

God's Plan for Reaching the World

Text: Luke 24:44-49

Introduction:

1. The Great Commission is found in all four Gospels. Each account contributes a unique aspect to our understanding of the great task that has been left for us to do by the Captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- a. Matthew 28:18-20
- b. Mark 16:15-16
- c. Luke 24:44-49
- d. John 20:19-23
- e. Acts 1:8

2. The context of our text.

- a. The early events of resurrection Sunday (Vs. 1-12)
- b. Christ reveals Himself to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Vs. 13-35)
- c. Christ appears to the 11 disciples (Vs. 36-43)

3. Consider the significance of Christ's final instruction. Christ continued to give inspired commands after His ascension through the Apostles and Authors of the New Testament Scriptures. However, the last words of His earthly ministry must come with a degree of weight and importance.

I. The Preaching of the Great Commission (Vs. 46-47)

A. The Central Truths of the Gospel (Vs. 46)

- 1. Christ's Crucifixion
- 2. Christ's Resurrection

I. Corinthians 15:3-4 *"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."*

B. The Challenge of the Gospel (Vs. 47)

1. Repentance

Acts 17:30 *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to **repent**:"*

a. The Definition of Repentance

i. A change of mind

ii. A change of direction - "repentance **toward** God" (Acts 20:21); "turned **to God** from idols" (I. Thess. 1:9); "that they should repent and **turn to God**, and do works meet for repentance." (Acts 26:20)

iii. Turning from idols was not merely turning from false belief. Idol worship involved a whole sinful lifestyle of immorality and perversion.

b. The Preaching of Repentance in the N.T.

John the Baptist - Matt. 3:1-2 *"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, **Repent ye**: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Jesus Christ - Matt. 4:17 *"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent**: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

The 12 Apostles - Mark 6:12 *"And they went out, and preached that men should **repent**."*

The Apostle Peter - Acts 2:38 *"Then Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*

The Apostle Paul - Acts 20:21 *"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance** toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."*

2. Remission

a. Translated elsewhere as 'forgiveness', 'deliverance', 'liberty'. Therefore, it means to be granted forgiveness or deliverance; to be set at liberty. It refers to someone being released from a debt on the basis of a payment that has been made. The great message of the Gospel is that the blood of Christ has paid the sin debt so that we might be freely pardoned.

b. Illustration: Remit is an accounting term

C. The Authorization of the Gospel - "in his name"

1. See Matt. 28:18-19a – Christ possesses sovereign power over heaven and earth and He authorizes us to carry out the work of the Great Commission.
2. The English word 'power' can mean "authority, command, the right of governing"

II. The Procedure for the Great Commission (Vs. 47-48)

A. Go (Vs. 47; Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15)

1. The Gospel is to be taken to "all nations" and "to every creature"
2. Example: Paul's missionary journeys. The Gospel must be carried.

B. Preach (Vs. 47)

1. There is a strong shift away from this biblical method today.
2. 'preach' = to proclaim or herald
3. The centrality of preaching in the propagation of the Gospel
 - a. Preaching is God's chosen method - I. Cor. 1:17-25; 2:1-5
 - b. Preaching was the primary method used by the early church – Refer to the Book of Acts and the examples of public and private preaching.

C. Witness (Vs. 48)

1. The word witness is the Greek word μαρτυρῶ from where we get the English word 'martyr'. A witness testifies of what he has **seen**, **heard** and **experienced**.
2. Illustration: The man born blind – John 9:25 "*...one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*"

D. Baptize (Matt. 28:19)

E. Teach (Matt. 28:20)

III. The Program for the Great Commission (Vs. 47)

A. The Scope - *all nations*

B. The Starting point - *beginning at Jerusalem*

1. Missions starts at home! The pattern is Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost (Acts 1:8)
2. We should seek to reach "around the corner and across the street."

IV. The Power for the Great Commission (Vs. 49; Acts 1:8)

A. The Promise of this power

1. We know that our Lord was referring to the Day of Pentecost that would soon come. There are some elements of Pentecost that cannot be repeated today. To pray for another Pentecost in its entirety would be like praying for another giving of the law at Mount Sinai. It is one of those colossal, mountain peak events of Scripture. However, we do need to pray for the same outpouring and anointing of the Holy Ghost that we might have power to witness for Christ. Pentecost, the major starting point for world missions in the early church, teaches us that Divine Power is an indispensable requirement for the work of the Great Commission.

2. This is illustrated in the following examples:

The Apostles and early believers post Pentecost: Acts 2:24-31 - *"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."* (31)

The Holy Ghost in Acts: Mentioned at least 53 times - "Holy Ghost" & "Spirit"

The Apostle Paul:

1Thess. 1:5 *"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in **power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance...**"*

1Cor. 2:4 *"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in **demonstration of the Spirit and of power:**"*

C. The Nature of this power

1. The English word 'endue' means to be endowed with something. The same Greek word is translated as follows:
2. "put on" - e.g. Eph. 6:11 **"Put on the whole armour of God..."**

3. "clothed with" - e.g. Mark 1:6 "*John was **clothed with** camel's hair...*" or Rev. 1:13 "*...**clothed with** a garment down to the foot...*"

4. Acts 1:8 "*But ye shall receive power, after that **the Holy Ghost is come upon you**: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*"

5. Illustration: Eye witness of George Whitefield preaching

D. The Person of this power - "I send" & "from on high"

E. The Key to this power - 'tarry'

1. The word 'tarry' literally means to sit down.

2. The early church was found in this posture when the Spirit was poured out.

3. "*And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in **prayer and supplication**, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*" Acts 1:13-14

4. "*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they **were sitting**.*" Acts 2:1-2

5. We need to have a balance between these two truths - waiting upon God and laboring for God.

Conclusion:

1. Are you preaching the message God has given you as an ambassador and using His methods to do so?
2. Are we seeking the outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power upon our lives personally and upon our church and its outreach?