

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth One Verse at a Time*

The Making Disciples of All Nations, Part 2

Scripture: Matthew 28:18b-20

Code: 2405

We come again this morning to our text in Matthew chapter 28 verses 16 to 20. I confess to you a certain amount of frustration in my heart because I could spend weeks on this passage and pull all kinds of truth and teaching from other areas of Scripture to embellish it. But I'm going to really keep it very simple and straightforward and not try to cover too much ground so that it has a unique and condensed impact on our hearts.

Now let me say initially, it has always been God's desire to reach the whole world. And so when we come to Matthew chapter 28 and we see that great statement in verse 19 "make disciples of all nations," we are under no assumption that this is something new. It is not something new. It is something very old, for God in the very beginning intended to bring mankind into fellowship and relationship with Himself. In fact, it wasn't until man in sin went away from God that God even designed separate nations. It wasn't until He needed a witness nation, a missionary nation that He called out Israel to reach the rest of the world. It wasn't until Israel failed to do that that God had to call on a small remnant of people to do what the nation would not do. And it is that that brings us to Matthew 28 and the words of Jesus "make disciples of all nations" were given to 500 disciples on a hillside in Galilee who were the believing remnant out of an apostate Israel. It was to them and all those who would be of like precious faith with them, including ourselves, that this command comes.

But this is only an echo, this is only an echo of God's original intention to reach the world. Even in calling Abraham, He said, "Out of thee will come a seed and through that seed will all the families of the earth be blessed." And it was to the nation Israel that God said, "Declare His glory among the nations," 1 Chronicles 16 and Psalm 96, "His wonders among all people." And in Isaiah 42 and Isaiah 43 and then in Isaiah 52 and in Isaiah 66, we hear the prophet who speaks, as it were, the heart of God telling the people to spread the message to the world.

It has always been God's desire to reach the world of lost people and bring them to fellowship with Himself. In 1 Timothy 2:3 and 4 it says, "God our Savior who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."

So, the heart of God has always been a heart to reach the world. In that verse which is more familiar than any other verse, it is simply stated, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

So, we're not surprised then to hear a command like this, "make disciples of all nations," for this is what God has intended from the very start. And now God has a remnant of people gathered on that hillside in Galilee and all those who will come from their ministry, including us, to whom this command is given to reach the world.

We're reminded that the statement "make disciples" is the heart of our calling. That we're in the world to do that. That teaching and preaching and praise, fellowship, all of those things which we cherish and hold dear to us are only means to an end. They are only elements of preparation for the real task which is evangelizing the world, which is reaching the lost for Christ. And so we are to be about making disciples of all nations, all peoples, all ethnic groups, all tribes, all races.

The idea of making a disciple is a beautiful, beautiful term. The word *matheteuo*, the verb that is used here, carries the idea of a believer and a learner. I suppose we could say it is a believing learner or a learning believer. Make believing learners of all nations. Make learning believers. It is not simply one who believes or you would have had another word. It is not simply one who learns or you would have had another word. It is a believing learner, one who places faith in Christ and who follows in a life of learning. As Jesus put it in John 8:31, the one who continues in My Word is the *mathetes alethos*, the real disciples, the genuine disciple, as opposed to the false one.

So, the mission of the church in the world can singly be defined as making believing learners, or learning believers out of all nations. We are here to seek those that are lost. The Father first sought true worshipers. He sent the Son then to seek and save that which was lost. And then the Spirit to empower us to witness, as it says in Acts 1:8 to accomplish the same goal. Jesus in John 17:18 said, "Father, as You sent Me into the world, so send I My disciples." For the same reason, that is to seek and to save those who are lost. And Jesus said after the Spirit is come, you will receive power and then you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth.

So, we're in line with that calling and commission that has always been on the heart of God. Even when Jesus initially called the disciples, He said, "Follow Me," in Matthew 4:18 to 20, "and I will make you fishers of men." Nothing has changed. From the call of Matthew 4 to the commission of Matthew 28, there has been a training process so that those who were called to be fishers of men when they are commissioned to be fishers of men will know what that involves and will be faithful to fulfill it. The tragedy of the church of Jesus Christ is that so many people have lost sight of that commission and they have settled for a comfortable self-indulgent kind of Christianity that is little more than an inexpensive social club membership. That is not God's intention.

I was gratified last Sunday after I poured out my heart in the morning service that there was a great response. The response immediately was that folks were talking about the message on Sunday night, to show you the tangible reality of the response, Sunday night's offering which was the first time

people could actually respond to what I said in the morning, Sunday night's offering was five times a normal offering. And that was followed by a week of interesting letters. One dear couple wrote and said, "Pray for us, we're selling our house so that we can move to something less expensive and use our resources for the work of God." Another couple sent a check for \$5,000 and said we have been saving for a satellite TV dish, we want this to go to the Lord's work. That's getting your perspective turned around. Instead of receiving the world, going to the world with the gospel. Instead of receiving their message, sending ours.

