

# The Great Commission

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Preacher: Nick C.

[ 0 : 00 ] This morning we are going to be talking about the Great Commission together.

! I know this is a passage that probably all of us are familiar with. It's one of those passages that are near and dear to our hearts. And I'm sure many of you, you can look back and think, when did you first hear about the Great Commission?

I wouldn't be surprised if it was a VBS way back in the day, you know? And all these years later, still we're talking about it, because still it should define how we live as followers of Jesus.

Now, there are two reasons why the Great Commission really stands out to me in my mind. The first is that I was called by the Lord to mission when I was in college.

And I've now spent more than five years of my life in other countries for the cause of global mission. So clearly it's really important to me. The second is that the Great Commission was part of one of my least impressive missionary stories ever.

[ 1 : 13 ] I had a friend who was kind of like a missions mentor. He was just really, really effective. And because of that, other missionaries would reach out to him and say, hey, would you come and train us?

So I live in Bosnia. My friend lives there as well. And this group of struggling missionaries calls him and says, look, we're just, we're fighting as a team.

We can't get any traction with the local community. Would you come and teach us? So my friend says, hey, I want you to come with me. I'm like, okay. Now, I've been on the field for like a year.

So I'm an experienced veteran at this point. And so we go to this missions team. And I'm just looking at these people. And I'm like, just pathetic. Just sad. No, not quite that harsh.

But we sit down. And my friend starts teaching. And he's like, guys, why are we here? You know, and all these answers. And then he goes, Nick, tell us the Great Commission.

[ 2 : 11 ] And I said something to the effect of, go into all the disciples of the nations for authority.

And then my friend said something to the effect of, that's okay, Nick. We're glad you're here. You know? And then we just moved on. And I just remember thinking, I had been there for a year.

And I couldn't even quote this. And that has always stuck in my memory. So now that you've heard me misquote it, would you please rise with me as we read it together?

This is Matthew 28, verses 16 to 20. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

And when they saw him, they worshipped him. But some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

[ 3 : 18 ] And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Would you pray with me? Father, we are here for you. God, we ask that you would speak through your word today.

God, I pray that you would give me the words to say that your people need to hear. And Father, I pray that my words would fall on hearts that are soft, hearts that desire to be changed, hearts that desire to obey.

God, I ask this for everyone in this room, but I ask it especially for myself. God, in all things, we want to honor and glorify you. We thank you for Jesus, our Lord. We thank you for who he is and what he has done for us.

And we thank you for your Holy Spirit. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. You may be seated.

Amen. Now, as we begin, so again, this is a familiar passage.

But brothers and sisters, this is a rich passage, a deep passage. We cannot possibly touch on everything today. There's just no way. We don't have time. But our outline today, we're going to talk

about the context of the Great Commission, the command that Jesus gives us, and the companion who will go with us.

[ 4 : 32 ] Now, we'll have 10 sub points. I know you can see them there in your notes. And I hope to have application throughout the sermon for us. Now, you'll also notice that this outline has three letter C's in it.

And I want to tell you about this. This is significant. This reflects a change for me. Because in Bible college, all these young preacher boys would get up and use alliteration. And it just got out of hand. And it would be a sermon called, Eight Points on Sanctification, all starting with the letter Q. It was ridiculous. And I looked at that, and I said, I will never do that.

No alliteration for me. And tried as I might, I just kept coming up with words that started with C. So here we are, the mighty have fallen, and we have an outline that starts with C.

So let's look at the text, starting in verses 16 and 17, the context of the Great Commission. I'll read those again for us. Now, the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

[ 5 : 36 ] And when they saw him, they worshipped him. But some doubted. Now, the first sub-point is the word location. Let's notice the location of the Great Commission.

It's on top of a mountain. Now, Jesus specifically called his disciples to this point. He could have called for them to go anywhere. He could have done this in the temple. He could have done this anywhere he wanted.

