



SHELBY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CORE 52: New Lens – Commission * MATTHEW 28:18-20, ACTS 10 & 11, MARK 16:15-16, JOHN 20:21-23, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20 * 9/21/2025

MAIN POINT

We are all called to the Co-mission of Christ to make disciples.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 28:18-20

Why do you think Jesus emphasized “all nations” in His commission? What does this say about the scope of the gospel?

What does it mean to “make disciples” rather than just converts? How is discipleship different from evangelism?

Have you ever felt called to share your faith or disciple someone? What was that experience like? What fears or obstacles do you face when thinking about making disciples?

Matthew 28:18-20, often called the Great Commission, records Jesus’ final instructions to His disciples before His ascension. He declares His authority over heaven and earth, commands His followers to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey His commands. The passage emphasizes the universal scope of the mission, the importance of discipleship, and the assurance of Christ’s presence “to the very end of the age.”

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 10

What stands out to you about Cornelius’ character and spiritual life (vv. 1–8)? Why do you think God responded to his prayers?

What is the significance of Peter’s vision (vv. 9–16)? How did it challenge his beliefs and traditions?

How did Peter interpret the vision when he met Cornelius (vv. 28–29)? What does this teach us about openness to God’s leading?

Have you ever felt God challenging your assumptions or traditions? How did you respond?

Acts 10 tells the story of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and Peter, illustrating the widening of the gospel to the Gentiles. Cornelius receives a vision from God instructing him to seek Peter, while Peter has a vision that teaches him not to call any person impure or unclean. When Peter visits Cornelius,

the Holy Spirit comes upon all who hear the message, confirming that salvation through Jesus Christ is available to everyone, Jew and Gentile alike. The chapter emphasizes God's inclusivity and the breaking down of cultural and religious barriers in spreading the gospel.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 11

Why were the Jewish believers upset with Peter at first (vv. 1–3)? What does this reveal about early church attitudes toward Gentiles?

How does Peter defend his actions (vv. 4–17)? What role does the Holy Spirit play in his explanation?

Are there people today who are still seen as “outsiders” in the church? How can we change that?

Acts 11 recounts how the early church in Jerusalem responded to the news that Gentiles had received the gospel. Peter explains to the church how God showed him that salvation through Jesus is available to all people, not just Jews, recounting his vision and his visit to Cornelius' household (Acts 10). The chapter emphasizes God's inclusive plan, the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding the early church, and the growing acceptance of Gentile believers. Additionally, it highlights the spread of the gospel to Antioch, where believers were first called Christians, and the church's commitment to teaching and supporting new disciples.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 16:15-16

What does Jesus mean by “all the world” and “all creation”? How does this expand the scope of the gospel message?

Why do you think Jesus connects belief and baptism with salvation? What does this tell us about the role of faith and public commitment?

What is the significance of the contrast between belief and unbelief in verse 16? How does this shape our understanding of the urgency of the gospel? Do you ever struggle with the idea of condemnation for unbelief?

Mark 16:15-16 records Jesus' command to His disciples after His resurrection. He instructs them to go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to everyone. Belief and baptism are presented as essential responses to this message, with the promise of salvation for those who believe and the warning of judgment for those who do not. The passage emphasizes the universal mission of the church and the necessity of faith in Christ for eternal life.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:21-23

Why does Jesus repeat “Peace be with you”? What kind of peace is He offering, and why is it important in this moment?

Have you ever felt sent by God into a specific situation or relationship? What was that like? What does it mean that Jesus is sending the disciples “as the Father has sent” Him? How does this shape our understanding of Christian mission?

What is the significance of Jesus breathing on them and saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit”? How does this moment connect to Pentecost in Acts 2?

