

The Great Commission: Go!

1. Read Matthew 28:16-20.

Matthew 28:19-20. 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 always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

What had been given to Jesus? (v. 18) _____

In what two places did Jesus have authority? (v. 18) _____

Who do you think gave it to Him? _____

Why do you think Jesus needed to tell them he had authority?

In verses 19-20 Jesus commands the disciples to do four things. What are they?

1. (v. 19) *G* _____

2. (v. 19) *Make* _____

3. (v. 19) *B* _____

4. (v. 20) *T* _____

What promise is included in the last part of verse 20? _____

2. Let us now consider these four commands in verses 19-20.

1. Go. Here Jesus is *not* saying become a fulltime missionary. Too often Christians assume that this verse does not apply to them, just to evangelists, pastors, and missionaries. But Jesus was commanding His whole Church! The verb ought to read, *having gone*, or, *as you go*. In this sense it is to everyone, that in your going, do the following. Whether your going is working in a factory, at the hospital, or at school, you are to obey the next three commands.

2. Make disciples. This should be our goal: to make disciples, followers of Jesus—not just hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word. Read James 1:22. Making disciples is real evangelism. Many have made converts but not disciples. Jesus commands us to make disciples. A disciple is one who follows another. We are to reach people with the Gospel so that they will become followers of Jesus, not just people who have prayed a prayer to get out of Hell!

Definition of Evangelism

Evangelism is the mission of the Church. Evangelism is sharing the good news of Christ's love with those in whom we come in contact, leading them into a personal relationship with Jesus, baptizing them, and teaching them to obey the Lord in everything, so that they in turn will be able to evangelize others.

There is a **process** to leading someone into discipleship. It begins with a personal decision to claim Jesus as Lord and Savior. The following verses will help you in leading someone to Christ.

Memorize their addresses (*where they are found in the Bible!*), **and what they refer to** (*the topic statement in bold*). If you would memorize the verses themselves, you would be blessed and ready to be used by the Lord at any time.

1. God loves everyone.

John 3:16, 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.

- It is good to begin with God's love and care for people. Jesus always approached those in need with compassion. We must do the same.
- Emphasize that God's love is unmerited. That He loves everyone the same, and that He cares particularly about the person to whom you are witnessing.
- Have the person reread the verse with you replacing the words *world* with their own name.

2. All have sinned.

Romans 3:23, For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

- The emphasis here should be on **all**. No one is perfect. No one can claim to never have sinned. Have the person reword the sentence using his or her own name for all.
- You might want to spend some time talking about sin as *missing the mark*. Here Paul is referring to sin as being less than what God is. It is like shooting an arrow at a target. The arrow keeps landing short of the mark. No amount of effort will ever make the arrow hit the target which is the glory of God, or His holy character.
- God is holy. We are sinful. There is a great gulf between us.

3. The wages of sin and the gift of God.

Romans 6:23, For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Wages are what a person gets for what he or she has done. What each of us has done is sin. What we deserve to receive as payment is death. This death is more than physical—it is spiritual. The judgment for sin is being separated from God forever! Read Ephesians 2:1-3 for a description of the dead person.
- Paul also talks about a gift. Every gift is free or it would not be a gift. It cannot be earned! To many this is a stumbling block. They want to say they had a part in their salvation. But the only part we actually have is in receiving the free gift of eternal life.

- Note that the offer is eternal life. Not the hope of eternal life, nor the possibility of eternal life! To say that you had eternal life and then lost it, would be to say that you never had *eternal* life, just the hope of it.

4. Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8, But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Peter 3:18, For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

- God demonstrates His love to everyone by sending Jesus to die for us. He has taken our penalty of sin. Remember, the payment for sin is death, separation from God. Jesus experienced physical and spiritual death as He died on the cross for us.
- Note in Romans 5:8 that we were not His friends, but His enemies!
- In 1 Peter 3:18 there are two people referred to. One is *just (righteous)*, that is Jesus. The other is the *unjust (unrighteous)*, that is everyone else in the world. The one who took our payment had no sin of His own. If He would have had sin, He would only have died for His own, not ours. Praise the Lord He died for us. ***He did for us what we could not do for ourselves.***

5. You must repent.

Luke 13:3, I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

- Repentance is a matter of changing the direction you are going. It is not only saying you are sorry, or that you have sinned but that you also are choosing to obey Jesus rather than sinning and disobeying Him.
- If a person does not want to change their way of living and obey Jesus, no matter how much they pray, they will not be saved!