And he specifically chose to do so on a mountain. Now, why is this significant? I think we need to think about the rest of Scripture. We need to think about where mountains appear in the Scripture. Because oftentimes, God chooses to interact with his people on the slopes of mountains. Think, for example, with me. Where did Abraham go to sacrifice his son Isaac?

He went up on a mountain. It's Mount Moriah, actually. And where did Moses spend 40 days with the Lord? Praying and fasting. He's on top of Mount Sinai.

[ 6 : 39 ] Where's Jerusalem located? It's Mount Zion. Where did the prophet Elijah face the prophets of Baal? It's Mount Carmel.

It's interesting, isn't it? But how about our Lord? For example, his most famous sermon. Where was it preached? It's the Sermon on the Mount.

Where did Jesus feed the 5,000? It's on the side of a mountain. Where was Christ transfigured? It specifically says, on a mountain.

And where did Jesus spend the last night of his life in prayer before the crucifixion? I hear the protest in the back. You'll say the Garden of Gethsemane. It's on the Mount of Olives.

Jesus spent the last night of his life on a mountain. And so when we see a mountain appearing in scripture, there's really a good chance that something significant is about to happen.

[ 7 : 39 ] And that is the case here. Jesus is calling his people to him, and he'll speak to them from a mountainside. But we also, besides just the location of the Great Commission, the setting, we see our next point, which is human weakness.

Look at the text with me again. You'll see it says that some doubted. Now, who's here? Who's standing here? We know that it is at least the 11 remaining disciples who are going to start out disciples here, but they're going to leave here apostles.

We don't know if there are other people in the crowd. There's a good chance that there are. The scholars are divided on this point. The text doesn't really seem to make it clear. What is clear, however, is that everyone who's standing on this mountainside is looking at the resurrected Christ. They have seen his miracles. They have heard his teaching. They've watched him cast out demons and call people up from the dead. And now he stands in front of them with the wounds of his crucifixion.

He is resurrected. And still, some of them doubt. Just think about that. How incredible is that? They're looking at the resurrected Christ.

[ 8 : 56 ] And still, they struggle to believe. But what does Jesus do? Do we see that Jesus separates the doubters from the crowd?

Does Jesus only give his commission to those who are full of faith? No. He gives his commission to all of them. Even to those who have weak faith.

So we see that Jesus is speaking to all of his disciples. Even to those who doubt. And he's commissioning all of them. And guys, I don't know about you. But I think that this should be an

encouragement to you and to me.

Because I don't know about you. But I look at my own faith. And so often it's weaker than it should be. I look at my own walk. And I wonder, just, this is where I am in the Christian faith?

When I was this age, I thought I would be so much better when I was looking ahead ten years ago. And still, I struggle with the same sins. The same weaknesses. The same failures. But we look at this and we see that Jesus is going to commission all of these people.

[10:01] He's going to send all of them out for the sake of his kingdom. Jesus will not say that only the best are fit for service in this kingdom. Because the spread of this kingdom hinges not on the quality of its servants.

It hinges on the quality of its king. Now, there's two lessons for us here. Now, the first is that we shouldn't be that person who looks at Scripture and thinks, Man, if I'd been able to live back then and actually seen these things, it would have been so much easier for me to believe.

If I had walked around in the wilderness with the Israelites, I just would have been grateful and happy as a clam the whole time. No, you would not have. These people are looking at the resurrected Lord and still they struggle to believe.

Their hearts, like ours, are programmed for disbelief and disobedience. We have the pages of Scripture. We do not have some derivative, lesser version of God's revelation.

We have the full revelation of God that we need to know him. If we had been back there looking at Jesus, we would have found it just as difficult to believe as we do sometimes here.

[11:13] We need to pray the prayer that the father of the demon-possessed boy in Mark chapter 9 prayed. He said, I believe. Help my unbelief.

