

5 Snapshots of the Great Commission as the Bible Commands It

The Great Commission should be imbued with the essence and mission of every local church. This is especially true if we are devoted to the “apostles’ doctrine” the way the early church was (Acts 2:42).

The early church was always “missional” because it was “apostolic.” The word “apostle” comes from the Greek word *apostello*, which means “sent one.” The Latin word for *apostello* is *missio*, from which the word “mission” or “missionary” is derived.

Paul, the great church planter, who wrote about one-third of the New Testament, was focused because he knew he was a “sent one.” Titus 1:1 (ESV) says, “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle [sent one] of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth.”

Furthermore, according to Paul, all Christ-followers were given a purpose in Christ Jesus before time began. This purpose was connected to the revelation of Jesus destroying death and bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:8-10).

Hence, all true Christians are not merely “born,” they are “sent” into this world. Consequently, it behooves all “sent ones” to understand the five snapshots of the Great Commission presented in the four Gospels and the Acts narrative.

1. Mark 16:15-17: Proclaiming the gospel while God confirms the Word with the power of signs and wonders. I understand the power of this particular snapshot of gospel proclamation. In the early days of our church, we initially grew in numbers by

seeing God perform many extraordinary healings and deliverances. Demons were cast out of many people, since our community was at one time filled with various expressions of witchcraft, and much of the neighborhood was oppressed. Paul said he depended upon the power of signs and wonders when he proclaimed the gospel to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:18-20). Every person who is serious about proclaiming the gospel should allow the power of the Spirit to demonstrate His Word so that people's trust is not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2:1-4).

2. John 20:21: Being sent as Jesus was sent. "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'" How was Jesus sent? By taking upon Himself human flesh and personally dwelling among the people whom He came to save. This is called the incarnation.

Consequently, one way to reach people with the gospel is by living and working among them. I believe every local church should have a faithful presence in its community. This also involves holistically ministering to the practical and material needs of the people the way Jesus did. (Jesus not only preached the Word, but He also healed the sick, fed the multitudes and brought peace to the broken-hearted.)

3. Luke 24:44-49: Being a witness after being enlightened by the Scriptures. Before His ascension, Jesus opened the minds of His sent ones so that they could understand the Scriptures. After that, He commanded them to proclaim repentance for the forgiveness of sins to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Hence, this illustrates the fact that sent ones, in order to be effective, need to understand and live in the narrative of Jesus as shown in the Scriptures. To the extent the word of God abides in Christians, they will have the power to proclaim the message of Christ.

4. Acts 1:1-8: Being His witness through the power of the Spirit. Acts 1:8 teaches sent ones they need to be empowered

by His Spirit to be His witnesses. Even after Jesus opened His disciples' minds so that they could understand the Scriptures, He still commanded them to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high by His Spirit (Luke 24:49).

Thus, sent ones need to not only know the Word of God, but they also need to be filled with the Spirit of God to proclaim the Word of God effectively. One way to be continually filled with His Spirit is to regularly give God space in our life. We must take time each day to worship Him by singing spiritual songs, hymns and the psalms (Eph. 5:18-20).

5. Matthew 28:18-20: Reaching whole people groups. Jesus said unto them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and earth. 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."

This snapshot of the Great Commission involves seeing whole tribes and/or collectives of ethnic people coming to Christ. In the early church, conversions of Gentile ethnic persons brought about changes in their identity as they forsook their foreign gods and joined the family of God through water baptism.

Eventually, as history demonstrates, whole nations were transformed after a critical mass of their population received the gospel, joined the church, and were catechized (taught the commandments of Jesus).

Consequently, the power of the gospel is so great it not only brings individual sinners into the kingdom but also causes whole people groups and cultures to experience God's reign. This is an important snapshot to understand if the church is going to positively impact the world. Only the church as a holy nation can function as the light of the world that is

called to disciple other nations (1 Pet. 2:8-9).

Truly, God intends for the recipients of the gospel to positively impact the quality of life of their communities as they restore the generational desolation of their cities (Isa. 61:1-4). {eoa}

Dr. Joseph Mattera is an internationally known author, consultant and theologian whose mission is to influence leaders who influence culture. He is the founding pastor of Resurrection Church and leads several organizations, including The U.S. Coalition of Apostolic Leaders and Christ Covenant Coalition. Dr. Mattera is the author of 13 bestselling books, including his latest, *The Purpose, Power, and Process of Prophetic Ministry*, and is renowned for applying Scripture to contemporary culture. To order his books or to join the many thousands who subscribe to his newsletter, go to .

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, *CHARISMA PLUS*.