

*** The Heights Baptist Church * Sermon Series: Doctrine ***
*** Topic: The Great Commission * Matt. 28:18-20 * 7/5/2026 ***

MAIN POINT

The Great Commission contains five elements: to trust in Jesus' authority and presence with us, to go, to make disciples of all nations, to baptize, and to teach them to obey Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

Who has helped you more than anyone else in growing in your walk with Christ? What was it about them that helped you so much?

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 28:18-20.

What five commands or encouragements are included in the "Great Commission"?

Note to study leader: Consider listing these five items on the whiteboard in preparation for discussing each item further in the next question.

Go; make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you; and a reminder that Jesus has been given all authority and will be with us until the end of the age.

Each one of these five elements is an important component of the Great Commission. If any of these are removed, then the church's mission is compromised.

In this lesson we will focus on three of the five elements in the Great Commission; "go and make disciples", and "teach them". Other lessons in this doctrine series have looked at baptism and the fact Jesus is present with us.

The Greek word for "disciple" is "mathetes" (pronounced "ma-thay-tās"), and is defined by Blue Letter Bible as, "a learner, pupil, disciple". A "disciple" is defined by Merriam-Webster as "one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another."

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-2

In what ways is a new Christian like a newborn baby?

How does the physical care a parent gives their babies compare to how the Christians in the church have responsibility to a new Christian?

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ TITUS 2:1-8

What are some ways we are directed to help other Christians grow in their walk with Christ?

Teach, encourage, urge, and set an example. This goes beyond just growing in doctrine, but also in developing Christlike character.

Note to study leader: Mention the Men's ministry which meets on Wednesday nights and provides a great environment for disciple making. Also, the "T-2" women's ministry which is based on Titus 2:4 and sets up mentor-mentee pairs. If you are interested stop by the help desk in the concourse.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS TRAINING THE TWELVE DISCIPLES.

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ 2 TIMOTHY 2:2; LUKE 9:57-62 AND JOHN 2:23-24

1. Select people to pour my life into.

What kinds of qualities do these verses describe as being important when choosing a person to train as a disciple?

As a church, we need to ensure we are following-up all baby Christians. And we need to be helping those who are in need (widows and orphans), and those who are struggling. But when we are specifically choosing someone to invest our life in to train them as disciples of Christ, we are to be looking for faithful, reliable people who love the Lord and are committed to growing as Christians.

How do I apply these verses to my life to ensure I am the kind of Christian I need to be to grow as a disciple?

How do I apply this when choosing someone to invest my life in to help them grow as a disciple?

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ LUKE 22:32 AND JOHN 17:6-9

2. Pray for them

How can we as a lifegroup or as mentors/mentees be more consistent in praying for each other?

Consider selecting one day each week to pray for each other in our lifegroup or as mentor/mentee.

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ MATTHEW 24:1-3 AND LUKE 11:1

3. Teach them

If I am mentoring (discipling) a younger Christian, what can I do to ensure I am using our time together to effectively teach this younger Christian what they need to know to help them grow as a Christian?

Have a plan. This can be accomplished using resources designed to follow-up or disciple others. Follow-up should include verses covering “the milk of the gospel”; topics such as a review of the gospel, Bible verses on assurance--such as assurance of salvation, and assurance of answered prayer. Also, basic doctrines such as baptism and communion. Then, move on to how to grow as a Christian (Time in the Word, prayer, fellowship, etc.). Be willing to adjust this plan based on where the person is at.

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ LUKE 9:23-26; JAMES 1:22-25; AND JOHN 13:34-35

4. Challenge them

How does training someone in their walk with God go beyond just teaching them?

Jesus often went beyond doctrine, challenging his disciples to grow in their walk with God.

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ JOHN 6:5-11; MARK 6:48-52; AND JOHN 11:1-14

5. Train them

How do these verses show Jesus going beyond just teaching his disciples, giving them real-life opportunities to put their faith into practice?

Jesus could have healed Lazarus before he died. He could have provided the food for the 5,000 before asking his disciples to feed them. We see Jesus deliberately putting his disciples in difficult situations, designed to help them grow. He could have prevented the storm before the disciples got into trouble. It is clear God is more concerned about our walk with him than in our temporary comfort.

We as finite people need to be careful here that we don't go too far in this area. Leave room for God to be doing this in their lives. But we can look for opportunities to help our mentees grow. Things like getting them involved in ministry or helping them take on more responsibilities in the Church.

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ MATT. 4:19; MATT. 28:19-20; LUKE 9:1-2, AND ACTS 1:8

6. Help them learn to spiritually reproduce

How can we help a Christian learn how to go beyond just being a disciple of Christ, and learn to make disciples of others, as we are commissioned to do by Jesus?

