

“The Great Commission According to Mark”

Mark 16:15-16

(Preached at Trinity, November 18, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we come to **Verses 15-16** we find the Great Commission according to Mark's Gospel. It was our Lord's charge to His disciples prior to His ascension. It was their marching orders. He appeared to them in person and charged them in person.
2. Matthew gives us the sovereignty of Christ in giving this charge.
Matthew 28:18 NAU - "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."
With absolute power and authority Jesus charges His disciples – “Go”
3. There are three things I want us to notice in this Great Commission
 - I. It pinpoints our priority – "Go into all the world"
 - A. Both here and in **Matthew 28** we find the command to “Go”
 1. This word in the Greek is an aorist participle – which represents the action as an event
 2. Both passages link the participle with an imperative verb.
Matthew 28 – “make disciples”
Mark 16 - “Preach the Gospel”
This gives the word “go” imperative force
 3. It carries the idea of a single action with continuing effect – They were being charged to “Go” with the purpose of bringing the Gospel to every person in the world.
 - B. The priority is huge – in encompasses the entire world
 1. In Matthew's Gospel the focus is upon the nations.
"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations"
The same universal scope is presented here in Mark's Gospel.
"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."
 2. The idea is the Gospel is a universal offer of God's grace
Christ didn't come for a single nation but for people from every kindred, tribe, and tongue
Revelation 5:9 NAU - "And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."
Revelation 14:6 NAU - " And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;"
 - C. The Great Commission is to be carried out in every walk of life
It could be translated, “As you go . . .”

1. Looking at the Great Commission from Mark and Matthew together the charge is simply this: As you go proclaim the gospel and make disciples
2. The idea is as we go through the various paths of life our priority is to incorporate the Gospel into all that we do
3. God give us countless opportunities. Our duty is to make it a priority

Not only does it pinpoint our priority . . .

II. It presses God's purpose - "preach the gospel to all creation."

A. God's redemptive purpose is the Gospel of Christ

1. Paul declared

Romans 1:16 NAU - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

2. The means of bringing this Gospel to the world is preaching

1 Corinthians 1:21 NAU - "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to know* God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe."

Here a word is used that looks more specifically to the content of the message—the Gospel message.

3. The charge is clear: As you go, Proclaim the Gospel!

B. This Gospel is the universal responsibility of every believer

1. This original charge was given to the 11 apostles.

Because of this some have tried to defend a position that the work of evangelism is limited to pastors.

2. It is true that preaching in the official sense is the domain of pastors

a. The word κηρῦσσω is distinct. It refers to the work of a herald "to be a herald, to officiate as a herald 1a) to proclaim after the manner of a herald 1b) always with the suggestion of formality, gravity and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed"

b. A herald was one authorized to speak for the king. It was an official position.

c. In the NT it is translated "preach" and is always linked with the apostles and those associated with the apostles.

We are far too careless with the pulpit today.

3. Preaching the Word and confronting sin is now seen as archaic. Many feel it will drive people away.

The truth is the Gospel IS offensive and it often DOES drive people away but that gives us no authority to change God's message or His method.

a. *Lloyd-Jones* – "in many ways it is the departure of the Church from preaching that is responsible in a large measure for the state of modern society . . . The Church, having abandoned her real task, has left humanity more or less to its own devices."

b. Preaching is God's method – it must not be abandoned

4. But there is another word used that is the domain of every believer εὐαγγελίζω – it is also translated “preach” but it literally means “announce good news”
Acts 8:1-4 NAU - "Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. ³ But Saul *began* ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. ⁴ Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word."
 5. This text specifically tells us that the apostles were NOT involved in this work. God ordained persecution for the specific purpose of spreading the Gospel far and wide – this is the work of evangelism.
- C. God's great purpose for His people is that we proclaim the Gospel - εὐαγγέλιον
1. The Gospel is the eternal plan of God for the salvation of His elect people
 - a. It is the grand message of the NT – εὐαγγέλιον – 76 times in NT
 - b. It is the declaration of the condition of man – sin and condemnation
 - c. It is the good news of Christ – His perfect life and the substitutionary atonement
 - d. It's the declaration of the demand of faith and repentance
 2. This is the Gospel that must be preached – that Jesus Christ came, and lived a perfect life of obedience, and that He died as a perfect substitution, the atonement which satisfied God's divine wrath, and that He was buried and rose again the third day.
 3. This is our duty—our great charge.
Romans 10:15 NAS - "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!"
 - a. It is our duty because Christ commands us to go
 - b. It is our duty because compassion for the lost compels us
Calvin - "And indeed nothing could be more inconsistent with the nature of faith than that deadness which would lead a man to disregard his brethren, and to keep the light of knowledge choked up within his own breast."