But many wonderful things have happened in response to what we saw last week as we began to look at the passage. We need to get out of that comfortable mold, we need to get away from that self-indulgent kind of Christian perspective and take on an own and possess and make ours this calling of god we have in this passage.

Now how do we do it? How do we make disciples of all nations? How? Well, last week I suggested to you that first of all we have to be available. Availability is the first thing. In verse 16 we read that the eleven disciples went away into Galilee and to a mountain that Jesus had appointed them. And that is to say they were available. They were where they were supposed to be when they were supposed to be there. And that's where it starts. It starts with being available. It doesn't start with knowing where you're going. It doesn't start with having a clear calling to a certain country. It doesn't start with all of the fine print finished and edited and complete. It starts with just being there saying, "God, I don't know what it is or where it is but I'm available. I'm here. You said to be here, here I am. I'm listening to Your voice. I'm reading Your Word, I'm gathering with Your people, speak to me, Lord, I'm available."

The second thing we saw was worship. In verse 17, when they did see Him and He finally appeared there at first at a distance, and then drawing near, they worshiped Him. They fell on their face prostrate, as it were, before Him. Some of them doubting until He came near because they had not yet seen Him after His resurrection. But when He came near, surely their doubt was erased. And they, too, worshiped. And we suggested last time that it is necessary for one who would fulfill the great commission to have a worshiping heart. That is to say his heart or her heart is wholly set on Jesus Christ. All else is lost. All else fades away. When they on that hillside saw the risen Jesus Christ, all their shattered dreams were regathered, all their disappointment was instantly ended. Their sorrow was turned into unbelievable joy. It was a reversal of every emotion they were feeling and perhaps there was worship that occurred on that day that is equalled by few other worshiping occasions in all of human history. They saw the risen Christ and everything in them was born anew. They had a focus that was singly on Christ. Like Paul has said, "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Who said, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Their focus was so clear. Who said, "That I may know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." It was that single mindedness that made the difference. They like David had set the Lord before them and all else disappeared. That's what it takes. It is not only an available heart, it is a worshiping heart.

And then thirdly, and this is where we come to our lesson today, the third element of fulfilling the great commission we see in the passage is submission...submission. In verse 18, our Lord when He does come near speaks and says, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And He makes a statement, frankly, that staggers my thoughts. And it reaches far beyond my ability to conceive or articulate. He is making a claim to consummate sovereign authority. He has all authority.

Now the word "authority," is the word *Exousia*,. It basically is a word that means "privilege or right or power or authority." Essentially you could define it as the freedom to do whatever you wish. It is freedom without limitation. Jesus Christ with all authority is free to do what He wants when He wants where He wants with what He wants to whomever He wants. It is absolute freedom of choice and action. That's the essence of sovereign authority.

Now we know something of that authority and its range by studying the gospels. We know, for example, in Matthew 4 verse 23 and in other places, He displayed authority over disease and authority over sickness. We know also in Matthew 4:24, Matthew 8:32, Matthew 12:22, Matthew 17 I think around verse 18, He displayed authority over demons. We see Him on several occasions displaying authority over death, most particularly in John 11 when He raised Lazarus from the dead. In Matthew 7:29 at the close of the Sermon on the Mount, they said He spoke as one having authority which meant He demonstrated an authority that superceded all other religious teachers and leaders in Israel.

He had authority to commission and delegate the power over disease and demons to His Apostles, which He did in chapter 10 verse 1. And in Luke chapter 10, also gave that same authority to the seventy when He sent them out. He had authority, according to Matthew 9:6, to forgive sin. In John 5 it says He had authority to judge, He had authority to raise the dead. He had authority to bring all men before the tribunal of God for their eternal judgment. In John 10:18 He says I have authority to lay down My life and take it up again. These are all indications of what is encompassed within the range of His authority. He has authority that some day shall allow Him to take the title deed to the earth and take possession of the world and the universe and all men. He has authority over Satan. He has all authority in the universe. And He is free to exercise that authority anyway He chooses. All that authority is His.

He affirms that here. You remember when Satan came to tempt Him, Satan said, "I'll give You this and I'll give You that and I'll give You the other thing. I'll give You all the kingdoms of the world." He had no need to receive those from Satan. He would receive them from the Father and possess authority over all of them. He possessed authority in heaven and authority in earth to do with them whatever He wished. And that authority becomes consummate in His Kingdom when all the kingdoms of this world, according to Revelation 11:15, are subject unto Him and the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. That authority which is spoken of in Psalm 2

where He will crush all other powers and receive to Himself the authority of the universe which He alone will possess.

