

Mark 16:15-20

The Great Commission

Today we are finishing up our final study in the gospel of Mark! – 11 months working our way through the life of Christ. – Favorite – Every 5,6 Yrs.

A) Title of the message today is the great Commission.

B) We are going to consider what the great commission is and it's application to

1) Us as a Church – and as individuals!

¹⁵ And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

¹⁹ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

THE ASCENSION.

A) Ascension – marked the end of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

B) The Ascension meant that Jesus had fulfilled his mission, which was to come and Rescue mankind from sin.

1) To play the role of the Redeemer

Now that Jesus had ascended into Heaven – Taking His place at the right hand of the father –

A) He left the work of reaching the world to his followers

B) Now I have to admit that if I were Jesus – I would have done this whole thing differently.

Bb) First - I would have appeared in the middle of the night to Pilate – How do you Like me now!

C) Roman solider who smacked him during the beating before the crucifixion – Blindfolded - Slapped face – Prophecy – who slapped U?

1) Middle of the night I would – have slapped him upside the head a few times – SURPRISE! Tell me who smacked you!

D) And I probably would have appeared in the temple courts of Jerusalem so everyone could see me RISEN – believe!

D) I Probably would have kicked the Romans out of Power – to give the Church a running start!

That is not what Jesus did though, and it doesn't surprise me because what I have found in a lot of things in the Christian life –

Jesus doesn't really like my ideas - He is SMARTER THAN ME!

WE are told in Isaiah 55:8-11

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.

⁹ “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

¹⁰ “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower

And bread to the eater,
11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.

The plan of Jesus was going to be about Him sending his followers into the world – with a Message:

V.15 “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

A) **Gospel = good news**

B) Sometimes Christians forget what the good news is and we want to argue – Creation vs Evolution –

1) Or we get side tracked in talking about Politics or OTHER ISSUSES

C) But none of that is the good news –

1) Apologetic TYPE conversations can be important – but the goal of is to get THEM to the gospel! =

What is the message of the gospel?

A) What is the good news – Jesus was sending his disciples out to preach?

B) Paul the apostle answered this question masterfully when he reminded the Corinthian believers of the gospel he had shared with them. 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*,
⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day *according to the Scriptures*,

The gospel is comprised of two simple but powerful components.

A) The first component of the gospel is that Jesus Christ died for our sins.

B) We have the opportunity to tell people their sins are forgiven regardless of what they've done, are doing, or ever will do -

C) Because Jesus was nailed to a Wooden Cross – where he bled profusely to pay the price for every sin!

D) The Bible says that all have sinned have fallen short of the glory of God!

E) We don't need to convince people they're sinners. They already know it...

According to scientists, male moths flutter around candles because they think hot wax smells like female moths—a confusion that is usually fatal!

We DO THE SAME THING - We flutter around things that look hot, that smell good—only to get burned time and time again.

And people spend their lives dealing with guilt for all the stupid decisions they have made.

A) But we have the Privilege of telling them –

B) Their sins can be forgiven and their guilty can be removed – because Jesus paid the Price!

1) **That's Good News!**

The second component of the gospel is that Jesus was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

A) This is what separates Jesus from every other religious guru, holy man, exalted teacher or leader.

B) Jesus Predicted his betrayal – He predicted that he was going to be crucified by the religious leaders –

1) He predicted that **3 days later He would rise again**

C) In doing so he was solidifying his boldest claim – John 14:6 **I am the way the truth and the life, no man comes to the father but by me!**

D) That my friend is the gospel message – THE GOODNEWS – which we get to proclaim.

Paul the Apostle would also write in Romans 1:16 “¹⁶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.*”

A) There is power in that message to save a person from Sin, Hell, from guilt. All that is needed is for them to believe!

B) The Power is in the message- more than the presentation.

1) Deliver the message: Publishers winner – not your job to convince them but to share with them – Winner

C) The good news is Jesus beat death – sin – Devil – So we could be winners

D) **Forgiven – set free – Hope of Eternal life.**

1) You just have to lay claim to that – **by believing** – THAT IS THE GOOD NEWS.

But there is also a BAD NEWS SIDE TO THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

A) SEE here in our text in v.16 Jesus also gives this warning: **but he who does not believe will be condemned.**

B) THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS BEING NEUTRAL – JESUS SAID YOU ARE EITHER FOR ME OR AGAINST ME!

C) Believe unto life – Choose not to believe – you are condemned! –

1) John's gospel puts it this way:

John 3:18-20 18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed –

D) The Person continues in sin - who dies in that state- – is choosing a destiny of DEATH – 1) ETERNALLY SEPARATED FROM GOD!

