

The Great Commission: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* -Mt28.19-20

Tell order were it not for the preceding verse: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”* There is our confidence, our hope, our assurance: knowing all authority on heaven & earth has been given to the One who sends us. The mission He is sending us on cannot fail. Why not? Because the One risen from death has complete sovereignty over all things, over earthly kingdoms and the heavenly kingdom alike!

He came to lay the ground work, to establish the New Covenant, to give His life a ransom for our sin, to crush the dividing wall of hostility, to fill His followers with His own Spirit. Then before sending His soldiers to spread His Spiritual Kingdom throughout this earthly kingdom, He assures them of His absolute authority over all things, in heaven & on earth. Therefore: multiply, fill the earth... not just with physical child, but now with spiritual children: children of Christ!

Go make more of those who love, trust & follow Me. How? Baptizing them in name of the Trinity: God the Father, Son & HS: proclaiming the Gospel of Christ's conquering death & resurrection, teaching them to observe, to obey, to trust, to follow all that He has commanded.

And then, just in case His authoritative introduction wasn't enough, He adds a bookend reminder at the end: “And behold, I—the one with all authority in heaven & on earth, I—Am with you always!”

Baptizing: that initial turn about face! When the Spirit of God lands on a sinner, convicts them of their sin, of their destiny—eternal separation from life, from God; an eternity in hell because of their sin against God—as the reality of such truth lands on a sinner, followed by the wonderful Good News of that God's anger, wrath and judgement for their sin... that God Himself poured out all of it upon His own perfect, righteous Son instead of upon them... that, in His body, on the cross, Christ absorbed God's wrath that they deserved... When, by grace, a sinner is made to see those fantastic truths—God's holiness, their sinfulness, the insurmountable debt they owe for failing to cherish, honor, love & obey God as He deserves, and then the news that God Himself paid the debt of their sin through the blood of His Son—they can't help but want to attest on the outside through baptism, what such Good News of God's love in Christ has done for them on the inside. Like a wedding ring that proclaims on the outside the love that we have for our spouse on the inside—in our hearts—so baptism is the outward proclamation of what God has done in washing our lives clean of sin through the blood of Jesus:

There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins; and sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains!

Just as our wedding bands proclaims that we are no longer our own, but belong to another, so our baptism proclaims that we are not our own but have been bought by the precious blood of Christ: the King of kings & Lord of lords now reigns. "The love of Christ controls us!" It is this gift of God's love in us & for Him that is His New Covenant Spirit. He pours His Spirit into the life of this once-sinner-now-by-His-grace-made-saint. He is the Vine, we are the branches. We have been reborn from death into God's very life. His Spirit creates in us a clean heart with new wants, wills, and desires. Blessed are those God has given new taste buds for they hunger & thirst for His righteousness, for His Son. As we saw a couple of week's ago in our study of Matthew 18.7-12, God Himself says,

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. -Ez36

For those who have truly been born again, who have been given God's Holy Spirit, there is now a hunger & thirst to know Him, to understand Him, to trust Him, to be "full of care" to obey Him, honor Him because we love Him! He is our all in all, our lives, our everything! And therefore, in addition to baptism, disciples are instructed in the ways of Christ, they are taught of the One they now love & long to know and make known. And, this new love for Christ abounding in their hearts & minds, goes on & grows on. Like any other good news, but all the more, this Good News of what God has done in Christ, of what He is doing & will do... such Good News cannot be contained & kept to ourselves. We cannot help but share it with others. Wherever we go, and whatever we do, the love of Christ controls us. And that is missional living!

When we think of Missions or missionary we rightly think of an especially called group of sent ones, folks who leave their homes & families, travel some distance, usually to foreign territories, in order to spread the Good News of Christ's Kingdom abroad. Those are *Christian missionaries*. To "make disciples of all nations", missionaries usually must leave their own. But this morning, I'd like us to focus on how most of us in this room are called to fulfill the Great Commission of Christ.

"Go therefore and make disciples..." Perhaps most of you know, the word "Go" in the Greek carries with it the idea of "As you are going..." So Jesus isn't only speaking to a specially called smaller group of followers who should "Go to foreign fields." No, this mandate to "Go" is for all

of us! If you are a Christian—a lover & follower of Jesus Christ; if He is your only hope in life, death & eternity—then you are just as called by His Great Commission as any missionary in a foreign field. “As you go...” As you go about doing whatever it is that you do... wherever you go, whatever you do, live on mission! Be about the mission of multiplication, making disciples!

There are Christian missionaries and missional Christians. When we talk about *missional Christians*, we’re talking about something similar, but not exactly the same. The primary difference, and, I believe the easiest way to differentiate the two in your minds is to think geographically. A Christian missionary usually goes away, to some other culture or region of the world. *Missional Christians*, on the other hand, may not go anywhere at all. But, wherever they are, they *too* are living on a mission. They too are real Christians, not just Sunday morning “church folk”. They live intentionally, everywhere they go and in everything they do, they long to bring Christ’s honor and glory, to know Him themselves and help others to know Him. That’s their mission, their purpose, drive, desire... the Love of their lives.

