

A Great Commission People

Matthew 28: 19-20

The Purpose of this Church shall be to Promote the Preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Spread of Divine Truth at Home and Abroad. This purpose statement came directly from our website. This defines who we are and what we expect to achieve as a local body of believers. This is a solid, Kingdom focused purpose statement. In fact, it summarizes what every New Testament church should strive to achieve.

Such a purpose is biblical and certainly needful in our day. The question is – how do we successfully fulfill such a worthy purpose? What does such an endeavor look like within the context of the culture in which we live? Such questions lead to other questions. Who is responsible to engage in this endeavor? What is our individual role in striving to achieve the purpose of Shady Grove Baptist Church? As we quickly examine these questions, I want to address them in reverse order. We, (you and I,) are responsible for this endeavor. If you are a born-again believer and part of the fellowship of this congregation, you are responsible for striving to fulfill this purpose. How do we engage in such a worthy endeavor within our cultural context? It is quite simple – we make a commitment to live intentionally for Christ. I will admit this is an expansive purpose that is inexhaustible, but we must engage in striving to fulfill it one encounter at a time, one life at a time.

As we examine the [aspects](#) of this familiar text, I want to consider: [A Great Commission People](#). As we begin, take a moment to notice [Verse 17 – And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted](#). Within those who gathered for worship, there were some who doubted. This doesn't mean they doubted that Jesus was in fact the Christ, but rather they were hesitant. They were unsure of their ability to fulfill all that the Lord had asked of them. No doubt, many believers are hesitant today as they consider the enormous responsibility of the Great Commission. Remember, we accomplish this one encounter at a time and one life at a time. Notice:

I. Our Responsibility – These verses reveal the heart of Christian service. These are the marching orders for the church. While Jesus gave this command to the disciples prior to His ascension, He left this instruction for the church – those these men would reach with the Gospel and successive generations of believers. This is our command, our responsibility. It is two-fold.

A. Evangelism (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](#). The phrase “teach all nations” has the idea of “*instructing with the purpose of making disciples of all nations and people.*” If one is to make disciples, those who

follow Christ and His teaching, then it stands to reason that we must present the gospel and win them to Christ. It is impossible to follow the Lord apart from a relationship with Him. Sharing the gospel with those who are yet unsaved is the starting point of the Great Commission. Our communities are filled with those who have yet to respond to the gospel of Christ – His death on the cross to atone for our sin, and His resurrection for our justification and eternal life.

- The Lord calls for new believers to be baptized following their conversion. As Baptists, this is essential for church membership. We do not teach that baptism saves, but we do encourage new converts to follow through with baptism, publicly professing their faith in Christ, and becoming an active member within a local body of believers. We must strive to encourage those we reach for Christ to be baptized and join the local church.

B. Discipleship (19a, 20a) – *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations* (make disciples of all nations.)^[20a] *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* Evangelism is essential; it is foundational in fulfilling the Great Commission. However, when evangelism is successful and we reach others for Christ, it is just the beginning of a continued process that requires much commitment. Those who are won to Christ, being saved by His grace, must then be discipled in the faith. Those who commit to making disciples for Christ are committing to making an ongoing investment in the life of the new disciple. *This involves instruction by word of mouth, literally sharing the truth we have received with them.* We must be willing to invest our wisdom in the lives of others.

- When considering this process, one would rightly discern that it would take a lifetime to share all that one has gleaned from the Word of God. Genuine discipleship really has no beginning date or targeted end date. We must be willing to continue to invest in their lives as long as we have opportunity. Each of us, regardless of our maturity level, should continue to be discipled as well. I pastor the church here, but I am actively being discipled by others who have much to share with me. As I continue to learn, I continue to invest in those I am discipling. Discipleship involves long-term commitment and investment.

II. Our Ministry – So, now that we have a better understanding of the responsibilities of the Great Commission, what does that actually look like in our everyday lives? We can look to the text for guidance. Consider:

A. The Participation (19) – *Go ye therefore...* I know this is deep theology, but if others are to hear the Good News, and have an opportunity to respond, we must take the gospel to them. The days of lost folks seeking out a church are gone. We cannot assume they know where we are and

depend on them to show up for service. Jesus commands the disciples to go out into all nations in ministry. The word literally means “*to transport one’s self; to go from one place to another.*” This involves determined and committed action. As followers of Christ, we are commanded to go forth into the world for Christ!

B. The Location (19) – *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.* This is quite challenging and can seem overwhelming. If we approach the Great Commission in our own wisdom and strength it will be overwhelming. However, the Lord has commanded us to go and make disciples of all nations. Some may never have an opportunity to make an international mission trip, but we can all pray and support those who serve around the world. The point is – everywhere is a mission field. As believers we must live intentionally, daily seeking opportunities to have gospel conversations. Wherever we are at any given time in life is our current mission field.

III. Our Authority (20b) – *and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.* As we have discussed, this would be an impossible endeavor within our own abilities. Thankfully, the Lord does not expect us to fulfill the Great Commission alone or within our own ability. In His closing words, Jesus revealed a two-fold promise. We can be assured of:

A. His Presence – Jesus promised to be with us always, even unto the end of the world. We are part of His body, seeking to build His church. He has a vested interest in the health and well-being of the church. He has promised to abide faithful to the church as she strives to reach others with the gospel until He returns in power and great glory. As we seek to engage those who do not know Christ, we do so with the assurance that He is near to us. He will guide us through His Holy Spirit. The Lord’s presence is both beneficial to us and essential to the process. He has the ability to work in the lives of those we encounter, preparing their hearts to be receptive to the gospel. What have we to fear? Yes, we have been tasked with reaching the world for Christ, but He has promised to be there with us as we obediently follow Him.

B. His Power – This goes hand in hand with the Lord’s presence. As we share the gospel, we are not sharing a myth or urban legend. We are sharing the life-changing Good News. The gospel has the power to transform a hardened heart full of sin into a new heart full of life in Christ. The Word of God, and the gospel in particular, are living and powerful. We lack the ability to save anyone, but we can share the life-changing message and watch the power of Christ transform lives. I find comfort in the power of our Lord through His Spirit. I do not witness to His saving grace apart from His divine power and leading. We are merely the voice that conveys the message; He is the one who convicts and saves. This provides boldness and assurance as we share the gospel.

Conclusion: This is a familiar passage to most, if not all of us. We know what the Great Commission is, but are we actively seeking to obediently fulfill it? Has the Lord spoken to your heart? Do you have a specific individual with whom you are planning to share the gospel? Are we intentional in actively living out our faith and being a gospel witness? Maybe someone is here today and has yet to respond to the gospel. I would urge you to respond to the leading of the Spirit, and come in repentance and faith unto salvation.