper sticker says. Secondly, we'll be a church that obeys his strategy. We will be a church that obeys the strategy of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28, 19, excuse me, 18, Jesus said, all authority has been given to me. So as a church, we need to trust that authority. But second, we'll be a church that obeys his strategy. Now, based on that authority, here we get into the picture as we study verse 19 and start to unpack what the Great Commission really is all about, this making disciples thing that we've been talking about over the last five weeks. I want us to think about the picture that we see throughout the Gospels, and also up to this point, the contrast between the strategy of the disciples and the strategy of Jesus Christ. We see Christ's strategy all throughout the Gospel. Jesus said he looked upon the world, he looked upon the people in the world, and he had compassion. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. He saw them wandering aimlessly, doing their own thing. And that's what we see, that's the way we see

[15 : 39] Jesus seeing the world. And we see the disciples coming up to him in Luke, I think it's Luke 9, when they face a little bit of opposition in Samaria. And what did the disciples tell Jesus? Jesus, can't we just call down fire from heaven and burn them up? That was the disciple's strategy, right? Well, Jesus said, now I've got a little bit different strategy. And can you imagine Jesus rolling his eyes about that point?

Guys, haven't you caught it yet? And as we're seeing here, Jesus says, all authority's been given to me, and then he's going to give his strategy before he leaves them. And then there's a time where Jesus had been talking about how he was going to have to suffer, how he was going to have to go through so many things. And he even relates back to Isaiah 53, where he would be the suffering lamb. And Peter comes up to Jesus, and he pulls Jesus to the side, and he says, Jesus, you know, with all due respect, and I'm kind of paraphrasing here, as your public relations manager, you know, I have to tell you that this is not an advisable course of action. You know, you just need to kind of

lay low. Jesus says, no, I'm going to Jerusalem. And so we see the contrast between the strategy of Jesus and the self-proclaimed strategy of his disciples. So Jesus dies on the cross, rises again, and at this point, you know, there's no telling what these guys are going to be doing. They're wondering, what have we been living for the last three, three and a half years? And so Jesus comes up to them, and he gives them his strategy. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations. And at that point, they've got two options. And we see their two options. First of all, they could have given themselves to a self-directed strategy that hopes for his blessing. A self-directed strategy that hopes for his blessing.

Now, what I mean by that is they could have come up with some pretty good things. You know, they could have taken out ads in the local newspaper. You know, they could have sent out a mailer. They could have done things from a human marketing perspective, or they could have taken him up on his strategy. Could it be possible that 2,000 years later in the church today, we're always trying to figure out the latest strategy? We're always trying to figure out the latest marketing concept. And our bookstores are filled with strategies for church to reach people and to appease people or to do whatever. And could it not be that we might have the best of motives? But nowhere in the Bible does God say he is promising to bless our motives. Now, motives are great. We need to have good motives. You know the only thing God promises to bless is his commands.

God said, I'll bless what I've given you to do. Don't just throw something out, hope it sticks to the wall, and I'll bless it. He says, do what I say, and I've promised to bless that. So two options. Either we can go on our own and try to hope that people will catch it and become disciples on their own, which is very often most believer strategies. Or second, we could give ourselves to a Christ-directed strategy that is guaranteed his blessing. A Christ-directed strategy that is guaranteed his blessing. Could it be that our job is not to come up with a new strategy? But just take Jesus at his word for what he has commanded us to do? Our primary responsibility is to know his will, and our responsibility is to do his will. Strategy he's already given it. And if we ignore it, maybe we missed the whole point to make what it means to make disciples of all nations. So what does a Christ-directed strategy look like?

What does it look like? What are the components of it? We're going to look at that right now. As we see and go into the Great Commission, we see, first of all, that Christ is our vision. Christ is our vision.

[20 : 01] As we go back to Matthew 4, where we started this five or six weeks ago, Jesus said what? Follow me. Look to me. Keep your eyes focused on me. I am the one you're supposed to follow. Not the world, not whatever is the latest new thing that comes about, the latest fad. But he says, focus on me. Follow me.

He said, then I'll make you fishers of men. Give yourself to me. So Christ is our vision. As we go out and live our lives, we are to be looking to him. What was Peter's problem when he started to sink, when he went out of the boat to go meet Jesus on the water? Peter took his eyes off of Jesus. So he lost his vision, and he looked at his own circumstances. He looked at the things around him and was afraid. And Jesus, he took his eyes off of Jesus, and he began to sink. So our agenda, our vision is to be like Christ. What was Christ's vision? What was Christ's purpose?

To come, to seek, and to save those which were lost. And so our vision and our mission is the same as that of Jesus Christ, to make disciples and to make sure that we populate heaven as much as possible because, remember, we saw last week that the end purpose of disciple-making is that millions upon millions and multitudes upon multitudes would stand before the throne of grace praising God and praising the name of Jesus Christ, those that we made disciples of. And that's the end goal.

