

Reading – Matthew Chapter 28: v. 16-20.

Theme: The Great Commission for all believers – Part 2.

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.

¹⁷ When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

Introduction

Last week we began a two part series on the "**The Great Commission for all believers**". We only had time for a long introduction and the first point.

We discovered that the **main focus** for many Christians when choosing a Church is determined by one of three things.

1. **Fellowship** – They ask the question "**Is there anybody here like me? Can I have good fellowship with like- minded people?**
2. **Preaching and teaching of the Bible** – Some Christians rate this as the most important thing. They want God's word faithfully taught each week.
3. **Music/ Worship Style** – Some people place music and worship style at the top of their list. They don't feel comfortable unless the music style meets their individual needs. They also want to worship in a particular way.

We discovered that although these three things are important in themselves and not wrong, they should not be the main and central focus of any Church.

We discovered that **bringing Glory to God** should be the **main focus** of every believer.

This is best done by obedience to the "**Great Commission**" which we are presently studying.

Last week our focus was on the theme of **Availability**".

If we are not available for Jesus, then we can't be called and commissioned by Jesus.

We learnt that **full surrender to the plans and purposes of Jesus for our lives is the first place to start.**

If you don't start with Jesus's plan, eventually you will travel down a road that will lead to a **Cul- de- sac**. (French word for bottom of the bag)

In England a Cul-de-sac is a road that goes nowhere, it is a dead end, you have to turn around and go back to main road.

Nobody wants to travel on a road that goes nowhere. It is the same with our Christian life and ministry.

Jesus has a road map, it is called the Bible.

Jesus has a plan for all of us and it starts with us **submitting to His plan.**

The disciples surrendered to Jesus' plan and travelled to Galilee to get their instructions.

When the disciples arrived on the mountain where Jesus had instructed them to come, there were two reactions.

Some Worshipped Jesus and some were doubtful.

1. Worship Jesus / Don't doubt Him. – v. 17-18a

The Bible is always very honest. We are told that some of the disciples worshipped Jesus, but some doubted.

There is only one recorded passage in the New Testament that teaches us that the disciples worshipped Jesus.

Matthew 14: v. 22-33 in N.K.J.

²² Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. ²³ And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. ²⁴ But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

²⁵ Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸ And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

²⁹ So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw that the wind *was* boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

³³ Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

One Bible commentator said;

"When God is not truly worshipped, he can't be truly served, not matter how talented, gifted, or well-intentioned His servants may be"

I suppose what he is saying is that if we don't serve Jesus for His glory, then we do it for ourselves, and therefore we don't truly worship God with a clean and surrendered heart.

What is amazing is that even at this stage, some disciples still had doubts.

Even after all the miracles that Jesus performed to prove His deity, and after He rose from the dead and appeared to the disciples on a number of occasions, some disciples had **mental challenges**.

We can give these disciples some support because as yet the Holy Spirit had not yet come to fill them, and empower them for ministry.

Nevertheless **the battle of the mind** is something that **all Christians face**, even though they may still be filled with the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 10 : v. 3-5. In N.K.J.

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

The way to win the battle of our minds is to have the mind of Jesus Christ.

Jesus always had a respect for God's word in the Old Testament. Jesus was always determined to do God's will, whatever the cost.

Jesus always had "faith" that God would fulfil the promises of His word.

Doubt comes from the devil, and you would do well to resist his temptation to doubt God's word.

The first recorded words in the Bible that the devil spoke were to try and make Eve doubt God's word.

Genesis 3: v. 1 in the N.L.T.

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

Genesis 3: v. 1 in the N.K.J.

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

So the second challenge in order to fulfil the Great Commission is not to doubt who Jesus is and to worship Him with all of your heart and mind.

Jesus must have first place in your life.

2. Submission to the authority of Jesus. - Chapter 28: v. 18b.

The next stage in the fulfilment of obedience to the Great Commission is to **recognise and submit to the authority of Jesus**.

Jesus tells us clearly that all authority in heaven and earth has been **given to Him**.

Why is this important and why did Jesus point out this fact to His disciples.?

The Greek word which is translated **“authority”** is the word **“exousia”** this word means having the **freedom and right to speak and act as one pleases.**

In relation to God, that freedom and right are **absolute and unlimited.**

During His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated His authority over **disease and sickness** in Matthew Chapter 4: v.25, and 9: v.35.