John 20:21-23 records Jesus' post-resurrection commissioning of His disciples. He sends them into the world just as the Father sent Him, giving them the authority to continue His mission. Jesus imparts the Holy Spirit to empower them, including the authority to forgive sins, symbolizing their role in proclaiming and administering God's forgiveness. The passage emphasizes the disciples' mission, the presence and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and the responsibility to extend God's grace and reconciliation to others.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20

What does it mean to be “Christ’s ambassadors”? How does this metaphor help us understand our role in God’s mission? Do you see yourself as an ambassador for Christ in your daily life?

Why does Paul use the word “implore” when urging people to be reconciled to God? What does this say about the urgency and passion behind the message?

2 Corinthians 5:20 presents believers as Christ's ambassadors, entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation. Through them, God calls people to be reconciled to Himself, urging others to turn from sin and embrace His forgiveness. The verse emphasizes the responsibility of Christians to represent Christ, proclaim His message of reconciliation, and participate in God's mission to restore relationships between humanity and Himself.

APPLICATION

Share a time when you became a convert to something other than Jesus - Apple, Sports Team, a diet or exercise program. What was it that convinced you to jump on board?

What rights and responsibilities do you feel you have as an "ambassador" of Christ?

What is the last "next step" you took toward God and the last "next step" you took toward another person? How would you coach another person to take those same steps?

Think of 3 people you would like to escort one step closer to God.

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

Matthew 28:18-20

Verse 18: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." - This declaration comes after Jesus' resurrection, affirming His divine power and position. Jesus is asserting His universal sovereignty. This echoes Daniel 7:14, where the Son of Man is given dominion over all peoples. The mission that follows is grounded in Jesus' authority. Disciples are not acting on their own—they are commissioned by the risen Lord.

Verse 19: "Go": This is a call to action. In Greek, it's a participle, implying "as you are going," suggesting that disciple-making is a continual lifestyle. "Make disciples": The central command. It involves evangelism, teaching, and mentoring—not just conversion. "All nations": This marks a radical shift from a Jewish-centered mission to a global one. The gospel is for everyone, regardless of ethnicity or background.

This verse breaks down cultural and religious barriers, emphasizing the inclusivity of the gospel.

"...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." - Trinitarian Formula: This is one of the clearest expressions of the Trinity in the New Testament. Baptism: A public declaration of faith and entry into the community of believers. It symbolizes death to sin and new life in Christ. Unity of Godhead: The singular "name" (not "names") emphasizes the unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Verse 20: "Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Discipleship involves ongoing instruction, not just initial belief. True discipleship is marked by living out Jesus' teachings. "Everything" means the full counsel of Jesus' commands, not selective obedience.

"...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Jesus assures His followers of His continual presence through the Holy Spirit. This is a source of strength, especially in the face of persecution or difficulty. "End of the age" points to the time of Jesus' return, reminding believers that the mission continues until then.

Acts 10

Cornelius' Vision (vv. 1–8) - Cornelius, a devout Roman centurion, receives a vision instructing him to send for Peter. This demonstrates God's initiative in reaching those outside the Jewish community and highlights Cornelius' openness and devotion.

Peter's Vision (vv. 9–16) - Peter sees a sheet filled with all kinds of animals and hears a voice telling him to "kill and eat," which he initially resists because of Jewish dietary laws. The vision symbolizes the removal of barriers between Jews and Gentiles. God declares all people clean and acceptable, emphasizing that no one should be considered impure.

Peter Meets Cornelius (vv. 17–33) - Peter travels to Cornelius' house, overcoming social and religious hesitation. Peter's message highlights Jesus as Lord and Savior and emphasizes that God shows no partiality. This encounter underscores obedience to God's call and willingness to step beyond personal or cultural comfort zones.

The Holy Spirit Falls on Gentiles (vv. 44–48)- As Peter preaches, the Holy Spirit comes upon all Gentile listeners, confirming that God accepts them just as He accepts Jewish believers. This event validates Gentile inclusion in the church and sets a precedent for baptism and reception into the faith community.

