

Reviving the Great Commission from the Gross Omission

Matthew 28: 18-20

We have read what is commonly known as the Great Commission. These were Jesus' parting words for the church just prior to His ascension. It is here that we discover our purpose in life. This is the mission statement for the church. These are our marching orders. It is here that Jesus clearly laid out the purpose and plan for the church to continue in His absence.

Sadly many have ignored the Great Commission and it has become rather the Gross Omission. This has become increasingly evident in our generation, but many down through the ages have failed in their purpose. When the idea of foreign missions was introduced to the Baptist faith, it was met with great opposition. Many have trouble following the command of our Lord when it comes to evangelism and missions. Consider these statistics: 95% of all Christians have never led a person to Christ; 80% of believers have no consistent witness for the Lord; Less than 2% are actively involved with some type of evangelistic ministry; and 71% give nothing toward financing missions or evangelistic ministries. ¹

These numbers are troubling, but they reveal just where the modern church exists. It is clear that the church as a whole is not fulfilling the Great Commission. There can be no doubt that this was the priority for Christ. It was the last thing He said before He left. These were His final instructions for the church. We have the complete Word of God; there is no new revelation, so we must fulfill our obligations. I want to examine this passage and see what we can discover concerning: [Reviving the Great Commission from the Gross Omission](#).

I. The Confidence (18) – [And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.](#) This verse ought to encourage us and give us great confidence in our quest to fulfill the Great Commission. We have received our orders from One who possesses all [power](#). This speaks of "*the ability, the authority, and the right to do something.*" We are serving the risen Lord. He spoke these words after His resurrection from the grave. He conquered sin and death and He has the power to enable us to carry out His work!

- [Mat.16:18](#) – [And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.](#) The church may have faced adversity; she may have stumbled along the way, but she has endured for over 2,000 years. We are a people of hope and ability through the Lord we serve. We can accomplish His will because we are indwelt with His power! This is not a task that is unachievable. We can do this through the power of our Lord.

II. The Command (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:](#) What is the first word in this statement? Go!

This is a word that requires and expects action. It means “*to pursue the journey on has entered.*”

Christ expected them to go and fulfill the Great Commission. He expected them to take the gospel message to a lost and dying world. This was not an option; it was a command!

- If you are saved, you are part of the church. You have inherited this command. We are to go and fulfill the Great Commission. This cannot be accomplished sitting on the pew within our comfort zone. There is a work to be done within the church, but we must take the message outside of our stained glass prisons to a world that desperately needs to hear!

I. The Confidence (18)

II. The Command (19)

III. The Called (19) – Notice the next word in this command. **Go ye.** The Lord was not vague in whom was expected to carry out this order. In fact, He was very specific. He was talking to the disciples and He gave the order directly to them. They had been called and appointed to this task.

- This command was given to His disciples. A disciple is simply a follower of Christ. They were entrusted with the work and that work has been handed down and entrusted to each successive generation. This was not a work that was exclusive for the eleven, but it is a work that continues today.

- If you are a child of God, you are responsible to fulfill the Great Commission. We will one day stand and give account to God of the life we lived and the faith we shared. This is not an option for us. If we are to live as God intends for us to live, we will embrace this command and do our part to ensure that it is carried out. **1 Pet.3:15 – But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:**

IV. The Course (19) – **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.** Here Jesus reveals their field of service, those whom they were responsible to reach. This was no small order; it was not to be taken lightly. They were charged with taking the gospel to all nations, in essence to the world. Wherever the Lord sent them was a mission field. None were to be overlooked or forsaken. All people were to hear the gospel.

- I don't want to alarm you, but we too are responsible for reaching all nations. We are obligated to reach the entire world with the gospel. This is where most get nervous and want to draw the line. Many are comfortable serving the Lord within their comfort zone, but refuse to go beyond that.

- You might ask how this is possible. We live in Mt. Airy. How are we supposed to reach the world? Consider the parallel passage in **Acts 1:8 – 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. This is not an option, but a command. We are to reach our **Jerusalem**, our family, friends, co-workers, etc. We are also to reach our **Judaea**, our communities – at the shopping center, bank, garage, ball game, etc. We are also responsible for our **Samaria**, literally our nation, the USA. This can be done while traveling, visiting friends and family, and through giving to missions here within the USA. Lastly we are responsible to reach the **uttermost part of the earth**.

- This too is attainable for each of us. All have not been called to serve on foreign soil, but all have been called to serve as foreign missionaries. We can achieve this by short term mission trips, shoe boxes for the less fortunate, and prayer and financial support of missionaries.

- It amazes me how reluctant many are to give in support of missions. It seems the easiest part of the ministry. God has not called us to leave our families and the life we know to travel half way around the world to live among foreign people. The least we can do is pray and give to support those who are there! Each of us will stand accountable to God for reaching the world.

I. The Confidence (18)

II. The Command (19)

III. The Called (19)

IV. The Course (19)

V. The Concern (19b-20a) – **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:** Christ reveals that there is a specific mission involved when going to all nations. We are to reach them for Him. The church is charged with evangelizing the lost. If we go in among the world and fail to present the gospel, reaching them for Christ, then we have failed in what we do.

- Now we can't save them. I realize that everyone will not receive the gospel, but that doesn't release us from our obligation. We must do our part to ensure that all people have the opportunity to hear and leave the rest to the Holy Spirit. **Rom.10:13-14 – For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. [14] How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?** I am confident enough in my Lord to know that He will touch the hearts of those who seek Him.

- There is one more important aspect involved in our concern. Jesus said we are to **teach all nations**. Clearly this involves the presentation of the gospel, but it goes beyond an initial introduction to Jesus. Once they are reached, they are to be baptized and disciplined in the faith. The word **teach** literally means “*to make a disciple.*”

- This is one area in which the church is failing. New converts are often overlooked and many times they simply fall through the cracks. We are responsible for their spiritual growth and well being. We are responsible to disciple them in the faith. Jesus emphasizes this need and responsibility in **V.20a – Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.** Where would we be spiritually had someone not helped us along the way? Reach out to those around us and help nurture their faith.

I. The Confidence (18)

II. The Command (19)

III. The Called (19)

IV. The Course (19)

V. The Concern (19b-20a)

VI. The Comfort (20b) – **and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.** Amen. (This is not implying that one should not get on an airplane.) What comfort we find in this verse. Jesus is with us always.

- I know that this seems an unreachable task, but we have the assurance that Jesus will be there to guide, strengthen, and encourage us wherever and whenever we witness for Him. **Lu.12:11-12 – And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: [12] For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.** **Is.55:11 – So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.** We serve a God of power and wisdom. We could never accomplish such a task in and of ourselves, but through Christ we can do all things. We can fulfill the Great Commission through Him.

I have heard these verses all of my life, but I have been challenged deeply through this study. I am certain that we could all do more in fulfilling the Great Commission. I don't want us to be a congregation that is guilty of allowing this task to become the Gross Omission among us.

I want to close with this challenge. Where would we be tonight if a church or individual hadn't sought to do their part in the work of God? Likely we would still be lost and on our way to hell. There are countless people in our communities, our nation, and our world who desperately need to hear the gospel.

They may not even realize it, but they need Jesus. What are we going to do as individuals and as a church body to reach them? Surely we could all do more than what we currently are doing!

¹ http://sermonnotebook.org/new%20testament/Matthew%2028_18-20.htm