And so, the Lord Jesus Christ has complete sovereign freedom of action. There is no one who can withstand His authority. There is no one who can question what He does. There is no one from whom He seeks counsel as to what is right. Total complete sovereign authority.

All authority, now notice this phrase, is given unto Me. Where did He get it? The first glimpse of that comes in the Old Testament in Daniel's prophecy in chapter 7 in verse 13. And in the vision, Daniel says, "I saw in the night visions and behold, one like the Son of Man," that of course being Christ, "came with the clouds of heaven." He sees Christ in His Second Coming, almost a description exactly parallel to Matthew 24:30 where Christ describes His Second Coming as the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. "And the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven and He came first to the Ancient of Days," that is an Old Testament title for God the Father. So the Son comes to God the Father and is brought near before Him and there He is given dominion and glory and the Kingdom that all people, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away. And His kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed. There is the scene of the glorious Son in His Second Coming glory, going before God the Father who gives Him all dominion and all authority and all power and all privilege and all kingdoms.

"All authority has been given unto Me," we ask the question where did He get it? It came to Him from whom? From the Father. The Father has committed all judgment unto the Son, says John 5. The Father has given all authority unto the Son, says Daniel chapter 7. That is repeated in many different places. In Isaiah 9 it says the government is upon His shoulders. God has committed all judgment to Him, all power. God, it says in Acts 2:36, has made Him to be Lord and Christ, Messiah, King. God, it says in Philippians 2, has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in earth and under the earth. And every tongue should confess Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father, Philippians 2 says that in verses 9 to 11. Christ is made Lord.

And there's coming a day when He comes with the fullness of that authority and He collects the kingdoms of the world and gathers them to Himself, purges out all that is evil and vile and godless and Christ rejecting and sends all those to hell who are going to hell, all those into glorious eternal heaven who belong there. And the kingdoms of the world come to an end as all is resolved in Christ. And in that day when He has collected the whole kingdom of the world and universe to Himself, purged out all that is impure, and redeemed all that are to be redeemed, it says in 1 Corinthians 15:27 that He having done all of that will take that and give it back to the Father in an act of adoring worship. So He is given all authority to take back the world and the universe from the usurping enemy Satan and give it back to the Father. He then has all authority. What that says is this. He is in charge. He is sovereign. And to Him we must submit.

Now why does He say this? Because it is on the basis of our submission to His authority that we put ourselves in the place of obedience, isn't it? We have to understand that His command is binding before we are going to undertake to obey it. Because the command itself is staggering. It is far-reaching. It is almost paralyzing...make disciples of all nations. And if it seems difficult to us, imagine what it seemed like to them. Five hundred rather impotent nondescript disciples on a hillside in Galilee, given an almost inconceivable command which they would tend to disobey out of the sheer ridiculous nature of it were it not for the fact that Jesus established that He had such authority that they had no choice but to obey.

And so it is then that we come to fulfill the great commission, first of all, with an attitude of availability. Secondly, with an attitude of worship. And thirdly, with an attitude of submission. It is only people who submit...now let me say it another way, if you're waiting for some kind of spiritual goosebump before you feel you're responsible to reach the world, you've got it wrong. It isn't a question of emotion, it is a question of submission. It isn't a question of waiting until you get zapped out of heaven. It isn't a question of waiting until you fall on the middle of the street and your nose lands on a map of South America and you say, "Oh, I see." It isn't until you get a voice from God, it is a question of submission to an already articulated command. All authority is given to Him. And many would love to come to Christ as their advocate to plead for them in behalf of their sins but they reject Him as the sovereign to rule over them. But that's who He is. His terms are He is Savior and Lord and He calls for submission.

His word and His commands are absolute. And that's why in verse 19 it says, "Therefore...therefore..." What do you mean "therefore"? Since I'm in charge, you are to do this...make disciples of all nations. Why? Because I am in charge and I say to do that. There's got to be a submissive spirit. And when you look for someone that you want to invest your life into, when I look for someone that I want to invest my life in, that I feel has spiritual potential, I look for someone with a submissive spirit, someone who is--to put it in another term--teachable. He is the sovereign Lord. This isn't negotiable. The great commission, the mission of the church then is predicated on three attitudes, the attitude of availability, the attitude of worship and the attitude of submission.

