

UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matthew 28:16-20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Just about all of us have heard the term, The Great Commission. It has to do with a direct commandment from Jesus to “go and make disciples”. Clearly Jesus had something in mind when He spoke these words and clearly His disciples knew what He meant by them. The question is, “Do we understand what He meant?” and perhaps even more important, “Can we do again what the early church did?”

When we look at the early church we see boldness, clarity, and power. We see a dynamic faith that impacts individuals, communities, and nations. We see a gospel that transforms and we long for that same power and presence in our churches today.

The four basic components to the Great Commission

- EVANGELISM
- DISCIPLESHIP
- HEALING
- CASTING OUT THE DEMONIC

Two conversations helped crystallize these for me. I met an African Bishop from the Diocese of Jos in Northern Nigeria, Bishop Ben Kwashi. This vibrant and humble man said to me, “Alan, if you *cannot* evangelize, heal the sick, cast our devils and disciple, you simple cannot minister in my diocese.” He further said, “I no longer send my clergy to England to be trained because they come back *learned but useless.*” Bishop Ben went on to explain that ministry without power is irrelevant in his country. Unless the Gospel of Jesus Christ has power over the spiritual darkness of the occult people, it will never impact the people of his land. Unless the Gospel can heal, deliver, set free, and transform lives, it is simply ignored.

The second conversation I had was with a prominent clergy person here in the United States. He shared with me that he has three (that’s THREE) earned PhD’s in theology, was tremendously educated, and learned in the faith, and thoroughly orthodox in his belief. Sadly, he acknowledged that even with all his learning he lacked any confidence or experience in three of the four components listed above. Although he agreed completely with them, he was unable to walk in them.

Matthew 9:35-37

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."

Luke 9:1-2

When Jesus had called the twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

- Jesus gave them power and authority
- Jesus told them to drive out demons
- Jesus told them to cure diseases
- Jesus sent them to preach the Kingdom of God
- Jesus told them to heal the sick

Luke 10:1-2

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."

Luke 10:9

Heal the sick who are there and tell them, "The Kingdom of God is near you."

Luke 10:17

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

EVANGELISM

Jesus came to save us, deliver us, reconcile us, find us, and destroy all the works of the devil. He did this because He, "so loved the world". He took our place on the cross. He suffered the penalty for our disobedience. He now invites every human being to hear the saving message of the gospel and offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all whom willingly respond.

The work of evangelism has been given to the church and is the responsibility of every believer. We are entrusted with the privilege to share God's saving love with others.

The gospel has basically four parts.

1. God loves us.
2. We are separated from God by our sins.
3. God sent Jesus to take away our sins and remove, that which separated us from God.
4. To be restored to God we must ask God to forgive us and accept His Son Jesus Christ as our Savior.

As we tell our story there are essentially three components:

1. What our lives were like before we came to accept Jesus as our Savior.
2. What happened? How did we come to accept Jesus as our Savior?
3. What difference it has made in our lives today.

DISCIPLESHIP

In our Baptismal Covenant we are asked, “Will you continue in the Apostle’s teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers?” and we respond, “I will with God’s help.” So, what is the “apostle’s teaching”?

Basic Christian Dogma’s (Nicene Creed)

- The Holy Trinity
- Jesus as Coeternal with the Father
- Virgin Birth
- Jesus’ Redemptive act in History
- Jesus’ death, burial, and bodily resurrection
- Jesus’ place at the Father’s right hand (mediator and intercessor)
- His coming again to Judge the living and the dead
- The role and work of the Holy Spirit – author and giver of life
- The role of Baptism and forgiveness of sin.
- The one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church
- Eternal life for all those who believe

