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

Reaching the World
Matthew 28:16-20
80-66

Turning your Bible to Matthew 28. This test is common to us, familiar to us as "The Great Commission". Matthew 28:16-20 and I want us to revisit it. Perhaps view it with a fresh look.

Beginning in verse 16 of Matthew 28, "But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated. And when they saw Him they worshiped Him but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up to them and spoke to them saying all authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And lo I am with you always even till the end of the age." That amazing and clear and familiar portion of Scripture reaffirms to us the primary responsibility of Christians in the world.

I know we enjoy Christian fellowship and it is rich and rewarding but it is not our primary responsibility. I know that we are called to praise and worship and that too is rich and enriching but that is not our primary responsibility. I know we are called to learn the Word of God, to teach, that we might understand better the Scripture but that, as good as it is, as vital as it is, is not our primary responsibility. Our primary responsibility is summed up in one verb here in this passage in verse 19, "make disciples" and then the breadth of it, "of all the nations." That is the primary reason the church is here.

If we were saved for fellowship then we would be taken to Heaven where fellowship is perfect. If we were saved for praise and worship we would be taken to Heaven where praise and worship is unhindered and perfect. If we were saved for the sake of teaching and training and knowledge and wisdom we should be taken to Heaven where knowledge is perfect. The reason we are left here is in order that we might make disciples of all the nations. That is our God given priority as a church. Jesus came, the Bible says, to seek and save the lost and we have the same task to seek and bring salvation to the lost. This is what it means to make disciples. The verb is mathe tusatav. It simply means to make a disciple. To make a learner. To make a follower of Jesus Christ. That's what we are

The Bible indicated that we are commanded to do it. This is one of those commands. The Bible also commands in 1 Acts 8 that we are equipped to do it. After the Holy Spirit you shall be witnesses. Having received the spirit at conversion we therefore have the resource for witnessing. Teaching and ministry and fellowship and worship and all of that is important but the primary goal is not to do something with the saints but to do something for the lost. That is everyone's task. And we understand that and we know that but it's easy to lost sight of that. We get too enamored and so involved in spiritual ministry and in Christian fellowship and Christian relationships and so busy in church activities and service that we lose touch with the needs of lost people. Sometimes even our theology accommodates us a little bit and we assume that the elect are the elect and then the Lord will never close the kingdom down on earth until the elect are all in. That we have less responsibility to be faithful to this commission. All of these things must be set aside. We must find ourselves

obedient to this command.

Now, the question that I simply direct to you this morning and believe this text answers is this question, what is necessary to make me effective in reaching the world? What is necessary to make me effective in making disciples of all nations? What are the ingredients? What are the qualifications? What are the motivation forces? What are the dynamics in my life that will cause me to fulfill the Lord's command? There are five of them in this text. And I believe in great measure they sum up all of the necessary ingredients and qualifications for effective evangelism. In the text they are explicit and implicit. One way or another it seems to me that they appear here and for our instruction.

Five keys to making disciples. Five keys that we must have if we are to fulfill this priority. Number one, let's write down the word availability. Availability. I think everything starts at this particular point. And this is somewhat implicit if you'll note in verse 16. "But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus has designated." Now at this point it doesn't take somebody who's necessarily deep in the Greek language to understand that when Jesus said meet Me in a mountain in Galilee some people showed up. It also seems to me that that's where any kind of effective ministry starts. It starts with showing up. It starts with being initially available. Somebody said the greatest ability it availability. There is a sense in which that is true because no matter what other ability you might have if you're not available the other ability is not of any consequence. Everything starts with being there. Everything starts with showing up. Now we don't know specifically where this was. There was no geographical identification of this particular mountain other than it was a mountain which Jesus had prior designated as a meeting place. We don't really know even the time that this occurred. It obviously was after the resurrection which of course has already occurred. It was also after several post-resurrection appearances of our Lord. Recorded in Luke 24 you remember particularly the one on the road to Emmaus. It is also after the meeting eight days after His resurrection which is recorded for us in John 20 and surely it is after the meeting with the seven that occurred and was recorded in John 21 which meeting caught them in the midst of fishing. They had gone back to their old profession.