Now listen to me. Those three attitudes indicate a God-centered preoccupation of the heart. They indicate a Godward focus that my heart is set toward God, that there is a willing devoted heart. I love the Old Testament when it talks about a willing heart. Exodus 25, Exodus 35, Judges 5, Judges 8, Nehemiah 11, Esther...or Ezra 1, Ezra 3 verse 5, other places, it talks about the people had a willing heart, the people had a willing heart. That's the kind of heart you see here, a willing heart, available...a worshiping heart, a submissive heart to do what He says. And that's the antithesis of being caught up in the inane trivia of our modern world...of spending our lives and our time and our talent and our energy and our money and our resources on ourselves. So you look at your own life and if you're not desirous of fulfilling the great commission, it isn't that you need a zap from God and it

isn't that you need some direct place to go, it is that you need to look to the attitude of your heart and ask: are you available? Am I really available? Am I really worshiping? Do I have a single focus in my life? Am I submissive so that when I find a command of God, I eagerly obey it? Now those are three foundational attitudes.

He has all authority. And if He has all authority, that means He has authority that extends to everything. He rules over earth and heaven. He rules over the physical and the spiritual. He rules over men and angels. He rules over holy angels and fallen demons. He rules over Satan himself. He controls disease. He controls circumstances. He controls the wind and the waves. He forgives sin. It's all under His control. And when He says we are to do this, then we are to do it.

And that takes us to the fourth, that is the principle of obedience, or the element of obedience which is necessary to do the great commission. And here in verse 19 is where we have the command "make disciples of all nations." And it calls for obedience. How are you doing that? How are you doing that? How are you making disciples of the people around you? The people around the world? How are you doing it? Or are you doing it? I may seem to you unnatural or impossible, as it must have to them, but it was commanded. Are you involved in making learning believers and believing learners? Are you, in the words of Mark 16:15, going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature? Are you, in the words of Luke 24:47, taking repentance and forgiveness of sins and preaching it in His name among all nations? How are you becoming a fisher of men?

Well, we are to be obedient. You say, "Well, obedient to what?" He tells you how to do it right here in verse 19 with three participles...the main verb is "making disciples of all nations...the three participles are: going, baptizing, teaching. That's how you do it. Going, baptizing, teaching, that's how you make a disciple. It isn't just that they should believe, it is that they should believe and be taught. It isn't just that they are taught, it also encompasses their act of faith which is symbolized in baptism. And neither of those can take place until you go to those people.

The commission of the church is not to wait until the world shows up. The commission of the church is to go to the world, to go to them. Now let's talk about that first participle, going, ἄφ' ἑαυθούτων, ἄφ'(?), actually in the Greek it could be translated better "having gone...having gone." It isn't a command--go ye, that's not a command in the Greek. In the Authorized they put it in the imperative mode but in the Greek it's an assumption, having gone. I mean, it's basic that if you're going to make disciples of all nations, you've got to have gone...having gone is assumed. It's obvious. It's natural. It's a corollary.

Now remember that early in the Lord's ministry, He said to His disciples, "Go not, don't go, except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." You can read that in Matthew 10 verses 5 and 6. You'll see it again in Matthew 15, verse 24. He says to them don't go. Now He says go. What's the difference? The difference is initially salvation is of the Jews, says John 4. Initially Paul said in Romans 1:16, "I

am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes, to the Jew...what?...first." Not only, but first. God's design was to give the kingdom offer to Israel, to all Israel to salvation then use Israel...and what a blessed calling this would have been...to reach the world.

So He was saying, "For now, go to Israel." We're going to Israel first, not only but first. Israel was apostate. Israel was unbelieving. The tragedy of that nation is designed in a beautiful beautiful parable in Matthew 22 where a king has a wedding feast for his son, and the king goes out to call the guests who had already been invited--that's the nation Israel-- they knew who they were, they were God's people, they knew their Messiah was coming, they knew they had their invitation in hand. And he went out to tell them, "You that have been invited, now is the time." And they refused to come. Some just were indifferent. And some were hostile. And so the king then said, "Go into the highways and the byways and find anybody you can find and invite them to come and they'll come and be the guests at the marriage of the son." And the picture was of an apostate Israel who refused their Messiah, forfeited the celebration planned for them and it was then given to another people.

And so, at first God in His grace brought salvation to Israel, not that it might be theirs alone, but that they might having believed it become the privileged witnesses to reach the world. They refused and God was left with this small little group of people gathered on a hillside in Galilee and a few other disciples down in Jerusalem, and through them He would do the work of reaching the world which the nation Israel refused to do. Since Israel no longer wanted the gospel, He says now go to the world...go to the world. No more just to the people of Israel. Oh, they won't be excluded, surely they weren't because the first place that early church preached was in Jerusalem and 3,000 Jews were saved and 3,000...I shouldn't say all of them were Jews...3,000 were saved, many of them, no doubt, were Jews as well as pilgrims from other lands. And the church in Jerusalem grew and flourished until the doctrine of the gospel had filled the whole city. And there was a great church there. And Jews throughout the history of the church have been redeemed and have responded to the gospel. It didn't exclude them, not at all.