WEEPING GNASHING – DARKNESS

E) Doesn't seem fair – Don't argue with me Argue with Jesus – Loved you and died for you – Choice

So the great commission is about Jesus sending his disciples into the world – to deliver a message.

A) Look again at v. 16 – this verse has caused some confusion in the church.

V.16 *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*

Aa) There have been those in the church who have read that verse and have tried to Make – Baptism is a requirement of Salvation.

B) **He who believes and are baptized will be saved.**

1) But notice the 2nd part of the verse – he who does not believe – no mention of baptism – why?

C) The emphasis is on the word believe – not believe and be baptized

Salvation comes through believing – faith –

A) **Baptism is the by-product of believing** – it was the tangible visible expression of faith – that you were choosing to follow Christ.

B) Baptism was also the altar call of the first century – it was the way that people outwardly expressed their faith in Christ

- 1) Faith was decided in the heart and expressed outwardly by baptism.

C) The whole idea of the Altar call – started in around the 16th century when they found it impractical to put a baptismal in the Sanctuary.

D) I have often thought – that if the Lord were to ever grace us with a different facility – having a baptismal – would be something I would want to do!

But the thing that we need to realize here is that the focal point of the text is on faith! Believing in Jesus is what saves you.

A) Remember Paul the Apostle who will go down in history as the greatest evangelist – and church planter of all time.

B) Remember in Corinth when the Church was divided by personalities

1) So glad that you are more mature than that – Jason and I can team-teach and you receive from both of us.

C) The **Church in Corinth lacked maturity and they were fixated on personalities** to the point that the church was divided.

1) I am of Paul, I am of Peter, and I am of Apollos – One of the things they were attached to was – who baptized them.

D) Paul said, “I am glad that I didn’t baptize any of you!” 1 Corinthians 1:14

Now if Baptism were a criteria for salvation – Paul in effect would be saying I am glad I didn’t lead any of you to faith in Christ.

A) Which would be a complete contradiction to Paul’s whole mission in life

Aa) **Paul lived to introduce people to saving faith in Jesus.**

1) That is also why he would say: 1 Corinthians 4:15 “**You have many teachers but not many fathers in the faith.”**

B) **Point being Paul was their Spiritual dad** – because he had led most of them to faith and Christ – and helped them get grounded

1) **Even though he wasn’t the one who baptized them!**

D) **The Focus is on Believing – Baptism follows believing**

What about v.17 -18 where he talks about drinking poison and handling snakes!

A) What is that all about – Saw that show – Church down in Texas - Passing snakes during the service.

B) Is that what Jesus is talking about here?

And these signs will follow those who believe: **In My name** they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

The thing that we need to realize about this passage is it is predictive – not Directive. Not instruction for church life.

A) Jesus is speaking in the context of the first missionaries – this is what is going to happen.

B) His point is they were going to be sent out with **authority and Protection.**

C) They were being sent out with His Authority Matthew 28:¹⁸ **And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, {Mark - In My Name!**

D) **Signs and wonders and healings** - were going to accompany the preaching of the gospel.

Signs would follow – to bear witness to the testimony of the word they were Sharing

A) **Signs will follow those who believe** – today many of the church have inverted that – you have believers **following after signs and wonders.**

B) Running from one meeting to the next – one side show to the next – where is the miracle crusade happening – Run over there.

C) But the text says that signs and wonders would follow those who believe.

1) God still heals – still works in powerful ways.

D) We have seen God heal people here of Cancer, - Grace – Wed – Skin Disease. God still heals

1) Does He heal everyone no! I wish he did. But we still can and should pray for healing.

E) Jesus was sending them out **with Authority!**

Reminds me of a man who was invited to a party of the Ultra Rich – Posh party nothing was spared.

1) Sitting there Party – cell phone rings – he picks it up off the table – says Hello

C) The voice on the other end – Says “**Honey – I was shopping and found this mink – Coat – Love it – really looks good only \$2,000 can I get it”**

1) He answered well if you really like it and it looks good on you – sure go for it.

On the way to the store I drove by the Mercedes dealership – Saw Sale

A) Pulled in and the car I have had my eye on is on sale for 45k

B) The BMW is 2yrs old – can I trade it in and get the Mercedes – Please

B) He said: Well ok – but make sure you get all the Bells and whistles for it – spare no expense.

1) Honey you are the best

C) One more thing: I got an email about that Beach house we were interested in – **Email said the Price dropped from 4.8 mil to 4.5 –**

1) I was thinking about calling the relator and letting her know we were interested – what do you think?

He said: Absolutely call her but try and work your magic and get her down to 4.2 or 4.3 – if she bites – Go for it – put in an offer.