But also, guys, a lesson for us is that if Jesus will send these imperfect, doubting disciples out to build his kingdom, it means that God will use weak and imperfect people like us as well.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

You might look at yourself and say, I am so weak. But God wants to use you in your weakness because in your weakness, he's strong. Now, guys, I love going to art museums.

[12:17] Going to art museums is one of my favorite things to do. And you're like, what's going on here? I was homeschooled, okay, so you have to cut me a little bit of slack. Wherever Katie and I used to travel in Europe, the first thing we would do is go to the local art museum and we saw unbelievable paintings, just incredible things.

I've seen paintings that just move me to tears. I have been just stuck right in the heart by the beauty I've seen. Sometimes even the evil that's on display. Paintings can communicate so much.

But you know what? I've never looked at a masterpiece and said, wow, that painter had great brushes. That painter had fantastic paint.

Whoa! Look at the frame on that. I mean, wow, it's on point. I never focused on the implements that he used. I focused on the masterpiece that the master had created.

Guys, it's the same for us. We're not the best servants that we can be, but we have the absolute best master. And he wants to use us. And I don't know much, but I know that's an encouraging thought.

[13:27] So we've seen the location and we've seen human weakness. But also something I want to mention is the reality of suffering.

We have to remember who the disciples are looking at. They're looking at Jesus, the one who wore the crown of thorns. Their Lord who stands before them has holes in his hands and in his side.

If Jesus suffered in his ministry and he's sending us out to minister, we should assume that suffering is coming our way as well.

But there's no suffering that we will ever endure that Christ has not already endured. He has gone before us. He has already suffered. And indeed, he goes with us as we go out, even if there's suffering ahead for us.

His life, his death, and the marks on his flesh demonstrate that following Christ is going to be hard. But this is the way. Remember as we frame this conversation on going out to the corners of the earth, what Jesus said before he was arrested and killed in John chapter 15.

[ 14 : 42 ] Jesus said, If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.

But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you. A servant is not greater than his master.

If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

Guys, the Great Commission is not going to be easy. I wish that it would be. I wish that we could wear the crowns of conquerors without ever being tested.

I wish that there wouldn't be suffering or pain or loss. But there's going to be. This is the way. But Christ is going to win in the midst of all of that.

[ 15 : 41 ] Now, I got to see proof of this last year with my job. I get to travel to go and meet with persecuted Christians. So I got to go to a country in Asia and I got to meet a lady whose husband had been martyred just two or three days before we met with her.

He was a pastor. And the police came and they killed him in his front yard right in front of his two small children. And we got to sit in a room with this lady who's from a village.

She's uneducated. Her world is profoundly small. And in that moment, her world was shattered. And we sat there and she was crushed by grief.

And we watched her weep because her world had changed. And in an instant, not only was she alone, she's also the breadwinner for these two kids. It was so hard.

And so we said to her, like, sister, they've killed your husband in this village. Do you want us to help get you out of this village and move you somewhere else? And this simple village lady looked at us with tears streaming down her face and said, no.

[ 16 : 50 ] The church meets in my house and if I leave, there's not going to be anybody else there to keep the church open. And I'm sitting with this lady and I realize I'm sitting with a hero, a giant of the faith who had felt real persecution but had progressed through it.

She had won in Christ despite what the persecutors had done to her and to her family. She hadn't lost hope and she hadn't lost her focus on Christ. Guys, we have been called to pick up our cross daily to deny ourselves and to follow Jesus.

This will not be easy, but what I can tell you is that there is a resurrection at the end. We have much to be hopeful about. So, we've seen the context of the Great Commission but now let's actually get to the meat of it.

Let's look at Christ's commands starting in verse 18 and going to 20. I'll read those for us. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Now, firstly, we see that Christ has authority.

[ 18 : 09 ] He doesn't just have authority. Christ has all authority. Now, when Jesus was on earth, He already had authority. We know this because when He spoke, He said that His words would never pass away.

He spoke directly for God. We know that He had authority over spirits because He could cast them out. He had authority over sickness because He could heal people. He had authority even over death because He could raise people up. But in a real sense, Christ has received all authority from His Father when Christ was vindicated after His resurrection.