Paul even preached to the Jews in any city he went to. He went first to the synagogue to win them to Christ. The Jews are included, but there's a new plan. No longer is God going to use the Is...the nation Israel to be His witness, they refused. He will use the remnant who believe to be His witnessing people.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

So now He says, "Go to everybody, Israel is no longer to be My witnessing people. You who are of faith become that people and you go to the whole world to preach the message of saving grace."

When Paul was called to be a minister and a witness in Acts 26:16, he reiterates his testimony and says that God delivered him from the people and from the Gentiles unto whom now I send you, to open their eyes, turn them from darkness to light, to the power of Satan to God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in me. And Paul is a perfect example of one who is sent to the world, just like these in verse 19, just like you and me.

And we're still to be about that task. We have to go, folks, we have to go. And so the assumption of verse 19 is "having gone," because this is the command, having gone, we're involved in making disciples of all nations. And you remember in Acts 1:8 it says that when the Spirit comes, you'll be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the world. They were scattered.

The first essential element of making disciples then is to go. That means wherever they are that do not know Christ, wherever you may go that Christ is not named. It may be your school or your office or your neighborhood or whatever, maybe around the world someplace, but "having gone" is assumed if we're going to do the job around the world.

The second element, the second participle that modifies the main verb is "baptizing." "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." *Baptizo*, a familiar term means to immerse in water, to dip in water. And our Lord is saying, when you go you are to be baptizing. Now what import does this have? Why does He stress this? Because baptism was the outward sign of an inward act of faith in Christ. Baptism was synonymous with salvation, though baptism in no way saved. It was the outward visible symbol of what had been done in the heart. And it was an overt act of obedience by which a person could demonstrate the reality of the miracle of salvation. There's no way that you can see someone being saved.

I have never seen a salvation, have you? I wouldn't be able to see it, it's a supernatural spiritual transaction. I have never seen a salvation. All I have ever seen is the fruit of one, true? All I have ever seen is the result of one. And if I don't see the result, then I have to question whether there was a salvation. And in the early church, it was essential that salvation be demonstrated the fruit of obedience. And that initial fruit of obedience was baptism by which an individual testified to their union in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ so beautifully symbolized in immersion. Now the baptism of John the Baptist was different, it was a baptism of repentance, of a people repenting of their sin to purify themselves inwardly and show that they were....show it by their outward baptism to ready themselves for Messiah. Jesus also baptized. John, of course, his baptism described in Matthew 3, Jesus' baptism described in John 4:1 and 2. Jesus baptized and it was also an outward symbol of a desire for a purified heart.

But here is a new kind of baptism. For the first time since Jesus died and rose again by now, people can be baptized as a demonstration of their identity with Christ in His death and resurrection. That is

why immersion is the only viable mode of baptism. For it portrays the death and resurrection of Christ in the very ceremony itself. Baptism, then, was commanded as we see here, and that's why it was done. Jesus said, "Baptize them." Now when you get into the book of Acts, and people are converted, and you see them being baptized, you know why. Because they were obedient to a command. Those who put their faith in Christ were to be baptized, but the command here is for those who preach the gospel to baptize which means that in giving the gospel, beloved, we are to tell people that it is not just something you believe and that's it, it is something you believe and publicly confess in this act of baptism. And when you find someone who is reluctant to do that, you may have reason to question the genuineness of their faith, for Jesus said, "Him that confesses Me before men, him will I confess before My Father who is in heaven." This is public confession.

No one is saved by baptism itself. Water can't save you. Any religious rite or act is impotent to save you. But this is an act of obedience. This is a symbol. And that is why the Scripture so repeatedly emphasizes baptism.

In Mark 15...Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," then verse 16 says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." And some people have said, "Well, wait a minute, that means baptism is a part of salvation." No, the next part of the verse says, "But he that believeth not shall be damned." The issue is the believing. You believe, you're saved...you believe not, you're damned. It doesn't say, "He that is not baptized is damned." But baptism is in there just like it's in Ephesians 4, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." and just like it's in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sin," and just like it's here, "Go and make disciples of all nations while you go, baptizing them," because it is an intrinsic element in the confession and demonstration of genuine heart faith. You understand that? By the deeds of the law or the works of the flesh, no one is justified. We're saved by faith, that is repeated again and again, "For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it's a gift of God not of works lest any man should boast," Ephesians 2:8 and 9. But baptism becomes that identifiable act that says that something has happened, that you're identifying with Christ.

And baptism was a step of faith. Yes, it was also a tremendous step of confession and courage. You were making a public statement of your identification with Jesus Christ. Now for you here in the nice baptistery at Grace Community Church, that's one thing, but for a Jew living in the city of Jerusalem, that was something else. There was a price that was very high. And so you could separate the true from the false somewhat more readily, I think.

