

Commissioned To Enjoy, Equip, & Evangelize

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 January 2025

Preacher: Jonathan Chancey

[0 : 0 0] Amen. Thank you. Just a quick word for you. If you're visiting with us, this isn't really our normal practice. Normally we are going through books of the Bible. And again, next week we'll begin going through the book of Genesis together. But here at the beginning of the year, we're taking just a couple weeks to focus in on our mission and our vision as a church. It's what we aim to do and how we aim to do it. And no discussion of a church's mission and vision is complete, I think, without a look at what we call the Great Commission. So this is going to be our passage this morning. If you would, turn to the book of Matthew chapter 28 and we'll look at verses 18 through 20. And if you don't have your own Bible, feel free to use one of those Bibles in the seat near you. Matthew 28 verses 18 through 20. And when you found it, let's stand for the reading of God's word. Stand and listen as I read.

Father, it is my desire that every one of us would take these words seriously. And God, that we as a church would be obedient to this Great Commission. Lord, that we would love you and your word and so desire to spread it to the ends of the earth. And so we pray now as we look to this glorious text, God, would you stir our hearts and show us Christ. Father, we ask that you would magnify your glory through the preaching of your word this morning. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen. You may be seated. Well, you may not know this, but there is a not so fun side of establishing a church. I mean, you learn pretty quickly that it's not only just preaching and teaching or ministry and prayer, all the fun stuff that you actually want to do as a pastor. Unfortunately, there are a lot of administrative and legal things, a lot of all sorts of paperwork that has to be done and filled out in order to set up a church as a legal recognized 501c3 incorporated entity here in the United States of America. And yeah, just so you know, no, they don't teach you any of that in seminary. I do think it's funny though, sometimes though, when I've had to fill out various forms for these things every now and then

I'll get to this question. They say, what is the purpose of your organization? And it's a good question, isn't it? What is the purpose of your organization? And then every now and then they'll follow that question up with another question that sounds something like this. Well, what sort of activities do you do? In other words, what is your mission and how do you go about fulfilling your mission?

And I'll tell you how I tend to respond. I say, well, we exist to magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. And how do we go about that? What sort of things do we do as a church? Well, we enjoy God and we equip the saints and we evangelize the lost. That's our mission and our vision. I wonder if you had to answer those questions, what would you say?

What would you say in your understanding is the mission of the church? And if you had it your way, if you could craft up a church to be exactly what you wanted it to be and what you wanted it to do, what would you say are the most important things that a church ought to busy herself doing?

[4 : 03] The truth is every one of us has an idea of what the church is supposed to be and what the church is supposed to do. But we have to take an honest assessment here as we do every year at the beginning of the year and ask, well, how does our idea of the mission and vision of the church line up with Jesus's idea of the mission and vision of the church? And what we see here in our passage this morning in Matthew 28 is that King Jesus has defined and determined the purpose and the mission and the function of the church. I'm thankful that he's not left it up to us to decide what the church is, what the church ought to be about. He tells us what we are to do and he tells us what our ministry ought to look like. And so the question that every individual Christian and every individual church ought to ask is not what is our mission going to be, but rather are we being faithful to the mission we've been given? This morning we get to hear Jesus's mission and vision for the church. And here it is again, I want you to hear it again. Christ calls all of his disciples in light of his absolute sovereign authority to go 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 he has commanded. And surely as we go, he promises he is with us to the end of the age. And we see all three parts of our ministry philosophy here in this passage. And so we'll look at each one. First, we see we are called to enjoy God.

We are called to enjoy God. Look there to verse 18 with me and let's get our bearings here. We're at the end of the book of Matthew. Jesus has gone to the cross. Jesus has died on the cross. And now he has risen from the grave. He's appeared to the disciples and now he's getting ready to ascend into heaven. And so step into their mindset here for just a minute. And naturally the disciples would be thinking, well, wait a minute, what are we supposed to do next? What are we supposed to do now? We saw you get murdered on the cross.

We witnessed your death. And now we're standing here. We're talking to you face to face. You've risen from the grave. And now you're telling us that you're leaving us. What are we supposed to do next?

And he does give them a task to do. We'll see that there in a moment. But look at what Jesus does. Before Jesus gives them a task to go and do in verse 19, he gives them a truth to know and to believe and to cherish and to rejoice in here in verse 18. He makes a big claim here in verse 18. And here's what he says. He says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

I want to ask three questions here to help us understand, well, what does that mean? And what does it have to do with our joy in the Lord? For one, question number one is what kind of authority is this? He says, all authority. Do you believe that? All authority in heaven and on earth. This is, this is total, complete, absolute, limitless sovereignty over all things in all places at all times in all ways. When Jesus says, when Jesus says all authority, guess what he means? He means all authority.