Jesus also demonstrated His authority over **demons** in Matt. 4: v.24, 8:32, 12:22, **over sin** in Matthew 9: v.6 and **over death** in Mark 5:v.41-42 and John 11: v.43-44.

Jesus also had the **authority to delegate his powers to certain disciples.**

Matthew Chapter 10: v. 1 in N.K.J.

And when He had called His twelve disciples to *Him*, He gave them power *over* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

Jesus also has the authority to execute judgement.

John Chapter 5: v. 26-27 in N.K.J.

²⁶ For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, ²⁷ and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

Even in the Old Testament, Daniel foresaw sovereign authority being given to Jesus.

Daniel 7: v 13-14 in N.K.J.

¹³ “I was watching in the night visions,

And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,

Coming with the clouds of heaven!

He came to the Ancient of Days,

And they brought Him near before Him.

¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,

That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.

His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,

Which shall not pass away,

And His kingdom *the one*

Which shall not be destroyed.

The reason that Jesus established His sovereign authority before giving the disciples His great Commission was to give confidence to the disciples to fulfil the great commission.

If Jesus was backing the project, how could it fail?

To make disciples of all nations seemed an impossible task at that time, however it had the backing of Jesus, his power was delegated to his disciples, to do His will.

If we obey the “Great Commission” Jesus will equip us to do the work He has called us to do and supply what we need for the task.

This is 100% certain.

When I came to O.I.C. 5 years ago, Jesus had taken 30 years to train and equip me to serve you as your senior Pastor.

Every step I took along the way was in obedience to the Great Commission. May I challenge you to take the next step in your life that will lead you to serve Jesus in being or making a disciple for Jesus.!!! Often the first step is the hardest, but today is a good day to take that step.

3. **Obedience to Jesus’s command. – Matt. 28: v. 19-20a.**

The next step in the fulfilment of the great commission is obedience to Jesus’ command.

This is only made possible if you have covered the previous steps.

Unless there has been a **surrender** to being available to Jesus, **worshipping Jesus for who He** is and understanding **His authority**, then you can't move forward to the obedience of actually making disciples of all nations.

Jesus was saying that because He was sovereign Lord of all the universe, He had the authority to command the disciples to be His witnesses.

Jesus also had the power to enable his disciples to fulfil that commission.

"Make Disciples" is the main verb and the central command of **v. 19-20**. Therefore it is important that we understand what it means.

The Greek word chosen which in English is the word **"Disciple"** carries a combination of meaning. In this context it relates to those who **place their trust in Jesus Christ and follow Him, continually learning and obeying Jesus.**

John 8: v. 31 -32 in the N.K.J.

³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

It is very clear from the teaching of Jesus that **discipleship is the normal Christian life.**

It is not something extra for more committed Christians.

Luke 18:v. 18-23 in N.K.J.

¹⁸ Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

¹⁹ So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. ²⁰ You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' "

²¹ And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."

²² So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

²³ But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

The rich young ruler came to the right person for eternal life that was Jesus. However he was not willing to give up his own life and possessions to follow Jesus.

Therefore he didn't become a disciple of Jesus.

The rich young man was willing to have **Jesus as a Saviour**, but he was **not willing to have Jesus as Lord and controller of His life.**

Luke 14: v. 25-33.

²⁵ Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ²⁶ "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish *it*— ²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'? ³¹ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

All passages referring to the conditions of discipleship involve a surrender of ones life to follow Jesus, whatever the cost.

Therefore in order to make a disciple for Jesus, you must first of all **"Be" a disciple of Jesus.**

So how does Jesus define what His disciples should do?

He sums it up in three words, **GO, BAPTIZE, and TEACH.**

- a) **Go** - In the Greek translation, where we have the word Go, it is slightly different. The word means **"having gone"**.

It anticipates that in order to make disciples, you have to go, this is very obvious, but not to everybody.

Today we expect people to “come” to Church. However around the world today that is not happening.

Therefore the word “Go” is a lot more relevant than it might have been when Churches were well attended.

In a moment I will tell you a true story about somebody who took the word “Go” seriously and reached many Japanese souls for Jesus.

In today’s contemporary language Jesus might say to us, **Go and get on with it, don’t just talk about it DO IT!!!!**

b) **Baptize** - The second word after go is **“Baptize”**.