So, we are to go baptizing. What does that mean? Leading people to Christ, whose salvation is genuine enough for them to desire to make a public confession of their union with Christ in His death and resurrection. And we need to preach that. And we need to teach that. And we need to tell people that so that we are saying to them, "Look, we're not asking you just to believe in Jesus and get eternal life no matter where you...no matter how you want to live or what you want to do. We're not

offering cheap grace and easy believism." We're saying, "We call you to Christ and calling you to Christ means we call you to obedience which is demonstrated in that act of baptism, by which you declare to a watching world your faith in the Savior and submission to His Lordship."

Baptism here is synonymous...now follow my thought...with salvation. And salvation here therefore is synonymous with making a disciples, would you note that in your mind? Baptism is synonymous with salvation. And salvation is synonymous with making a disciple. So you make a disciple when you lead someone to Christ.

All of this stuff that I keep reading about nowadays that a second...that a disciple is some second generation or second level Christian and later on you can become a disciple, just does not square with Scripture. Making a disciple means leading someone to faith in Christ which baptism typifies. When you come to Christ, confess Him as Lord and Savior, believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, and demonstrate that in an act of obedient baptism, you are a disciple. You don't wait to become a disciple at some future time in your life. But there are a lot of people now who are saying there are lots of Christians who aren't disciples. You can be a Christian and not a disciple. And the reason they want to say that is because they know the Bible teaches that to be a disciple, you have to give everything up and follow the Lord. If you're not willing to do this, do this, do this, you're not worthy to be...what?...My disciple. If you're not willing to lay your life down, take up your cross, follow Me, so forth and so on, you can't be My disciple.

So, people who want to allow people in on the easy basis, who want to allow people to be saved by just raising their hand, signing a card or wanting it, who want to allow people to be saved who want to make no commitment to obedience to Christ, have this convenient category of people who are Christians but not disciples, well one very severe textual problem they're going to have to deal with is, how is it then that a disciple is made at the moment of salvation in Matthew chapter 28 verse 19? You cannot separate discipleship from conversion. When you are saved, you then become a learner of Christ and there is a submissive spirit in one who is truly saved which manifests itself in a willingness to make a public confession and a willingness to submit to the teaching of what Christ commanded.

And that takes you to the third principle which we'll get to in just a moment...teaching. A person who comes to Christ is willing to learn. So the burden is ours to teach them whatever Christ commanded. The assumption is that if they're truly converted, they'll want to know. The truly converted person has a hunger for the truth of God, a hunger for the Word of God, a desire to be obedient. Even when we're disobedient, we know that it's against the grain of our deepest desire which is to obey. So having gone, He says, make disciples of all nations and you do that initially by bringing them to faith in Jesus Christ which is demonstrated in the act of initial obedience in baptism.

Now would you notice that He says "baptism is in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?" First of all, I need to say that that is not necessarily a formula for baptism, that's a

common way and we often use that in our baptisms, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." And it's a beautiful way to do that. There are, however, several occasions in the book of Acts where people are baptized in the name of the Lord, baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. In fact, there is no baptism in the book of Acts in which this formula is ever used. It only appears here. Every baptism specifically where any formula is given, or any statement is made as to who the baptism is in or into is the Lord, the Lord Jesus, Jesus Christ.

Now we conclude from that then really that there's no binding formula. People want to make a big case out of that but there's really no binding formula. To baptize someone in the name of Jesus Christ is simply to baptize them sort of demonstrating and portraying and picturing their union with Jesus Christ. And that's wonderful. And that says plenty. Here we just have the fullest statement possible. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit shows not only their union with Christ but their unity with the whole godhead. It's a fuller and richer and more comprehensive statement. But in no way should we construe that it is some kind of absolutely necessary formula since there are other statements made in the book of Acts.

The wonderful thing we do want to note though in the book of Acts is that they were obedient to this. And everywhere the gospel was preached and everywhere people believed, people were being baptized. Acts 2:41, Acts 8:38, Acts 9:18, in the tenth chapter of Acts with Cornelius, verse 48, the sixteenth chapter of Acts verse 33, the Philippian jailer and his family, you come into Acts 18:8, Acts 19:5, the followers of John the Baptist, over in Acts 22, I think around verse 10, baptisms, baptisms, baptisms, baptisms, baptisms always going on, always going on.

And so, we're not looking at some kind of ceremonial rite in which conversion takes place by water and there's some special formula you have to say. It's just that our Lord has given us the richest possible statement of the comprehensive union that occurs when a saint comes to faith in Jesus Christ. We are one with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...marvelous thought.