6. You must believe by faith.

Romans 10:9-10, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9, For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

- To become a disciple of Jesus a person must put his or her faith in Jesus completely. Note in Romans 10 that it is necessary to confess with the mouth. There are no secret Christians. A person **must** proclaim in words that can be heard, that **Jesus is their Lord, Master.**
- But words must be supported by belief in the resurrection of Jesus.
- Faith is the certainty that when we ask God to do something, He will do it. The person must pray knowing that God will forgive them and save them, without any doubt.

7. You must call on the Lord and receive Him.

Romans 10:13, For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

John 1:12, But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

- To call on the Lord a person must simply pray in faith believing that God hears and will answer.

Sinner's prayer. Here is a prayer that you can use to lead someone to Christ. Have them repeat it after you, phrase by phrase, and out loud.

Lord Jesus, thank you for dying for me on the cross. I know that I should have died for my sins. I ask you now to forgive me for sinning and come into my life. I claim you as my Lord and Savior and I choose to follow you the rest of my life. I believe that you resurrected from the dead and are alive today in my life. Thank you for saving me today. In Jesus name, Amen.

3. Let us now consider the third command in Matthew 18:19-20. **Baptism**

According to Matthew 28:19-20 evangelism is much more than winning someone to Christ. After one confesses Jesus as Lord and Savior, according to Matthew 28:19, what should they do next?

4. **Scriptural Baptism**

Because there are several kinds of baptisms that are unscriptural we must have a proper understanding of what the Bible means by baptism. We will accomplish this by answering some important questions.

• **Who should be baptized?**

The answer might seem academic, but the Radical Reformers (*Anabaptists, Mennonites, and others*) in the 1500's focused on the issues of The Lord's Supper, the Priesthood of the Believer, Church Government, and on **Scriptural Baptism**. Since everyone in Europe at the time was Roman Catholic, they had all been baptized as babies which was the practice of the Catholic Church then, and remains so today. The radical reformers believed that infant baptism was **not** scriptural. Some denominations still practice infant baptism today! (*Lutheran, Episcopal, Anglican, and Presbyterian*)

Read Acts 2:38, 41

What must happen before water baptism? (v. 38) _____

According to verse 41, who were baptized? _____

Read Acts 18:8.

What came before their baptism? _____

There are two things to remember here: **the requirement for baptism is belief in the Lord Jesus as Lord and Savior**. The other is that water baptism always **follows believing**. These are the two issues central to the Reformers' thinking.

• **What is the meaning of baptism?** Some denominations believe that water baptism washes away sins (*Lutheran, Roman Catholic*); others believe that they receive the

Holy Spirit in baptism and that baptism completes the salvational process (*Christian Church & Disciples of Christ*). We believe that the death of Christ was sufficient to deal with all our sins and formed an adequate basis for divine forgiveness and cleansing (see Col. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). The grace of God responds to **faith**, not baptism. The moment a person puts his or her faith in Christ they receive the Holy Spirit and are considered a part of the family of God (see John 1:12; Gal. 4:6; 1 Cor. 12:13, 27). But what is the purpose or meaning of water baptism?

Water baptism bears witness to certain spiritual realities which God has accomplished in the believer's life. When a new believer is baptized he or she is proclaiming, publicly, the following:

1. **Salvational faith in Christ** (Acts 18:8). The believer identifies with Jesus and is telling the world his faith is in Him alone.
 2. **Union with Christ** (Rom. 6:1-4). Water baptism is a picture, outward portrayal, of what God has done already in uniting the believer with Christ. The believer participates in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. (*The actual event takes place when the believer puts his faith in Christ.*) For more on this read Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:10-13, 20; Col. 3:1.
 3. **Desire to obey Christ** (Matt. 28:19-20). The believer announces his decision to follow Jesus for the rest of his life. Certainly obedience to his Lord's commands is understood!
 4. **Cleansing from sin** (Acts 22:16). While baptism does not wash away sins, it does portray the believer's cleansing from sin's defilement and guilt. The believer claims his freedom from sin as being final, once-for-all, never to be repeated again. See Col. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; 10:10, 12; Rom. 8:31-34 for more insight.
- **How should one be baptized?** There are three modes or forms of baptism practiced in the Church today. The most common form is **pouring** (*known as affusion*). The second is **sprinkling** (*known as aspersion, not commonly practiced until the 13th century*). The third is **dipping** the new believer in water (*known as immersion*).

