

YOU

Sermon Series: Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus

To be used with: Joining God's Work

Sermon Title Possibilities: All Christians Are Called To Serve

Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study "*Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus*," this sermon explores the command of the Great Commission as well as how it is lived out on a daily basis.

Introduction: Before we can understand algebra, we must understand addition and subtraction. Before we can write a term paper, we need to be able to understand verbs, nouns and adjectives. Before we can grasp the fact that we are to join God in His work, we must understand that we are all called to fulfill His Great Commission. This sermon will exegete the Great Commission so that we can better understand it and apply it to our lives.

1. Jesus is speaking to His disciples

In setting the context for the Great Commission, we know that Jesus had been crucified and raised from the dead. He had appeared to His disciples on multiple occasion and had also appeared to more than 500 witnesses (1 Cor. 15:6). He is soon to return to the Father where He is currently seated at the right hand of the Father enthroned in power.

Prior to His ascension He communicated with His disciples the Great Commission. It is vital to note the plural nature of this command. Jesus is talking to all of His disciples. He did not single out Peter, who was extremely vocal. He did not appoint only Thomas who had moved away from doubt. Instead, He spoke to all present that day. The implication for us today is since the command was issued to various people then, it still applies for us today. We too are called to join God in His work. He did not exclude anyone then and He does not exclude anyone today.

2. Jesus is in authority

When an individual receives a command, it is common to consider the authority of the one who is issuing it. If the command comes from a supervisor, it is advantageous to fulfill it. If it comes from a friend and it involves getting out of the recliner at a pivotal point in the game, it is most likely ignored.

The command to serve God by joining Him in His work is issued by Jesus who has been given all authority in heaven and earth. No greater authority exists than Jesus and as we learned in our first point, the Great Commission applies to all of Jesus' disciples. We now must turn our focus to the command itself. What does obedience to look like?

3. Jesus commands us to make disciples

In order to fully understand and apply the Great Commission, we need to understand some basic grammar. Many know and understand that a verb is an action word. When a command is given, the fulfillment of the verb is the action to be taken. An adverb, which modifies the verb, tells us how to fulfill the verb. If we are commanded to run quickly, the act of running is the verb. Quickly, which modifies the verb, tells us how to fulfill the command.

In looking at the original language of the Great Commission, making disciples is the command. Go, baptize and teach tell us how to make disciples. Many assume that “go” is the command, but this is not the case.

Given this information, we need to understand our calling to serve God so that we can be found faithful to Him. A disciple is a life-long learner and we are called to make life-long learners. We are not called to simply lead someone in a prayer of repentance and then move on to the next individual. Instead, we are called to share the gospel message with those around us and journey with them as they journey with the Savior.

The way that we fulfill this command is by going, baptizing and teaching. The best way to render the adverb go is to communicate it as an “as we go” approach. As we go to work and school, make disciples. As we go to our kids sporting events, make disciples. As we go about our daily routine in our own homes, we are to make disciples within our own families. The proper understanding of this part of the text will radically change how we approach evangelism.

We are also to baptize and teach. Baptism is a public symbol of our commitment to Christ. It does not complete our salvation, but rather serves as an act of obedience to the One who is in authority. We are also called to be life-long learners. The fulfillment of the Great Commission is the learning and observance of all that Christ has commanded us. Once again, we are all called to join God in the fulfillment of His Great Commission.

Conclusion: The Great Commission concludes with a promise that must not be missed. Jesus said, “And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age” (v. 28). Yes, we are called to join God in His amazing work, but He has not left us alone. As we seek to make disciples by going, baptizing and teaching, He is with us every step of the way. He will never abandon us.

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