

I invite you now, to open your Bibles to this morning's scripture text, which can be found in the Gospel of Matt 28:16-20. This can be found on page ____ in your pew Bibles. We are in our final week of the "Made for Mission" series today. Scripture reveals our appointment, in the great commission.

Our Fathers Word

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

And Jesus came 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 of the Holy Spirit, 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.

NKJV

The word of God for the people of God

Welcome to the final week in our exciting Made for Mission series. I don't know about you, but I have had some very encouraging moments through God's word over the past five weeks. I would even say that it has been eye-opening. In the event that you may have missed any of these messages, I invite you to visit our church website where you will find the Made for Mission tab in the sermon series drop down menu. Go there to listen or to read; in fact, share that website with as many people as you can.

As we contemplate all the possibilities for serving God, for *engaging lost people*, we should feel great comfort from these divinely inspired words in scripture; (Eph 2:10) *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.* God prepared good works for us to do. Our missions have been prepared in advance by God. We only need to choose to take that first step in faith, follow Jesus, and let God do all the rest.

God is *present*, through the Holy Spirit *in us* everywhere we go to lead us and to guide us, to provide for us and to protect us from evil as we navigate *our journey* through the *daily choices* in a life on mission with Him. As we grow in our relationship with God, we become more receptive to the Holy Spirit's presence and inspiration. It's so amazing how God inspires us moment by moment to serve and witness to people he places in our lives. What a great privilege it is to be called by God. What a great honor it is to fulfill His purpose for us and give Him pleasure in our obedience. What an absolute blessing it is to follow Jesus on a life of mission with Him, making a difference in this world, impacting the lives of lost people. Amen!

Scripture has eliminated all doubt in our minds that we are all called. We now have the knowledge that our mission and Jesus' mission is one and the same.

Now that the urgency of our mission has become clear, it is time to put our feet into motion, it's time to put a plan into action. God has revealed this knowledge to our minds, so that it will take root in our hearts, and empower us to action. If this series has been for you, an epiphany, or only a gentle reminder of the importance that we *all* must take our active role in this mission, then now, it's time to hear the final words of Jesus before he returned to heaven. It's time for us to receive our appointment, our commission. Here, we come to the end of the Gospel story; here we listen to the last words of Jesus to his men, which also applies to all of his followers; and in this last meeting Jesus did three things.

Jesus tells his disciples, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**” ^{shhh}(Matt 28:18) The first thing he does is to assure them of His power. The right to rule *everything* belongs to him. All existence comes under his reign. Surely nothing was outside of the power of Jesus, who had died and conquered death. Now the disciples, all followers, are the servants of a Master whose authority upon earth and in heaven was beyond all doubt. Jesus is the one true King.

This is unspeakably important. The highest significance we could attribute to these words still seems to fall short. The crucified and risen Christ has cosmic authority. It's greater than we can speak, but we must speak.

After establishing his authority — on the basis of that authority, not simply to command persons, but to empower obedience — Jesus issues this famous charter for his church:

" 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, *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." The second thing Jesus does is give His followers a commission.

The Great Commission, as we call it, is truly great. It's a unique combination of epic and brilliant. It's epic in that it *has been effective, to say the least*. For the past 2,000 years the people of Jesus have been *making disciples*. They *have*, they *are*, and they *will*.

It's also brilliant, in part, because of how simply it spells out the Christian mission. The gospel imperative, grounded in the authority of Jesus, is crystal clear. Because of who Jesus is, we ***should be going***, therefore, and *making disciples* of all nations. The commission of Jesus is to win *all men* for himself. This is foundational when we're talking about the church. This is foundational for creating a community of love.

Jesus came to this world to reveal God and redeem worshipers. (John 1:14, 18; 4:23) Now that mission has been handed down to his Spirit-filled followers, which we'll do in obedience to the profound phrase: make disciples.

And if that's the center of the commission, Jesus then tells us how it looks, practically speaking. Following the Gospel imperative, "make disciples," he gives us two ways:

(verse 19) **Baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and (verse 20) **teaching them** to observe all that I have commanded you. Some argue that it may well be, that the instruction to baptize is something which is a development of the actual words of Jesus.