[8 : 16] John 3 verse 35, Jesus says, the father loves the son and has given all things into his hands. All things. Ephesians 1 verses 20 through 22, Paul says, God raised him from the dead, that's Jesus, and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Do you hear all authority in these verses?

In other words, Jesus stands far above every ruler that has, has ever been and every ruler that there ever will be. Jesus is greater than the greatest imaginable king or president or leader or ruler that there ever has been or that there ever will be. Jesus is more powerful than the greatest threat or greatest danger you could possibly imagine that exists here on earth. Jesus has a greater and more expansive domain of his authority. He's not bound by this boundary or that boundary. He doesn't have limited authority, limited sovereignty. He has total, complete sovereignty over all things, in all places, in all ways. He has all authority. So second question, how did he get this authority?

Because he says, look there, it has been given to me. Jesus has been, has been given all authority. Now we, we got to think about this for a minute because of course, God, the son, the second person of the Trinity, God, he has always had all authority, right? God, the son has, has never had a moment in time where he did not have all authority. And so what's going on here? Well, now Jesus, the God, man, God incarnate has now been, been given all authority. How can this be? Well, we get a clue in Philippians chapter two, this passage ought to be familiar to us by now. I'll read it again. Paul says, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Therefore, you hear this? Therefore, therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father.

[11 : 42] In other words, church, all authority means the mission has been accomplished. Jesus, the Son of God, has come. The King of all the universe has come and wrapped himself up in weakness. He has set aside his divine rights as ruler of the universe. He's come and become man in order to accomplish a plan of redemption. And now he stands on the other side, resurrected, reigning to say, all authority has been given to me. I've done it. It is finished. I have perfectly accomplished the plan of redemption.

He has perfectly obeyed in our place. He's come through the trials and temptations of life in a fallen world, just like you and I, yet without sin. He has triumphed over sin and death and the devil. And now, because of all of this, he has earned the right as the God-man to have all authority in heaven and on earth.

So, last question. What does that have to do with our enjoyment of him? Now, I assume that all of you know what it's like to be under bad authority. And maybe you had a bad boss or a bad teacher or a bad father, a bad mother. Bad authority is a pain to deal with, isn't it? Bad authority hurts those who are under the bad authority. But on the other side of this, good and godly leadership, good and godly authority is a blessing to those who are under that authority. And Jesus says, all authority has been given to me.

This is good and complete and loving total authority from a good and faithful forever king. All authority is really good news for those who come up under his authority. You see this. When Jesus says, all authority has been given to me for those who love his authority, those who submit to his authority, those who rejoice in his reign and rule over their lives, there is nothing but blessing that comes from the authority of Christ. For all those who know him, all authority means that all of our greatest enemies, everything that we fear the most, they've all been conquered in him. We look to Jesus and we rejoice that he has authority over death. Jesus has authority over sin. Jesus has conquered, he has authority over Satan. What do we have to fear? He has all authority. Because Christ has all authority in him, we enjoy the blessings of forgiveness, adoption, of reconciliation with God, of new life in him. We enjoy his victory over sin and death and the devil. Because he has earned eternal life in him, we enjoy and receive eternal life. Because he has gone into the presence of the

Father, we have the hope that we will go to be with him where he is. We enjoy the blessings of his authority. But all of that, all of that pales in comparison with this. Because Christ the King has conquered and has all authority, guess what? We get to enjoy Christ himself. We get to know and enjoy and delight in the resurrected King Jesus. And we're called to do that right now. This is, this is the first task, if you can even call it that. This is the first task of every disciple of Christ. It's not to go and do something for God. It's to delight yourself in the Lord. Know that he will give you the desires of your heart. So ask yourself, Christian, this morning, do you enjoy his authority? Are you rejoicing in the reign of Christ over your life? Do you rejoice in the fact that he has conquered in your place, that he lives and reigns in resurrection? Are you enjoying him this morning? And one sign that you enjoy him is that you want to spend time with him. I wonder what that'll look like for you this year.

[16 : 13] What steps do you need to take this year? I mean, here together as a family, we gather to enjoy him and to worship him, but also individually on your own. What will that look like for you? Your heart will desire more of what your heart delights in. Delight yourself in the Lord. Not only this, when you enjoy something, you want to share it with others, don't you? You want to bring other people into that joy. You want to talk about it. And so second, second, Jesus says that we are called to evangelize.