So some time after the resurrection, after the eight day appearance of the resurrection, after appearing to the seven who must have had time enough to go back to Galilee and set up their fishing business. Some time after all of this, some where between three and four weeks, no doubt, after the resurrection, and you remember the Lord ascended after 40 days so it would have been before that. Somewhere between three or four weeks, probably, after the resurrection Jesus meets with his disciples. Now it does not say that it was exclusively the disciples and I am convinced, and I am not going to go into all of the detail at this point, but I am convinced this is most likely the meeting that is indicated in 1 Corinthians 15:6-7 as a meeting in which Jesus appeared to 500 at one time. It is very likely that not only that the disciples were here but approximately 500 others were here. May well have included the women who have been noted already in the chapter who were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Galilee, of course, was where most of the believers were. When you remember the believers in Jerusalem gathered in the upper room for the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost there were only 120 of them. It seems reasonable that this appearance that involved 500 then would have happened in Galilee where the preponderance of believers lived.

So somewhere on a hillside in Galilee, a hillside unknown to us, a large crowd of disciples gathered together with the 11 who are no longer the 12 because the defection of Judas to be meeting with the Lord at a prescribed time and place designated by Him. The crowd was believers with all their

weaknesses, with all their questions, with all their confusion, with all their fear, with all their bewilderment about how it was Jesus wound up dying on a cross and now they are ready to have their first sight of Christ. Apart from the women and the disciples those in Galilee very likely had no occasion to have seen him before this. And so some of their confusion and questioning will they pray and hope will be resolved in this meeting. Remember again it is not the elite, not many noble, not many mighty is the poor and the common, the ignoble and those who put their faith in Christ taken from the masses of the people. In some open field in some secluded place far from the crowds of Jerusalem and the threat they gathered together to meet with the Risen Christ.

And let me just draw out of that the very obvious reality that nothing happens except to those who are available to have it happen. When Isaiah 6:8, "Here am I. Send me," he was reiterating the point of availability which is the starting point of any effective service to Christ. They were there. They wanted to see the living Christ. There was enough desire in their hearts to follow Him to bring them there. Because they were there they were privileged with His presence, His promise and His great commission. They were little people and they submitted themselves to this designated time and place with the desire to be with Christ. There are some big people, you know, who think they're big with their own puny plans and their own agendas who never bother to show up with the redeemed and consequently they miss the momentous events and settle for the trivia of human life.

I suppose at some point it is fair to say that fulfilling the mission duty of your life to make disciples of other people begins with meeting the Lord at the appointed place, in the Word, in prayer and in the assembly of the redeemed. Not forsaking the assembly of yourselves together as some do and much the more as you see the day approaching. You're never going to have any kind of impact on the world unless you are willing to set aside that designated time and place to be in the presence of the living Christ, with His people, in His Word, in communing prayer with Him.

I tend to think that many people never bother to go to the lost because they can't even bother to get together with the saved. They never have much to say to those who are without Christ because they have very little to say to Christ Himself. You have to ask yourself about your availability because I am convinced that those people who are most effective in making disciples are doing that because there is an overflow of privileged communion with the living Christ. They choose to be in the Word, they choose to be in prayer, they choose to be in the assembly of the redeemed and out of that kind of fellowship with the presence of the living Christ comes impoticeto carry out His cause.

There is a second feature that I think flows out of this text, verses 17 and 18. Let's say the second word here that gives us a quality, a necessary ingredient for effective disciple making is the word worship. Worship. It says in verse 17, "And when they saw Him they worshiped," proscuneto. It means they prostrated themselves in adoring worship. They worshiped Him. That is the right response and I am sure if you had been there or if I had been there that day seeing the resurrected Christ would have been such an overwhelming experience that we also would have fallen on our faces, prostrate, in adoring wonder as we saw the vision of the resurrected Lord. They worshiped Him. They were in awe of Him. They already loved Him. They already trusted Him. They had already affirmed their praise to Him. And now it was consummate as they saw Him in His resurrected, glorified form.

