

The Commission

Matthew 28:19-20

Sermon by: Stephen Herrod, Pastor

MESSAGE:

THE COMMISSION

PASSAGE: MATTHEW 28: 19-20 ESV

19 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, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

MESSAGE GOAL:

The goal of this message is to remind the Church of their collective responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission, which is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. This sermon seeks to clarify the true meaning of discipleship as opposed to the diluted version often associated with modern Christianity. It encourages believers to actively engage in making disciples through their daily lives, and concludes with the comforting assurance that Jesus is always with His disciples.

SERMON NOTES

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, has given the Church a group assignment in

which every one of us bears personal responsibility, and the group assignment that He has given us is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

That word for disciple in the Greek is **mathētēs** (μαθητής), and it means learner. It describes someone who submits to another person in order to become their student.

Let's narrow our focus now specifically to what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. A disciple of Jesus Christ is:

1. One who learns from Jesus' teaching. According to Matthew 11:29, Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
2. One who lives according to His commands. According to John 14:15, Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commands."
3. One who imitates His character. According to Luke 6:40, Jesus said, "The student is not above the teacher, but

The Commission

Matthew 28:19-20

Sermon by: Stephen Herrod, Pastor

everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.”

4. One who participates in His mission to make disciples. According to the scripture reading for today’s sermon, Jesus has commissioned His disciples to also be disciple-makers.

A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who learns from Jesus’ teachings, lives according to His commands, imitates His character, and participates in His mission to make disciples.

And the group assignment for disciples of Jesus Christ is to make people outside of our community of faith into disciples of Jesus Christ!

Now let me put you up on some game real quick so that you won’t be deceived. The word “Christian” and the religion “Christianity” are nowhere to be found in the Gospels. While the word “disciple” is used 281 times in the New Testament, “Christian” is only mentioned three times: Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, and 1 Peter 4:16. Acts 11:26 says that in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians. They were called Christians because their behavior, actions,

and speech were like Jesus Christ. So technically, the terms “Christian” and “disciple” are synonymous, as they both describe someone who learns from, obeys, and imitates the character of Christ.

However, here's where it gets tricky and where you must be discerning: Somewhere between the time of Antioch and now, the definition of Christianity has shifted and devolved. Once again, the devil has repackaged his deception, slapped the label “Christianity” on it, and created a false gospel.

This counterfeit Christianity and its false teachings are the same deceptions the devil has used repeatedly over time—it produces a people who honor God with their lips, but whose hearts are far from Him.

Don’t be deceived: this false Christianity offers membership without discipleship, access without accountability, lip service without life service, and faith without works.

But let me remind you of the true Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and true Christianity.

The Commission

Matthew 28:19-20

Sermon by: Stephen Herrod, Pastor

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news that through Christ Jesus, God offers salvation to all people. God, in His love, sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to live a perfect life, to die on the cross for our sins, and to rise from the dead, conquering death. When we repent of our sins and believe in Jesus, we are saved.

And get this: When you get saved, that is the starting point, not the ending point. You are not to “get saved” and leave it there, but to be saved is to be called out of darkness into His marvelous light. To be saved is to be called, and the calling on your life is to follow Him and become His disciples, and then make disciples! You are going to hear me say this a lot: All of us here who have been saved have also been called. You have a calling on your life! The church has limited itself by reserving the idea of calling to the clergy in the church, but the Bible is right, and if you have been saved by God, you have also been called by God. If we're really going to do this group assignment that we've been given, then we all should be preaching! We all should be preaching the Word of God with our lips and with our life!

Family, this group assignment that we have to make disciples is our task collectively, but

with every group assignment, everybody has a part to play. So let me break down this assignment, and help us understand our collective role, and also the individual aspect of this collective mission that we have been assigned.

Get this: The Great Commission, or this group assignment, as I have been referring to it, has only one direct command, and that is to “make disciples.” The supporting actions—going, baptizing, and teaching—provide the means or the process by which disciples are made.

In other words, the task that we have been given for this group assignment is to “make disciples.” And we are to make disciples by going, baptizing, and teaching all that Jesus has commanded. Let me explain it grammatically: The controlling verb is to make disciples, and there are three participles that support the command to make disciples, and these participles describe the process or steps involved in fulfilling the command. The three participles are going, baptizing, and teaching.

