

A Church Commissions and Sends (Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 1:1-8) 26-Jan-25

Matthew 28:16-20

The Great Commission

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Acts 1:1-8

Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven

¹ In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Intro/Marks of a Church

In January, **we're going through a four-part series giving 4 marks of what a Church** looks like.

Obviously, there are **many things a Church does** but...

[Slide-4 Marks]

The **4 marks** we're looking at in **January** are:

1. A Church – **Teaches and Preaches** – which we did the first week
2. A Church – has **Biblical Fellowship** – which we did the second week
3. A Church – **Worships in Spirit and Truth** – which we did last week
4. A Church – **Commissions and Sends** – this week!

4th mark of a church then is - a Church – **Commissions and Sends**

Commissions

So, let's look at **commission** first

[Slide-Commission Context]

The **context** of both our readings is:

- Jesus has **died on a cruel cross** and **taken the punishment for people's sin upon Himself** – and **offered forgiveness of sins** to all who repent and believe and accept Jesus as Lord of their lives

- Jesus has **risen from the dead** – 3 days after His death – **to prove He has power over death** (which is the punishment for sin) – and offers all who believe in Him – eternal life
- He's **appeared risen and alive for forty days** – and He is **about to ascend to Heaven**
- He doesn't **want anyone to perish in Hell**
- So, before He ascends to Heaven – Jesus gives a **commission** to His **eleven disciples** [*Judas Iscariot not there because He betrayed Jesus*]

As we said in the children's talk – a **commission** – *is a command or an order given to a person or a group of people* – it's like Jesus is saying to the disciples '**here's your job description**'

If we look at **v16** – the **eleven disciples** are with **Jesus** on a **mountain** in **Galilee** – and they worshipped Him **v17** – but notice some doubted.

Their **doubts** – might be

Is Jesus real? Is He really alive? Is He a ghost? Or a vision or a hallucination?

We know from the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:6) that the **risen Jesus appeared** – to over **five hundred people** at different times and places – over 40 days.

That would be a **conspiracy theory of epic proportions** for all those **five hundred people** to have **got together to pretend Jesus had appeared to them.**

So, we have no need to **doubt Jesus' resurrection**

(pause)

Now, let's look at the **commission**

[Slide-Matthew 28:19-20)

First from **Matthew 28:19-20**

*¹⁹ Therefore **go** and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*

Let's **look** at the **verbs** here

1st verb – **GO** – In **Greek** it's an **imperative** – they are to GO -it's not a suggestion – it's a **command**!

And remember – **these eleven disciples are pretty scared** – they mostly ran away when Jesus was arrested and crucified.

2nd verb – **Make Disciples** – also in **Greek** an **imperative** – they are **to make more disciples.**

A **disciple** is someone who **learns from a teacher** and then **follows what the teacher taught** and **becomes just like the teacher.** So, there is a **multiplication going on.** The eleven disciples **make more disciples** who in turn **make more disciples!**

The next two verbs – are **“how” they make disciples**

As they are **“going”** and **“making disciples”**

3rd verb – **they are to be baptizing**. The tense of this verb in Greek it's an ongoing action – as they go and make disciples – **they baptize and they baptize**.

Baptism is a **sign of something great happening**. It means the **person baptized** has **repented of their sins** – said sorry to God – and is now **committed to following God's way** – and they accept and believe that **Jesus has died for their sins to be forgiven** – and they are now saying **Jesus is King of their life** – and the **water in the baptism** is symbolizing this **commitment to Jesus** and showing **Jesus has washed away their sins**

4th verb – they are to be **teaching** people what Jesus commanded so that these new disciples **can also follow Jesus' teaching!**

From the 2nd reading from **Acts 1**

[Slide-Acts 1:8]

V8 – gives us **a bit more detail** of the eleven disciples' **job description**

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses

The verb “**you will be my witnesses**” is also an ongoing action in Greek. The **disciples** are not just **to be witnesses in a single instance** but will continually **be witnesses?**

A witness is **someone who has seen an event firsthand**. These men have **seen Jesus** and **seen who He is** and **what He did**.

The **disciples** are to share who Jesus is – and why He came.

They are to share the Gospel – **Good News** – that **Jesus saves people for Heaven.**
 And when they witness this to others – **these others also share that Good News!**

Application

[Slide-Application]

That **commission** applies to us too.

By definition, a **disciple does whatever the teacher does** – so just as Jesus made disciples and just as His eleven disciples did what Jesus did – as we become disciples – **we do what they did and make more disciples!**

Jesus' commission is a command – not a suggestion.

This commission lines up with our **Mission Statement** here at Toukley

***Our Mission:** Enabling and equipping people by God's grace to become, and grow into, complete followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

And this commission also lines up with **our Vision** at church

***Our vision** is by the year 2030 to transform our community with the love of our Lord Jesus.*

So whatever ministry we do here at Toukley Presbyterian Church – it needs to be fulfilling the purpose of - **making disciples of Jesus.** Every friendship we make, every group we are part of – **are all ways of building loving relationships so that we can make disciples.**

Sends

Which brings us to the 2nd part – a Church not only commissions people to share the Gospel – it **sends** people out to share the Gospel

[Slide-Sends Matthew 28:19]

In our 1st reading from Matthew 28

If you look at v19 again – where are the disciples to GO!