We are told that believers first of all need to be **“Baptized”** in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The use of the three names identifies a person with the trinity of God. **God is one but has three persons.**

When a person believes in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord and they are born again by the Holy Spirit of God, then they must be Baptized as an **outward evidence of their inner conviction and peace that they are now a child of God.**

Being Baptized is a personal testimony to everybody that you are now are true committed follower of Jesus Christ.

The act of Baptism has no saving grace or any merit towards your Salvation. It is purely an obedient witness and testimony.

However NOT to be Baptised when you are truly born again, and believe in Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, is actually an act of disobedience.

So if you have not been baptised yet and you are truly a believer, **you need to get going and arrange your Baptism.**

The Ethiopian in Acts 8: v. 26-40, recognised the teaching from Isaiah referred to Jesus, and after everything was explained to him from the scriptures, he **immediately requested Baptism.** Philip said to the Ethiopian that he could be baptised immediately, **if he believed with all of his heart.** (v. 37)

If your heart has been truly changed, Baptism should follow.

c) **Teach** - What were the disciples to teach the new believers? The answer is **EVERYTHING** that Jesus had taught them!

John 14: v. 19-26 in N.K.J.

¹⁹ “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Today we have the whole Bible, and in order to teach somebody about Jesus we must have read the whole Bible ourselves and have a good understanding of each book.

We have just been through the 5 teaching blocks in Mathew’s Gospel that is a very good place to start.

In the discipleship course that we have been running at O.I.C., I have insisted that every disciple reads the whole Bible and encouraged the learning of memory verses. Your knowledge of the Bible and your personal holiness are the two elements in teaching people about Jesus. It is no good having the knowledge if your life-style does not reflect the life-style of Jesus. People today are more likely to read your life-style first before they read the Bible. If Jesus isn't real to you, and the Holy Spirit is not working in your life to change you, then you are unlikely to be much use in teaching others.

4. Power from Jesus – Chapter 28: v. 20b.

The last part of Great Commission is very important. If you have obeyed all of the other elements up to this point, but do not have the power of Jesus, to make disciples, then you are not going to be very effective.

In the English translation it is not so clear about the importance of what Jesus is saying here.

In the original Greek translation, the word translated "Lo" is "Idou" in Greek. It means that Jesus is calling special attention to Himself about His presence being with the disciples, always, even until the end of the age.

In other words, those people who obey the Great Commission, will be supported by Jesus, all of the time. Jesus will never leave them and He will never forsake them.

This is wonderful news for us. We don't have to worry about anything. **We just need to get on and DO IT!**

Application

I leave you with a true story on what could happen if you obey the great Commission. Your story will be different, but be encouraged by this true story of a Japanese man who was going nowhere in his life.

Many years ago a young man called Hiroji Doi wandered through the streets of Fujidera in Japan. He was frustrated with life. He seemed to be doomed to be a failure. He had failed at many jobs of employment and was feeling depressed.

He noticed on a street pole, an advertisement to a special meeting. He had nothing else to do so he went along.

It turned out to be a Christian meeting.

The preacher told the story of the wise and foolish man.

Luke Chapter 6: v. 46-49 in N.K.J.

⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? ⁴⁷ Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. ⁴⁹ But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

As Hiroji listened to the preacher apply the message, he realised that his life was just like the house built on the sand.

After the meeting Hiroji asked the preacher how he could build his house on solid rock.

He put his faith and trust in Jesus.

Suddenly he had a purpose in life, to serve Jesus.

He went to college, trained as a teacher, met a Christian girl and got married.

However Hiroji was sent to fight against the Chinese and was taken prisoner for over two years.

He battled through starvation, bitter cold, sickness, brain washing and torture.

However Hiroji's heart remained firm and solid because he built his life on the rock, and that rock was Jesus.

Hiroji's faith was rewarded and one day he went home from China and was re-united with his family.

When he eventually retired from being a teacher, he felt called to help with a Christian organisation, doing hospital evangelism.

He spent the rest of his life witnessing about Jesus.

He is now in Heaven enjoying his reward.

It only happened because one man obeyed the great commission. He put an advertisement on a post and told the story of the wise and foolish man.

Today there are millions of people in Osaka who are building their lives on the sand and we need to point them to Jesus, so that they will, like Hiroji, build their lives on the rock, which is Jesus Christ. If they do this, they will have meaningful lives, and be disciples of Jesus.

With all the benefits of eternal life to come!

Don't delay, why not purpose today, to obey the Great Commission. Who knows where this might lead?!