A) Awesome I am so excited she said: I love you so much – I will see you soon.

B) The guy hung up the phone – and said: **Anyone know whose cell phone this is?**

C) Imagine having that kind of authority to just buy whatever you wanted?

D) Jesus authority is even greater – Over death, Disease and Demons

SENT THEM WITH AUTHORITY ALSO WITH PROTECTION.

A) When He said: **Drink poison and not die – they would take up serpents and not be harmed.**

B) He was speaking of the Protection that was going to be on them – living in a culture – where – water came from natural springs – no purification process – NO Public sewage so Poisons were common occurrence

- C) Go to a third world country- Scary – India – Africa – Sick as I ever have been there – trying to feed us well.
- D) Mission field can be a scary place Yugo – Romeo - Big bowl of Cherry's - Mike Harris and I were just devouring
- 1) You like – Cherry's – good Protein - What? - Fully of maggots –

Paul Acts 28 bit by a snake – threw into the fire {Where snakes belong} – Where snakes belong

- A) They islanders marveled he didn't die! – A god!
- B) So Speaking of protection: Not instruction for church life – not saying make it your practice to drink – poison and handle snakes.

- C) He was not giving instruction – Some have misunderstood today –
- 1) Services where they bring in Rattlesnakes

D) If you handle them and bit and don't die it means – you have the right faith

- 1) If you die – NOT ENOUGH FAITH – STUPID

E) Not what he is saying at all – He is saying – they were being sent out with his AUTHORITY

1) AND HIS PROTECTION

APPLICATION FOR US IN THIS AS A CHURCH BODY AND AS INDIVIDUALS?

- A) Great Commission is still the same- Called to go into the entire world – preaching the gospel.
- B) Look back at Matthews account - Matthew 28:¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,

- A) Note the emphasis is on making Disciples not converts.
- B) A DISCIPLE IS A LEARNER – A FOLLOWER SOMEONE WHO IS COMMITTED TO JESUS
- C) Greg Laurie “Not all believers are disciples but all disciples are believers.”
- C) This why we are so committed to the word as a church.
- 1) Not content to merely see people get saved – we want to see them grow.

After they come to Christ – New believer Class or a discipleship group

- A) Plugged into Wed nights or a Home group – focus is on becoming students of the word.

B) When we go out are not about just going some place – Crusade or outreach and seeing people come to Christ.

- 1) Our focus is on Church planting – Provide a place where they can grow

C) I am stoked to be a part of a church that understands the Commission to go! Seen quite a few people go.

Early Church PENTECOST – Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria – the uttermost parts

- A) Jerusalem is Vista, Judea and Samaria – Oceanside, Carlsbad...

B) We want to continue to go to **OUR Jerusalem Vista** – Praying Constantly about ways to impact our community. – Go to our community.

- 1) Ideas – role out around the first of the year.

C) Also **Judea and Samaria's – Camp Pendleton**. North County

1) **Home groups** in all of those communities – Challenge to our home group leaders – praying and thinking – How to impact their neighborhoods

D) Uttermost parts – Mexico outreaches – Jan – Costa Rica

1) Italy – England in the spring –

But the go mentality really starts with us as individuals

A) God isn't asking most of you to go to a foreign land – or another state, which believe me, can feel like a foreign land.

B) But God is wondering if you would be **willing to go across the street to a neighbor** – just lost their job, or their spouse.

C) He wants to know if you will **cross the hall at work to the office or cubicle** to talk to the person you work with about Jesus.

D) Willing to go across the tides of social clicks to befriend someone who is not a part of your group – outcast.

1) As a High School Pastor I challenged the kids – who are the leper in your school or the woman at the well.

Before Jesus calls you to go to some radical place – He wants to see you go to a neighbor, a relative, a workmate or a schoolmate who needs Jesus.

A) What part of go do you not understand? -

B) Question- I am willing to go?

1) Begin to pray – Lord burden for the lost – pray Lord who do you want me to go to.

C) **Close today with Communion:** Jesus said whoever desires to follow me must deny himself pick up his cross and follow me.

1) Cross is not your burden to bear – Wife, Job, Boss,

D) Cross was an instrument of death that brought life to others.

1) Willingness – put aside own cares, time, insecurities - step out of our comfort zones

E) Cross the isle – touch someone who needs the gospel.

Partaking of communion: Confession - Identify with your mission - confess – Lord I am willing to GO!

STEP OUT OF COMFORT ZONES

TODAY MAKE A DECISION TO BECOME A DISCIPLE – FULLY COMMITTED!

NOT SAVED: DENYING SELF – YOUR WAY – surrender to His way

A) Admit need a Savior