

INTRO

Good morning, everyone. If you don't know who I am, my name is Cody Rogers and I'm the Worship Pastor here at Coram Deo. I also have the honor of heading up our **brand new** college ministry, meeting on Thursday nights @ 8pm in the cafe.

Go ahead and open your bibles to Matthew 28:18, and I'll meet you there in a minute. If you're a guest with us...**FILL IN EXACT INFO HERE.**

As you're turning to Matthew 28, I want to give you some context as to why we are spending time in this passage...and why my wife and I felt compelled to begin a college ministry.

This is my family *****PICTURE*****. That's my beautiful wife of almost 6 years, Brittany, and our three kids...Isabella, Tara, and Ayden. We had the humbling experience of fostering our kids starting in May of 2018, and the immense blessing of getting to adopt them this last November *****PICTURE OF ADOPTION*****

I wish I had the ability to formulate the words to describe the overwhelming joy, love, and support we experienced through the process. You can tell by this picture that the church did what it does best...it showed up and in a big way.

You may not have had the exact same life experience as me, when it comes to adopting children. However, we can all relate to having those big moments in our lives that change everything. Moments that teach you things, sharpen your mind or resolve, and even bring about a renewed focus.

Take the pandemic. In March of this year our world shut down. People began working from home, school was shut down, extra-curriculars were cancelled...and we all of the sudden found we had a lot more time on our hands. We learned many things about our world, our church, our schedules...and our commitments.

You see, a momentous event in our lives brought about a greater understanding for many of us...and it caused us to refocus.

And just as the pandemic has done that for many of us...the adoption of our three children has done that for me.

Since the moment the judge finalized our case...and then even more when we received their new birth certificates to find our names as their parents on them....since that moment...the Lord has brought one word to my mind over and over.

The adoption started it, and then the pandemic shutdown fueled it. That one word is...discipleship.s

That word...that thought...that concept has created a burden in my soul that I can't escape. I feel like discipleship has always been something that has defined our ministry, but now I find it to be the consuming force behind why we do what we do.

Staring at my children on that awesome day in November...I began to ask myself the question...how shall I disciple them? What is the Lord calling me to do to be a faithful parent?

It began, in me, a reflection on my own life. How I had been discipled, who had discipled me, how they had discipled me.

I began evaluating my whole ministry through it, not that I hadn't done it before, but now I had a renewed vigor and focus spurred on by this momentous event in my life.

It's what has caused me to parent the way that I parent, to lead worship the way that I lead, and now to pastor the college ministry the way I feel called to pastor them.

Discipleship. It's the driving force behind why we are starting up the college ministry, and it's the heart of our passage today. In fact, this passage is the heart of our mission statement in the college ministry. So, let's dive into the word together, get our eyes on what God has for us today, and let it change our lives.

I'll read, you follow along, **Matthew 28:18.**

This is Jesus approaching the disciples as they met upon a mountain in Galilee at the end of his earthly ministry.

“And Jesus came and said to them (the disciples), All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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.”

CONTEXT

I've told the college ministry every time we've gathered around the word...context is king.

And here we find the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew. It's Jesus' last words after having spent over 30 years on Earth, living among man. It's the capstone to his earthly ministry...the farewell address. For most of them, it's the last words they will ever hear Jesus physically speak.

Last words matter. That's why when we lose somebody we love...we try to think of the last words we spoke to them, or that they spoke to us.

It's why we as a country have recorded and preserved the farewell address of every president since George Washington. It's why Valedictorians and Professors and Presidents of Colleges speak at the graduation ceremony.

What we say in our final moments with someone carries a weight to it. And this is no different with this moment right here.

What do you say after having done the things that Jesus did? How do you bring to a conclusion the healing of thousands, the saving of souls, the miracles performed, the crucifixion and the resurrection. What do you say to bring all that to a conclusion?

According to Jesus...you give them one last charge. You say something that will persist for thousands of years to come, you give the greatest commissioning that has ever been given. So much so...that it is called THE. GREAT. COMMISSION.

It's a commission to every believer and it's something that demands a response. So let's look at what our responses should be. 3 Responses to the Great Commission.

The first... **Be Centered on Christ.**

You thought I was going to hit discipleship right away, yeah? Well, we are getting there, I promise. But discipleship has to flow from somewhere first. In order to teach and promote a proper understanding and love of Christ, we need to first have a proper understanding of Christ.