That's a great statement, also, because Christ puts Himself on a level with the other two members of the trinity. And those people who want to say that Jesus never claimed to be God have got some problems in that verse. He puts Himself on a level with the other two members of the trinity. It's a great verse, also, to prove the trinity. All three persons are there. And would you please notice this? It doesn't say, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and the name of the Son and the name of the Holy Spirit," nor does it say, "In the names of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." It is one name with three persons, the mystery of the trinity. The name means all that a person is and does, all that is bound up in that name, the name means all that God is as a trinity, all that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are. We are baptized in. And the word *ἑνὸς ἑσθ*, *ἑνός*, (?) could mean "into," it could mean "unto," it could mean "in." It's just the idea that when we are baptized, we come into a union with the trinity through Jesus Christ. And as I said before, it symbolizes His death and resurrection. We have a full union with Jesus Christ. What a wonderful, glorious thought. And not only

with Him, but with the Father and with the Son as well.

Now the point is this. Becoming a disciple happens at salvation and involves a full union with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit which is a transforming reality demonstrated by the beautiful ceremony of baptism. What are we called to do then? While we're going, or already having gone, we are to be bringing men to the Savior, baptizing them as an outward testimony of this inward union. And then, would you notice verse 20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It's not only a converting ministry that we're called to but it's a teaching ministry.

Now we have to follow up that new convert who is now desirous of being obedient and therefore desirous of learning what it is he is or she is to obey by teaching all things, the whole counsel of God in terms of Acts 20:27. Oh, that's such a marvelous thing. We're to teach them all things the Lord has commanded, life-long..life-long commitment to obedience. I love that. See, being a disciple is a question of obeying commands. You can't be a disciple of Christ without an obedient heart. You can't be a disciple of Christ without a desire to follow Him as your Lord. That's the whole point of the rich young ruler when He said to him, you know, take all you have, sell it and give the money to the poor and follow me...and the guy went away and said forget it, You're not in charge of my life. He couldn't be converted. Coming to Christ is saying you are in charge of my life. I submit, I want to be obedient.

And so, He says to those people gathered there, you teach them all the things whatsoever I have commanded you. And He'd commanded them a lot. And some of them would write it down. John 14:26, He told them, "I'll send you the Holy Spirit, the Spirit will bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said." And the Bible writers wrote it down. The Spirit of God gave it to all of us. We have the commands of Christ. We have the words of Christ. We have the teaching that He gave. And that is what we are to teach other people. We are to teach them all of it...all of it. I love that...all things. There are not options. There's just a great grand host of teachings to which we must submit. There's no true discipleship apart from personal faith in Christ and there's no true discipleship apart from the desire for an obedient heart. That's why the Bible talks about the obedience of faith. That's why it says in Hebrews 5:9 that the only people who really are people who have been redeemed, Hebrews 5:9, the only ones whom Christ has really transformed, and I think this is so clear, it says are all them that obey Him. They're the ones who have received eternal salvation. Romans 6, Paul says you used to yield yourselves as servants of unrighteousness, I thank God you now yield yourselves as servants of righteousness. You're obedient to the faith. You're obedient to the truth.

So, ours is a ministry then of making disciples which means making learning believers or believing learners...People who believe and desire to obey. So our obedience then is built on attitudes of availability, worship and submission. And out of those attitudes will come an obedience to this calling of God. I'll tell you, it's a joy to reach the world of people who don't know Christ and to teach them, and teach them, and teach them. I praise God for the vehicles this church has. And you can be a part of that. You don't have to do the teaching necessarily and go, but your gifts and your involvement in

our church and in our radio ministry and tape ministry and things like that allow us to send materials and to teach around the world. And we can all be a part of this. Listen, you have more opportunity in this church to fulfill the extension of the great commission than in most, or even perhaps nearly all churches across this country. By the grace of God, you've been given a great privilege to see people come to Christ because of your prayers and your giving and your involvement. Not only in your own personal life, but in a world- wide emphasis. And then to follow up with teaching materials and things that will lead them to the commandments of the Savior which they desire to obey.

All of those four things are critical but they wouldn't mean a thing without the last one. I mean, it wouldn't matter that I was available, and it wouldn't matter that I had a worshiping heart, and it wouldn't be any use at all that I was submissive and wanted to be obedient if it wasn't for number five...and that's power. Because I couldn't do it in my own strength. Nothing would happen. It would all be ashes. And so, the conclusion then, wonderfully given is, "And lo," and that's an attention getter, an exclamation...think of this...imagine this...grab this..."I," and the Ἐγώ ἔγωγε, Ἐγώ, here, the "I" is emphatic, "I, no less than I, the living risen Son of God, am with you." Isn't that great? I mean, I wouldn't want to do this on my own, would you? But He's with us. I don't know about you, but I lean on that an awful lot...all the time. I pray a common prayer in my life, "Lord, You care more about this than I do, so do what You will. Lord, You love these people more than I do, so reach them. Lord, You're more concerned about the integrity of Your Word than I am, so please, God, energize my heart to be true to Your text."