So we want to be like Christ, our vision. Christ is our vision. But secondly, what's involved is making disciples is our mission. Making disciples is our mission. This was the great mandate that Jesus Christ gave. And when you get to Matthew chapter 28 verse 19, he says, 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 things that I've commanded you. So making disciples is our mission. And as we look at verse 19, what we see is we see an imperative here in verse number 19. It's an imperative verb. And just in case it's been a few years since you've been through English class, an imperative verb is a command. You know, when Catherine gives me an imperative, it's a command. Honey, would you do this? Honey, please do this. It's an imperative and it's taken as a command. Because when we give someone an imperative, it's something that we want them to do.

So there's one command, one imperative here in verse 19 of chapter 28. And the imperative is to make disciples. In some of your Bibles, if you have King James, it says to teach. And that's an unfortunate translation. Because the word there is not teach. The Greek word for teach is didasko. [23 : 20] So what the word there in the Greek is, which is make disciples. And so what Jesus said was make disciples. He put teaching in a little bit later in there. But the imperative that Jesus gave was make disciples. Be reproducing disciples, the Greek word that he used here. And the other words that are there were participles like baptizing and teaching. One imperative is to make disciples. The teaching, the baptizing, those are not imperative verbs. Those are participles. So as we look at this whole point and we ask, how do we make disciples? And as we've been studying the last four weeks is this imperative, make disciples, is surrounded by other words that help us to see what this looks like. For example, if we were to read Matthew 28 verse 19 in the Greek, it would literally read this. Because the word go is a participle. And the imperative mood, imperative mood, aorist activist, active voice is go, therefore going as you go, make disciples. That's literally how the Greek reads. Therefore going as you go, make disciples. So what Jesus is telling his disciples is go going, but as you're going, as you're living your life, make disciples, reproduce yourself. So this is the incarnational facet that we see. Remember, Jesus was God in the flesh. Jesus is the word made flesh. Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit. So when Jesus ascended into heaven, we are his hands. We are his feet. We are his mouth. So we are Jesus incarnated, so to speak, in the world today. He has left us to continue his message. So first of all, what we see as we see the great mission, the great mandate is going, in going, therefore, 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 things that I have commanded you.

So the first thing that we see, remember, we've been saying that we are to share the word, show the word, teach the word, and now we're going to bring it to a culmination in the great commission. So first of all, Jesus is saying, going as you go, share the word. Going as you're going, share the word.

That's how we begin to make disciples. We take the word that has been entrusted to us, the gospel that has been entrusted to us, and just as Jesus went out preaching, just as Jesus went out telling people excuse me, to repent and to make sure that they understood who he was, we go and we do the same thing. We share the word. Secondly, what we see, Jesus not only said in going, or therefore going, go and make disciples, go and make disciples of all nations. He says baptizing them, baptizing, and in baptizing, we show the word. In baptizing, we show the word. This is the way that we identify our lives with Jesus. This is the way we identify our lives with the church. Literally, it says in the Greek language, baptizing them into the name. Baptizing them into the name of God the Father,

God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, into his character, who he really is. Now, I think that's why baptism is so important. That's why public baptism is so important, because it tells the world this individual is now identifying themselves with Jesus publicly. They're not ashamed to be identified with Jesus. People might call them names. Their family might disown them, but it doesn't matter because they're not afraid. As Paul said, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. I am not ashamed of this person, Jesus, and I'm willing to publicly identify myself with him. And we show the word that Jesus is the Son of God, and he's worthy of our worship and our praise. So we go and we share the word. And in baptizing, we show the word. We show the world that Jesus Christ is who he is. And then third, we, in teaching, in this Great Commission, in teaching, we teach the word. In teaching, we teach the word. Sound familiar? He says, teach them, verse 19, excuse me, verse 20, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And as we come to the end of Matthew 28, we need to see that the gospel of Matthew is divided into about five sections. Five different times,

[28 : 40] Jesus either calls his disciples to himself, or his disciples come to Jesus, and we see a pattern emerge. Jesus teaches his disciples, and as they leave, John, excuse me, what we see Matthew saying is, after he was done, after Jesus had finished these things, after Jesus had finished teaching them these things, then they go out again. Five different times, Jesus calls them, or they come to him.