Look there again to our text. 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. The blessings and the victory of what Christ has accomplished are to be enjoyed and they are to be shared. The task of every church and every individual Christian, out of our delight in the Lord, is to go and make disciples of all nations. And of course, when we hear this, our first thought ought to be towards missions. You realize there are about 8 billion people living on planet earth as of today here in 2025. 8 billion people living on planet earth.

Did you know 40 to 42 percent live in what we call an unreached people group? Can you believe that? 40 to 42 percent of the world population belongs to what we call an unreached people group? That's 3.2 billion people who have little to no access to the gospel. They don't know the authority of Christ.

They don't know that he has conquered the grave. They don't know who to trust to have their sins forgiven. They don't know the blessing of knowing him. They can't enjoy him because they've never heard of him.

And apart from hearing the gospel and apart from believing the gospel by faith, I won't sugarcoat it for you, church. They will die in their sins and they will go to hell. Does your heart ache when you hear that?

[18 : 49] Do we care? The Lord has commanded us to go. And of course, not every Christian is going to be called to pack up and to go overseas and to be a missionary. But listen, whether we stay or whether we go, we are all called to be a part of fulfilling and obeying the Great Commission. Do we believe that?

Some Christians may be called to pack up and to go share the gospel in a difficult and largely unreached place. But all Christians, all Christians are called to share the gospel and make disciples wherever it is that the Lord has placed them.

And we need to understand this, church, this command, go and make disciples. It doesn't just apply to the missionaries and it doesn't just apply to the apostles.

This is a command from Jesus to me and from Jesus to you to be obeyed. Hudson Taylor, he says, the Great Commission is not an option to be considered.

It is a command to be obeyed. And the primary way we plan to get the gospel out to the lost around us, you know what it is? Here's our strategy for reaching the lost around us. You want to hear it?

[20 : 13] It's for each and every one of you, each and every one of us to engage in personal evangelism right where we are. J.D. Greer, he says this, Without the mission, a church is not a church.

It's just a group of disobedient Christians hanging out. Does that sting a little bit? The church is a movement before it is an institution.

And the number one characteristic of a movement is movement. If something is not moving, it can't be called a movement. And people who are not moving are not part of the movement, even if they are members of the institution.

Are we moving towards the lost around us? Are you moving towards the lost around you?

God has placed you in the midst of lostness. I know you see it. Are you moving towards it with the good news of Christ? Jesus commands you to be an evangelistic Christian.

[21 : 34] This is the mission King Jesus has given us. You are called to be an evangelist. And so how will we do it? When Jesus called his disciples, he gave them a new identity and a new purpose.

He gave them a new mission. You remember what it was? He said, from now on, you're no longer fishing for fish. What did he say? From now on, you're going to be fishing for men. I like to fish.

I'm not great at fishing. I enjoy it. I feel like I'm learning a little bit. I'm trying to get better. But three things I think are pretty obvious. Even I can understand it. Okay? To catch fish, number one, you have to go where the fish are.

You will not catch fish sitting in your living room, will you? There's no fish there. You won't catch fish if you're just sitting at home. You have to actually get up, get in a car, drive to where the fish are, seek them out.

And to evangelize a non-believer, most likely they're not pouring into your living room. You actually have to go be around non-believers.

[22 : 38] And when you go, number two, don't forget the bait. You must take bait with you. Be prepared to give them something that will draw them in.

Go with bait ready. Pave the way for spiritual conversation. Now, your goal is to get to the gospel. Your prayer is that you would be able to have a gospel conversation.

But that doesn't usually happen right away. At least not with me. So, just have a normal conversation as a Christian who loves them. Don't be weird.

That's maybe another step we should add here. Just don't be weird, Christian. Have a normal conversation as someone whose identity is in Christ who loves your lost friend.

Loves your lost neighbor. It might sound something like this. How was your weekend? Well, mine was great. How was yours? Oh, mine was great. I went to church. Let me tell you what we learned.

[23 : 42] It was excellent. The pastor preached from this text. Here's what I'm learning. That's not... This is normal. How's your day going? Well, I'm just... I've been thinking about this truth that I read from the Gospel of Matthew.

Can I share it with you? How's your day going? Actually, not so great. I'm really struggling with this, but I'm praying through it. Actually, is there anything I could pray for you for? These are just normal conversations.

This is bait to draw someone into a spiritual conversation. But number three, number three, third. You have to be ready to actually pull the fish in when it bites.

Don't just be content to scatter the bait and go back home. You have to actually, when a fish bites, you don't just wait around and watch it. What do you do? You reel it in. You catch the fish. All of these things, as good as they are, they aren't the Gospel.

