Session 2- Our Mission

Scripture: Various
Subject: Mission
Central Theme: Accomplishing Our Mission
Objective Statement: We must accomplish the mission that God has given to us called "the Great Commission". We are more likely to do that when we can answer these 5 questions.
Keyword: Questions
Points:
1. What is the Great Commission?
2. Why is it stated in five different places in scripture?
3. What are the five different emphases in those five texts?
4. How did the disciples and the early church flesh this out?
5. Why is the Great Commission so important?

Introduction:

Connection:

Have you ever noticed a connection between owning a lot of something and valuing it less?

- I noticed that when we have had a Sam's Club or Costco membership and bought things in bulk, we tend to use more of it, eat more of it…basically be less frugal with what we have.
- Sometimes the more you have access to something, the more you take it for granted.

- From time to time on television or on the internet I have come across a video capturing a crisis event in a big city.
- Someone has been hurt, or is having someone stolen and people just watch. No one comes to their aid.
- What's worse is that in recent years these events happen and instead of helping people video the event with their cell phones.
- Contrast that with my experiences in small town life. My grandparents live on a lake in Brownwood, Texas. I didn't notice until we had left there and come back that everyone that we drove by waved to us on the way in to town. There were only 4 or 5 trucks that we passed in a 8-10 minute drive, but they all waved hello though they didn't know us.

Whatever you have an abundance of we tend to value less.

Tension:

- In our culture we have more potential connection to other people than at any other time in history.
- Whether we live in the middle of a metrapolotin city, or in the most remote and rural part of the nation, we have access to more people than ever before.
- As a culture I believe it means that we are beginning to value people less and less.

People matter to God.

- If people matter to God, we should love people, too.
- God made people in His image.
- God loves people. He is no respector of persons. The Bible says that man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.
- Big, little, old, young, fat, skinny, American, European, Asian, African… Put any human distinction you want on the table- It doesn't matter and doesn't change this fact- People matter to God.
- How much? He sacrificed His Son for them.
- But that's not the only thing that matters to God.

Truth matters to God.

- Truth should matter to us as well.
- John 1:14 says- *"14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."*
- What was notable about Jesus according to John 1:14 was that Jesus was not just love and grace. He was truth. It was the combination that was so powerful. He loved people, and was committed to the truth.

- There are only tow things on this earth that are eternal- The Word of God, and people.
- Interestingly the target of the ministry of the local church outlined by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-17, is that the people of God be equipped to do ministry the way Jesus did- speaking the Truth in love.
- This is a great description of the mission of our church.
- It is my goal over this sermon, and the coming few sermons in the month of July, to describe the mission of our church.
- Why does our church exist? What are we supposed to do?
- Of course we exist to glorify God, but how do we do that as a part of this church?
- Our church exists to glorify God by accomplishing the mission we have been given.
- This mission is called the Great Comission, and it is our co-mission vision.
- Today's message really is an argument for the theology and philosophy of our mission.

We must accomplish the mission that God has given to us called "the Great Commission". We are more likely to do that when we can answer these 5 questions.

1. What is the Great Commission?

- Webster's dictionary defines the noun commission as follows
    - : a formal written warrant granting the power to perform various acts or duties
    - : a certificate conferring military rank and authority
    - : an authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or to perform prescribed acts
    - : authority to act for, in behalf of, or in place of another
    - : a task or matter entrusted to one as an agent for another
    - : a group of persons directed to perform some duty
    - : an act of entrusting or giving authority
    - the commission of limited powers to the administrator
- If then, a commission is the authorization and command of a group of persons to perform some duty, what is the great commission.

What is the Great Commission?

A. It is the mission statement for every local church.

- Jesus spent 3 years of His life in earthly ministry reaching people, teaching people, and ministering to people.

- While he did this ministry Himself, he called people to do life with him. He had disciples that he poured His life into while He did this ministry with them.
- At the end of His earthly ministry, after His resurrection, he authorized those men He had trained to make disciples like he had. Assembly's of Jesus Christ, what we called churches, were the fruit of that ministry. They assembled people who had been reached and were being discipled in the context of that ministry.
- This is the mission of the church today, to make disciples of Jesus Christ of all nations. That is the mission He has given to every local church.

