

IS THE GREAT COMMISSION OUR GREAT CONCERN?

Text: Matthew 28:16-20

In most of our Bibles, if you look at the top of the page or if you have a study Bible there's probably a heading over these verses that says, "the great commission". The word "commission" means to give instruction or command to a person or group of people; to authorize the production of something. The preaching of the gospel began with Jesus, who chose 12 to be with him always but also teaching a host of other disciples and sending them forth with the good news. After his resurrection, the last thing he did was to pass the work on to those left behind. The pattern is simple...preach the gospel everywhere, baptize the believers, then disciple them so that they can repeat that pattern. Our goal as a New Testament assembly is to make disciples that make disciples.

When we look at the very first page of the Bible in the creation, God made everything to reproduce and renew itself. **Genesis 1:11-12** And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*. *Seed is what is needed for reproduction. Herbs yield seed, trees yield fruit that contains seed, and in both man and beast...the male carries seed and the female conceives it.* What is astounding is that God hasn't had to create anymore people since the day that Adam and Eve were created. God hasn't had to create more trees, grass, herbs or animals since the six days of creation because he made it possible for those things to reproduce and continue on. **Genesis 1:27-28** So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Everything that God has given life to, is expected to be fruitful, reproduce and multiply.

The great commission is about being fruitful and multiplying. God made man in his own image, but sin spoiled that image. The new birth is the restoration of God's image in man and we that have been born again are expected to be fruitful and multiply. The word of God is the seed that contains Christ, the heart is the ground it must be sown in, and when the word is believed then the seed is conceived and it produces repentance and faith. When a person exercises repentance and faith, their spirit is born again...made alive by the Spirit of God and they are a new creature in Christ. The book of Acts is the multiplication of the

word. Every time someone is saved, that is Jesus Christ multiplying himself. When the Lord was crucified and died, the religious leaders of Israel thought that they had done away with Jesus forever. But on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came as a baptizer, he turned the 120 in the upper room into little Jesus's that preached in the power that saw 3,000 converted in one day and 5,000 on another. They hadn't stopped anything, in this dispensation, every time someone repents and believes the gospel, Jesus reproduces himself in another person.

Here at the Memorial Baptist Church, we have a threefold goal that we got direct from the Lord Jesus himself.

- **Preach the gospel to everyone**
- **Baptize the believers in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**
- **Disciple the converts into mature Christians**

There are two great ditches that most people fall into concerning their view of the great commission: That God does all the work himself and we have no responsibility at all, or that all the responsibility is on us and we can do it independently of God. Both are wrong!

We labor together with God in this work - 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

The things we cannot do – turn light on in someone's conscience, convict them of sin or convince them they are a sinner, draw them to Christ in power...ALL OF THAT IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The things we can do – sow the seed, water seed that is already sown, pray for the salvation of anyone, and we can obey the word of God which will make us light

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

This scripture says that we are ambassadors for Christ. An ambassador is a diplomat sent from their own country to be a representative to a foreign country. Those of us that are saved, our citizenship is in heaven. That's our home country and we represent the Lord Jesus Christ here in this world. This world is not our home, that's why we feel so out of place here. An ambassador works for and has the message of peace. These verses state that we've been given the ministry and committed to us the word of reconciliation. This means that we urge others to be reconciled to God. That their sin has separated them from God and broken their relationship. That because of sin, God is at enmity with them but through the sacrifice of Christ and his resurrection, they can be forgiven of their sin, restored to a right relationship with God and become a son of God and have eternal life.

I think it's wise to stop and consider if the great commission is our great concern. To many the point of salvation is just to be a better person, to others it's about avoiding sin to the point of isolation, but Jesus compared us to salt and light because both salt and light make an impact on their environments when introduced to it. The point of salvation is to become a Christ follower and if we follow Christ that means that we participate in his work of redemption.

Let's look at some honest reasons why we don't take the great commission personally or seriously:

- **Fear** – We are afraid to have difficult or awkward conversations with people and we're equally afraid of how they will take it. It's just easier to go along if we all get along. We're afraid we'll get it wrong or be asked a question we aren't prepared for and look foolish. We're afraid it will cause a break in relationships with people we care about if we tell them the truth.
- **Satisfied** – For some people they are saved and their immediate family is saved, and they could care less if other people go to hell. When the Titanic sank, many of the lifeboats were half full or less because the people in them were satisfied that they were in safety and didn't want to go back to help others be saved from certain death.
- **Comfortable** – To many as long their church is semi-full, the bills are paid and there's no fighting going on among the people of God they are completely satisfied and never consider that the work is never done.
- **Immaturity** – The point of discipleship is to help new converts build a walk with Christ that helps them find their purpose in the body of Christ and come to maturity so that they can be productive in the kingdom of God. Most people rejoice that their sins are forgiven and that they have eternal life, but when you start teaching and preaching their responsibility as a Christian to Christ...that's where the "amens" dry up and the walls around their hearts go up. Infants, toddlers, and adolescents don't

reproduce for a reason, they're not physically or emotionally mature enough to do so.

I want to challenge myself and every born-again person in this church for 2026. Would you pray that God would use you to bring just one person to Christ in the coming year? I'm not talking about making another phone call to a family member you've been trying to guilt into being saved. I mean asking the Holy Spirit to place you in the path of someone that needs to be saved and submitting ourselves to working together with God like the scripture says. If that means inviting them to dinner, having a hard conversation that the Holy Spirit prompts while you're working with someone, answering their questions according to the scriptures, carrying a burden for them that causes you to pray in the middle of the night...whatever God would have us to do to sow the seed or water seed that's already sown.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

1 Timothy 1:15 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.