

The Great Commission

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[0 : 00] chapter 28, and we'll just read verses 16 to 20, but putting it in context, it's following the resurrection.

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, as they were instructed by the Lord, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age. Amen. I'm going to look for help from the Lord to bring a challenge.

[1 : 19] It's good to know that you've been doing some outreach. Well, this is our motivation. That's from the Lord. I'm going to sing one. One of them simply means the gospel of John tells the crowds and tells individuals, it was my Father who sent me.

I was sent into the world. And the word Messiah means just that. But then in John 17 and verse 18, we read these words, as he prays to the Father, as you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

Into the highways, into the byways, into the streets, to the poor, to the crippled, to the lame, to the blind. It's a comprehensive mission. And Mark chapter 16 sort of re-echos the, if I can find it quickly, the Great Commission, as we call it, Matthew 16, 15, Jesus said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. But whoever does not believe will be condemned. The Great Commission is Christ's mandate to his followers to evangelize the world.

Every nation, every nook and cranny where people are to be found. And it's a mandate echoed in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, his second letter, where we read that God has committed to us an urgent message.

[3 : 24] And it's a message of reconciliation to convey to the world. Because the world, I think as we said recently in one of our sermons, a world so alienated from God because of sin, it needs to be reconciled to God.

Jesus alone made that reconciliation possible because he's the one mediator between God and man.

And the gospel message, again in Paul's letter, 2 Corinthians 5, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.

Such was God's grace. So we call it the gospel of God's grace. His great plan is clearly stated in John chapter 3 and verse 17.

Christ was sent. You see, Christ did not come into the world in order to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

[4 : 36] And salvation is found by putting one's trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he completed the finished work of atonement, making reconciliation possible.

And each person so reconciled by God's grace is in turn to pass on that message, the message of reconciliation reconciliation to others.

In his family, amongst his friends, amongst his schoolmates, we are God's ambassadors from that moment in the world. As though God, Paul says, were making his appeal through us, we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

And so are people added to the church. The Bible teaches that the true church is bound for heaven.

We're on our way to heaven. Paul, when he was writing for the Ephesians, said, we've been saved by grace, God raised us up with Christ and seated us in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus in order that in the coming ages God might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus to show us to the universe.

[6 : 11] That's how important it is to God. And that's our destiny. The hymn writer says, forever with the Lord, amen, so let it be.

Though for an allotted time, we're not in heaven, we're bound for heaven, for an allotted time we live on earth.

But we are citizens of heaven, even now. The Bible says so. We are citizens of heaven. To the church again in Ephesus, he says, you are fellow citizens with God's people.

Not you will be, but you are if you're a Christian. Colossians 3, your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Philippians 3, 20, our citizenship is in heaven. That was said to the church at Philippi. Philippi was very much a Roman colony.

[7 : 14] There was a lot of Roman things in Philippi. They were governed from Rome, but they were a colony. And the church at Philippi, Paul described as a colony of heaven.

They were citizens of heaven, but living in Philippi. And Hebrews 12, of course, says Christian believers all have access with boldness to come to God now.

You, he says to the believers on earth, you have already come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven, to the spirits of righteous people made perfect.

While in this world we do not have an enduring city, we seek the city that is to come above, the heavenly Jerusalem, of course.

And the church so reconciled to God becomes a witnessing community in a dark world. And we're involved to bring the reconciling grace of Christ to others.

[8 : 28] The hearers and the believers of the gospel, and every day some are added to that, the hearers and the believers of the gospel soon are to become the proclaimers of the gospel.

God leaves each one of us in the world obviously for varying lengths of time. I didn't think I'd live to 77 but that's where I am.

I think of Jim Elliot who died when he was 28 attempting to reach the gospel. We live for differing periods of time but why does he do that?

Why does he leave us in the world and not take us to heaven where we belong? Well the answer is because we have a mission to fulfill and that's the big reason to put why am I here?

Put that at the top of your life. Why has he left me on earth? To fulfill a mission to reach out to those whom the Bible describes as Graeimer said who are lost spiritually and they're not bound for heaven because there's an alternative to heaven to win to Christ is our goal those who are dead in sin and need to be given new life.

