

**Video** – Ben Brezina

God is working in amazing ways among our church family – and even greater things are yet to come for God’s glory.

For the past few weeks we’ve been discussing what I believe are the (4) most critical teachings of Christ focused on knowing Him, loving Him, and following Him – challenging teachings that should’ve caused all of us to take a long, hard look at the reality and vitality of our faith.

In week 1 we looked at what’s required to have a saving relationship w/ Christ. In Mt. 11, Jesus said, “*Come unto to me all of you who are weary and heavy-laden* (burdened by the weight sin and worn out by the impossibility earning God’s favor) *and I’ll give you rest.*” **COME** to Jesus, **TAKE** His grace, and **LEARN** from Him – and He’ll give you rest.

In week 2 we looked at what it means to love God w/ all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength – and if you do, how it will be evident in your relationships w/ other people.

Then last week, we looked at the powerful requirement of following Jesus – we have to **DISOWN** all rights to ourselves and **PICK UP** our cross in obedient followship.

As we close out this series of lessons, today I want to look at our great privilege found in Matthew 28:16-20 – better known as the Great Commission.

*Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him – but some of them doubted! Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the H.S. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am w/ you always, even to the end of the age.”*

When I think of the Great Commission, I’m reminded of a product we’re all too familiar w/ here in Atlanta. It’s a drink invented by Dr. John Pemberton, a pharmacist, in 1886 when he concocted a caramel-colored syrup in a brass kettle in his backyard – and of course I’m speaking of Coca-Cola. Until 1970, Coke was basically an American soft drink when the company made it their ambition to make Coke available to every person on the planet. And today, some 130 yrs. later – in every country in the world you can buy a Coke. 97% of the world’s population has heard of coke and more than ½ the world has tasted a Coke. At present, 1.7 billion coke products are consumed every day around the world – meaning around the world, the avg. person drinks a coke once every (4) days.

W/ such amazing global expansion since 1970, someone said if Jesus had given the Great Commission to the Coca-Cola Company, the Gospel would've already been presented to every person on earth – but God didn't give His commission to Coke or any other company – He gave it to His followers. He gave it to us.

This AM I want us to take a few minutes to consider what God has given us and what He expects of His people.

## I Our AUTHORITY

*All authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me.*

This is THE key statement in the Great Commission b/c it's the basis on which everything else is built – **Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and earth and has the right to use this power** – from Scripture we see He has authority over...

### A He showed authority over DISEASE

By giving *sight* to the blind, *sound* to the deaf, *stamina* to the lame, and *skin* to the leper.

### B He showed authority over the DEMONIC

By overcoming Satan in the wilderness and closing the mouths of demons and casting them out into swine.

## C He showed authority over NATURE

When He walked on water and calmed the storm. Remember when Jesus was on a boat w/ His disciples in a raging storm asleep. They freaked and He simply got up, wiped His eyes, and spoke a word of silence.

## D He showed authority over SIN

When He gave grace to the woman caught in adultery – Jesus said, *“Where are your accusers? Neither do I accuse you. Go and sin no more.”* Or how about when He conquered the grave setting all of us free from the condemnation and judgment we deserve b/c of sin.

So let me explain while this is key and the basis for the Great Commission – b/c while Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and earth and has the right to use this power – **He makes it available to us.**

**Jesus was imbued w/ all power – but for a purpose.** He said, “I have all authority in heaven and earth for a purpose; and I’m entrusting to you.”

Let that soak in for a second. Jesus said to His followers, *“I have all authority in heaven and earth and I have put it at your disposal to accomplish my mission.”*

I don't know we fully understand/appreciate what this means and what is required for us to experience His authority. But I'm certain it doesn't mean that we get His power and can do as we please w/ it; but rather that His power is accessible to us when we bring our lives into alignment w/ His will, Word, and way and that He will dispense it to us as we need it to accomplish His sovereign mission.

Jesus' authority resides in us in the H.S. who indwells us so that God's purposes might be accomplished in/through us.

**Meaning** – *Success in life isn't based on who we are or what we can do but on Christ in us living through us. It's not about how smart, creative, talented, or rich we are, but that He is more than able to work in us when we live in His power under His authority.*

Indian Pastor who overcame witch doctor.

## II Our ASSIGNMENT

**Our assignment has to do w/ God's agenda?** *Lk. 19:10* says Jesus stepped out of heaven and into humanity for one purpose – to seek and to save the lost.

His agenda is to lead His creation back into a relationship w/ Himself. His assignment is for us to continue the mission. His assignment is that we **MAKE DISCIPLES!**

make disciples (*matheteuo*) it refers to someone who doesn't just believe, but someone who believes and diligently follows in continual learning and obedience.