We need to teach others how to share the gospel, and how to follow-up and disciple others. We can show them a method for sharing the gospel, and then let them practice sharing it with us.

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ MATTHEW 17:1-2 AND MATTHEW 26:36-38

7. Spend time together

How might this look different than just scripted teaching times in lifegroup, or as mentors/mentees?

This can be fellowship nights, meeting for meals, service projects, or getting involved in Community Groups together; even routine daily activities, such as going to a gym or going on a walk.

APPLICATION

The Heights has been conducting "Starting Point" classes to help us grow in our walk with Christ, and find how we can best serve in the Church. If interested, ask for more information at the help desk.

***Note to study leader:** The following question incorporates the "LIFE" acronym (from our "Starting Point" classes) into the lesson. A summary of this acronym is included in the first portion of the Commentary section of this lesson. Include a brief description of "LIFE" as part of this application. Today's application is based on the "E" in the "LIFE" acronym.*

Engaged disciple-maker: I am regularly looking to invest in others to help them take their next step in following Jesus.

What can you do to ensure you are growing as a disciple of Christ?

How can we get involved in making disciples of others?

How can you assist the church in making disciples of all nations?

PRAYER

Pray that we would apply the reality of the Gospel message to our everyday lives. Pray that our church would continually remain rooted in the Gospel, and that our identity in Christ would drive us to live for Him. Pray that we would realize our standing with God is based on grace alone. Pray that as we continue to grow in Christ, we will look less and less like the old self, and more and more like Jesus.

***Note to study leader:** Attached is a copy of our Multiplying Disciples pathway. We will have copies of this in each classroom. Please use this in your lesson and hand it out to everyone in class.*

COMMENTARY

The LIFE Acronym

This acronym is part of our “Starting Point” training programs. The letters in LIFE stand for the following:

Loving our neighbor: I am motivated to show God’s love and compassion to others where I live, work, and play.

Intentional friend: I am purposefully cultivating relationships within my church family.

Faithful follower: I am sensitive to the moving of the Holy Spirit in regular times of prayer, worship, and Bible study.

Engaged disciple-maker: I am regularly looking to invest in others to help them take their next step in following Jesus.

MATTHEW 28:16-20

28:16-17. Sometime during the forty days of Jesus’ post-resurrection stay on earth, the eleven disciples and many more of Jesus’ followers proceeded to Galilee, where Jesus had instructed them to go (26:32; 28:7, 10). Jesus had specified a particular mountain as their meeting place. At the end of the journey, presumably on the designated mountain, they saw him. Imagine their joy! It was only natural that they worshiped him. But some doubted (the word doubt means “to duplicate,” “to be of two minds,” or “to waver, hesitate”). Some experienced the internal tug-of-war between “two minds”—the one wanting to follow their fledgling faith and the other wanting to follow “reason.” Even those presented with clear evidence for the truth can still have doubts. These were the followers of the Messiah-King who would continue into Acts, willing to take any risk in obedience to their master. This was true faith in action, living on the edge of “risky” obedience.

28:18. Matthew noted that Jesus came near or approached. Here was no case of mistaken identity. The disciples could look Jesus in the eye and see that this One was the same Person whom Pilate had arrested. They could hear the voice clearly and know it was the voice they had listened to for several years. Jesus’ claim made the need for decision even clearer: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” The kingdom Jesus talked about (4:17) had been established. The King had received authority to reign. This kingdom far exceeded the size of the Roman Empire. Only God could make such a declaration. Only One who ruled in heaven as well as on earth could claim such power.

28:19-20. On the basis of His authority, Jesus issued the Great Commission. Disciples had to accept the authority if they were to accept the commission. The commission is intricately formulated in the Greek. Stated somewhat literally as translated from the Greek language, the Great Commission reads as follows: “Therefore, having gone, disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep (or to persistently obey) as much as I commanded you. And look here, I am with you all the days, until the completion (or perfection) of the age.” The introductory “therefore” connects the Great Commission to Jesus’ authority established in verse 18. The phrase “having gone” assumes obedience to the Commission. This phrase is not so much a call to go as it is a command to do certain things on the way. Disciples who recognize Christ’s authority have one major task. The only imperative verb form in these verses formulates that task. Disciples under Christ’s authority disciple the nations. That is, they share the gospel and help believers grow in Christ. Building the church by discipling the nations expands the disciple’s journey. It sends them to the nations. Here is the universal nature of the gospel made explicit and clear. Disciples under Christ’s authority must leave their comfort zones and the people with whom they feel at home. They must expand their horizons to incorporate every nation of people on earth. The church must devise plans and strategies to use the talents, gifts, energies, and resources of every one of its members. Every member must be on the move, discipling the nations.

