

I. Introduction

A. 2018 Barna research study

1. Churchgoers: Have you heard of the great commission?
 - a. 51%=no; 25%=yes, but I can't recall what it says; 17%=yes, and it means ...; 6%=I'm not sure
2. 37% picked Matthew 28:18-20 out of a Scripture line-up from selections in Matthew

B. Unity of the biblical message

1. *And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.* (Matthew 24:14, Mark 13:10)
 - a. Jesus is not setting a timetable; He is setting an order of events determined by the Father.
 - b. From Genesis to Revelation, there is a consistent, overarching theme (remember bride/bridegroom) that God wants a people and is willing to give everything to make that possible, even at ultimate cost to Himself.
2. Three events in all four Gospels
 - a. Feeding of the 5,000; the crucifixion; and the commissioning of the disciples
 - b. Interestingly enough, the commissioning of the disciples is also found in Acts.
3. *There are five distinct commissioning passages in the New Testament for those who have committed to following Jesus.

II. Unpacking our commission

A. The five passages

1. *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18-20)
 - a. Distinctive: Make disciples
 - b. Of note
 - 1) All authority; non-negotiable; demands by nature obedience
 - 2) Make disciples: as you are ...
 - a) going, make disciples
 - b) baptizing, make disciples
 - c) teaching, make disciples
 - d) *There is an inference here that as you go, baptize, and teach it is possible to not make disciples.
 - 3) Not just individuals, but entire nations
2. *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."* (Mark 16:15-16)
 - a. Distinctive: Proclamation
 - b. Of note

- 1) The extent of proclamation is to all creation; the all-encompassing nature of God's glory.
 - 2) Missing the Gospel, failure to respond does not result in a less satisfying life, it results in condemnation
 - 3) *The Gospel doesn't make my life better as so often is the selling point, it completely changes my life and demands something wholly surrendered and different (i.e. a condemned person freed by another)
3. *and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."* (Luke 24:46-49)
- a. Distinctive: Witness
 - b. Of note
 - 1) Fulfillment of the Old Testament message and mission
 - a) Not a new concept
 - b) Connecting everything back to what has been said and is now happening
 - c) All of Scripture finds its focus and fulfillment in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus AND in the mission to all nations.
 - d) *Our commission is connected to and continuous with the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.
 - 2) We have witnessed all of this and are tasked with being witnesses on Jesus' behalf.
4. *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you."* (John 20:21)
- a. Distinctive: Sent-ness
 - b. Of note
 - 1) "Sent ones" 40 times. 40th time shifts from God sending Jesus to Jesus sending us.
 - 2) Just as Christ was sent, so now the Church (and each one of us) is sent.
 - 3) The relationship of Jesus (sent) with His Father (sender) becomes the relationship of us (sent) with Jesus (sender).
5. *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the Earth.* (Acts 1:8)
- a. Distinctive: Power of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Of note
 - 1) Witness empowered by the Holy Spirit
 - 2) Outward movement of the Gospel message
 - 3) *The Gospel of the Kingdom is always in motion outward, never stalling or stagnant.
- C. When and where?
1. Matthew=post Resurrection; told to go from Jerusalem to Galilee a few days to weeks journey north
 2. Mark, Luke, John

- a. In Jerusalem the night of the resurrection
 - b. Distinctive language in all three Gospels, possibly suggesting separate statements of Jesus
 - 3. Acts=40 days after the Resurrection, south of Galilee on the Mt of Olives
 - 4. *This wasn't just one statement Jesus made, it was the focal message He wanted to leave with His disciples and all who would receive the Gospel. It was literally the last thing He said to them.
- III. Our commission
- A. What it is and is not.
 - 1. This commission is not something that is reserved for "missionaries" or those who are highly trained.
 - 2. This commission is not only for the 12 disciples turned apostles.
 - 3. This commission is not a category or a season that might define a part of one's life.
 - 4. This commission is expected to be the drive of every Jesus follower's life—all things in my life must ladder up to this directive.
 - B. Jesus' commissions all at once: You are sent by Jesus to make disciples, proclaiming what you know and have seen and have experienced from Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to your neighbors and to all ethnicities in all nations.
- IV. Cliff-hanger
- A. So, what does this look like?
 - 1. You've got a week. You have the Spirit living in you (advocate, counselor, comforter)
 - 2. Next three weeks we will help unpack this and we are not the Holy Spirit.
 - B. Remember
 - 1. Obedience
 - 2. Compassion
 - C. *Are you like Jonah or are you like Jesus? Have you excused yourself from this commission or have you embraced it and live your life in obedience to what Jesus clearly has asked of you?

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:1-13)

COMMUNION