The participle “going” carries the idea of movement and action, which implies that the work of making disciples is not stationary or

The Commission

Matthew 28:19-20

Sermon by: Stephen Herrod, Pastor

passive, but we must actively engage people outside of the community of faith with the Gospel. We have to go beyond our gathering, beyond the four walls, and engage people with the Gospel! Now individually, going means to live intentionally wherever we are—in our neighborhoods, workplaces, families, and social circles. We are to live with Gospel intentionality. Our life is to be a sermon that preaches in our homes, and everywhere we go, that Jesus Christ is Lord. A true disciple is not a Christian in church and a heathen at home, or a Christian at church, yet heathen in the neighborhood. Part of the group assignment is embodying the Gospel with your life in such a way that your life is a living epistle written by Jesus the Christ!

Next, as it relates to the participle “baptizing,” baptism is the outward sign of someone’s identification with Christ and His Church. Baptizing new disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit signifies their initiation into the faith and their public commitment to follow Jesus. Baptism marks the entry point into discipleship; it’s how someone visibly demonstrates their decision to follow Christ. In making disciples, baptism symbolizes the new birth and transformation that has taken place, and is

taking place, through faith in Christ. When it comes to baptizing for the group assignment, baptism is usually performed by leaders within the church, but all of us still bear personal responsibility. While not every Christian baptizes others, we are called to lead people to the point of baptism through our witness, support, and encouragement. Finally, teaching is crucial for discipleship, and not just general teaching, but teaching them to observe all that He has commanded us. You see, after someone believes the Gospel and is baptized, the final step in discipleship is teaching. A lot of us know what Jesus did, but we don’t know what He said, and if we are to get this discipleship thing right for this group assignment, we need to know what He did, but we also need to know what He said AND obey what He has said!

Now when it comes to teaching for the group assignment, teaching in the church is carried out by those whom God has gifted spiritually to teach, those whom God has called to be teachers, myself being the lead teacher of this assembly. But all disciples also bear a personal responsibility for teaching. As you are taught the true Word of God, you can mentor or disciple a new believer by teaching the truth that was

The Commission

Matthew 28:19-20

Sermon by: Stephen Herrod, Pastor

delivered to you. Furthermore, parents have been called to teach their children, as stated in Deuteronomy 6:6-7, and this is so important! I have to say this: We get in an uproar about a lot of things, and I'm all for righteous anger, but what we really need to be in an uproar about is prayer and teaching being taken out of homes! Get this: The entire responsibility of teaching and passing God's Word on to the next generation is not all on the church, but it is a work that should be shared with parents, grandparents, and should start at home! We've got to get back to covering our children in prayer and praying for them at home! We've got to take that tablet out of their hands, turn the TV off, stop all the bickering, and start studying God's Word as a family at home! Many of our children and grandchildren are being discipled by what they see on TV and TikTok, which in many ways is not good. They are being discipled by doctrines of demons, and if we are to truly save our children, save our family members, and so on, speak the Word over their life, speak the Word into their life! Go home today and this week, and start speaking the Word over your children's life! Over your spouse's life! Speak the Word into your children's life! Speak the Word into your cousin's life! If they are not made into disciples of Christ,

they will be made into disciples of someone else, but you have a calling on your life to make disciples! Speak the Word into their life! Teach them what the Lord has commanded us to do! The majority of teaching will come from here, but you too, have a responsibility to pass on the teachings of Jesus Christ to your family, your children, your friends, and beyond!

As I close, we dare not overlook the promise Jesus made to us in verse 20b. He says, 'Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'

It's interesting that when Matthew first introduces us to the Messiah, he recalls the prophecy from Isaiah 7:14, which says His name shall be called Immanuel—meaning 'God with us.' Now, at the end of Jesus' earthly journey, He leaves us with this assurance: even though He is leaving physically, He is still with us.

So, I leave you with this to meditate on, to hold fast to, and to find strength in: no matter what you go through, God is with you. Even in the moments when it feels like He isn't there, God is with you. He promised never to leave us alone. Beloved, God is with you until the end.

The Commission

Matthew 28:19-20

Sermon by: Stephen Herrod, Pastor