Scripture know nothing of receiving Christ as Savior but not as Lord, as if a person could take God piecemeal as it suit him. Every convert to Christ is a disciple of Christ expected to follow in continual obedience. A true disciple is more than a convert – he is a committed follower. Meaning that to convert w/out an abandoned commitment to follow is no conversion at all. Why? B/c a truly converted person is filled/indwelt w/ the H.S. and given a new nature that craves to obey and honor the God who saved him. *unknown*

What's our expectation? What are we to do in making people into Christ-followers who make followers of Christ? What is the strategy Jesus left for us to apply?

## A SHARE the Word

As we're going we are to **introduce** people to Jesus. We are to take the Word entrusted in us, and we're to live and speak it into the lives of others. **We are to live it to give it.**

**Some people have mistaken the message of Christ as something to sell instead of something for which to die.**

I recently read about a traveling vacuum cleaner salesman who sales technique to get his foot in the door was to knock on a door and when it opened he'd throw a bag of manure on the floor before the resident had a chance to object. One day he approached a home, knocked on the door, and as the elderly homeowner answered the door, he threw down his bag of manure. Before the woman could object said, "Lady, this vacuum is so powerful, and I have so much confidence in its ability, that if it doesn't clean to your satisfaction, I will personally get on my hands and knees and pick up every speck of manure by hand." The lady replied, "Well sir, come right on in and get started b/c we don't have electricity."

While we certainly aren't selling anything, there may be times when our commitment to share what God has done in our lives might just bring us to our knees for the sake of those who don't know Him.

What are you doing w/ this good news told to you? Who told you? Research indicates the most people who regularly attend worship can point to the person who introduced them to Christ. Who do you point to and who points to you?

## B SHOW the Word

**baptize** – baptism is where a person outwardly demonstrates the faith transaction that's taken place internally when they received Christ as Savior.

In baptism we're identifying ourselves w/ God's grace and seeking to assume His character as we associate our lives w/ His – *we're committing our lives will demonstrate His life.*

## C SOW the Word

teach – we plant truth by investing the lessons of Jesus into others until they're able to feed on God.

**What do we teach?** We teach people how to trust/obey – to see, hear, and experience God and how to help others to do the same. **We invest Jesus in us into others.**

## III Our ASSURANCE

*Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

As disciples it's critical we look for God's PRESENCE to guide and influence his life.

A disciple *trusts in the Lord w/ all of his heart, leaning not on his own understanding, but in all his ways he acknowledges God, allowing God to direct his steps.*

A disciple waits for God's stamp of approval. He doesn't move until he knows God is IN it and FOR it. He makes sure God is WITH Him. He doesn't jump ahead or devise a plan w/out God's fingerprints all over it.



This means that the Christian life is Christ in you – living through you. It is about knowing God, hearing His voice, and responding to His leading.

But this is counter-intuitive to our human nature. We think God needs our help and He can't do it w/out us.

It's at this point we've got to realize that while bookstores might be filled w/ books on new strategies, plans and methods for how to do the "Christian thing" – they tend to look more like the world than the Word.

The Christian life isn't something we do in our ability but only through living surrendered to Christ and following His Word and H.S. While there will always be a constant tension b/w the manufactured life and the orchestrated life – it is only in abiding in Him and obeying His leading that we will live as blessed disciples.

Have you ever heard of the spot in Death Valley known as **Dante's View**. From that perch, you have a choice. On a clear day, you can either look down 282 ft. to the lowest spot in the continental U.S., to a place called **Bad Water**, or you can look up 14,500 ft. and see Mt. Whitney – the highest peak in the continental U.S. From this one spot, you can choose to look at the highest or the lowest point in the U.S.

**Each of us has a decision to make – and possibly two.**

Every person who's ever lived, is living, or will live has to make a decision about what they are going to do w/ Jesus. Will I believe and receive Him as my Savior or reject and ignore Him. Should you choose to embrace His grace, then you have a 2<sup>nd</sup> decision to make – will I follow and participate in the great Privilege of the Great Commission?

The disciples had a choice. They picked. They could've left Jesus in mid-sentence, or they could follow Jesus – and they chose to follow. They had–to some extent–what we are called to have: commitment. The level of commitment in these eleven men is astounding–considering the fact that only a few days earlier they were scurrying like rodents for the nearest hole as their friend and Lord took beatings and ridicule, not to mention the agony of the cross. **But something happened b/w the cross and the Commission;** something powerful in the lives (11) men who stuck around. Something happened that turned those men from cowering converts into determined disciples – **they made a choice!**

As I close today, I have a invitation for your consideration – a commissioning of choice. If you've never received Christ as your Savior, then I'd like to ask you to make a decision today about Jesus. If you've trusted Christ as your Savior, then I want to ask you to make a decision about how you are going to live – for you or for Him – for your will and way or for His will and way? Will you Seal this decisions by partaking in Holy Communion as you commission.

*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you:  
The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,  
and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is  
my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”  
In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This  
cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you  
drink it, in remembrance of me.” **For whenever you eat this  
bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death  
until he comes.** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*