What is the Great Commission?

B. It is a statement of orders from our Supreme Commander to the officers in the field.

- The mission is God's mission. As we will see, like the commander in chief authorizes officers to lead soldiers on a spiritual mission, our Supreme Commander- God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, have authorized all those who are His disciples to make disciples in our mission field.
- The Bible speaks about the Spiritual battle that is waging. We are in a battle for the souls of men and women, boys and girls.
- Our marching orders are summed up in the Great Commission.

What is the Great Commission?

C. It is a statement of principles.

- Dr. Bill Munroe, Pastor of the Florence Baptist Temple in Florence, South Carolina, a man that I greatly admire, said this about the Great Commission.

Webster's Dictionary defines a principle as "a fundamental truth, law or doctrine upon which others are based; an essential element that produces a specific effect." That is why the Lord gave the Commission-"to produce a specific effect." I sense many today may be thinking, "But how could the Commission be relevant in today's ever-changing, high-tech culture? Isn't the Great Commission sort of a tired, old-fashioned formula?" Allow me to answer that question with one I have already posed: would Jesus have given us a strategy that He knew would become irrelevant and ineffective before the task was completed? The answer is self-evident. The very nature of the Lord Himself would not permit that. So think of the Great Commission as a set of unchanging principles, universally applicable to local churches. They are principles based upon truth, for our Lord spoke them; principles which, if we would but apply, could still enable us to consummate the Great Commission, perhaps, even in our generation.

D. It is a process.

- We are going to see very clearly that the Great Commission is a process.
- Again, Dr. Munroe says this:

Webster's Dictionary says a process is "a series of events, strategically arranged in order to systematically reach a certain objective." Our objective is to reach every available person with the Gospel of Christ, to baptize everyone who receives Him, and to equip them to become obedient, productive members of a local church, who will themselves join in the mission. To achieve this objective requires a definite process.

We will never effectively reach our objective with a calendar full of random activities. We cannot just meet together, preach, pray and hope for results. Effort and activity do not count-no matter how sincerely given. There must be a process-a "series of events, strategically arranged to reach our objective." The process must be carried out in a disciplined and consistent manner. Just as a general produces a "war plan" based upon local conditions, so must we develop a process and strategy based upon the local spiritual terrain. It is far easier to have projects and programs than it is to have a process. A project is an evangelistic campaign, a rally, an event, a special day or promotion. A project has a start and finish date. The Great Commission is not a project. Nor is it a program. There are wonderful programs to assist in our evangelism efforts. I think of the Awana Program, FAITH or Evangelism Explosion ministries that have trained thousands to witness. But the Great Commission is not a program-it is a 365-day-a-year process. The process involves a three-phase cycle. The first phase is "Go and make disciples," or evangelism. The second is the churching phase where the convert is baptized, assim-ilated, or connected to the church. Phase three is the equipping stage where the believer is trained to know and be obedient to the teachings of Jesus Christ, and to become involved in the mission themselves. Only when the cycle has been completed can we really say we have fulfilled the Commission.

2. Why is it stated in five different <u>places</u> in scripture?

A. Jesus did not just say it once. It was <u>repeated</u>. In fact, it was His <u>method</u>.

- While the commissioning phase of him ministry was at the end, Jesus did not just wait to send His disciples to do ministry just at the end.
- He would do ministry while they watched him. Then he would do ministry with them. Then he would watch them do ministry and coach them. Finally He sent them out and cheered them on!
- These expressions of commission solidified the principles, methods and mission he had already been doing with them.

B. Jesus did not want His followers to forget it or forsake it. He wanted us to do it together.

- There is an individual responsibility to do the great commission, but it always leads to the local church.
- We are calling this series “Our Co-Mission Vision” because we are doing this commission together.

Why is stated in five different places?