Not only does it pinpoint our priority and presses God's purpose

- III. It presents a precept - "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."
 - A. The Gospel message we bring is not optional
 1. We go forth in command mode. We go forth under the authority of Christ
 2. God commands all men to repent. We must compel men to repent.
 Spurgeon on this passage: “If we are commanded to preach it, it is implied that you are commanded to hear it.”
 - B. There is a glorious promise to those who believe the Gospel
 1. They are delivered from their sin
 - a. They are saved from the penalty of sin
 - b. They are saved from the power of sin

2. They are given life abundant, both now and forever
3. Baptism is the outward declaration of the inward work of the Gospel
 - a. It also implies union with a local church. Baptism is administered under the authority of the local church
 - b. It is through the local church that discipleship continues
Matthew 28:19-20 NAS - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you"
- C. There is a message of doom for those who continue in disbelief "but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."
 1. The Gospel is Good News, but it must be received
 - a. You do not have to perish in your sins
 - b. Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If you repent of your sin and trust Christ He will save you!
 2. For those who continue in unbelief there is the fearful message of doom

Not only does it pinpoint our priority and not only does it press God's purpose and not only does it present a precept it also poses a problem.

- IV. I poses a problem? What excuse can you offer for not making this a high priority?
 - A. Is it because it is an unimportant work?
 This is the most important work – kingdom work
 1. There are many labors that demand our attention – but our chief work is kingdom work
Matthew 6:33 – “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
 2. We must not allow ourselves to be distracted
 Few things in this life have eternal consequences.
 3. Look at the multitudes. Don't be turned off by their foolish actions. Don't be turned off by their foolish opinions. They are merely acting like lost people – like you used to act. We must see them as human beings. We must see them as wandering blindly towards the abyss.
 - B. Is it because it is too difficult a work?
 1. Yes, it is difficult – but this is our calling. We have been drafted as soldiers in a great battle.
2 Timothy 2:3-4 NAU - "Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."
 2. Yes it is difficult – but we have the promise of our Lord's abiding presence
Matthew 28:20 NAU - "lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
 3. It is essential that we press on. It is important that we continue laboring in our Lord's harvest until the end.
Luke 9:62 NAU - "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

- C. Is it because you feel it is not your work?
1. The Great Commission could not have been for the Apostles only. The Apostles never came to America, to your neighborhood, to your office
 2. The Great Commission could not be for pastors only. But even if it was primarily the duty of pastors, how shall people hear the preaching. Most people will never enter a church. Won't you at least bring people with you
 3. Of all the duties of the Christian life our Lord gave special emphasis upon this one – Go, tell
 4. Our generation is responsible for this generation of lost people. Is it right for you to excuse yourself from the labors?
 - a. No Christian is excused from this work
 - b. God is sovereign over our lives. He makes none of His people too busy to serve Him.
- D. Is it because you feel you are not equipped for the work?
1. We have the Scriptures
2 Timothy 3:16-17 NAU - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."
 2. We have God working in us through His Spirit
Acts 1:8 NAU - "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
- E. Is it because you have seen no fruit from your labor?
- Galatians 6:9 NAU** - "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."
1 Corinthians 15:58-16:1 NAU - "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord. "
1. God will never hold us responsible for the results – only that we be faithful and obedient
 2. The results reside in His power alone

Conclusion:

1. Obviously this is a great work. It has eternal consequences. Heaven rejoices at our success.
Luke 15:7 NAU - "I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."
2. The Apostles committed themselves to this labor:
Mark 16:20 NAU - "And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them"
3. May we recommit ourselves to this great labor