A passage which helps us understand the reality of Christ's authority is Ephesians chapter 1 verses 18 to 23 read, Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might, that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead 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. Christ is over all other types of authority.

Or a passage perhaps that's more familiar is Philippians 2. 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.

[ 19 : 54 ] And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 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.

Of this passage, Charles Spurgeon said, Christ had suffered, bled, and died. He had now risen from the dead. He was weak. He was despised.

He was forsaken even of His own God. But now, having finished the work which was given Him to do, His Father honors Him. He is about to lift Him to His right hand and gives Him, as the result of His resurrection, all power in heaven and on earth.

So we see that Jesus has all authority. And this is the foundation for the Great Commission.

Because if He doesn't have authority, how can He send us out? But since He has all authority, He can send us out.

and we can go out in sure confidence. And we see that Jesus has all authority in heaven. And guys, this means that Jesus has all authority in the spiritual realm.

[ 21 : 16 ] The devil and his demons are real. And they are real enemies of all of us. But they cannot defeat us. They cannot defeat the kingdom of Christ.

because He has all authority over them. Which means that there is nothing that the enemy can do to you that's not under the authority of your great high priest.

And that's an encouraging thought. I think of many of the stories in the book of Acts. I think of Acts 16 where we see a girl who is possessed by a spirit.

And the scripture says in Acts 16, 18, Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.

And it came out of her that very hour. We see that there is power in the name of Jesus in the spiritual realm. Again, recently, I was in Asia and I met a man who's a believer but his family for generations had been witch doctors.

[ 22 : 22 ] So they consorted with spirits. And then a missionary came to town. So his father put a curse on this missionary and he was certain that this man would be killed.

It had worked before and a week later the missionary came back to town. So he said his father did a second curse, a more powerful one, a more evil one.

and said to his son, we got him. No one can survive that. A week later the missionary just came back to town. So he said his father got with this man that I was with.

They went to a cemetery. They built a shrine and they started this horrible, horrible ceremony to put a curse on this missionary.

and he said right in the midst of it a gust of wind blew and it blew their shrine over and everything disappeared. And he said his father didn't have any words.

[ 23 : 17 ] Didn't know what to say. So he said they went back home that night. The next morning his father got up, got on his motorcycle and drove into town. Went into a church, walked up to the pastor as a witch doctor and said I want you to baptize me.

because he had seen the power of Christ. And I was sitting with this man's son decades later and this man is still serving the Lord as an example of Christ's power in the heavenly realm because Jesus is stronger than the spirits that they served.

And guys this is something we need to keep in mind because what did Jesus say in Matthew 16? He said that he will build his church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I don't think I need to remind you but gates are for defense not offense. We are the church of Jesus Christ. We're not in some spiritual Alamo trying to hold off these hordes of darkness.

We're taking ground. We're on offense. They're on defense. And they're not going to win because we have Christ with us and Christ has commanded us. The one with all authority has told us to go out and make disciples and the very gates of hell cannot resist his church.

[ 24 : 38 ] Let's keep going. Notice also that Christ has all authority over the earth as well. I think a couple of applications for us here.

First it means that Christ has all authority over all governments and all human institutions. And remember Jesus is saying this in the Roman Empire.

Caesar was all powerful. Caesar was worshipped as a god. Caesar commanded 600,000 Roman soldiers. Caesar dominated Europe, parts of Asia, North Africa.

The Mediterranean was called a Roman lake. And all of this was ruled by Caesar. Caesar. And Jesus said, I have all authority even over Caesar.

And guys, this is important for us because I think sometimes we feel it. We feel that our own government is tightening on us just a little bit. It's a little less friendly than I think it used to feel.

[ 25 : 40 ] In other countries all over the world, our brothers and sisters find themselves oppressed all the time. There are rules against Christians. There are rules against churches. There are rules against missionaries.