In short, Jesus says to his church: make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching. It's one command followed by two ways it should be obeyed. One imperative, two ways, grounded in the authority of Jesus — this is the heart of the Christian global mission. It's naturally summarized by the three categories of gospel, mission, and community.

The central command to make disciples because of Jesus's authority is captured by that holy word "Gospel." This is the non-negotiable goal that's carried out by baptizing and teaching. The baptism part is that great symbol of new-covenant initiation. The washing of entry into the church. It's the fireworks moment of God's work and ours in giving the gospel to all nations, captured by the category "mission."

The teaching part fills out what's supposed to happen to all these baptized converts. With disciples in the context of other disciples, we're taught what it means to follow Jesus, captured by the category "community." As we are creating our community of love, and bringing others to God, into the family, we should be mindful to teach them along their journey. We should be bringing them with us when we go out on our journey, witnessing, and serving on a mission, with them at our side for their edification. Great word edification, "to edit out the bad or wrong".

The third thing Jesus does in today's scripture is to promise His presence. When presence is promised, it's the same as Jesus bringing someone with him. He is leading, we are following. It must have been a staggering thing for eleven humble men to be sent forth to the conquest of the world.

Even as they heard it, their hearts must have failed them. However, no sooner was the command given, then the promise followed. They were sent out – as we are – on the greatest task in history. With them, and with us, is the greatest presence in the cosmos. Jesus brings us with him.

Jesus concludes with His promise to be with us always, even to the very end of the age. If he is in the driver's seat of your life, then he is bringing you with him. What he did for the disciples over two-thousand years ago, Jesus wants to do for you today. Through his example -- Jesus discipling us, Jesus bringing disciples with him -- he is inviting us to do the same with others. He is demonstrating to you, to bring someone with you.

Do you know how many times throughout the New Testament it says Jesus took his disciples with him? No? Me neither. I started counting in the Gospel's alone, and lost track because practically everywhere he went he took someone with him.

The evidence is abundantly clear that with incredible intentionality Jesus brought people with him. Today's scripture text points to gospel, mission, and community — and these form a grid through which everything in the church's life can be understood.

We could easily argue that Jesus was the greatest leader of all time, He is God after all. While the greatest book ever written, the Bible, is all about Him, he never actually wrote any books. He never held a public office. He remained inside a small area of the world while he walked the earth. He was only here for thirty-three years, with only three years of that time being spent on mission.

Yet, here we are over two-thousand years later with over two billion Christians world-wide following Him from all walks of life, all ethnicities. That is powerful leadership. That is powerful discipleship.

The mission Jesus started and calls us to follow in is now spreading, and growing faster than ever before. What a blessing to be a part of that. What a blessing it will be for others, if you bring them along with you.

Bring someone with you. As you follow Jesus in a life on mission, the mission you were made for, your journey, don't go alone. Do as Jesus did, bring someone along and teach them as you go. This is one of the greatest leadership lessons' we learn from our Lord. He gives us this great example over and over for making disciples through bringing someone with you, *and teaching*. He provides you with a simple way to bring *pleasure* to your Father in heaven. His *pleasure*, from your *obedience* to the great commission. *Obedience* that will result in hearing God say to you one fateful day, as you stand in front of Jesus, accounting for your time here, "well done, my good and faithful servant."

Will you please pray with me.

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for your grace, and your love.

Thank you for sending Jesus into this world on a mission of love,

on a mission of restoration, and salvation, seeking the lost, seeking us.

Thank you for calling us to follow Jesus in a life on mission with Him.

We acknowledge Father, that our baptism is our appointment into ministry for you.

Thank you for appointing us to serve our community of love within your church.

As we go, give us a merciful heart Father, give us your eyes for the lost,

and empower us by your presence of the Holy Spirit to reach the lost.

Let all those we meet know you and your perfect love through our example.

May you get all the glory, as you draw them in with an unfailing love,

a love that flows from you Father to Jesus, from Jesus to us,

and from us, to them.

Let them know your perfect plan that you have called *all* to have a part in.

We lift up to you lord, your church, your disciples, your family, your children,

here at Pemberville UMC, bless us Lord that we may be a blessing to others.

Expand our community of love, and bless us with the blessing

of a growing congregation, empowering our ministry serving you.

Keep your hand upon us, guiding us to your final victory.

Keep us from doing harm, by guiding us to do only the good deeds that you have prepared in advance for us to do.