What would you notice please this is really consistent with Matthew's emphasis if you go back to the very beginning at the first chapter or two of Matthew's Gospel as he introduces the coming of Christ and His birth he is very careful to point out that wise men came and worshiped Him. And here as he

consummates his Gospel he is very concerned to point up again that He was worshiped. Back in chapter 28:9 he talks about the fact that even before this there were those who expressed worship to Him as they took hold of his feet. The one who came to be worshiped is worshiped. He was to be worshiped; he was worshiped when he accomplished redemption by the sacrifice of himself and appeared to His people.

Would you notice please, however that at the end of verse 17 that some were doubtful. Some doubted. Now somebody might say why did they add that? Why does Matthew say that? You don't have to say that. doesn't that plant the seed in somebody's mind who is skeptical of Scripture, that says I don't know if I can really believe that and if you think that's strange for me then realize that there were some people there that day who saw Christ supposedly after His resurrection and they doubted too. Doesn't it seem an unnecessary addendum that might give some justification for someone's unbelief today? Why does that have to be said? The answer is very simply because it was true. The Bible always has transparent honesty. The biblical writer is never caught up in some human effort to convince people of the resurrection by contrived and selective reporting. The biblical writer is not into selective evidence gathering. They just record the fact, the truth and the truth is some were doubtful. Not surprising. Not surprising. They weren't used to seeing resurrected beings. They had their doubts because that's part of fallenness, that's part of human sinful nature and they had not hereto foreseen the resurrected Christ. They had heard that He had risen.

Furthermore, and this might seem a rather crass thing to say but it is true, I would dare say I might be a little more than a fog this morning for many of you if you didn't have glasses. Have you ever thought about that? Have you ever thought that up until the invention of glasses a great mass of the population saw a fuzzy world? And here you have probably 500 people on a hillside, maybe the sun was bright, it usually is in that part of the world, Jesus was a little far off and I'm not going to describe His glorified form to you but it must have had some kind of presence that was to one degree or another a bit unrealistic or unlike what they had been familiar with. And here they are trying to focus their unaided eyes on this somewhat distant figure and try to focus their weak faith on the reality of the risen Christ. I don't believe it was wicked doubt which chooses to reject evidence. I don't believe it was foolish doubt which chooses not to consider evidence. I believe it was virtuous doubt that just needs more evidence.

And Jesus did and interesting thing, verse 18, it says, "And Jesus approaching spoke with them." Isn't that interesting? Why do you think He did that? I think it was to give them more evidence. What did he say to Thomas in the upper room? Do you want to know who I am, do what? See My scars. That's plenty of evidence. Jesus approaching them the Greek text says. They just weren't sure it was really the Lord because they hadn't seen him before; only the 11 and the women had. This is the first time for them. And this is not something that happens every day. So Jesus came nearer and nearer to erase the doubt. Whatever it was about His resurrection glory it didn't change the fact that He could be recognized by those who had seen Him before His death. And so they saw His beauty, that unfading beauty, that appearance, so mild and yet so almighty. So entirely human and yet divine. So mild and yet so powerful the lion of the tribe of Judah, the conqueror of death and hell and yet the Lamb of God with the marks of the slaughter upon Him. They saw Him and I'm sure that after He came near they found themselves ashamed and joined those who worshiped.

To worship it to acknowledge deity, to acknowledge majesty, to acknowledge sovereignty, to acknowledge glory. That is essential, I believe, in the life of one who would be a disciple maker. Because I am convinced that it is only when you are consumed with love and adoring praise to Christ

that you are literally controlled by that. You do not evangelize in a vacuum. It comes out of a worshiping heart. If I really love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart, soul, mind and strength then his cause is my passion, right? What I love consumes me but there are those people who are not worshiping as they should. Their worship is thin and shallow. Their worship is infrequent, sporadic. They say they love Christ but it is not a cultivated, deep, intimate, communing love that elicits an ongoing, unending praise and worship from their heart. And as a result motivating them to do His work and to champion His cause and to preach His message is well nay impossible because the truth of the matter is they are rather occupied with their own agenda. To the one, who like John the Baptist, says he must increase and I must decrease making disciples becomes the priority in life.