You need to be ready to share the Gospel. That's what evangelism is. Sharing.

[24 : 48] Speaking the good news of the Gospel. And so what's that? What's the Gospel? God, man, Christ, response. Is this familiar to you? We sum it up with these four parts.

God, man, Christ, response. I'll give it to you in about 30 seconds. It's very simple. There is a God who created all things, rules over all things, who created you, to whom all of us are accountable.

Mankind blew it. We have all sinned against this holy God. You're not perfect. I'm not perfect. We all recognize this. This is common knowledge. Nobody is perfect.

But the bad news is God demands perfection. And apart from perfection, you cannot be with this holy God. So third, the good news of the Gospel is God has sent His Son to save sinners.

And He's lived perfectly in our place. And He's died as a sacrifice in our place. And He's risen from the grave. History can show you this. This is real, historical, actual information.

[25 : 51] He's risen from the grave. And He stands to forgive even the worst of sinners. If you would repent and put your faith in Him. Would you like to put your faith in Christ?

Would you repent of your sin and trust in Him? You too will be born again and have eternal life. This is the Gospel. This is what we hold out to our friends and our neighbors and our family members.

This is the only hope that they will be saved. Church, I want to see us reach the lost this year. The only way that it's going to happen.

Here's our big strategy. Yes, we'll preach the Gospel here. When we gather every single week, you'll hear it. We'll preach it from every single text in Genesis or in Matthew.

It doesn't matter. Every single time we gather, we will hear the Gospel. But also, we will go. We will live as commissioned Christians.

[26 : 52] We will live with the good news of Jesus quick off of our lips. We will go praying and seeking opportunities for the Lord to save others.

We will desire to see the Lord save the lost. We will be evangelists. We will be fishers of men.

But then lastly, third, what do we do next? Because the journey doesn't stop at conversion. That's just the starting point. That's the starting line.

We are not just after converts. We are called to make disciples. So third, Jesus says we are called to equip the saints.

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.

[27 : 56] Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Do you notice a progression here?

Do you see the progression that Jesus lays out for us? We are called to go and to share the Gospel. And when someone, by the grace of God, hears the Gospel and believes and puts their faith in Christ, we praise God.

But that's not the end of our responsibility towards them, isn't it? Now we're called to bring them into the church. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

You know what baptism is? Baptism is a marking off of a new believer out of the world and into the believing community of the church.

It's saying that this individual has died with Christ and is now raised to walk in newness of life as a new creation. And the church, when they baptize somebody, we're saying, we affirm your profession of faith.

[29 : 03] We see the evidence of your regeneration. We hear you saying, I believe in Christ. And we now commit to bring you into this believing community and walk alongside you as a brother or sister.

As members of the body. We're called to evangelize them, bring them in, baptize them. And then we are called to teach them. Can I just say something very obvious here, church?

New believers need to be taught. New Christians, they need to be instructed and taught. You realize none of this comes naturally, right?

We have to be taught. A new believer does not know naturally how to study their Bible, do they? A new believer doesn't know how to pray. You know, Jesus' disciples asked them, asked him, Lord, teach us how to pray.

And new believers don't know naturally how to fight temptation or how to honor the Lord at work or how to be a godly husband or a godly father, a godly mother, a godly wife, a godly worker, a godly citizen.

[30 : 13] How to honor the Lord in all that you do, whether you eat or drink or whatsoever you do. They don't know anything about the attributes of God or the historical proofs of the resurrection or Christian ethics or Christian worldview.

They don't know any of this. And so how in the world are they supposed to grow? They must be taught. They must be fed.

And not just information only. They must be taught to observe all that Christ has commanded. They must be taught to obey.

How do I love my brother? How do I navigate a conflict, a disagreement with a brother or sister in Christ? How do I share my faith? This doesn't just happen naturally.

We all must be taught. And it's the church's job to teach. A good parent. A good parent doesn't consider their job done when their child is born.

[31 : 13] They don't just leave them on their own to figure out how to eat or how to get dressed or how to walk or talk. They don't just bring them into the world and then set them off on their own and say, Well, my job is done here.

If they do that, they're not good parents, are they? But how many stories have I heard of people coming to faith in a church or through a ministry?

And it was obvious and real for them. They know for the first time. They truly believe the gospel. They know, yes, I am forgiven. Yes, I am a Christian now.

I am a child of God. There's new life there. But then the ministry or the church just kind of goes on. They think that their job is done now.

