

Sunday Morning Message

October 20, 2024

Hitting the Reset Button on Fulfilling the Great Commission

Texts – Several – Listed in the Introduction

Congregational Reading – Matthew 28:18 - 20

Introduction

Turn to - Acts 8:1 – 4; Acts 5:40 - 42; 1 Corinthians 15:1 – 4; Matthew 28:18 - 20

We talk a lot about The Great Commission, a phrase that is familiar to many of you, but perhaps foreign to more than a few. Jesus gave His Great Commission to the disciples right before He ascended into Heaven. It was the last charge the Lord gave us, and it is really the central theme and purpose of this local church and all others. We exist as a church corporately to fulfill The Great Commission.

We have been talking for the last few weeks about hitting the reset button on some areas of our life that need to be adjusted. This Back-to-School time of the year provides more regular schedules, so it is a great time to reconfigure our lives to make sure that we are rightly prioritizing what we should be doing. We have talked about hitting the reset button on our love for the Lord, generally; on our attending church; on our devotion to prayer and to the Word of God; on our practice of compassion and forgiveness. These are all things we get away from at times and we become casual about. Today, we are going to discuss perhaps a very needy area that we need to hit the reset button, and that is fulfilling the Great Commission.

What is the Great Commission?

*"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." -
(Matthew 28:18-20)*

"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." (Acts 1:8)

"14 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. ... 19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." (Mark 16:14-15, 19-20)

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." - (John 3:16)

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." - (Matthew 24:14)

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. 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." - (Luke 24:47-49)

I The Great Commission Involves Three Primary Duties

Let's go back to our text verses:

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." - (Matthew 28:18-20)

1 Preaching the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1 – 8)

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations

It is through faith in the gospel that people are saved from going to Hell. We are all lost sinners and without Christ we were doomed to an eternity of separation from God in a horrible place the Bible refers to as Hell. But the Gospel (or good news) teaches us that Jesus Christ died on the Cross 2000 years ago and was buried and rose again on the third day, and by doing so satisfied the payment that God demanded for our sin. God says that if we will repent and place our faith (our dependence) on the Lord Jesus Christ and what He did for us on the Cross, we could not only escape the penalty of Hell, but also enjoy the pleasures of Heaven for all eternity.

But for people to hear the Gospel, the Gospel must be preached:

Turn to Romans 10:5 – 15

2 Baptizing the Saved

baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

What is Biblical Baptism?

Baptism is the complete immersion of a believer in water. Baptism is not sprinkling. The Bible is clear in every case that the people being baptized went down into the water and came up out of the water. John the Baptist baptized in Aenon (John 3:23) because there was "much water" there. You do not need a lot of water to sprinkle someone.

Baptism is not for babies, for the Scripture tells us in Acts 8:37 that the requirement for baptism is first a belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Baptism is a public profession of your faith in Christ. It publicly identifies you with Christ's message, and it paints a picture of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Baptism also pictures the cleansing from sin.

Baptism also is a requirement for membership in the local church. You cannot be a member of the church unless you have been Scripturally baptized.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41)

Jesus commanded baptism.

Jesus identified with His own message through baptism. He was baptized Himself. That is why we sometimes say that we are following the Lord in baptism.

3 Training Disciples

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:1-2)

After a person has been saved, and after they have been baptized, they should begin what is really a lifelong process of Christian growth, which we commonly call discipleship.

Once we are saved, we become ambassadors for the Lord, and we must be trained to represent the Lord well:

Turn to 2 Corinthians 5:16 – 21

We have an organized program of discipleship which we recommend to all new believers. It is a one-on-one program where one of our disciples sits down with a new convert and teaches him (or her) the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. We also recommend this program to all who are new to the church, even if they have been saved for a long time.

We are also disciplined through the instruction that we receive in our church services. The best counselling and instruction that you can receive will come through what you learn in the church services and Adult Bible classes. We use a lot of Scripture here in our preaching and teaching, and you will learn the Bible, and, more importantly, learn how to better glorify and represent the Lord through faithful attendance to the church services.

You can also go even further in your discipleship by attending a Bible Institute level class, or Bible College.

The point is that after we are saved God wants us to grow in the Lord.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly

dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

Discipleship and Christian growth will better equip you to fulfill the Great Commission yourself.

II The Great Commission Permeates Four Geographic Areas

"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." (Acts 1:8)

A careful study of the Book of Acts saw the gospel spread geographically from the Jewish population in Jerusalem through Samaria, up into Syria, then into Asia Minor, and eventually into Europe.