For example, the country of Brazil. There are whole regions of the country that missionaries are not allowed to enter because the government doesn't want missionaries to change the culture of the native peoples.

They would rather them stay in their own native lifestyle and beliefs than allow them to be exposed to the gospel. Or even this year in Israel, this wasn't passed but it was discussed.

a rule that would mandate jail time for anyone who tried to evangelize a Jewish Israeli and that's because Christian missionaries are being effective in Israel.

So the government even started thinking about ways to try to stop this. Thankfully, it wasn't passed but it means that even Israel is thinking about ways to limit missions. Katie and I lived in Russia and we knew we were breaking multiple Russian laws about evangelism.

[ 26 : 47 ] you can't just walk around and witness to people in Russia. Praise the Lord, we never had issues with it but this was a law and more laws like this are coming. We're Christians.

We want to respect our governments. We want to respect our rulers but Christ has authority over them and his authority supersedes theirs and if they say you can't make disciples but he says that you must then we have to listen to him no matter what consequences come towards us.

But this also means in addition to government that Christ has all authority even over our surrounding culture and we live in a culture that wants us to keep quiet about what we believe.

We live in a culture that wants us to say everybody's religious beliefs are equally valid. This is called pluralism and it's the air that we breathe in the United States in 2023.

Our culture would love for us to be Christians as long as we stay Christians in this room on Sunday mornings and at no other time. But we don't have that luxury because Christ has all authority in heaven and earth and he has sent us out and if we only practice Christianity in this room we can't make disciples.

[ 28 : 06 ] John Stott a famous theologian wrote this. He said the fundamental basis of all Christian missionary enterprise is the universal authority of Jesus Christ in heaven and on earth.

If the authority of Jesus was circumscribed on earth if he were but one of many religious teachers one of many Jewish prophets one of many divine incarnations he would have no mandate we would have no mandate to present him to the nations as the Lord and Savior of the world.

If the authority of Jesus was limited in heaven if he had not decisively overthrown the principalities and powers we might still proclaim him to the nations but we would never be able to turn them from darkness to light.

Only because all authority on earth belongs to Christ dare we go out to all nations. And only because all authority in heaven as well as earth is his have we any hope of success?

Looking past his authority the next word is disciples. Now making disciples is the heart of the great commission. Now what is a disciple?

[ 29 : 21 ] I think there's a lot of ways that you can define it. The definition I'll use today is a disciple is someone who knows loves and obeys Jesus. Now what is a disciple?

In ancient Israel there were traveling teachers who would walk around. These are traveling rabbis. And a rabbi would go and visit a town and he would start teaching. And there are people who would be moved by his teaching and come up to him and say I want to follow you.

And so this teacher would take them on as disciples and they would now stay with their rabbi stay with their master and travel from village to village to village and the disciples would be spending time with their master watching how he interacted with people and then they would be memorizing his teaching.

That way when he died they would carry on the legacy of his ministry because they would literally have his teaching committed to memory. And there was this chain of rabbis and disciples rabbis

and disciples that just went on forever.

And guys we are called to be disciples. This is a relationship of closeness because a disciple was close with his master. They spent countless hours on the road together.

[ 30 : 34 ] We see this in the scripture. Jesus calls his disciples and they're with him for three years and they walk around and they go everywhere together. But it's also a relationship that demands sacrifice.

Because if you're going to follow the teacher and you can't stay where you are you can't hold on to all the things that you value and follow him. You have to say no to something so that you can say yes to your teacher.

And this was just implicit in the disciple relationship. And that's what we're called to do and be.

We're not called just to be converts. We're not called just to pray a prayer one time.

We're called to be disciples. And not only disciples but disciples who make other disciples. Because guys I don't know about you. I don't think we can make something that we're not.

It's just a basic fact of biology. Creatures make what they are. Horses make horses. Lions make lions. And disciples make disciples.