Acts 11

The Church Questions Peter (vv. 1–3) - Some believers in Jerusalem were critical of Peter for associating with Gentiles and eating with them. This reaction highlights the tension between traditional Jewish customs and the new reality of God's inclusive salvation plan. It also illustrates the early church's struggle with understanding God's expanding mission.

Peter Explains God's Guidance (vv. 4–18) - Peter recounts his vision of the sheet with unclean animals and his visit to Cornelius. He emphasizes that the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles just as He did upon Jewish believers, confirming God's acceptance. Peter concludes that God shows no favoritism and grants repentance leading to life to all who believe. Salvation is by God's initiative and grace, not human distinction or adherence to cultural boundaries.

The Church Accepts the Gentiles (vv. 18) - The Jerusalem believers glorify God, recognizing that He has granted repentance to the Gentiles. This marks a significant moment of unity and expansion, affirming the church's mission to include all nations.

The Growth of the Church in Antioch (vv. 19–30) - Persecution following Stephen's death scattered believers, leading to the spread of the gospel to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. In Antioch, Jewish and Gentile believers form a thriving community. Here, followers are first called Christians. Barnabas is sent to encourage and teach these new believers, and he brings Saul (Paul) to help. The church also engages in practical ministry, sending aid to Judea, demonstrating both spiritual and tangible support.

Mark 16:15-16

verse 15 - Jesus commands His followers to reach all nations and peoples, showing that the gospel is not limited to a particular ethnic or cultural group. The Greek word for “proclaim” implies heralding a message publicly and urgently. Sharing the gospel is active, intentional, and widespread. “Whole creation” underscores the global and comprehensive nature of Jesus' mission.

verse 16- Belief in Jesus is the foundation of salvation. Faith is not mere intellectual assent; it involves trust, surrender, and allegiance to Christ. Baptism is essential to salvation and serves as an outward expression of inward faith, publicly identifying believers with Christ. It symbolizes cleansing, new life, and entrance into the community of faith.

Salvation: Faith and baptism are presented together as essential responses to the gospel.

Rejection of the gospel carries eternal consequences. The verse emphasizes that the response to Christ is decisive and has eternal significance. This warning underscores the importance of evangelism and sharing the gospel with urgency and clarity.

John 20:21-23

verse 21 - Jesus parallels His mission with theirs; just as He was sent by the Father to bring salvation, so the disciples are sent to continue His work. Being sent implies both privilege and accountability to represent Christ faithfully. This sending marks the beginning of the disciples' role in spreading the gospel to all nations.

verse 22 - Empowerment: Jesus gives the disciples the Holy Spirit to enable them to carry out their mission. Guidance and Strength: The Spirit equips them with wisdom, courage, and supernatural ability to teach, heal, and witness effectively. Connection to Pentecost: This verse anticipates the fuller outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2).

verse 23 - Authority in Ministry: Jesus gives the disciples the responsibility to proclaim and administer forgiveness in His name. Spiritual Significance: This authority underscores the church's role in reconciliation, offering God's grace and calling people to repentance. Contextual Meaning: The verse is not about personal judgment but about exercising discernment and proclaiming the forgiveness and accountability God provides.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Believers are representatives of Christ, carrying His authority and message to the world. Just as an ambassador speaks and acts on behalf of a sovereign, Christians are tasked with faithfully representing Christ's purposes and character.

The reconciliation message originates with God; Christians are instruments through whom He communicates. Our lives and words serve as channels for God's invitation and call to salvation.

Urgency and Persuasion: The word "implore" conveys heartfelt appeal, showing the importance of responding to God's call. **Reconciliation:** This refers to restoring a right relationship with God, made possible through Christ's death and resurrection.

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us" (context from vv. 21) **Basis for Reconciliation:** God's initiative in sending Christ, who bore the penalty of sin, enables humanity to be reconciled.

Theological Implication: Salvation and restored fellowship with God are acts of divine grace, not human effort.