Where's your heart? If your heart is set on Christ then Christ is all, His kingdom is all, His cause is all, His purpose is all you live for. In order to make disciples then you have to start with availability and you have to proceed to worship. There's a third word, let's write this one down, it falls out of the text, submission. Submission. We could even use the word participation. Verse 18, "When He did finally get next to them He said all authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth." This is a far reaching statement. This staggers my thoughts. Reaches beyond my ability to conceive. But let me at least get in touch with it. When Matthew began this gospel he introduced Jesus as king. He gave His royal lineage and had a group of Oriental king makers acknowledge Him as king. He began with the fact that he was king and king means sovereign. And now as he ends his gospel it's the same thing, "All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and Earth," which is another way to say he is king. King over all kings. Sovereign over all sovereigns. He is in charge. Absolutely in charge. So we then are called to submit and to participate in His kingdom.

Look at the work authority for just a moment. Exusia. It could be translated permission, it is sometimes translated privileged, sometimes right, sometimes power, sometimes here authority. But I think the simplest definition is this, complete freedom of action. Complete freedom of action. Now think about that. Think about that long enough you'll see that that's a rather comprehensive definition. Nothing causes His action. He is completely free to cause it Himself. Nothing hinders His action. It is complete freedom of action. Nothing contributes to His action. It is complete freedom of action. That is authority. You act independently of any other person or influence.

Now this particular authority is not authority like a great conqueror gets when he conquers a nation and on the basis of what he has done he is the authority. This is authority based innately on who He is not on what He has done in the truest, purest sense. He is God. And it is the authority that innately belongs to deity. But it is authority innately belonging to deity which has been reaffirmed by what He has accomplished on the cross and through the resurrection. Thus as one who is the conquering hero and one who is innately God He has complete freedom of action. He has freedom to do exactly what He wants when He wants, how He wants with what He wants to whomever He wants. Would you please notice if that is not enough it says all authority. All authority. No exceptions. Total sovereign right to rule. It has been given to Him by God. It says has been given to Me. Ephesians 1, Philippians 2, Collations1 are just samples of Scriptures which indicate that God has given authority to Christ.

The statement then is intended to establish who is in charge. He is king, He is authority, we submit to that authority, we participate in the unfolding of his kingly purpose. He is Lord. He is sovereign authority over Heaven and earth and that means all of us.

what are the necessary ingredients for effective evangelism? First of all to be available, to be

present. Secondly, to be filled with awe and wonder and a heart of worshiping love. thirdly, to be submissive and be eager to participate in the purposes of the great king of all kings.

It has to be that I live with an attitude that says the king to whom I submit it my Christ and no other but Him. now there are many people who will admit to Christ as their Savior to deliver them from hell. There are many who would admit to Christ as their advocate to plead their case before God. Seems to me there are fewer who would acknowledge Him as their sovereign to rule over them in whose kingdom they have the privilege of participatory submission. Those are His terms. And that's where you begin.

As I said earlier, you don't evangelize the world in a vacuum. You don't make disciples on a whim. It is the overflow of these three great spiritual attitudes: availability, worship and submission. Show me a willing, worshiping, humble heart I'll show you and instrument God will use.

So many of us are caught in the inane, trivia of the world, spending our time, life, talent, energy, money ,resources on stuff that will burn and wondering why God doesn't use us to make disciples. We have to back up and start with these attitudes. The first place to go for corrective is to your heart and check it out. Do you have a willing heart? Are you available? Are you there listening to the voice of God? Communing with Him? hearing Him speak through the Spirit? Do you have a worshiping heart? Do you have a humble heart submitting to the privilege of sharing in His kingdom?

Write down a fourth word. This too an essential element. The word is obedience. The word is obedience. Big word. Comprehensive word which we will give a very brief treatment of. Verse 19, "Go therefore," therefore, it's a good place for that transition, very good. It's saying this, if you're available and if you're worshipful and if you're submissive therefore go. And here we come directly in contact with obedience. We have a command in this verse. The command is make disciples. The word go is not in the imperative. It is a participle. There are three participles here: going, baptizing and then one in verse 20, teaching. Participles modify the main verb. How do you make disciples? By going, baptizing, teaching. That's a simple structure. Going, he says, that's very obvious. I mean how are you gonna make disciples of all nations unless you are going. The assumption is they're not coming you're going. Those three participles put us in touch with a very simple command to make disciples of all the nations and describe how it is to be done.