[ 31 : 35 ] But what if we're not disciples? What if we're just shallow converts? What then will we make? We're called to make disciples and in order to do that we must be disciples ourselves.

now I hope that I can encourage you in your walk with the Lord the same way I hope that I can encourage myself because there are so many distractions in my own heart.

It's incredible to me whenever I start to think and pray about spending more time with the Lord or going somewhere to serve Him or meeting with somebody for their spiritual good just an unbelievable number of really good excuses that arise.

I doubt that I'm the only one who feels this way. It's so true and it's just like why is it so easy for me to watch Netflix but it's so hard for me to spend more time with the Lord in the morning?

It's as if there is something resisting us. But guys I want you to remember something that I have to remember. When I look at my own walk as a disciple and I think man I should and could be so much better it's not about me and it's not about you.

[ 32 : 47 ] What did Paul write? He said but faithful is He who has called you and He will bring it to pass. God is working in and through us and we know that His will is our sanctification because Scripture says so.

So even now let's recommit ourselves to go deeper with our Lord and Master. Let us be willing like the disciples of old to say no to some things in life so that we can say yes to Him.

And also guys making disciples means that we have to invest in evangelism. We are commanded by the Lord to make disciples for Him and we cannot do this.

People do not know who He is by our preaching the gospel to them. I know that evangelism is a challenge for many of us. But it's our Christian duty.

We're called to go out and make disciples. But more than duty it's also our Christian privilege. We get to go out and be implements of the Lord calling people lost in darkness to come into His kingdom of light.

[ 34 : 01 ] And through the foolishness of our preaching of the cross God will move. God will save. God will be glorified amongst people who don't know Him.

It's incredible but we know this if we are faithful to preach God will move. Guys I just want to encourage you we should all be doing this. The burden of evangelism is a burden that all of us should help carry but more than a burden it's an opportunity for all of us.

We can participate in the building and expansion of the kingdom of our Lord through being faithful in evangelism. Michael I'm doing this for you brother. Michael Kingston said he wanted me to do a little advertisement for Sunfest volunteers speaking about evangelism.

Guys we're going out next week we're going to have a ton of opportunity to speak with people about the Lord. Every year we do this we get so many good evangelistic opportunities. And Michael said we need more volunteers.

We need more people to sign up. So if you're thinking about evangelism and you're thinking man I just I don't even know where to start. Why don't you start at Sunfest with us next week. We'll go out and we'll do it together.

[ 35 : 13 ] And if you say I don't even know what to say that's okay. We're going to have a training this Tuesday night. We want you to come. We want to give you an opportunity to enter into

evangelism with your brothers and sisters.

So I hope that you'll do that. I hope that you'll take that opportunity. But guys more than just evangelism the call to make disciples also is a call to help people who are already believers go deeper in their faith.

Now when I was I was 23 a friend of mine discipled me. Now he was 10 or 15 years older than me and he could just see I think he could see a ton of holes in my life.

And so he said hey I just want to start meeting with you. And so we just started having coffee. And man he just started asking me questions. And we would open the word together and he would say things like hey I have to go run some errands.

Do you want to come with me? And man I totally wanted to because I got to watch how he interacted with other people. And this relationship was the first time that I had been clearly discipled and it changed my life.

[ 36 : 18 ] And it was so simple. It wasn't anything mystical. It was meeting with somebody regularly opening the scripture and then living life together. So guys I want to ask you have you been discipled for one is a question but two are you investing in discipleship?

Are you investing in a younger person for example in this church? Are you meeting with somebody that you could do spiritual good for? Maybe it's not somebody who's younger than you maybe it's somebody who's your age.

Maybe it's somebody that you know is really struggling. Are you meeting with them? Is there a young couple that could be benefited by seeing your example of Christian marriage? Guys we're supposed to be making disciples.

That means we should be evangelizing but it also means that we should be pouring into each other. We should be striving to help each other go deeper into the faith. This is a part of fulfilling the Great Commission.