The Great Commission involves going, making disciples, and baptizing, which occurs after a person has acknowledged Jesus, the risen Savior, as his or her personal Savior. Baptism incorporates the new believer officially into the church. Baptism is also one means of making a public confession of faith. Baptism pictures or symbolizes what Jesus did and what the new Christian is doing. Jesus died for our sins. He was buried in the tomb. God raised Him from death to life. Baptism also pictures the believer's having died to sin and being raised to a new life in Christ, a life that is eternal through the ages.

The second action in discipling is teaching. This instruction reaches back to the earthly ministry of Jesus. It takes every parable, every sermon, every word Jesus said and teaches them to the church. It seeks to develop Christlike individuals. The teaching ministry begins with the New Testament accounts of the life and death of Jesus Christ. It expands to the rest of the New Testament and then incorporates the Old Testament as the foundation of who God is and what God planned long before He sent Jesus to fulfill Old Testament prophecies. This entire Word of God is the curriculum each disciple is charged to teach to new believers.

TITUS 2:1-8

2:1. The phrase “but you” shows the contrast between Titus and the false teachers (see 1:15-16). Instead of teaching based on empty talk and deception, Titus was to ensure that his instructions were consistent with sound teaching. The theme of sound teaching is a constant refrain throughout Paul’s letters to Titus and Timothy (see 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9). Such teaching will not only build up the faith of believers, it will protect them from the destructive influences of false teaching.

2:2. Paul’s list for older men is similar to the qualifications for overseers from Titus 1. Levelheaded literally means “sober.” Maturity implies a consistent use of good sense and judgment. To be worthy of respect suggests being dignified, as opposed to being silly or juvenile. Sensible implies being self-controlled or disciplined (see Titus 1:8). Sound in faith, love, and endurance means demonstrating a healthy expression of these great Christian virtues. Instead of the more familiar, “faith, hope, and love,” Paul referred to endurance, a quality especially appropriate for older men who might be tempted to “coast” morally in their senior years or to have a sense of uselessness because of their age.

2:3. The apostle directed older women to be reverent in behavior, a unique phrase that is found only here in the New Testament. It focuses on the sacred responsibility Christian women have as representatives of a holy God. Not slanderers is a form of the word also translated “devil,” for the Devil is the chief slanderer. The implication is that older women are to have mastery over their tongues. Not addicted to much wine implies having mastery over the appetites. The exhortation to teach what is good is specifically applicable to older women’s responsibility to younger women.

2:4-5. In thinking of what the older women were to teach, Paul described the qualities desirable in the young women. His focus was on married women with children at home. Single adult women were much rarer in Paul’s day than in ours. Older women could teach these young married women to love their husbands and to love their children. The wife plays a critical role in the success of every family.

Self-controlled is the same word translated “sensible” in 2:2. The term “pure” especially focuses on having sexual integrity, being faithful in marriage. The word rendered “homemakers” literally means “busy at home,”—that is, being good managers of domestic responsibilities. “Kind” translates a word often rendered “good.” The wife’s role in marriage is repeated in the New Testament (see Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1,5). Submission does not imply that wives are inferior but that they have a distinct, God-given role in the home.

2:6. The young men in that society for the most part were married with children at home. Yet the word of counsel Paul offered was appropriate whether they were married or single. They were to be self-controlled. This is a form of the word translated “sensible” in 2:2 and “self-controlled” in 2:4. Lack of self-control, especially in physical appetites, has long been recognized as a challenge for young men. The phrase “in everything” at the beginning of 2:7 probably should be included with 2:6. That is, the younger men were to keep themselves under control in every way and in all areas of life.

2:7. Titus—probably a young man himself—was to be an example to the other young men, and to all believers. Paul addressed Titus’s behavior. He was to be known for good works (see also 1 Tim. 4:12). Others were to see the pattern and follow it, just as Titus and Timothy had followed Paul’s example.

Paul next spoke about Timothy’s ministry of teaching the Christian message. He was not just to mouth the words; rather, his listeners were to recognize that the teaching proceeded from a person with integrity and dignity. Titus was always to teach truthfully in a way that inspired respect.

2:8. Paul moved from the manner of Titus’s teaching to the content: it was to be sound beyond reproach. He was to stick to the plain, simple, life-giving gospel message, as we have seen Paul emphasize repeatedly in these letters. Furthermore, a result of Titus’s teaching truthfully and well would be that any opponent would be ashamed and have nothing bad to say. The apostle affirmed that it is the combination of outstanding behavior and outstanding teaching that best silences opposition to the good news of Jesus.