It is interesting to compare this with Mark 16 where Mark records Jesus, "go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." And also with Luke 24:47, "that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nation." So it says make disciples, that involves going, that involves preaching the gospel which involves the forgiveness of sins followed by baptism, followed by teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I've commanded you. there you have the sum of it all. But it starts with going or literally having gone. The assumption that you're not going to do this until you've gone somewhere it needs to be done, right. it all starts with going.

But I wanna focus on that second thought of baptizing. For you by the way going may be across the campus, across the street, across the state, across the country or across the ocean. But let's talk about that baptizing term. In Mark's gospel it says preach the gospel. In Luke's gospel it says preach forgiveness of sins. Here all it says is make disciples by going and baptizing. You say where's the gospel here? Well the assumption here is that you know that word baptizing is loaded with gospel preaching because to be baptized is to be visibly carrying out a symbol which illustrates the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism was simple a public sign, a public confession that a

person had identified himself in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It assumes then the preaching of the gospel; the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ and all that was involved in its significance. Is it inherent in the very visual drama of baptism?

That important ordinance of immersing a person in water, dunking them in water, is a way for a person who put their faith in Christ, the way to demonstrate their faith and their union in Christ. Peter preached it in 11 Acts he said repent and be baptized. Paul in writing Ephesians says one Lord, one Faith, on Baptism. He's talking about water baptism. Baptism became an inseparable reality from salvation. If a person was converted to Jesus Christ they were baptized. And if a person wasn't willing to be baptized there was reason to assume that their conversion was not genuine. Every believer is to be baptized. And every believer is to call others to be baptized. That seems to be to be a missing ingredient in our evangelism today. It seems to be that many people are going but not all who are going are baptizing. You say well it's only important that you believe for salvation. Yes. Salvation is a matter of faith not water baptism but water baptism is the sign of true faith because faith without works is what? Dead. And the very first work that is visible in public is that of baptism.

Baptism became so inseparable from leading people to the knowledge of Jesus Christ that when you said baptism you were referring to conversion. When he says baptizing them he means leading them to the knowledge of Jesus Christ or the preaching of the gospel so that they identify with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection and commit themselves to confess Him as Lord. That's all inherent in baptizing. It became synonymous with salvation and utterly inseparable. And sad to say we don't emphasize that as we ought to. Calling people to salvation is calling them to baptism in water. That's why we do that every Sunday night. That's why you need to be baptized. If you are claiming to be a Christian and have never been baptized there is reason to be suspicious of the reality of your claim unless you have never heard this before. When we go out to preach Christ we should call people to be baptized, to make that public identification of their union with Christ, confessing Jesus as Lord with their mouth and identifying with Him outwardly. They're unwilling to take that stand and to pay that price there's reason to assume theirs is less than a saving faith. One who refuses baptism is likely not exercising true faith.

Calling people to salvation is the issue baptism is identifying mark. Somebody might say well, I might get embarrassed if I were baptized. Well if your personal embarrassment stands between you and baptism then you've got a problem. I don't know what level of faith we could assign that to. I'm not saying that if you have not been baptized you're not a Christian. I'm saying there is reason to suspect that. What's holding you back? Some people say well it's difficult.

Let me read you a letter I got this week. Do you remember I told you about a young boy named Mark in Australia? Mark is a quadriplegic who lives in a ward in a hospital and will live there the rest of his life and is hooked to a respirator. He is also blind. He is 17 and somebody gave him some of my tapes and he started listening to the tapes and he wrote me a letter. And he said I heard your tapes and I know that if I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ my sins will be forgiven but I don't know what it means to believe. Remember that letter? And so I preached one Sunday morning a sermon on what it means to believe and then I got the tape and I sent it to him and he wrote me back and said, "Having heard your tape I now know what it is to believe and I believe and I'm saved." And I shared that with you and I got another letter from the pastor from a local church that's been ministering to him and this letter is very interesting. It goes like this:

"A few weeks ago now Mark volunteered to me that he was thinking about asking for baptism. He

admitted that he still had some doubts but queried, 'Is it all right to be baptized if you just want to be obedient to the Lord?' That desire to be obedient to the Lord became a deep conviction. In checking with the doctor about the possibilities the doctor observed that Mark could not be dunked without some risk. His connection to his breathing machine is made through a sleeve that fits a little loosely in his throat through his Adam's apple. Mark balked at first but as he prayed he decided that he would accept the risk if he could be baptized in the normal way. (I had explained Plan B to him which would have been the old Mennonite way of pouring. I have never done it this way but would have if there was no other way.) on the day we met at the hospital swimming pool with three others who wanted to be baptized and most of the folk from our church, Mark's family who don't attend services anywhere were also there. because Mark can't speak very loudly and not at all without the breathing machine one of the fellows from the church brought a PA system along.

"We took Mark's testimony from his wheelchair. It was very simple but sweet. He thanked the Lord for forgiving him of his sins and declared that he wants to follow the Lord so that he can serve him with his life. The actual baptism was quite an ordeal. The doctor, a Roman Catholic, suggested we let Mark into the water on a sheet. Because of Mark's long term illness his bones are very brittle. One of his legs fractured earlier this year when he was simply lifted into his bath. The fellows who visit him and one of the elders Mark admires were in the water to help him. The doctor and Mark's father lifted Mark out of his chair and laid him at the water's edge. Then the doctor unhooked Mark's breathing machine. Two of the fellows in the water gripped one side of the sheet and the doctor and Mark's dad handed the other side of the sheet to the two others who helped. In the water I had to use one hand to block off the open air tube in his throat and use the other to hold his nose and push him under. With some quick and considerable efforts, because his limp body floats naturally we got him under. Then we reversed the process and the doctor quickly hooked up the machine again. It made none of its warning signals; if water had gotten into his lungs it would sensed it immediately and Mark would have been hustled off for medical emergency. We all breathed a sigh of relief and thanks.

"The whole procedure reminded us of the paralytic who was lowered to the hole in the roof on a blanket. This time however the man on the sheet didn't have to rely on the faith of his friends; he had his own testimony to give.

"It was amazing that the hospital was so cooperative. They could have been very difficult if they had wanted to be but the day I went to see them about it I was referred to a deputy instead of the head man. This deputy just happened to be a Baptist. He has Baptist in very strategic places. And we received the help we had hoped for.

"Thanks so much for your support letters, prayers and encouragement. Mark continues to listen to stacks of your tapes and sharing them with others in the fellowship. This has proven to be very beneficial to everyone. Just one more thing, Mark wanted me to share these thins with you. he is personally very grateful for your service to him through the tapes and the books. Next year he will begin to study theology by correspondence and hopes to add more and more to his faith."

Wonderful story about wanting to be baptized so much that you'd risk your life to be baptized. That's the evidence that we should show in our own faith. We have been called by God to make disciples. It involves going, it involves baptizing. We need to be baptized or we can't proclaim it and we need to call others to be baptized. In fact our elders had a discussion this week and in that discussion they said is baptism a command. Yes. If you aren't baptized have you disobeyed it? Yes. Then can an unbaptized believer take communion? What's the obvious answer? Any known disobedience stands

between you and the Lord.

Next Sunday morning we will have communion. And I can only trust that your heart is right before God if you come to take it and that you have been baptized or have expressed your willingness and eagerness immediately, as soon as possible to be baptized. That's where you make your public confession of Christ. Visible through that symbol.

The third term and the last one is teaching. In verse 20 making disciples involves teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. making a disciple doesn't end when they believe; it doesn't even end when they are baptized. It ends at the end. You've got a task at hand and that is to teach them to observe all thing I have commanded you. they are to be instructed.