[9 : 50] Now by Galilee the first disciples called Peter and Andrew followed by James and John were fishermen. Jesus announced what he intended for them what he intended for them to do.

eventually and it was related to their profession. This is what he said as my disciples I will send you to fish for people.

Peter and Andrew left their nets and at once followed him. James and John were in a boat preparing their nets. Jesus called them they left their boat and their father immediately and followed him.

They too all four of them were to become fishers of people. So Jesus calls commissions qualifies equips and authorizes them for this important work.

He it is who will give success so that the catch is as good as possible as great as possible as they fish for human souls.

[11 : 07] I think it was last time I was here I was speaking on I think so the conversation that the Lord had with Peter on the beach when he prepared a barbecue for them and they came out of the water and they had been fishing and caught nothing.

He says well catch the net on the other side and you'll catch a lot. And they caught so many the boat couldn't contain them. That's a parable of when we're in partnership with God how many can be led to him.

If we have time from Matthew 28 16 to 20 I want to draw four elements for Jesus followers required for Jesus followers to accomplish this mission that I'm describing.

First principle availability the disciples first act of obedience after the resurrection was to go to the mountain that Jesus had designated in Galilee leaving all their other involvements whatever they were they were to follow his commands disentangle themselves from all other affairs of life in order to give themselves exclusively to him.

they rearranged their priorities therefore to go where he wanted them to go to be where he wanted them to be. Matthew 26 32 we read Jesus' words after I have risen from the dead I will go ahead of you into Galilee there you will see me.

[12 : 49] And that's just confirmed in Matthew 28 that was the rendezvous that Jesus had decided on. There Jesus would speak more to them of the work they were to do when freed from lesser worldly priorities.

You remember throughout the gospel the Lord uses the harvest metaphor quite regularly as he spoke of this great work.

Matthew chapter 9 verse 37 Jesus spoke of a plentiful harvest ripe to be gathered in requiring laborers who were not at all plentiful but few.

The harvest was plentiful the problem was the laborers were few. So he is the Lord of the harvest he says pray that the Lord of the harvest send out workers into his harvest field.

There's to be no delay no need to wait. He says in John 4 35 see the harvest field open your eyes and look at the fields and they're already ripe for harvest.

[14 : 05] No time to lose. The time is now problem therefore problem all who could be so laboring were were not available to labor.

Talented reapers they may have been but they weren't available. They've yet to respond as did Isaiah following his conversion in Isaiah chapter 6 with the words here am I Lord you need someone here am I send me send me you can count on me Lord I will go for you look no further never mind what others are doing I'll go for you Jesus spoke of people called but who have other preoccupations and so make their excuses so it's axiomatic that if we are to share in this great outreach to the world for Christ we must be available available to send ready as willingly as Isaiah you can't go your own way and go God's way you've got to make a choice Jesus said no man can serve two masters you can't serve yourself and God you can't serve money and God availability is a trait of a disciple of

Christ the first disciples left other things to follow him they left their nets their job their boat their home their parents indeed Jesus said to Peter said to Jesus in Matthew 19 we've left everything to follow you which accords with what Jesus said in Luke chapter 14 verse 33 unless you do give up everything you have you cannot be my disciple don't let that verse get lost on you if you don't give up everything you have you cannot be my disciple the great charge God has against each of us is we have turned each one to our own way turned everyone to our own way in fact Moses had the same problem in the Old Testament Deuteronomy chapter 29 to Israel he says the person who when he hears the word of God blesses himself and thinks

I will be safe even though I persist in going my own way the Lord will not be willing to forgive him Jesus gave the great commission to 11 apostles and one commentator suggested there were more than the 11 apostles there there were 500 on one occasion who saw the Lord Jesus after the resurrection and he concludes that they could well have been there but the great commission is for all true believers for all who were present all who were within sound of his voice and that same commission goes not only to all that crowd that may have been there but to every person who got converted even on the day of Pentecost and every generation since is to become part of this great commission now as you sit there and as

