



Reaching our Neighbors Pt 3: The Commission of Jesus

April 19, 2020

Good morning!

Anybody else sick of the word "unprecedented?" :) Its use is understandable though. One "good" thing COVID-19 has done is make people think about eternity.

Did you know that nearly two people die every second?

Job said, "O remember that my life *is* wind: mine eye shall no more see good." **Job 7:7 (KJV)**

The Psalmist wrote: "Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? What man *is he that* liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah." **Psalms 89:47-48 (KJV)**

James said, "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." **James 4:13-15 (KJV)**

Friends, people are dying. Many will face judgment without our LORD. Yet there is hope...

1. God **loves** people (Jn 3:16)! Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Lk 19:10). He does not want one of them to perish in hell (2 Pet 3:9).
2. People are **lost**. Satan, the god of this age, has blinded the minds of many (2 Cor 4:4). Without Jesus, many of the people you know will die in their sins (Jn 8:24).
3. People are **hurting**. God is standing by to bind up their wounds and heal their broken hearts (Ps 147:3).

Jesus wants us to be passionate about reaching people...intentional. Let us go His Words about this...

Holy Texts:

- **Matthew 28:18-20 (KJV)** *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*
- **Mark 16:14-16 (KJV)** *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. 15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*
- **Luke 24:44-49 (KJV)** *And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is*

written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: **47** And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** And ye are witnesses of these things. **49** And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

- **John 21:15-19 (KJV)** So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?* He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, *Feed my lambs.* **16** He saith to him again the second time, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, *Feed my sheep.* **17** He saith unto him the third time, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, *Lovest thou me?* And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, *Feed my sheep.* **18** Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.* **19** This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, *Follow me.*

Thoughts on Mathew 28:18-20

1. In the authority of Christ, we must again, “Go.” (vv18-19)
2. Go is a verb. It is an imperative. The word means “to travel or journey.”
3. Disciples of Jesus are to not just “go,” but go in His power and authority! This should give us great confidence; Jesus promises to help!
4. We are also commanded to “teach.” Teach what? Everything He commands! The entire Bible! The whole counsel of God! Yes, the Great Commission is about preaching the Gospel, but also teaching the Bible! Why is this so? Because our LORD wants more disciples...more followers.
5. The word “teach” (mathēteuō) means “to make learners or pupils.”
6. The church is integral in this process: new converts are to be baptized into the body of believers!
7. Consider the beauty and power of our LORD’s Commission: the church, in an effort to reach our friends and neighbors with the gospel, goes. We decide to actually move from where we are to where they are. Then, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we begin to teach all the things that the Lord has commanded. By his grace, some will be saved! Those new believers are baptized into the body of Christ and begin to learn and subsequently live lives that honor him! They then repeat the process!
8. This should excite us! *Imagine new people coming to know Jesus, being baptized into the church, and taking up the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and learning with zeal and faithfulness! Imagine their lives rapidly changing as the Holy Spirit empowers their obedience! Imagine the peace, and joy! Imagine whole generations shifting, whole nations changing!*
9. YOU and I are a part of this! Command wasn't just to the Eleven, but through them!
10. We get to partake in preaching the best news in all of creation, sharing it with our family, friends, neighbors, with humility and joy. Hallelujah!

Thoughts on Mark 16:14-16

1. Mark also gives us the clear command to “go.” I want there to be no doubt as to the commanded nature of the Commission to preach the Gospel of Christ to everyone

2. Interestingly, it was in the context of unbelief that the Commission was given by our LORD. (v14) And this gives me hope! The disciples lived with Jesus for three years and yet struggled with faith. Have you ever struggled with faith? ☺
3. The Commission wasn't given to perfect people! Far from it. As they sat in unbelief, likely hiding from religious and secular authorities as they "sat at mean" or reclined at table, the LORD appears and establishes a critical part of the mission of the Church.
4. After a stern rebuke, Jesus says, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." Wow! (v15)
 - Understanding the "Go!" nature of the command and the context in which it was given will also help us understand the nature of the church when it gathers and what we must do when we scatter.
 - When we gather, the saints "come together." When we leave, we "go." In other words, even the nature of the evangelistic part of the Great Commission helps us to see that the meeting of the local church is not primarily for evangelism.
 - The church gathers for edification and instruction of the saints. We gather to worship and learn; we scatter to preach and disciple others. Both of these things are "The Great Commission." Each has its primary place.
 - **Can you IMAGINE what would happen if every person listening won ONE family to Christ this year (by God's grace) and got them connected to a reasonably healthy local church?**
 - Renewal! Revival! Reformation!!!!

Thoughts on Luke 24:44-49

1. From Luke's perspective, an understanding of the Scriptures gives a fuller understanding of the Whole Gospel. Truly, if you don't study the Old Testament, it's hard to truly grasp the New. (Acts 8:35)
2. Luke also reminds us of the importance of prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit. It is God who opens up understanding! (v45) We must pray that as we attempt to reach our neighbors, the Holy Spirit will empower our efforts and the Lord would open up the hearts of people to whom we are ministering.
3. May the LORD help those in our sphere of influence understand that the redemptive plan of God from Genesis through Revelation speaks of the coming of, suffering of, divine nature of, death of, rising of, and coming again of our King, Jesus! (v46)
4. Finally, we can take this thought from Luke: *ministry of the Gospel must include repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Name. We must not leave out the call to repent; we must not leave out the true reason why he came: the forgiveness of sins!*
5. And that Gospel Message is to be preached (kērussō: "herald, proclaim openly") to all nations (v47), in the power of the Holy Spirit! (v49) Fill us LORD to do just that!

Acts 1:8 (KJV) *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Brief Thoughts on John 21:15-19

1. This passage has always caused some personal emotions.
2. Three times, the LORD framed the Commission to "feed my lambs, feed my sheep, feed my sheep" on the foundation of whether Peter truly loved Him.

3. Basically, it's like He said, *"if you love me....truly, truly love me....no I meant seriously, passionately, with all your heart and mind and soul and strength love me...you will preach the Gospel and teach my people."*
4. Peter was grieved at this. (v17) Would you have been? What if the LORD put these same questions to you?
5. Could the LORD's questions about whether Peter really loved Him have something to do with the fact that the cost of the Commission was high? (v18-19)
6. Are we willing to "follow Him" even with such a high price!

As we close, here is what Foxe's Book of Martyrs says about ol' Peter. **What are you (and what am I for that matter) willing to give up for the Great Commission?**

Among many other saints, the blessed apostle Peter was condemned to death, and crucified, as some do write, at Rome; albeit some others, and not without cause, do doubt thereof. Hegesippus saith that Nero sought matter against Peter to put him to death; which, when the people perceived, they entreated Peter with much ado that he would fly the city. Peter, through their importunity at length persuaded, prepared himself to avoid. But, coming to the gate, he saw the Lord Christ come to meet him, to whom he, worshipping, said, "Lord, whither dost Thou go?" To whom He answered and said, "I am come again to be crucified." By this, Peter, perceiving his suffering to be understood, returned into the city. Jerome saith that he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was.

Mark 8:35 ESV - For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

Final thoughts:

- What are you willing to endure to reach your neighbors?
- What are you willing to suffer to obey our LORD's Commission?
- What things are in the way of such devotion and determination?

May the LORD remind us of not only how high the price is, but how tragic the consequences are if we do not obey. May we live with a sense of the eternal...with the understanding that those around us are eternal souls destined for either heaven or hell. May that knowledge, combined with the grace of God towards us, stir us to action.

In Jesus name, Amen!