



**GETTING STARTED**

> *As your group time begins, use this section for very brief review prior to showing the video to help get the conversation going.*

Let's do life together!/Opening Discussion: Welcome to your LIFEgroup; share how you have changed your prayer life since last week.

Our Subject Today: This week, we continue our sermon series, CHRISTIAN(ESE), and will be looking at the doctrine of **Missions**. What is the definition of **Missions**?

**VIDEO NOTES/QUESTIONS**

**INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY / OBSERVATION:** Luke recorded the initial fulfillment of the Great Commission as the Gospel spread and New Testament churches were formed.

**INTERPRETATION:** See Commentary on pages 5-6

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS:**

- 1) What image or what definition comes to your mind when you hear the word "missions" or "Christian Missions" or even something like "The Great Commission"?

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER:** Pastor David's words - "Missions is about going to a foreign land to tell people about Jesus, and you better believe that we as Christians should be doing just that but church missions is also about going across the street, or going across the state, or going across all the states to love people, and to serve people, and to care for people in Jesus' name and folks we know that, because as Jesus wrapped up His life and ministry here on this earth, before He left and ascended back into heaven not only did Jesus command us to go, but Jesus also told us where to go, and then He also told us that we should all be doing missions."

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)****Read *Matthew 28:18-20***

2) Why are these verses commonly known as the Great Commission? How can you live your life "On Mission" according to the Great Commission?

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER:** According to the research, only 17% of churchgoers in America say that they've heard of the great commission and actually know what it means. What we need to understand is that the most important part of the Great Commission isn't just knowing what it means, but actually doing what it says by striving to be a person "on mission" for Jesus. "Making Disciples" is an imperative verb (or command), so we are commanded to go and "Make Disciples" every where.

**Read *Acts 1:6-9***

3) When we apply these verses to our life, we are encouraged to witness for Jesus. Why is it so hard to witness to someone else? What fears do we face?

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER:** Pastor David's translation: Instead of just sitting around doing nothing, just waiting for me to return and to make this world right and new again, go out into the world and start working and advancing the Kingdom of God now, by BEING...don't miss this...by BEING my witnesses - that just like Jesus didn't tell us to convert our neighbors but to love them, He also didn't tell us do witnessing but be witnesses and church, that's huge because I think that one of the greatest failures of modern day Christ followers, me included, is that we relegate Christianity to a system of thought where we learn and study and process and talk...we do all of those things and more instead of keeping it, as it was meant to be, a way of life where each & every day we take what we've learned, and we take what we've studied and processed and talked about, and we put it into action so that it can truly make a difference both in our lives, and more importantly, in the lives of others.

4) When we apply *Acts 1:8* to our lives, we see that each believer in Jesus is given power to be a witness. How does that encourage us as we are on mission next door and around the world?

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER:** You will not be alone when it comes to witnessing. The Holy Spirit will give you power and speak through you. "For it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." - *Matthew 10:20*

Check out the book of Acts focusing on where to be a witness.

*Acts 1-7* is all about God's people being witnesses in Jerusalem.

*Acts 8-9* is all about God's people being witnesses in Judea/Samaria

*Acts 10-28* is all about God's people being witnesses to the end of the earth.

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)****Read Acts 2:37-47**

5) What was the result of their witnessing? Can someone share the results from your personal witnessing?

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER:** Pastor David - The end result of them being witnesses was that other people took notice, other people were encouraged, and countless numbers of people committed their lives to Jesus and to Jesus' church. They did so, because the church was actually being THE church doing all they could to meet each others needs and to point people to Christ.

6) During the sermon, you heard about a new mission possibility to help out a church in Panama City called City Church (formerly known as Northside Baptist Church) that was hit hard by Hurricane Michael. How can we as a LIFEgroup help serve this new mission?

Click on the following link to see how you and your group can *Reach Beyond Our Walls* and serve on "**Mission**": <http://www.fishhawkfc.org/disaster-relief>

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER:** Start by stopping right now to pray about the needs that were shared this past weekend. Now, make a list of the suggestions of how your group can help City Church.

