

Matthew 28:16-20

Introduction

- I. Every morning we wake up with two conflicting desires
 - A. The desire to protect and control our lives (safety, comfort, security)
 - B. The desire to be a part of something larger than ourselves (adventure, mission)
- II. We're starting this outreach series by grounding ourselves in God
 - A. God's heart for the world (Jonah)
 - B. God's mission to the world (Matthew 28)
- III. We want to understand God's larger mission so that we can join him faithfully

The Passage

- I. God's Mission in the World
 - A. Creation (Genesis 1:26-28)
 - 1. God created humanity in his image of God
 - 2. God gave humanity authority to rule over creation as his representatives
= "fill God's creation with God's image"
That was God's program
 - B. The Fall (Genesis 3)
 - 1. We didn't live out our "image of God-ness" well
 - 2. We didn't rule his creation well
 - C. God's Response: God goes on a mission to redeem the world
 - 1. "Mission" (Latin, "mission") = "sent"
 - 2. God "sends" his Son to do for us what we can't do for ourselves
 - a. Sending language: see John 4:34, 5:30, 5:36
 - b. Jesus' life: he is the image of God who shows us who God is and who we were meant to be
 - c. Jesus' death: he pays the penalty for our sin and reconciles us to God
 - d. Jesus' resurrection and ascension: he receives all authority from God to be ruler of the universe
 - 3. God "sends" his Spirit to do in us what we can't do in ourselves
 - a. Sending language: see John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7-11
 - b. The Spirit point humans to their need for Christ and bring them to saving faith
 - c. The Spirit makes us more like Jesus, the true image
 - 4. Jesus sends his disciples to be a part of his mission in the world
 - a. Sending language: John 20:19-22
 - b. His disciples share the message of his Son in power of his Spirit
 - 5. Colossians 1:3-7
 - a. We see all three sent ones involved in the spread of the gospel here
 - b. Whereas at creation humanity was to "bear fruit and multiply" and fill the earth, now the gospel is "bearing fruit and multiplying" and filling the earth.

II. Joining God's Mission in the World (The Great Commission: Mt 28:16-20)

A. Four commands (v. 19-20)

"make disciples" is main command and the other three show us how to do that

1. "Go"

- a. The disciples would have heard, "move out, leave"
- b. But "Going" or "as you go" is probably an appropriate translation as well (Paul's early church communities weren't required to leave their cities but were encouraged to remain in their cities, jobs, homes)
- c. The key for all of us: having a sense of "Sent-ness"
 - 1) We are all called to be "missionaries" (sent ones) whether that's abroad or at home
 - 2) Imagine if we brought the same intentionality to everyday life that we bring to mission trips!

2. "Make disciples"

- a. A disciple is a follower, student, or apprentice of Jesus Christ
Someone who has committed their lives to Christ, placed themselves under his authority, and is learning to live life from him and learn about salvation from him
- b. So making disciples means coming alongside people and helping them move in that direction.

3. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"

= bringing them to a saving faith symbolized in baptism

They are immersed in a relationship with the Father who sent his Son and his Spirit

4. Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"

Involves a lot of head knowledge: "teaching them"

Involves a life style change: "to obey everything I've commanded you"

5. Notice this is a slow, daily, ongoing process (disciples aren't made overnight)

6. Notice there's no formula for how to make disciples. We each will do it

differently according to our giftedness and opportunities. The key issue is

Examples: Going to Dominican Republic and sharing love of Christ with poor, House of Hope, starting a book club in your neighborhood, starting a Bible study at lunch with some co-workers, Inviting neighbors over for dinner, Mentoring a high school student, Discipling your kids about money, blogging about spiritual issues

7. Key issue: NOT there's some formula to follow, BUT I see myself as part of God's mission, he has sent me into world, How am I coming alongside people to help them grow into more faithful followers of Jesus Christ?

B. Two promises frame these commands

1. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (v. 18)

- a. This 33-year-old Jewish carpenter from Nazareth now is the ruler of the entire universe and is in control of everything
- b. "therefore, go make disciples"

The reason we can go out and make disciples with confidence is that Jesus has all authority. Whatever situation we find ourselves in, Jesus has authority over that

2. "I am with you always" (v. 20)
 - a. His presence is with us wherever we go to make disciples
 - b. We are not alone, not left to ourselves
3. These two promises together show us that it's not up to us, it's up to him!
 - a. We may feel insecure, inadequate, unsure, but we are sent by one who has total authority, and he is with us
 - b. So that frees us up to do our best and trust the results to him

C. Jesus gives this command to doubting-worshipping disciples (v. 17)

These aren't superheroes but rather ordinary men who are a combination of worship and doubt, just like us. Those are the kind of people Jesus chooses for his mission.

Conclusion

- I. It's not about us. It's about God and his mission in the world.
- II. Pray this week, "God where is your mission happening around me? Where are you at work around me? And how can I join in your mission this week?"

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. How did hearing about God's mission throughout the Bible (God sending his Son, Spirit, and apostles) add to or change your understanding of the Biblical story?
3. Explain how Jesus' two promises in v. 18 and v. 20 provide the foundation for the four commands in v. 19 and 20. How do those promises affect your feelings and perspective about outreach? In what situations do you need to hear those promises in your life at this time, especially as it applies to your attempts to come alongside people to make disciples?
4. On Sunday we talked about how there's no formula to making disciples. As you think about your own gifts and interests, what might be some natural ways for you to make disciples in your own life?
5. On Sunday it was argued that we are all missionaries in the sense that we are all part of God's mission, "sent" by God to make disciples. The question was posed: "what if we lived every day of our lives with the same intentionality we live with on mission trips?" How did you react to that question? How would you answer that question personally?