They are to go to **ALL NATIONS** – literally people of all ethnicities – all ethnic groups. No-one is to be excluded – everyone needs to hear about Jesus

[Slide-Sends Acts 1:8]

And it's the same in our **2nd reading from Acts 1**

Look at v8 – the disciples are to witness in the city of **Jerusalem** – then the **whole of Judea** (Southern Israel) – and then in **Samaria** (middle/north of Israel) – and – then to **the Ends of the Earth!** Literally the remotest parts of the Earth.

This means sending people to:

- The **remotest island in the world** - **Tristan Da Cunha** in the **South Atlantic Ocean** – 1750 miles from Cape Town, in South Africa!
- Or the **Pitcairn Islands** in the **Southern Pacific Ocean** – where some of the descendants of the mutineers of the Bounty live!
- Or to **Oy-myakon** in **Russia** in the **Arctic Circle!**
- Or the **remotest place in Australia** – the **Kiwirr-kurra Community** in **Western Australia's Gibson desert!**

And it also means **sending people to places close by**:

- Our **families, our friends, our neighbours** – **to build relationships**
- To our **local schools** at Toukley, Gorokan, Budgewoi, Kanwal, Warnervale and Woongarrah – **to teach Scripture to the children**
- To **Canton Beach** – to **evangelise**
- To our **local streets** – to **deliver Bibles**

And it also means **praying for and supporting our Mission Partners**

- People like **Colin and Alison Morrow** – in their **Presbyterian Inland Mission** – in South West NSW
- And people like **Mick Alley** – ministering the Gospel to the **Samburu tribe in Kenya** – and supporting our **sponsored Kenya boy Senteyio** so he grows up to follow Jesus!

What Equips People to Make Disciples?

If our Church is to **commission** and **send** people to make disciples – we're going to have to equip people to do this

[Slide-Equips]

So, I'd like to just focus for a few minutes on how we can equip people for this **commission** – so that they can fulfil the job of making disciples.

Well from our two Bible readings we have a number of things that **will equip us to go out and make disciples**

1st – we have – **Jesus' Authority**

In Matthew 28 – v18 – Jesus says - ***All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*** – and then He sends the disciples out!

So, when we go out with the Gospel **we go in the authority of Jesus, which means we do not rely on our own authority or strength, but on Jesus.**

Jesus' authority assures us that the mission will succeed, even if the world resists.

2nd – we have – **Jesus' presence with us**

In Matthew 28 – v20 – Jesus says - ***And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*** – Jesus promises to be with us in our hearts forever.

So, we don't need to be afraid or doubt!

Now remember, we said last week that Jesus is God's Word in flesh. So, when we out – **we also have God's Word with us.** And remember – ***God's Word is alive and active, sharper than a double-edge sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.***

(Hebrews 4:12)

If we want to maximize the power of God's Word – then we need to **read** God's Word [**Promote: Bible reading plans – Bible Apps**] – and we need to **know** God's word – and **apply** God's Word to our lives! [**Promote: Joining a Growth Group is a great way to spiritually grow in God's Word**]

And remember God promises this – He says - *my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.* (Isaiah 55:11)

3rd – we have – **the Power of the Holy Spirit**

In our 2nd reading from Acts 1

Look at v8 – Jesus promises the disciples - *you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you*

- We said last week – the **Holy Spirit dwells inside every Christian**
- The Holy Spirit equips us with the gifts and the power needed to fulfill the mission.
- – the Holy Spirit “*teaches us all things*” and “*reminds of what Jesus taught*” (John 14:26) and “*testifies about Jesus*” (John 15:27) and “*proves the world to be wrong about sin*” (John 16:9) and “*guides us in all truth*” (John 16:13)
- The Holy Spirit gives us boldness and courage to share the Gospel despite opposition.
- The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and discernment – and helps us know what to say, when to listen and when to speak.
- And as we said last week – when we have the Holy Spirit – The Holy Spirit produces the Fruit of the Spirit in us – *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.* When we display this fruit it will help us make disciples of Jesus and attract people to follow Jesus!

4th – we have – **the Body of Believers**

- Notice - Jesus sent the disciples out as a **group** – not as individuals – and remember He established His **Church** (Matthew 16) as the **vehicle** to tell people the Good News
- The **Church** is not an **individual** endeavour but a **communal** one.
- We are equipped by the **prayer, support, encouragement, and accountability of fellow believers.**
- Together, the **Church** is - the Body of Christ - with each member playing a **unique role.**
- As we said two weeks ago – **teamwork makes the dreamwork!**

Conclusion (2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

To finish up then – and to sum up what Church is

Jesus has given us **a ministry of reconciliation**

[Slide-Conclusion]

Here's how the Apostle Paul describes this ministry of reconciliation in 2

Corinthians 5:16-21 - *¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are*

therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As Christ's ambassadors – my challenge for us this morning then is...

To whom will we be an ambassador of Christ?

To whom will we be a minister of reconciliation – so that we can lead them into a right relationship with God – so they can go to Heaven?

If we all chose one person in our life to do this with – we multiple God's Kingdom...

Let's pray...

Father God, thank you for our Lord Jesus, our Saviour.

Thank you for His Church which He established to make disciples.

Enable us and equip us to commission and send people out to make more disciples of Jesus.

Enable us and equip us through Your Word and Your Spirit – to be good ambassadors of Christ – and to offer a ministry of reconciliation to all who are lost from You.

In Jesus Name, we pray. Amen