He takes a significant amount of time teaching them, training them, and then Matthew says, after Jesus had finished teaching them these things, then they did this. Then they went. So now we come, it's repeated over again, five different times, but when we come to Matthew chapter 28, the

passage that we've just read, Jesus pulls his disciples to himself, and he engages in some more teaching. Not as long, but some teaching nonetheless. We see the same pattern, but what we don't see is, we don't see Matthew saying, and after these things. Because I think what we're seeing here is, this is not finished. Because when Jesus told his disciples, going, therefore, in going, make disciples, baptizing them, teaching them, but his mandate was not to stop with the disciples. Because think about it. You know, some have said, well, Jesus said that to his disciples. He didn't say that to us. He said that to these men. Well, the problem is, if that were true, then Christianity would have died off in the first century. Because what he told them, he wanted them to replicate in other people. And what they did, they were in turn supposed to be making disciples, so they would replicate their lives.

And it would go on and on and on and on. This was his strategy. And it began with the disciples, and it continues with every other believer after that. Because we have the same mandate that he gave his disciples. Because we're following in the same line. You believe, you trust, you follow, you make a disciple. And you train that disciple to make other disciples. Then in turn, that disciple goes out, shares the word, shows the word, makes disciples, trains that disciple to make another disciple. And it goes on and on and on. So there's a reason why Matthew didn't keep up with that same pattern. Because Jesus didn't finish his teaching. How is Jesus teaching today?

Through you and me. We are the ones that he gave the command to teaching the nation, teaching those who learn about me to observe all things that I have commanded. So the book of Matthew is an open-ended book.

[31 : 35] And this last chapter is still being written in the hearts and in the lives and in the minds of those who hear the word, those that we teach and those that we disciple. It's spreading through us and in turn spreads through them. Not just in classrooms, but in the lives that we share with others. And maybe a different way of thinking about it would be, we're not just teaching others, we're training them to follow Jesus. We're training our children. We're training those that we have led to the Lord Jesus Christ. We're training them how to pray. We're training them how to say no to temptation. We're training them how to share their faith. And it's like Jesus did with his disciples. Not necessarily a classroom, but it was life. There were so many teachable moments that he had. And he showed them as he was talking to them. And he lived this life before them. So next we come to all nations. He says, 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 things that I have commanded you.

He says, do this of all nations, of all nations. So here's where we serve the world. Each one of these components is vital for our transformation in the disciple-making process. And if you look on the back of your page here, here is a visual of how it might look. We start off at the bottom on your page. You see, we see the globe. We see the world. Over six billion people in the world. Over a billion people have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. So if we start at the bottom, we start with a disciple. That's us. We're following Jesus. We are a disciple of him. As we continue, we go. As we're going, he says, share the word. Tell others about Jesus. Tell others the good news. Share the gospel.

And as we share the gospel, we hopefully people will hear. And how will they know? How will they believe if someone doesn't tell them? So we share the word. And in turn, they believe. They trust Jesus Christ as their Savior. And they become a believer. And as we are teaching them, we are teaching them the importance of public baptism. Following Jesus. And being willing to show the world. So we are baptizing them. We show the word. And they, in turn, become a disciple. Remember, we're continuing to replicate ourselves. And we are teaching them. We're training them as we're spending time with them. Helping them to understand how to pray. How to say no to temptation. How to follow Jesus Christ. And our goal in this is that we replicate ourselves so that they, too, can become a disciple-maker. The next step in the process. And as we're together, serving the world, being a disciple, sharing the word, seeing others become believers in Jesus Christ, who then, in turn, become disciples following Jesus, who then, in turn, replicate themselves, making disciple-makers, so they can go out and become a disciple, share the word, see how it continues around and around and around. It's a cycle that should never stop until Jesus Christ comes back. We are to be making disciples.

It didn't stop in the lifetime of these 11 men. Jesus expected it to continue on after them. And that we, too, would have the same mission, the same mandate to make disciples. Now, as we think

about this here, a couple of things. Often, we get stuck somewhere. We want to ask ourselves the question, where are you? Where am I? You know, sometimes we get stuck here on the bottom. You know, we become a believer. And we ask ourselves the question, are we replicating ourselves in the lives of others?

Are we making disciples? Are you discipling others? Are you sharing the gospel? Are you going out into the world and making disciples in your neighborhood, in wherever, the people that you have relationships with? Maybe are we stuck there? Or maybe sometimes we get to the point where we've stalled at number two. Could be maybe you've trusted Christ as your Savior. Maybe you haven't been baptized yet.

[36 : 37] Maybe you haven't shown the world that I'm willing to follow Jesus and I'm willing to be identified with the name of Jesus. I've never been baptized. That, I believe, is extremely important because it's something that Jesus commanded. So we are to be making disciples. That's what disciple making is all about. Taking the gospel, his truth, being Jesus's mouth, being Jesus's hands and feet in the world where he's left us to replicate ourselves, to be making disciples so that heaven will be populated. Now, Jesus could have chosen another method, but he chose us. He chose us to be continuing what he started on planet earth, starting with his disciples and then continuing with every other believer that has ever lived and ever will live until Jesus Christ comes back. So the last, number three, the last part of our covenant together would be, I trust that we will be a church that depends on the presence of Jesus Christ, who depend on his presence.