Now listen to this, making disciples involves going, preaching the gospel including the forgiveness of sin, calling for saving faith, baptism and then it involves instructing them to a lifelong obedience. How people can extract that out of the ministry of the church and the ministry of evangelization I do not know. we are calling people to an overt, public identification with Jesus Christ and a lifelong obedience to His commands. That is what we are calling them to. Why else would you become a mafaytaste, a learner of Christy if it were not to learn His commands that you might apply them to your life? There's no discipleship apart from personal faith. There is no discipleship apart from a willingness to be taught the commandments of Christ in order that you might obey His Lordship in your life.

That's how we are to evangelize and we are obedient to this pattern. We are to go to those who do not know. we are to call them to public confession with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and identification with Jesus Christ in His death, _____ and resurrection and we are to call them that in coming to Christ they are submitting to a lifelong obedience to His commands.

Let's not cheat on what is the message we are obediently to proclaim. We start with availability, worship, submission and obedience. We make disciples the way the Lord said to do it.

Fifthly and finally, the last word, write down the word power. Power. Such a noble responsibility, such an eternal task, demands something beyond our own resources. And so at the end of verse 20 this great promise, "And lo behold! I am with you always even to the end of the age," or better not to the termination of something but to the consummation of everything. I am with you till the second coming is what he has in mind. That's the power, that's the power. Sublime encouragement. You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you. he is with you always in the form of His indwelling Holy Spirit. What a great truth.

Yes, the child born was Emanuel, God with us, and He is with us. it is not by human might and not by human strength but by My spirit says the Lord and until the consummation not just the cessation of something but the ultimate consummation of everything, until Jesus comes He is our power, He is our resource. Those are the words, beloved, that lie behind the life of effective evangelization. Availability, worship, submission, obedience and power. And when those are part and parcel of your life you will be effective for God. David said to the people in 1 Chronicles 29:5 he said, "Who is willing to consecrate his service this day to the Lord?" That's the question. Who is willing to consecrate his service this day to the Lord? Who is willing to be available to the Lord's presence? To worship the Lord's person? To submit to the Lord's authority? To obey the Lord's plan? To be

empowered by the Lord's might and resource? Are you? it means stripping your life down to the priorities.

Years ago I read a story by S.D. Gordonwho was describing a group of men who were preparing to climb Mt. Blanc in the Swiss Alps. The evening before the climb a French guide outlined the prerequisite for success. He said you will only reach the top by setting aside all the unnecessary accessories and carrying only bare essentials. Well the next day when they started off for the climb a young Englishman, you might know it, disagreed and proceeded along the following morning not only with climbing equipment but a brightly colored blanket, large pieces of cheese, a bottle of wine, bars of chocolate and a bunch of camera equipment. Under the direction of the guide the group set off behind the Englishman. And along the way the group found first his bright blanket, then his cameras, then his cheese, then his wine and that finally last what was most precious to him his chocolate. Some of you can identify with that. finally they discovered him at the top with nothing.

And S.D. Gordonmade the application to the Christian life. There are people who on the way to the top drop the nonessentials. There are other people who when they find they can't make it to the top without their stuff pitch their tent in the plain and let the top go. And then S.D. Gordonsaid and the plain is very full of tents. That's true. The church is a plain full of tents. People who have decided to keep the stuff and park a long way from the top.

Let's bow in prayer. Lord it would be a great testimony for us if people who were following us found the trail to the top strewn with all the stuff that we had gladly dropped in wanting to fulfill this high calling. Don't let us pitch our tent in the plain, be content to live with the stuff, never reach the top. Help us to drop the stuff. may the people who know us see a trail of it as we pursue the great priority of making disciples. Going to the people we can go to and equipping others to go. Preaching the gospel to the people we can preach it to and equipping others to preach it. calling to baptism those who believe and calling others to do the same and then teaching and teaching them to observe all things that you've commanded. We want to fulfill the reason for our existence here by making disciples. Lord, give us that opportunity because we're available, 'cause we're here, because we're submissive as well as being worshipful. It isn't just that we're in awe of You and so we praise it is that we are in awe of You and so we submit. And then help us to be obedient to the plan as You've outlined it for proclamation and trust in Your power to bring it to pass.

We know that we can only reach the world one at a time. Bring us one this week that we can reach. For the sake of Your dear Son we pray all these things.

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