C. Jesus did not just say it one way.

D. Jesus gave us a cohesive picture of our mission in these five texts.

3. What are the five different emphases in those five texts?

A. Matthew 28:18-20- The Great Commission is a process.

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

- There is the process in a statement.
- The word for "teach" is "make disciples". As stated before, that is the evangelism stage.
- The word for baptizing them adds them to the church, and it is in this assembly that they are taught to obey all that Christ commanded.
- There is the series of events. Reach them, teach them, send them out to minister.
- The Great Commission is a process.

B. Mark 16:15- The Great Commission carries a message.

Mark 16:15

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

- What is the message?
- It is the Gospel.
- Gospel means good news.
- What is the good news? That Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.
- That message must be given to every person in all of the world. Quite a scope!
- The Great Commission carries a message.

C. Luke 24:44-49- The Great Commission is about the person of Jesus Christ.

Luke 24:44-49

44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and

in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

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- Can you imagine this Bible study?
- The resurrected Jesus doing teaching on the prophetic scripture about His birth, life, subistituionary death, burial and resurrection.
- The Gospel is all about Jesus. What is did the scriptures say?

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46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

- The message of the Gospel, and the commission of Christ is to make disciples not of ourselves, but of Jesus Christ.
- It's not about us. It's all about Him!
- The Great Commission is about the person of Jesus Christ.

D. John 20:21- The Great Commission is a delegated authority.

John 20:21

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

- The Father has a mission. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
- For this reason He sent Jesus. Jesus constantly said that He came to do His Father's will.
- In this commission He stated that He had come with the Father's authority. He was now handing over authority to the disciples to make disciples of Jesus.
- This is similar to what was stated in Matthew 28:18 when he said, "All authority is given to me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore and make disciples…"
- The Father sent the Son. The Son sent the Spirit to us, and He sent us to the world.

- Let me be clear about what I say at the end of each service. Why do I say, "You're not dismissed. You're sent."? What I'm trying to say is that the ministry has not just been accomplished only to be done again in the building at the next service or the next Lord's day. What I'm saying is, the point of this gathering is for you to be equipped to go out into the world to do ministry all week long. The ministry is not over, and only done by professionals. The ministry is to be done outside of this building by every Christ follower who has been given the authority to make disciples of Jesus Christ. You are not dismissed. You are sent.
- And by the way, I'm not saying you are sent by me. You don't go by my authority as an undershepherd.
- We all go under the authority of the resurrected Jesus who gave it to us from His Father, and who has empowered us by His Spirit.
- The Great commission is a delegated authority.

E. Acts 1:8-9- The Great Commission is to be done locally, regionally, and globally.

Acts 1:8

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.

- Where should the Great Commission be done?
- Of course it is done internationally.
- In our church context, we emphasize the Gospel getting to the nations.
- We are praying that the Lord would see fit to send someone from our church to a cross cultural, international ministry somewhere in the world.
- Jesus commanded that the Commission be done in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and into the Uttermost part of the earth.
- For the disciples Jerusalem was where they were. Judea was the surrounding area where there were people that were culturally homogenous. Samaria was near them geographicaly, but cross cultural. Of course the uttermost part of the earth to them was expansive in geography, and completely cross cultural in language, religion and culture.
- Notice a very important word in the verse…It's the word "kai" or "and". Jerusalem AND Judea AND Samaria AND to the uttermost.
- The Great Commission- making disciples- evangelism, discipleship, and sending- is not just for missionaries in foreign lands, and not churches here at home. Nor is it just for churches here at home with no effect to the nations.

- How can we do the Great Commission in all of those places at the same time?
    - You can't, but we can.
- It's our Great Co-Mission Vision.
- The Great Commission is to be done locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

4. How did the disciples and the early church flesh out the Great Commission? (Acts 2:41-47)

Acts 2:41-47

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

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5. Why is the great commission so important? (Acts 4:10-12)

Acts 4:10-12

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

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Acts 4:18-20

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of

God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

- If that transforming work of the Great Commission is going to affect our families, our neighborhoods, our county, our state, and our nation, then we must make Jesus Christ's last words our first work.
- The Great Commission mandate of evangelism and discipleship cannot be unknown and undone. We must make that work our primary focus. It must be our co-mission vision. We must do it together as a church body.