Just like the missionary who travels abroad, “the Love of Christ controls” them as well, but their mission field may be in their own backyard, across the street at their neighbor’s house, across town at work, HEB, the play-park, the ball field, the classroom, meeting room, coffee shop, restaurant... while digging ditches, laying pipe, crunching code, answering calls, sawing logs, framing houses, rebuilding engines, painting fingernails, buying property, selling houses, writing poetry, studying science... Christ affects & infects *all* aspects of their lives. They have a longing & desire to infuse His Word & His ways into every thought & conversation. We call this *missional living*, but, truth be told, isn’t this really just “Christianity”? If you are a Christian, isn’t this how your life should be lived: intentionally, to love, honor & obey the Lord in every aspect of your life, not just on Sunday mornings between nine and noon? Yes!

Consider a couple paragraphs from wikipedia on missional living.

According to Lesslie Newbigin and Jesus' statements in the Gospel according to John, every Christian has been sent by Jesus with the gospel together in community to those in the surrounding culture for the sake of the King and His kingdom: “The Church is sent into the world to continue that which he came to do, in the power of the same Spirit, reconciling people to God.” Jesus said, “As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

“No one can say: ‘Since I’m not called to be a missionary, I do not have to evangelize my friends and neighbors.’ There is no difference, in spiritual terms, between a

missionary witnessing in his home town and a missionary witnessing in Katmandu, Nepal. We are all called to go—even if it is only to the next room, or the next block.””

So, Christian family, brother, sister: Are you living on mission? Are you a missional Christian? Is there really any other kind?

(CLICK) Some of the most significant hurdles missionaries have to overcome concern language & culture. Some missionaries will spend years learning language & dialects, and local laws & ethics, etc. Well, it's no different for missional Christians. True, there are many areas of influence—say the supermarket, for example—where we all pretty much speak the same language. However, unlike those sitting around you this morning, there may be kingdoms God has especially suited or equipped you to influence, where most of us wouldn't stand a chance, can't relate to the situations, or speak the same sort of language. For example, when Tucker & his mechanic buddies start talking about cam shafts, rear differentials & dampener valves... uh... they might as well be speaking Portuguese because I don't understand any of that. This to say, when it comes to influencing the kingdom of mechanics, God has gifted, inclined, shaped & suited Tucker in ways that He might not ever prepare you for.

So, what about you? Where has God especially suited you to live on mission? As you know, I have an affinity for Jesus, for knowing & making Him known. I not only love teaching & discipling His people on Sunday mornings, but I love proclaiming the glories of God outside of Suite 100, especially to young people, especially to young athletes, and especially on the softball & baseball field. That's an arena of influence & opportunity that the Lord has given me. And there are many other examples throughout this Church family:

Garrett's grazing group

Chuck's prison ministry

women's Bible Studies

Bobbi's ministry at the Serenity House

Hannah & Tarryn Hastings summer camp

Chelsea volunteering at the Woman's Clinic in Kerrville

Duane's SC radio ministry

... myriad of others here today

If you think about it, there are probably areas in your life that God has especially suited you for. How can you minister the Kingdom of Christ in those kingdoms of your influence? Could you

use some help? Perhaps in thinking things through, in coming up with new ideas, ministry opportunities, ways to serve or proclaim the Gospel to those in your areas? What about some financial backing for those ideas? This is one of the main reasons we have a ministry at South Church called Restore.

The three main pillars of our Restore ministry are “Growing in Truth, Sharing Life Together, and *Living On Mission*”. There is so much creativity in the Body of Christ. As we seek the Lord together, as we seek to make disciples in the Hill Country, as we pray about these things together... I wonder what incredible creations in ministry the Lord would have us come up with here at South Church.

Sadly, so many great ideas for reaching local communities die on the vine. The way it usually goes is that God will give someone in the family an idea. They're not sure what to do with it, so they call up their pastor and say, “Hey! I've got an idea.” A lot of time they just expect their pastor to run with it, to drop whatever he has going and take up the reigns of this new ministry. Needless to say, the great idea doesn't end up going anywhere.

But, what if, instead of laying your ideas at the feet of your pastor, what if you took the idea to your Restore family, to a group of likeminded believers who love to live on mission together? What if your diamond in the rough idea was passed around in conversation with others who love the Lord? Maybe they'd have a suggestion or two that would make your idea even better! Who better to join you in prayer, to plead with the Lord for His mind, His power, His work as together you work to create new ways to minister together. What about funds for resources, equipment, or food for those you're hoping to minister to? That's exactly what our Restore families are for: to help each other faithfully *live on mission*, to multiply, to make disciples: “Him we proclaim... that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” -Co1.28

Explain logo: glory of Christ at center of our lives which we take out in all directions

SONG: *Glorious Christ*

COMMUNION

SONG: *Amazing Grace*

BENEDICTION: *God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work... The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. -2Co9.8,13.14*