**SUMMARY (My Take-Away for This Week)****POSSIBLE SUMMARY/TAKE-AWAY:**

- Missions is everywhere, next door, around the world
- I need to get serious about witnessing
- We/I can help City Church in Panama City



## COMMENTARY

**Mission:** Task on which God sends a person that He has called, particularly a mission to introduce another group of people to salvation in Christ. The mission of the churches is to send our missionaries to all parts of the world until everyone has had the opportunity to hear the message of Jesus and accept Him as Lord. Interestingly, the term mission is not found in the Scriptures, yet the concept of mission permeates the entire Bible.

**Old Testament** Its foundation lies in the understanding that the transcendent God is also the God who is involved in history. He is the God who acts. The record of His involvement in history indicates that His work is both revelatory and redemptive. People know who God is by what He has done. Since the fall (Gen. 3), God's primary activity has been redemptive, as the confessions in the OT reveal (Deut. 6:20-24; 26:5-9; Josh. 24:2-15).

Clearly, God's mission concern is inclusive, not exclusive. As indicated in the listing of the nations in Gen. 10, God's interest has been in all people, not just in Israel. When God called Abraham and his descendants, they were chosen, not to be exclusive vessels, but rather to be a means of blessing "all families of the earth" (Gen. 12:1-3; 18:16-19; 22:9-19; 26:1-5; 28:10-14).

**New Testament** The mission begins with Jesus who was sent to earth to reveal the Father (John 1:18; 14:9), to glorify Him (John 13:31; 14:13; 17:1, 6), to bring the kingdom of God on earth (Matt. 12:22-32), and to make God's love and mercy known to a lost world. He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). His mission was also inclusive. While Jesus' ministry was primarily for the Jews, He also met the needs of non-Jews.

Through His teachings Jesus made clear that His mission was to continue after He ascended. Each of the Gospels and Acts contains an account of His mandate to His followers, telling them to go to all the world, make disciples, baptize them, and preach the gospel (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21-22; Acts 1:8). The scope of mission was inclusive. The church was to cross all barriers—to reach out to all ethnic groups, clans, tribes, social classes, and cultures. The message of salvation was to be shared with all people everywhere (Bob Compton, "Mission(s)," ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003]).

**The Great Commission:** It is accurate to see a missionary purpose for the entire Bible. If God had not revealed himself in Scripture, we would know only that there is a Creator God (Ps 19; Rm 1:18-10). Such general revelation is not sufficient to lead us to saving knowledge of God. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the only answer to humanity's need for holiness and salvation (Jn 3:16; 14:6; Ac 4:12; 2 Cor 5:21). After their fall into sin, God came to Adam and Eve and announced the protoevangelion (First Gospel), that One was coming to destroy the work of the evil one (Gen 3:15). When God later called Abram, he told him that he would bless all the families of the earth through him (Gen 12:3).

In the Great Commission, Jesus charges his followers to make disciples of all nations by going to them, winning and baptizing them, and teaching them to obey all he has commanded (Mt 28:19-20). In *Matthew 22:33-40*, the Great Commandments teach us to love God and our neighbor. If we love our neighbor, we will want him to have eternal life. As we seek to imitate Jesus, the Great Compassion that characterized his life will shape our also. Our compassion should lead us to go to them and preach the gospel, disciple believers, teach leaders, and plant New Testament churches among them (M. David Sills, "The Biblical Basis for Missions," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017],

**Matthew 28:18-20.** Jesus is passing the torch to his disciples, even as he promises to be with them forever—spiritually, not physically—to empower them for future mission. Jesus can make the claim of v. 18 only if he is fully God, inasmuch as the whole universe is embraced in the authority delegated to him. And yet he is still in some sense distinct from his Heavenly Father, so that Matthew can use the divine passive in speaking of his having "been given" this authority.

The main command of Christ's commission is to "make disciples" (*mathēteusate*). Too much and too little have often been made of this observation. Too much is made of it when the disciples' "going" is overly subordinated, so that Jesus' charge is to proselytize merely where one is. Too little is made of it when all attention is centered on the command to "go," as in countless appeals for missionary candidates, so that foreign missions are elevated to a higher status of Christian service than other forms of spiritual activity.