Because look at verse 20. He says, As you're doing all of this, as therefore going and going and make disciples, baptizing them, teaching them, everything that I've commanded you, he said, teach them, but you will be dependent upon my presence. Because he says, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. We have the promise of the presence of Jesus Christ. He says, surely I'm with you. It's like he's saying, I myself am with you as you're doing what I've commanded you to do. And it hearkens back to the beginning of Matthew. Remember how Jesus Christ was introduced to the world? Emmanuel, what does that mean? God with us. And so as we are, as we are, as we have been entrusted with the power of Christ, the authority of Christ to share the word, Jesus says, my own presence is going to be with you. Remember we saw in the beginning of the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit came down and indwelt them. And so we have the Holy Spirit empowering us today. So we know that God's presence is always with us over and over again. That's what we see his word saying. Now, why bring that up here?

Because hasn't Jesus promised that he'll always be with us? We always have his presence. I think we all know that, but why would he link that with the Great Commission? And I think maybe what he is saying very clearly is that you will never fully realize my presence with you until you begin following this command. You will never fully realize my presence and the power and the greatness and the strength of my presence until you fully give yourself to this mission. Because I believe when we give ourselves to this mission of making disciples, we will know the presence of God in ways that we could have never known before. Because when we fear, we trust and he comes through. When we are wondering how people are going to respond and we trust him and we step out in faith anyway and share the word, show the word, and as we're teaching and as we're making disciples, we are going to be so blessed with the presence of the presence of Jesus Christ that we could never experience in any other way. Because we're seeing

Jesus Christ working in the lives of others. Lo, I'm with you even unto the end of the age. Also, as we come to the end of this, we see we will need the promise of his presence. We will need the promise of his presence as we're doing this. I think we need to be living our lives such that if it were not for the power of Jesus, we'd fall right flat on our face. Because think about it, if we could be doing it without the presence and power of Jesus, then we'd be doing it in our own power. And what does that accomplish? The Bible very clearly says that's wood, hay, and stubble. That's just personal works.

That's just human works. But he says when you're doing it and everything that you're doing, I have to show up otherwise it falls flat. Then we are living, needing the promise of his presence. Lo, I'm with you.

[41 : 27] And then secondly, we will know the power of his presence. We will know the power of his presence. He will enable us to accomplish his mission. And lo, I am with you always. We will experience that presence. We will know by experience the power of his presence. So as we close, we see a picture of the Father's heart, he wants us to be continuing what Jesus began. As he was

incarnated, God in flesh, showing the world that he didn't come to be served. He came to serve. He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

And Jesus Christ left us with the same mission. To seek and to share the saving power of the gospel of Christ and be making disciples. So what's it going to look like in our lives?

What are we going to have to give up? Give up our fear maybe? Maybe give up some of our comfort? Because it is uncomfortable to follow Jesus. Because what did Jesus say? You've got to take up my cross.

Take up your cross. Take up your cross. Being willing to die for me. But this is Jesus' plan. And it's the plan that he promised to bless. And he's promised to give us.

So as we close this morning, let's spend just a few moments thinking about this great commission. Let's bow our heads this morning. Close our eyes. Just spend some time individually between us.

[43 : 11] As we confess before him. Reflect on this mission that he's given us. And what it will look like in each of our lives. It will look different in each of our lives.

You know, we won't all go in the same fashion. We won't all go to the same places. Because God has placed you in different places than he's placed someone else.

He's placed you in different environments. He's placed you in the lives of different people. People in whose lives you have influence.

How will we use that influence? Will we use it for his honor and for his glory? Or are we going to just let that influence be wasted by not bringing Jesus into the picture?

And influencing them through our living and incarnational life of Jesus before them. And taking the opportunity to share the truth of the gospel.

[44 : 17] In whatever opportunity he gives us. And I really believe this is encouraging to us.

Because he did not leave us on our own.

He says, I'll be with you. He linked. An unusual and I believe supernatural promise of his presence with us.

As we follow this strategy of making disciples of all nations. Teaching them to observe whatever he commanded. Baptizing them.

And training them. In turn to be disciples. Who will in turn be able to invest their lives in the lives of others. And so the cycle would continue.

Until we all stand before him. Multitude upon multitude. Before the throne of God. Praising. His name. Forever. And ever.

[45 : 21] And ever. Father thank you for this time this morning. May we be obedient to you. Father. May we trust you. At every turn.

May. May. We. Obey you. May we trust in your authority.

And father please help us. As we obey your strategy. And ultimately father as we depend upon your presence. To carry out this great mission that you've given to us.

Let's live our lives on purpose. Father we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.