

Briefing Doc: Realigned for the Mission - Matthew 28:16-20

For the message, "Realigned for the Mission" given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on January 26, 2025

This is a fun AI generated briefing document (edited) to help you process and reflect upon what we learned in our study together of this passage

I. Overview

This presentation focuses on Matthew 28:16-20, often referred to as the Great Commission, and how it should "realign" our understanding of the Gospel, Community, and Mission. The core argument is that this passage isn't just a call to evangelism, but a foundational directive that shapes the entire Christian life. It emphasizes the authority of Jesus, the importance of making disciples, the practice of baptism, and the ongoing presence of Christ in the mission.

II. Key Themes and Ideas

- **The Authority of Jesus:** The study begins by highlighting Jesus's authority. Matthew 28:18 is quoted, "And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...." This authority is contrasted with that of earthly rulers like Caesar Augustus, who was also called "The Son of God," "King of kings, Lord of lords," and "The Savior of the whole world," demonstrating that Jesus holds ultimate power and right to command obedience. The study also cites Revelation 19:16, "King of kings & Lord of lords," reinforcing Jesus's dominion. This authority is the foundation upon which the mission is built.
- **The Great Commission — Making Disciples:** The central focus is on the command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). This is not simply about converting people but creating lifelong followers. The study emphasizes three key aspects of discipleship:
 - **Going:** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." The mission involves active engagement and not passive waiting.
 - **Baptizing:** The study defines baptism as "a sacrament given by Christ to signify the central truth of the Gospel: the cleansing of our sins made possible." It also links baptism to becoming a witness for Christ, referencing Ananias's instruction to Saul in Acts 22, "...Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name."
 - **Teaching:** Disciples are to be taught "to obey everything that I have commanded you." Discipleship involves both knowledge and obedience to Jesus's teachings. This is not just head knowledge, but a life transformed by his example.
- **The Scope of the Mission: All Nations (ethnē):** The study clarifies the meaning of "nations" by explaining that the Greek word ethnē refers to "a tribe, a nation, a people

group, or ethnic groups bound together by various customs." This expands the vision beyond geographical boundaries to encompass diverse cultural and social groups. The document highlights Revelation 5:9, "You were slain, and by Your blood You ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation," underscoring that the mission is for all people, globally.

- **Discipleship as a Lifelong Process:** The study emphasizes that "Discipleship is a Lifelong Apprenticeship of Following Jesus in a New Way of Being Human". It's not a one-time event but a continuous process of learning from and imitating Jesus way of life. It defines a disciple as "Someone who Learns the Teachings of their Master & Lives According to their Example".
- **Individual Participation:** The presentation makes clear that the great commission isn't just for some elite Christians, but is an action for "all disciples" to be involved in. This emphasis is on a universal call to mission and discipleship, not just reserved for a select few.
- **Our Availability:** There's a recognition that people often feel inadequate to fulfill the mission; however, the study insists, "God never asks about our ability or inability, but only our availability." This concept emphasizes that God can use anyone willing to serve, regardless of their feelings of being ready or not.
- **The Church exists for the Mission:** The study concluded that the church doesn't exist for its own sake but as an instrument in God's mission. This point is reinforced by a statement, "We do not exist for ourselves but for the mission of Jesus!"

III. Key Quotes

- "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 obey everything that I have commanded you, and I will be with you always to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).
- "There is not one square inch of the entire creation about which Jesus Christ does not cry out, "This is mine! This belongs to me!" - Abraham Kuyper
- "All Christians at all times should be prepared for that moment when God brings them into contact with a person prepared by the Holy Spirit for trusting Christ." - C. Peter Wagner
- "God never asks about our ability or inability, but only our availability."

- "It's not so much that Jesus has a mission for his church, as much as he has a church for his mission." - Christopher Wright
- "We do not exist for ourselves but for the mission of Jesus!"

IV. Conclusion

This study on Matthew 28:16-20 calls for a radical re-evaluation of how Christians understand their faith and their role in the world. It's not simply about individual salvation, but about actively participating in the mission of Jesus to make disciples among all people groups. This requires acknowledging Jesus's supreme authority, understanding the scope of his mission, embracing the practice of baptism and discipleship, and relying on his promise of constant presence.