Let's keep going. We see that Christ has called us to go to all nations. Guys this is significant. This word for nation it could just mean countries and if it does that means that there's 200 countries roughly and we need to go to all of them and that includes the hard ones.

[ 37 : 34 ] That includes North Korea. That includes Sudan. That includes Yemen. We're called to go to all of these but probably it doesn't just mean countries. It doesn't just mean nations.

It probably means individual people groups which is a group of people that has its own language and culture and if there's 200-ish countries there's at least 17,000 people groups that we know of and of these even to this day 2,000 years after the life and death of our Lord there's at least 3,000 of those people groups that represent 250 million people who have no gospel witness whatsoever. Christ died two millennia ago and still these people have not heard his name. Guys this is why we invest in missions and this is why missions agencies like the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention that we all know and love continually send people out to the margins to the strangest furthest places on earth because that's where these people groups live.

We don't just go to the easiest largest people groups that are the ones that are most easily accessed. We have to go to ones that are even far away on the backside of mountains in jungles in war zones because Jesus is Lord and he deserves to be worshipped by people from every tribe and tongue and that's why we invest in going to all people everywhere even the ones that are hard to reach.

And what is the fruit of this vision? We see it in Revelation chapter 7. John writes after this I looked and behold a great multitude that no one could number from every nation from all tribes and peoples and languages standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands crying out with a loud voice salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

[ 39 : 35 ] So we see that the command of the Great Commission is that we have to go to all nations even the ones that are hard. Maybe we would even say especially the ones that are hard.

But you might ask like how do we even get involved in Global Mission? We're sitting here in northeastern Oklahoma. How do we have a tangible effect on the cause of Global Mission? How do we live out the Great Commission? I just want to give you four ideas today. Things you can do. The first one you can do is learn. You can start to learn about the world.

You can read about countries and you can follow the news. You do not know how helpful it has been for me that I just know the capitals of countries because time and time again I'll meet

somebody from another country and I can say are you from the capital?

Usually they are and they're like you're a genius because most people don't even know where they're from at all. And guys that has opened so many doors for me. You think about like say our young people you guys all have to learn Spanish in school.

[ 40 : 36 ] Rather than learning Spanish just so you get an A in class guys what if you focused on Spanish so that you could use it for the cause of mission? What if you asked the Lord to help you learn this language so that you could reach people in Spanish?

Pray about that and see what the Lord does. All of us can be learning and guys we can be learning about people who are unreached but we can also be learning about where the church is being pressured.

The more we learn the more our hearts will be burdened to pray. Guys you can give. This is the second way we can get involved in mission even from here in Oklahoma. You can give money. There's a Latin proverb that the sinews of war are infinite money. Guys I have to say it feels that way with missions too. It's so expensive to send people to the far corners of the earth. And guys this church is generous. It is really impressed me. And because there are millions of Southern Baptists like us who are faithful to give and there are thousands of missionaries all over the world who are reaching people right now.

[ 41 : 39 ] But I ask you can you give more? What can you change in your life so that you can continue to give to the cause of mission? Guys you can pray. Mission is spiritual.

It's a spiritual task. And if we go about it just going about it like it's a physical task we are guaranteed to fail. It is a spiritual work. And the work of our missionaries on the field should be girded up by our prayers here.

And guys when you pray it's not some substitute work. You are 100% involved in whatever they're doing missionally.

Finally guys you can go. You can go long term maybe on the mission field. You can go short term. Guys maybe you can go to the lighthouse mission here in town.

There are Afghan refugees in Tulsa. There are so many ways that you can get involved in reaching the nations even from here in Oklahoma. You don't have to go to the far reaches of the earth to start obeying this command.

[ 42 : 45 ] So guys I just I give you these as ideas. If you want to talk more I would love to talk with you about this after the service. Guys we see that we're called to baptize in the great commission.

Now baptism is a symbol of what the Lord has done. And when we enter into our relationship with Jesus now we are laid down with him mirroring his death and then we are raised up again to walk in newness of life.

