

Orenco Church – Study on the Great Commission

October 22, 2025

The Great Commission is considered the climax of the gospel because it is Jesus's final command to his followers, given after his resurrection, which demonstrates his victory over death and claims his authority over all of heaven and earth. This command to "make disciples of all nations" is the culmination of God's long-standing plan for humanity and serves as the mission for the church between his ascension and his return.

Authority and Victory

- **Jesus's authority:**

The commission begins with Jesus declaring, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18).

- **Resurrection context:**

This declaration is powerful because it comes after his resurrection, showing he is the victor over sin and death. The disciples' hope had seemed lost, but now they see him, alive, in control of all authority.

Fulfillment of God's Plan

- **Global scope:**

The command to make disciples of "all nations" (ethne) represents the expansion of God's plan beyond the Jewish people to include every ethnic, cultural, and geographical background.

The Church's Mandate

- **A direct command:**

The commission is not an option but a direct, non-negotiable command from Jesus himself, making it a core mandate for all believers.

- **A promise of presence:**

Jesus doesn't just give the command; he promises to be with his followers "always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). This assurance of his enduring presence makes the mission possible and guarantees its ultimate success. assurance of his enduring presence makes the mission possible and guarantees its ultimate success.

A Closer Look at Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8 is a foundational verse that instructs followers to be witnesses for Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, beginning in their immediate surroundings and expanding outward to the "ends of the earth". This command emphasizes that the mission is a joint effort between believers and God: God provides the Holy Spirit for power, and believers are to share their faith through words and actions. Reflecting on it involves understanding the necessity of divine empowerment, the progressive nature of the mission, and the personal responsibility to be a witness.

Divine empowerment

- **Source of power:**

The verse clearly states believers will receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon them, not through their own abilities.

- **Source of authority:**

Jesus is the one commissioning the disciples, and the power to fulfill the mission comes from the Holy Spirit, which is often referred to as the "Promise of the Father".

- **Overcoming fear:**

This promise of power is a direct response to human weakness and fear, giving believers boldness to speak about Jesus.

The expanding mission

- **A progressive plan:**

The command is a mission that starts locally and expands outwards: "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth".

- **A global scope:**

The verse sets the stage for the Book of Acts, which chronicles the spread of the gospel from its Jewish roots to include Gentiles in Samaria and beyond.

- **Modern application:**

Today's believers are called to be witnesses in their own communities (Jerusalem) and extend that influence further, both locally and globally.

The role of being a witness

- **A life of testimony:**

Being a witness involves testifying about Jesus through both actions and words.

- **A shift in focus:**

The verse redirects the disciples' focus from the timing of Jesus' return to their immediate mission of being witnesses, emphasizing that God provides the enablement for this task.

- **The role of prayer and action:**

Believers are encouraged to seek the Spirit's guidance and power to find opportunities to share the message of Jesus.