I stand here we each possess various gifts from God special to us I can't do what you do maybe maybe you can't do what I do we're as gifted as God wanted us to be it's a gift a gift is a gift we didn't deserve any gifts but God gave us gifts we have time and we have gifts from God to offer back to him the old Saint Francis Saviour gave advice to his young monks yeah they were monks and there was the light that they had he advised them give up your small ambitions give up your small ambitions availability to what God wants you to do second thing is adoration second element remember Mary sister of Martha enjoyed sitting at the Lord's feet at every opportunity and when they saw

[18 : 44] Jesus in Matthew 28 the verses we read when they saw Jesus they worshipped him in some way well it was the right thing to do Jesus is to be worshipped God saved us to be worshippers the whole duty of man the great shorter catechism says the whole duty of man is to worship God and enjoy him forever perhaps some fell down and worshipped him on the spot in their own way but we read some doubted some doubted in other words they didn't all worship they were there but they didn't all worship doubts hinder the worship some one has become known as doubting Thomas don't know why my mother called me Thomas whether she had that in mind or not I don't know yet we must be careful not to misjudge Thomas in John chapter 11 he wasn't a coward he wasn't a doubter too much because in

John chapter 11 he openly declared his willingness to suffer and die with Jesus he said to the rest of the disciples let's go and that we may die with him Thomas eventually did die for Christ in the process of fulfilling the great commission he went to India through Thomas we learn about Jesus patience and compassion with those who do have trouble with doubts John 20 24 this doubter became a worshipper he adored Christ when he saw the nail prints when he saw the evidence of the fact that he was alive he bowed before him not saying anything but my Lord and my God he became a worshipper to the believer that's important my Lord and my God adoration in the 6th century St.

Gregory wrote by the doubting of Thomas we are more confirmed in our belief than by the faith of the other apostles because we see so much the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ he can deal with honest doubts so there may be some here this morning and what's holding you back is doubts well Jesus came and spoke to doubters as a result of which there was a change in them and the doubters became worshippers with their doubts removed their faith grew to full assurance but it's worth noting that they were not rejected because of their doubts their weak faith became solid faith not credulity oh we're plagued these days by easy believism you've heard of it as the term suggests it's used when convictions don't go very deep you want to believe on Jesus yes I believe in Jesus it's not quite like that there are those who believe rather too easily credulous shallow superficial and often temporary there are others who reason their faith through give their minds and their hearts to the worship of the Lord you see there are people who believe anything without much argument or much discernment or much depth

Jesus' disciples held to what they discern to be true I like something that the pastor of Charlotte Chapa said the other week he's quoting C.S.

Lewis he said if Christianity is not true forget about it just don't give it any further consideration if it's not true forget it if it is true it's got to be everything what it cannot be is moderately significant it's either all or nothing there are people who I say believe all too easily but there we are they were available to him they worshipped him now thirdly what they gave their allegiance to him Jesus merits their allegiance their obedience and their allegiance was given to one who has the highest authority there is no higher authority in the universe than Jesus

[23 : 34] Christ verse 18 all authority Hebrews chapter 1 says God made the universe through this one the magnificent words of the great commission were spoken by someone who exercises authority over the entire universe the absolute ruler of heaven and earth revelation 12 now you now have come salvation power the kingdom of our God and the authority of his messiah his servants triumphed over the devil by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony and of his discipline we read they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death every morning my wife and I read a devotional book written by Patrick Sukdeo for every day of the year you read a story of a martyr someone who's given their life for

Christ the great company of which we read here in revelation chapter 12 they did not live their lives so much as to shrink from death and there are so many of them and more now in 2016 than ever there has been all but one of the eleven disciples died a martyr's death Paul 2 the disciples calling is to render allegiance unconditional allegiance to his sovereign submit to his authority and accept his will his authority is our confidence it was he who authorized the disciples to go the book of Acts records how the apostles obedient to the great commission set about their tasks so obediently so untiringly so faithfully so persistently they turned the world upside down this is what we read in Ephesians 1 God raised Christ from the dead seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms far above all rule authority power dominion and every name that is named that is named that is invoked not only in this present age but also in the age to come God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything in the church which is his body Jesus Christ is Lord

of all to Peter one Christ's divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness making disciples out of every nation is a massive task but the disciples heard