1 Jerusalem

For us, Jerusalem is our community, it is our town. It is your neighborhood. It is your neighbor, your family, your co-worker. You and I are personally responsible to do everything that we can do to get the message of the gospel to Galloway, Absecon, Egg Harbor Twp., Egg Harbor City, Mullica, Port Republic, Atlantic City. We need to take ownership of this area for the Lord.

How can you help reach this area with the gospel?

Have good testimony within the community – live for God!

Carry gospel tracts with you and distribute them to everyone that you know.

Give out "Done" Books to those who will read them.

Learn how to share your faith with others and do it.

Invite folks to church, VBS, Back to School Rally, etc.

Participate in our organized outreaches.

Get involved in the Bus Ministry and Kids Club.

Pray for the community; pray specifically for the lost people that you know.

Give to the General Fund.

2 Judaea

Judaea was the area surrounding Jerusalem. It was culturally the same as Jerusalem, but maybe too far away for the people in Jerusalem to go and personally minister too. For us, Judaea would be supporting the work of church planters outside of our immediate area. (i.e. Cardiff Baptist Church, Bayview Bible Baptist Church, the Atlantic City Baptist Church plant – coming this summer.

We can help these churches by sending a team of soul winners to their town and help them evangelize. Perhaps a family from our church will go there every week for a while to help them get started.

We can support them financially.

3 Samaria

These folks were not just geographically distant, they were also culturally different. We must come out of our cultural comfort zones and get a burden for reaching people who are different from us. (i.e. Brother Town – reaching the Arab speaking population in Philadelphia)

4 The Uttermost Part of the Earth

We in Galloway are commanded by the Lord to do what we can do to reach the uttermost part of the earth with the gospel.

We can go ourselves – surrender to be a missionary.

We can give to those who go through our Missions offerings.

We can support and participate in special missions' projects such as the Seedline Projects.

We can pray. (Poem by Sarah Goodwin)

Last night I took a journey
To a land far 'cross the seas;
I didn't go by boat or plane,
I trusted on my knees.
I saw so many people there
In deepest depths of sin,
And Jesus told me I should go
That there were souls to win.
But I said, "Jesus, I can't go
And work with such as these."
He answered quickly, "Yes, you can
By traveling on your knees."
He said, "You pray; I'll meet the need,
You call and I will hear;
Be concerned about lost souls,
Of those both far and near."
And so I tried it, knelt in prayer,
Gave up some hours of ease;
I felt the Lord right by my side
While traveling on my knees.
As I prayed on and saw souls saved
And twisted bodies healed,
And saw God's workers' strength renewed
While laboring on the field.

I said, "Yes, Lord, I have a job
My desire Thy will to please;
I can go and heed Thy call
By traveling on my knees."

Conclusion

God saved you and me and left us here on the earth so that we can be used of Him to help Him save others. God could have taken us immediately up into Heaven, but He didn't. He wants to reach other lost people through the vehicle of The Great Commission.

Someday soon, you and I will stand before God and give an account of what we did with The Great Commission.

*"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, **we persuade men**; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."* (2 Corinthians 5:9-11)

God used someone to persuade you to be saved. We now need to do our part in persuading others. You and I need to go to everybody we can personally go to and give them the gospel, the good news of the salvation that is available through Christ. We also need to give so that this church will have the funds it needs to fulfill the Great Commission, and so that we can give to other churches around the world so that they can do what God has called them to do.

Illustration from Warren Wiersbe: (W. Wiersbe, Something Happens When Churches Pray, pp.102-3.)

Dr. E. Myers Harrison was a great servant of God and a great missionary statesman. He said that each of us as Christians must hear what God has to say. There is the command from above: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Have you heard that?

I've heard people say, "But God wants our church to be different. We're not supposed to have a missionary program." I don't believe that. I believe the command from above is given to every Christian and to every assembly that God has raised up. Then there is the cry from beneath. Remember the rich man who died and woke up in hell and begged for someone to go and tell his brothers? (see Luke 16). "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house (for I have five brethren), that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (vv. 27,28). There is the cry from beneath. If you and I could hear the cries of people in a lost eternity right now, we'd realize how important it is to get the Gospel out. There's the command from above. Have you heard it? There's the cry from beneath. Have you heard it?

Then, according to Dr. Harrison, there is the call from without. Acts 16:9 says, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." People around us are saying, "Please come to help us!" So much money, time and energy are being spent on routine church matters in America when there is a whole world to reach for Christ! We face so many open doors!