Basic Christian Doctrine’s and Practices

- **Salvation** – coming to faith in Jesus – new birth into the family of God.
- **Baptism** – outward sign of initiation into the faith and family of God.
- **Holy Communion** - memorial meal and spiritual food.
- **Holy Spirit**- fruits of; gifts of; work of, infilling by, etc.
- **Atonement** – substitutionary sacrifice of Christ to make us one with God.
- **Righteousness** – made right with God through Jesus Christ.
- **Sanctification** – set apart for that which is holy and used of God.
- **Justification** – just as if you never sinned – your sin is forgotten by God and not remembered.
- **Body of Christ**- the total body of believers, past, present, and future.
- **Fruits of the Spirit** – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and gentleness.
- **Gifts of the Spirit** - scripture mentions about 25 different gifts.
- **Prayer** – talking with God effectively and listening to his answers.
- **Stewardship** (giving) – understanding the tithe and biblical instruction.
- **Lay ministry**- all given a gift for the common good.
- **Bible Study** – required of every child of God for training and discipleship.
- **Worship** – Christian duty and joy.
- **Forgiveness**- given to all who repent and choose Jesus as savior.

- ***Satan*** – fallen archangel corrupting and destroying the creatures of God.
- ***Hell***- place of eternal torment for all who reject God’s gift of salvation in Jesus.
- ***Demons*** – fallen spirits under Satan’s control.
- ***Spiritual Warfare*** – the unseen battle around us.
- ***Healing*** – physical, emotional (inner) and spiritual.
- ***Deliverance*** – God’s power over evil spirits to free us from their torment.
- ***Eternal life*** – God’s gift to all believers.
- ***Heaven*** – eternal dwelling place of God, his saints, and angelic beings.
- ***Angels*** – messengers that serve God and his saints.
- ***Sin*** – missing the mark – that which separates us from God.
- ***Eternal Judgment*** – for all those who reject Jesus.
- ***2nd Coming of Christ*** – the end of this age. His triumphal return for his Church.
- ***Antichrist*** – a spirit working through a person that imitates Jesus and leads the world astray.
- ***Tribulation*** – a period of 7 years prior to the return of Christ.
- ***Holy Scripture*** – 66 books of the bible – 39 OT; 27 NT; divinely inspired and completely accurate in all it contains. The source and basis of our faith and doctrine.
- ***Human Sexuality*** – Only one expression blessed by God – Man and Woman in Holy Matrimony.
- ***Moral and Ethical Standards*** – golden rule; 10 commandments; Summary of the Law; Biblical standards.
- ***Sanctity of Human Life*** – made in God’s image, unique and of infinite worth and value to God.
- ***Free Will and Original Sin*** – the ability to make choices freely and the blessing or consequences of those choices.
- ***Sovereignty of God*** – His absolute control over all events in time and history for his purposes. Always just and completely consistent with his character.
- ***Temptation*** – that which draws us away from God and leads to sin.
- ***10 Commandments*** – the basis of all law and governance in the earth.
- ***Summary of the Law*** – love God, neighbor, self.
- ***Golden Rule*** – do to others as you want done to you.

The renewing of the mind gives you a “grid” with which to process life and decision-making. **2 Corinthians 4** tell us to bring every thought captive to the mind of Christ.

- The renewed mind can detect deception.
- The renewed mind can detect error.
- The renewed mind can respond to temptation – it is written.
- The renewed mind is the source of God’s Wisdom.
- The renewed mind is filled with Godly counsel.
- The renewed mind is a shield of faith.
- The renewed mind is a light in the darkness.
- The renewed mind is salt in the earth.

HEALING THE SICK

Isaiah 53:4-7:

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

Matthew 8:16-17

When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were ill. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."

1 Peter 2:24

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds, you were healed.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

And I, when I came to you, brothers,^[a] did not come proclaiming to you the testimony^[b] of God with lofty speech or wisdom.² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men^[c] but in the power of God.

Acts 8:4-8

Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.⁵ Philip went down to the city^[a] of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.⁶ And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.⁷ For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed, or lame were healed.⁸ So there was much joy in that city.

CASTING OUT THE DEMONIC

Mark 16:15-18

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues;¹⁸ they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

John 14: 12

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the father.

Ephesians 6:12

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Colossians 1:13

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

Colossians 2:15

He disarmed the rulers and authorities^[b] and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Acts 16:16-18

As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” ¹⁸ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned, and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.