There are three reasons why dipping or immersion is the proper mode:

1. **The meaning of the Greek word "baptidzo"** is to immerse. All Greek lexicons translate this word immerse or dip, **never** is it translated sprinkle or pour, and remember *no lexicon was written by a Baptist!* The word has been transliterated into our language—to have translated it would have shown sprinkling and pouring to be unbiblical.
2. **Immersion was the practice of the New Testament Church.** The only description of baptism in the New Testament is the story about the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:38-39). They both went down **into** the water, and came **up out** of the water. This would not have been necessary if sprinkling or pouring were proper.
3. **Immersion properly portrays the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.** Only immersion is a picture of death (as the believer goes down into the water), burial (as he remains under the water), and resurrection (as he is raised up out of the water).

The early church departed from the practice of immersion when false teaching arose in the second century that a person had to be baptized to be saved since baptism

washed away sins. This error led to infant baptism and the baptism of infirmed people. Since they could not be immersed, they were sprinkled. There is no scriptural grounds for baptismal regeneration, or infant baptism, or any mode of baptism other than immersion.

5. Let us now consider the fourth command in Matthew 18:19-20. **Teaching.**

According to Matthew 28:20, we are to teach what God has commanded us. Has God shown you anything? You might not know as much as someone else, but you know what you know! Teach what you know.

6. **There are several teaching opportunities** at Grace Fellowship are:

• **Sunday Worship**

Read Hebrews 10:25. We are instructed to meet regularly with other believers. Most churches set aside **Sunday morning** as a time to worship the Lord. As part of that weekly service the Pastor presents truths from the Word of God. These messages are biblically based with applications to the believer's life. Don't miss this opportunity to learn.

• **LifeBuilders**

Much of LifeBuilders is about learning. The following focus on learning and applying the Word to your life: *(these are listed on the webpage)*

- Springs of Life Lessons
- Christian books
- Special Life Electives
- Bible reading and memorization

• **LifeGroups**

These groups meet twice monthly for encouragement and accountability. Usually limited to 8, these groups are designed to study, challenge, pray, and minister. Within these groups each disciple will be matched with another disciple for mutual discipling and encouraging. Once a disciple is on LifeBuilders Step 3 he or she will be responsible to take another disciple through Step 1.

• **Mentoring**

Read 2 Timothy 2:2. Here we have discipleship explained in one verse!

What are you to pass on? _____

To what kind of men are you to pass them on? _____

What are they to do in turn? _____

Lest you ladies feel this is only for men—read Titus 2:3-5. It is the responsibility of women to teach the younger women godliness. It is always best to have men discipling men and women discipling women!

Mentoring does not have to be formal. It can be as casual as meeting for coffee, or for jogging. The goal is the imparting of spiritual truth and mutual accountability. If you are not now discipling someone, find a *disciple*. Ask the Lord to lead you to him or her.

Mentoring is usually done one-on-one or in couples. This is intensive work designed to help new disciples find freedom in Christ and prepare them to go into a LifeGroup.

- **Special Teaching Opportunities**

Throughout the year we challenge disciples to be involved in retreats, conferences, and special teaching weekends.

7. The *goal* of teaching disciples is recorded in Ephesians 4:12.

- **Equipping**

Here Paul says that the work of ministry is *not* done by the Pastor, evangelist, etc. Who is to do the work of service or ministry? _____

The goal of any pastoring, teaching, or discipling is to equip the **saints to serve**. This assumes that everyone serves some place in the Body. If you do not have a place of service you are derelict as a believer! It is your calling to serve Christ wherever He chooses.

Read Matthew 25:14-30. Note especially verses 21 and 23. Because these two slaves were faithful in _____ things the owner put them in charge of _____ things. Far too many believers want to be in charge of much when they have not been faithful in the little things.

Before you will be given the responsibility of much you **must prove yourself faithful in little!** This is a law in the Kingdom. Paul was faithful for almost 14 years before he left on his *first* missionary journey.

- **Unity**

Go back to Ephesians 4:13 and note that the next goal is the unity of the faith. Good teaching brings unity to the Body. Remember that unity does not mean unanimity. We might differ on some minor issues of interpretation, but we know how to love each other—that's unity of purpose! Our goal is the building up of the Body of Christ and oneness in Him. We can have fellowship with those with whom we differ because of the Holy Spirit in us. Love must rule in our relationships.

- **Maturity**

What a difficult word. Some believe they are mature because they've been around a long time. Others because they know a lot of information. Review the **Marks of a Disciple** in Introduction Lesson. These are the signs of maturity. How are you coming??

A mature believer has been through many testing of his or her faith (see James 1:1-4) and has come through the test purer. Like refined gold, the mature believer is precious and of great value. Why don't you make it your goal to be a mature believer and lead others to maturity?!

Remember the definition of evangelism? The final step in the Great Commission is to mature believers to the place where they in turn can make disciples, lead them to be baptized, and teach them, so they will also be able to do the same!