

Being Serious about Christ's Great Commission at New Life

Matt 28:18-20

A) What is the Great Commission?

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt 28:18-20 NLT)

Throughout Church history, this commandment has been referred to as the Great Commission. The Great Commission is really three different commands: First, "**make disciples of all the nations.**" Second, baptize these disciples. Third, "**Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands**" of Christ.

It is best to understand references in the NT to a disciple as a convert to Christ. Acts 14:21 "**They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples.**"

Therefore, the first part of the Great Commission, the command to "make disciples in all the nations" is a command to do evangelism and missionary work all over the world.

The second command in the Great Commission is to baptize these converts in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Great Commission is far more than evangelism. If we only make Christians or disciples we will disobey Christ's Great Commission.

B) Why is it the Great Commission?

The word co-mission reminds us that this is not just a mission we are sent to do. It is a co-mission that Jesus Christ will be doing with us. Jesus said, "**And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**"

Christ's Great Commission is the most important work in the world.

A second reason this is the Great Commission is that it is a command for every Christian.

This is not something God is going to do without us.

This is different than evangelism. Who will become Christians has already been predestined and chosen by God before the creation of the world. (Eph 1:4-5)

But this is not true of teaching disciples to obey Christ's commands. It is not predestined by God how holy and obedient you will become Christian. It was predestined by God that you would be a Christian. But God has not predetermined what kind of Christian you will be. That depends on the decisions you make, and the kind of teaching you receive from others.

A third reason that the Great Commission is great is because of its scope. The Great Commission of course begins in our own lives. Then, if you are married,

it extends to your spouse. So husbands, the Great Commission first applies to yourself, and then to your wife, and then to your children. (Eph 6:4).

But let me tell you our definition of a mature Christian man or woman. They are teaching and helping people beyond their family.

But the scope of the Great Commission does not even stop with your local church. Jesus said "**Go and make disciples of all the nations**

A fourth reason this is the Great Commission is that this is among the hardest work in the world. Do you understand what Jesus is really commanding in the Great Commission? Essentially, He is saying, "Go and change people's lives."

The Apostle Paul reflects both the standard of the Great Commission and the hard work and even wisdom it requires when he writes: **He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.** (Col 1:28 NIV).

A fifth reason this is the Great Commission is that nothing will bring more happiness into your life. "**I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth**" (3 John 1:4 NLT).

Finally, another reason this is the Great Commission is that there is nothing better or more important that you can do for another Christian than to help them to obey Jesus better.

C) The Good News about the Great Commission at New Life

First, we ARE serious about it. We make it very clear at New Life that you are expected to grow.

In my opinion, this is by far the most common reason people have left New Life. It's hard to be consistently confronted with the biblical standards of authentic Christianity. Quite frankly, there are easier places to go to church. But we have never wanted it to be easy to be a member of New Life. If it was, we would be failing Christ's commands in the Great Commission.

We are really good at changing people's lives.

Yes, people have left New Life. But if they were here for any significant period of time, there has always been one thing that is true. They were changed.

Discussion ?'s

- 1) What three commands are included in the Great Commission? Which one of these is the hardest?
- 2) Why is it called a Co- mission? What does this practically mean?
- 3) There were 6 reasons given for why the Great Commission is great. Which one challenges you the most? Which one encourages you the most?
- 4) What has been your experience of spiritually growing at New Life?
- 5) What has been your experience of helping others to grow at New Life?
- 6) What was most meaningful to you about the Sunday message?