They've brought the child into the world. And now that new believer is left on their own. They just don't know what to do. Church, we don't just want to bring new baby Christians into the world.

[32 : 17] We want to see them raised up to maturity. I found myself praying this prayer often, especially on Sunday mornings.

Before we gather, I'll pray something like, Lord, would you bring non-believers to faith in Christ and bring believers to maturity in Christ this morning?

You could join me in praying that this year. Lord, would you bring non-believers to faith and would you bring believers to maturity? That's what we're called to do, church. Listen to this image from Ephesians chapter 4.

It says, He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

That's the standard. Have you hit it yet? Have you matured completely yet to the measure and stature of the fullness of Christ? So that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine or by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

[33 : 42] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped.

When each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Christian, are you growing?

Are you chasing after maturity in Christ? Has your walk with the Lord stalled?

Do you feel like you've hit a wall? Are you... You don't know that next step to take. You don't know what it means to walk with the Lord. You're struggling to pray. You don't know how to study your Bible. You don't know how to share your faith.

We are called to grow up together. Look around you and ask yourself, who here can help me grow and who can I help grow up in Christ this year?

[34 : 54] Christ Jesus has defined the mission of the church. It isn't optional, but He's promised us He has all authority. Church, this mission will be accomplished.

And He's promised us His presence. He will be with us even to the end of the age. And so here's what I want each of you to do this morning as we close.

I want you to commit with me right now to pray these three prayers this year. Starting today. Would you pray these three prayers with me throughout 2025?

For our church, for yourself. These three prayers. Number one, Lord, Lord, would you be the greatest joy of my life? Lord, would you help me?

Would you shape my heart? Would you change my desires so that I enjoy you and that I love you and that I delight in you as my greatest treasure of my life? And it may be for you that that's the first time you've ever prayed anything like that.

[35 : 52] Lord, change my heart so that I truly enjoy you and love you with all my heart. It's number one. Number two, Lord, use me to bring non-believers around me to faith in Christ this year.

Lord, I'm not even sure how that's possible. I'm scared to do it. I don't know the right words to say, but God, I know I'm called to be an evangelist.

And so would you use me to see others around me come to faith? Would you open up my eyes to see the opportunities that are already there around me and in my normal rhythms and routines, the people that I come into contact with at work or in my neighborhood or at the ball field or within my family, but also, God, help me to go seek them out wherever you would have me go.

Make me an evangelist this year. Third, Lord, help me to grow and help me to help others to grow around me.

I don't want to be stagnant in my walk with you. I don't want my brothers or sisters around me to be stagnant in their walk with you. We want to grow up in maturity and Christ-likeness this year.

[37 : 18] And so, God, would you simply show me that next step that you would have me take? I wonder what that is for you. Each one of us, wherever it is we're in our walk with the Lord, each and every one of us has a next step to take.

I mean, maybe that next step for you is that first step of truly repenting of your sin and trusting in Christ Jesus as your Savior. If that's you, you take that step right now.

Call upon the name of the Lord and you too will be saved. For the believers in the room, at every stage, we all still have a step to take towards maturity, do we not? These Bible studies we've discussed this morning with the men's and the women's ministry, excellent opportunities for you to take up and grow.

And maybe that's looking around and picking somebody else in this church and coming to them and asking them, friend, would you just commit to pray with me this year? Can we set aside a time to meet together and read a book of the Bible together?

Maybe a good Christian book together. I just need encouragement. Would you commit to call me and encourage me? Would you help me to grow? And maybe you can be that for someone else in the church this morning.

[38 : 34] Each and every one of us has a step to take towards Christ-likeness this year. I ask you, friend, would you pray, pray, pray, pray and ask the Lord, would you show me what that is?

Christ, Jesus, has defined the mission of this church. 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. Surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Let's pray. Jesus, I thank you that you have not left the mission up to our own interpretation because surely we would be about something else.

We would make this thing about ourselves. We would want to grow our own kingdom. We would be internally focused.

[39 : 48] We would be fixated on numbers and finances and worldly success. But God, you have spoken clearly that you want us to be about magnifying the glory of your name in the gospel of Jesus Christ as we enjoy you, as we evangelize others, as we equip the saints so that we grow up into Christlikeness for your glory.

Lord, we pray. Would you do that amongst us this year? God, would you make us a worshiping community that truly loves you and enjoys you?

Father, would you bring the lost to faith this year through our proclamation of the gospel? God, would you would we see baptisms this year that are the fruit of personal evangelism of our members?

God, would you show us how to grow in Christ this year? We want to honor you and we want to magnify your glory. So we pray, Father, would you do it?

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.