Jesus say I will build my church nothing is more certain and the gates of hell will not overcome it it's a sure thing and there will be representatives in heaven around the throne from every tribe from every people from every tongue and from every nation the old testament prophesied he was given authority glory sovereign power all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him his dominion is everlasting and will not pass away his kingdom will never be destroyed are you part of that kingdom he's lord of heaven and earth his message is for every nation in the world and sovereignty such as he has merits our loyalty and submission and allegiance because he says all is mine

I'm I'm the boss go therefore fear not for I have sent you now that's a command with an encouragement two words I used folks I don't know where you stand this morning spiritually whether you think what I'm saying is nonsense it could be two words are used with regard to our response to the gospel the first one is believe and that's important but look search more diligently in the New Testament and you'll find another word in connection with the gospel it's obey the gospel obey the gospel the gospel brothers and sisters is not a request do you want to believe yeah believe if you want if you don't bother it's not a request it's a command and if you don't believe in him that's disobedience

[29 : 01] John 8 31 to the Jews who said they believed in Jesus Jesus said if you hold to my teaching you really are my disciples then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free our commission is to make the kind of disciples who will hold to Jesus truth who will follow him immediately and unconditionally Acts 14 21 they preached the gospel in Derby and won a large number of converts it's not the word they preached the gospel in Derby and won a large number of disciples they strengthened the disciples encouraging them to remain true to the faith refusing to go where he commands is disobedience those who are personally obedient are then to teach others the importance of obedience disciples

I hear a lot at the chapel at the moment disciples making disciples well that's it disciples make disciples incidentally I could interpolate at this point in the New Testament and even in the Great Commission brief references made to an immediate test of obedience followed by your profession of faith what shall we do when they heard the gospel from Peter what did Peter say repent and be baptized give public testimony make an unashamed confession baptize when you go into the world preach the gospel to every creature teaching them all things I have commanded you baptize them in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit my son my oldest son and his wife are Wycliffe Bible translators and the goal of

Wycliffe its vision is to have begun translating the Bible into every language in the world by the year 2025 only nine years away when the gospel has preached has reached every nation then shall the end come Jesus said the task completed well in our is our persuasion based upon open confession with the man the conviction that what we are doing is really true to value the word of God the message that he's given us in the Bible I've got far too much to say so I'm going to try and cut it briefly and move on to the final thing with regard to the great commission

Jesus said as you go I'm with you always right until the end of the age remember he came into the world and it was announced that his name was Emmanuel which means God with us that title is his forever he is God with us as you go I'm with you to the very end of the age I'm God with you for a task so great we need the presence of the one who said I will build my church so finally and briefly knowing that without him we can do nothing I'm going to talk about ability for a couple of minutes ability ability the task is great but is it too great God knew what they needed these disciples and he promised him in Acts chapter 1 verse 8 you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you the one who has all power in heaven and earth is able to do this endure us with power for what reason was the promised enduring of power given not to do fancy things that impress people to be careful what I'm saying

God endured the Lord Jesus with power for the preaching of the gospel for the teaching of his word by what power by which power they would be made effective in witnessing in a little while we're going to sing our closing hymn and I must say I appreciate it whoever chooses the hymns does a wonderful job with regard to the theme of the preacher at least I say that from my personal point of view we rest on thee we rest on thee our shield and our defender we go not forth alone against the

for he's always Emmanuel no one else could ever say what he said all authority is mine therefore go these were unlettered fishermen uneducated without worldly influence and they set out to win the world for Christ serving him who had all power for the evangelization of the world and made available to us and there will not be one day when he will not be with us as we face the task unfinished

[35 : 05] Paul said to the Ephesians there is incomparably great power for us who believe that power is the same as the mighty strength God exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms far above all rule and all authority well that's it folks the purpose of the church has not changed in 2000 years don't let's forget what the purpose of the church on earth is the church militant the messages the message that we have that we believe that we value is for the person across the landing in the flat for the person next door for the folks across the street and for everyone across the oceans so availability adoration allegiance allegiance and ability well let's sing that hymn shall we we rest on thee our shield and our defenders our our Jungkook pop the years go ■■■■ratorimmeoc ob Father I comme var■■■ stato Flag π α d hardcore mar colum assurance I ■■■■■■ ve gram lam barowa