This is hugely significant for us because we're Baptists and you notice we're supposed to make disciples and then we baptize them. We don't baptize children. We don't baptize the children of disciples.

We baptize disciples. This is what we're supposed to do. And also notice we don't just baptize people. We baptize them into the whole trinity. Jesus gives us the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We're supposed to enter into relationship not just with Christ. We enter into relationship with God the Father through Christ the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit. Our spiritual inheritance is not just Jesus.

[ 43 : 50 ] Our spiritual inheritance is the entire trinity. And guys this is something that it's really good for us to think about. But we keep going and we see that we are called to teach.

notice that we are called to teach everything that Christ has commanded us. We're not called to adjust his teaching. He didn't tell us I want you to go out and teach only the things that make the most sense to you.

Only the things that you're comfortable with. He told us to go out and teach everything that he had commanded us. And that means that we're not supposed to have an adjusted gospel.

We're not supposed to look at our culture and say oh our culture is comfortable with this part of the Lord's teaching but not with this part so we'll just get rid of that. No. Every culture has something that they're uncomfortable with about the Lord's teaching and we're called to teach it all.

We are called to teach an unadjusted gospel. We are not called to make the message up ourselves. We're called to deliver the message that he has given us and to deliver it fully.

[ 45 : 02 ] Guys in closing we're going to look at the companion who goes with us. Now this is in verse 20. Jesus says and behold I am with you always to the end of the age.

Now this is significant because this is the gospel of Matthew. In Matthew chapter 1 it begins with Matthew 1 23 that Jesus will be called Emmanuel which means God with us.

So at the beginning of Matthew we see that this infant who will be born he'll be God with us and then the book closes with Jesus saying and I'm with you always. This is a huge theme in the gospel of Matthew.

Now Christ has gone before us already and he will continue to go with us now. Now we have his spirit which both Paul and Peter in the New Testament called the spirit of Christ who indwells us which means that wherever we go Christ is going with us.

And this means that if he's going with us we go out with him and we go out in his power. Guys I'm not saying you need to go out and try to make disciples on your own.

[ 46 : 11 ] I can encourage you to go out because I know that Jesus goes with you as you try. And he gives us courage when our hearts fail and he empowers us when we're weak.

If he did not go with us how could we possibly succeed? But since he does go with us brothers and sisters how can we fail? And you notice also not only do we have this companion who's always with us says he's with us to the end.

Now guys this means that Jesus is standing on this mountain and he can look ahead and he can see how this whole thing ends. He can see the failure, he can see the loss, he can see the struggle, he can see the pain, he can see it all.

And I don't get the sense that he's pessimistic about how this ends. He can look out and know that he is Lord of all, Lord even of how this all comes together and he wants to include us in it.

So guys there we have it. We have the great commission. We have all the reason in the world to be optimistic about our participation, our place in the great commission even in 2023.

[ 47 : 23 ] We have a clear command given by our Lord who promises to go with us as we seek to expand the boundaries of his kingdom. There's nothing more significant that we could devote our lives to, our time, our treasure, everything about us than this cause, the cause of making disciples.

Now we're going to pray, but if the Lord has laid something on your heart during this message that you'd like prayer about, maybe it's somebody that you want to talk with about the Lord, then please feel free to come forward.

We'd love to talk with you. Pastor Mike would as well. We'd love to pray with you. But also maybe you think, I don't know Jesus as Lord. I don't feel connected with this because I'm not a disciple.

And if that's you, then we want you to come forward as well because we'd love to talk with you.

Would you pray with me? Lord, we love you and we thank you so much for your word. Your word is powerful and true.

Your word gives life. We thank you that you have given us a commission, Lord, and we ask that you help us to obey. We know that you're with us and we rejoice in this fact.

[ 48 : 33 ] We thank you for your word, God, it's true. Help us to honor you in all that we do, say, and think as we leave this place. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Thank you.