I mean, I lean on the fact that it's the power and the purpose of God that is behind everything. And the promise of power comes in the promise of presence. Do you see that? I am with you. I am with you...no less than I Myself. And when He went away He said, "I'm going to go away but I will come to you." Remember that? "In the form of the Spirit, I will come to you." The Lord is with us. He is in us. And He is empowering us. Oh what power. "I, no less than I the resurrected Christ with power over death am with you." Isn't that great? This is the one who has power over demons, power over disease, power over sin, power over death. He's with us.

You say, "Yeah, but how often?" You tell me. How often? "All the days," the Greek says, "All the days...all the days." Literal days, all the days, He'll be with us all the days until the consummation of the age. Not the word "end." "End" just means something stopped. Consummation is the word Ἐπίτελευσις, Ἐπίτελευσις, means to translate...consummation. That is the consummation of many diverse elements into a grand finale.

Now what does He mean by this Ἐπίτελευσις, Ἐπίτελευσις? What is this? Ἐπίτελευσις, Ἐπίτελευσις, means the ending, Ἐπίτελευσις, Ἐπίτελευσις, means to come together...so the coming together of all the ending events. He uses it here and three other times, those other three times are in Matthew 13. And in Matthew 13, the three times he uses it it always speaks of the Second Coming. So what the Lord is saying is so wonderful. He's saying, "I'm with you all the days until my Second Coming." You say, "But what about

that...what about after that?" Well, after that He'll be here, that's not a problem. Until I'll get here, I'll be here, is what He's saying. Don't worry about it, I'm coming again and until I come again I'll be here.

The end of the ages is the Second Coming to be followed by the Kingdom of Christ. So He says until I come in My Kingdom, I'll be there in My presence. Isn't that great? So the task of reaching the world is a task that is made possible by the power of Christ who is present in us...in us. And no wonder Paul says, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all he can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." And no wonder Matthew said "Amen...so let it be." I mean, I can get into this great commission now. I understand that what God wants out of me is availability. What He wants from me is a worshiping heart that's totally centered on Him and not the junk of the world. What He wants is a submissive spirit that says, "Whatever You ask, Lord, I'll do it." And then when I hear it, He wants obedience. And what He gives me in return is not only all the commands and all the orders and all the right instruction, but the power of His own presence to pull it off and make it happen. So let it be. Let's bow in prayer.

And with your head bowed, I want you to listen to something. A few years ago I shared this with you and I want you to hear it again because I think it's so profound. It's a little story.

On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur, there was once a crude little lifesaving station. The building was just a hut and there was only one boat but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea and with no thought for their safety went out day and night, tirelessly rescuing the lost. Many lives were saved by this wonderful little lifesaving station. So it became famous.

Some of those who were saved and various others in the surrounding area wanted to become associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought and crews were trained and the little life station grew.

Some of the members of the lifesaving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and poorly equipped. They felt a more comfortable place should be provided, as the first refuge of those saved from the sea. So they replaced the emergency cots and beds and put better furniture in the large building.

Now the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place for its members and they decorated it beautifully and furnished it exquisitely because they used it as sort of a club. Fewer members were now interested in going to sea on lifesaving missions so they hired lifeboat crews to do the work.

The lifesaving motif still prevailed in the club's decorations and there was a liturgical lifeboat in the room where club initiations were held. And about this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast and the hired crews brought in loads of cold, wet, half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick. The

beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So, the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where the victims of shipwrecks could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting there was a split in the club membership and most of the members wanted to stop the lifesaving activity because they were a hindrance and unpleasant to the normal social life of the club. Some members insisted on lifesaving as their primary purpose and pointed out they were still a lifesaving station after all. They were finally voted down and told if they wanted to save the lives of various kinds of people shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own lifesaving station down the coast...which they did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that occurred in the old. It evolved into a club and another lifesaving station was founded. History continued to repeat itself and if you visit that coast today, you'll find a number of exclusive clubs along the shore, shipwrecks are still frequent but most of the people drown.

It's easy for the church, isn't it, to lose sight of what it is...so easy. How about you?

Father, I pray for every person here that each of us because we have heard all these many years the gospel of Jesus Christ, that in faithfulness we will stand with those people on that hillside in Galilee and hear the great commission and willingly go as they went. And we are the fruit of their going. O God, may there be a generation who are the fruit of our going. Help us to deal with our lives, our time, our money, our opportunities, everything for the sake of the Savior and eternity and to know we're here for one reason, to miss that is to miss everything. Work in every life and we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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