## COMMENTARY

**Matthew 28:18-20 (cont.)** The verb “make disciples” also commands a kind of evangelism that does not stop after someone makes a profession of faith. The truly subordinate participles in v. 19 explain what making disciples involves: “baptizing” them and “teaching” them obedience to all of Jesus’ commandments. The first of these will be a once-for-all, decisive initiation into Christian community. The second proves a perennially incomplete, life-long task.

Evangelism must be holistic. If non-Christians are not hearing the gospel and not being challenged to make a decision for Christ, then the church has disobeyed one part of Jesus’ commission. If new converts are not faithfully and lovingly nurtured in the whole counsel of God’s revelation, then the church has disobeyed the other part. Key implications for preaching appear here. There must be a balance between evangelistic proclamation and relevant exposition of all parts of God’s Word, including the more difficult material best reserved for the mature (cf. *1 Cor 2:1-5 with 2:6-10*).

Matthew closes his Gospel with Jesus’ promise to be spiritually present with his followers until the end of this age, that is, until his return, when he will once again be present bodily (although “the end of the age” might be an idiom roughly equivalent to *forever*). Despite the Great Commission, Matthew wants to end his Gospel centering more on Christ’s attributes than on the disciples’ task. *Verses 18-20* link back with *1:23* to frame the entire Gospel with references to Immanuel—*God with us*. In Jesus, God remains with us for now and eternity! (Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, *The New American Commentary* [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992])

**Acts 1:6-9. Witnesses of the Lord’s Message (vv. 6-8)**

Notice that the call to witness is not limited to any select group of people since it spreads from the apostles to the 120 believers and on throughout the pages of Acts. Nor can we restrict it only to service in our own churches or to some kind of “professional ministry.”

**Witnesses of the Lord’s Ascension (vv. 9-11)** Here in the NIV translation of *Acts 1* we find the seven last words of Christ on earth: and to the ends of the earth. Immediately after uttering those words he ascended and was hidden by a cloud, even as they watched. The concept of a cloud linked with God is a common Old Testament theme (Exod. 13:21; Ps. 68:4; Isa. 19:1; Dan. 7:13). We refer to it as the *Shekinah* glory explained in *Ezekiel 11:14-25*.

Angels taking the form of men was hardly unknown, even in New Testament times (Matt. 28:2-3; John 20:12; Luke 24:4). Picture the disciples standing in fear and awe looking intently, a phrase which appears fourteen times in the New Testament. We know this was the eleventh appearance of the Lord after his resurrection and that the ascension took place on the Mount of Olives in the vicinity of Bethany (Luke 24:45-53).

**Ascension (vv. 9-11)** In the entire New Testament, only Luke records this event in both his Gospel and his history. Although brief, this account reminds us of the Old Testament departures of Enoch and Elijah and particularly the transfiguration of Christ (Luke 9:28-36).

Let’s not wander from Luke’s emphasis. The ascension is historical, important, and very real—but Luke immediately moves on to a reminder of the apostle’s task in the light of the Lord’s return. In other words, we don’t dwell on Jesus’ departure; we emphasize what he does for us now in heaven and the fact that he will soon come again ((Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, *Holman New Testament Commentary* [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000]).

**Acts 2:37-47.** The early church was marked by faithful attendance—meeting together daily in the temple courts. They practiced the presence of Jesus—still a good idea for his people. Luke makes good use of the Greek word *homothumadon*, translated together, applying it in 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; and 5:12. Their witness included a demonstration of hospitality. Witnessing may be the main theme in *Acts*, but praising certainly represents a secondary strain common in Luke’s writings. What happens to believers who worship, work, and witness for their Lord? The Lord grows the church. Let’s not miss the order—first godly relationships with each other, then growth (Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, vol. 5, *Holman New Testament Commentary* [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998])

**Prayer:** Lord, all authority in heaven and on earth is yours. And I accept your commission to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Amen (Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, *Holman New Testament Commentary* [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000]).

*(All quotations used with permission of the publisher or are public domain works.)*