And he gives it to us. Let's look again in verse 18, but start with verse 17.

“And when they (the disciples) saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.”

It doesn't say what they were doubting...and it's up for a little bit of debate. Some say they were doubting their ability to carry on without Jesus...some say they were doubting there were those that still doubted Jesus as the Christ...I find that one harder to believe but for sure we don't have clarification.

What we do know, is that doubt existed, and Jesus had the answer to that doubt.

Verse 18. *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”*

Our first response is to
Be Centered on Christ...

Be centered on him
As your authority in Heaven.

Be centered on him
As your authority on Earth.

Why am I using the word Centered? Because I think it accurately depicts our response to Jesus' authority.

Jesus is the authority in Heaven. What does that mean? It means that everything that we know about Heaven is Jesus' to command. It's his to control, for HIS purpose and HIS will. All that happens is within his authority.

The same thing for Earth. Everything that happens, that has happened, and that will happen....happens within the **authority of Christ**.

Colossians 1:16-17 **"16** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. **17** And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Nothing happens apart from what Christ wills to happen. Apart from what Christ authorizes.

And so our natural response to knowing that literally everything happens on his authority...is to center our lives on Christ.

What do I mean by centered? I mean every decision we make, every word we speak, every thought we think...centers on the acknowledgement that Christ is Lord over both heaven and earth.

Illustration

I remember the night before my wife and I met our kids for the first time. Our house was quiet. It was clean. It was controlled. My wife and I lay in bed discussing and wondering what it was going to be like to all of the sudden have kids in our house.

And boy. Did we find out quickly. We got the phone call the next day around lunch time that the kids would be arriving in our house in less than three hours.

Mass chaos ensued as I rushed home to help watch our daycare while Brittany ran with a friend to Walmart to get some clothes and supplies since we were told they were coming with nothing.

A couple of hours later those beautiful kids came through that door and the chaos level went even higher as Brittany is trying to get them acquainted

with the house...while still having daycare kids...while I'm sitting down with our case worker to sign paper work.

The next few hours were all a blur...and then all of the sudden I remember being in my care...by myself on my way to pick up some little caesar's pizza....and I lost it. I started crying uncontrollably. I wish I could tell you that it was because I was so happy and grateful...and I was...but those weren't the reasons for my tears.

You see, in a matter of moments...my whole center of life had shifted. It wasn't the head of a household of two anymore...I was the head of a household of 5. Every decision I made on finances, leadership, direction...they no longer just impacted my wife and I. They impacted my wife, myself, and three other humans who now called my house their home.

My center of gravity changed. Just like...when we finally acknowledge Christ's authority in our life...our center of gravity changes. Every decision we make, action we take, thought we think...is now in view of Christ's authority. In view of our life being centered on Him. All the we do either brings fame to the name, or shame.

That's what Christ is appealing to when he is speaking to those who are doubting. He's reminding them that all of life is centered on him, and that nothing happens outside of his control...

And it's using that authority that he gives HIS great commission...verse 19.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." Let's stop there for a moment.

You see? I told you we'd get to discipleship. Our second response to the Great Commission.

Be Committed to Discipleship.

Two types of discipleship...the first.

Your personal discipleship.

Look at the first word of verse 19. "Go..."

It's a command. Something to be followed. Something to acknowledge and own. The discipleship of others doesn't happen unless you first take up the charge to listen, obey, and follow Christ.

You have to be personally committed to the teachings and commands of Jesus. That word "Go" has to apply to you. It has to spur you to move.

It has to hit you as a command from someone you have a personal relationship with.

This command is not the impersonal stoplight that flashes a color and inadvertently tells you it's okay to move forward.

No, this "Go" is the voice of the shepherd to his sheep. It compels you from within yourself. And that only happens if you take your personal discipleship seriously. If you spend time with Jesus to recognize his voice and to understand who it is that is calling you, and why it is an urgent matter for you to obey.

Now, this statement needs to start with your personal discipleship...but it's real focus is **The discipleship of others.**

Let's finish verse 19 and into 20.

"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."

I believe this verse to be very straight forward. Jesus was telling his disciples, Go...baptize...show them **what I have shown you.**

That's the two things that Jesus declares as discipling all nations.

1) Baptize them. Baptism being representative of somebody's conversion, their crossing over from death to life, their acceptance of Jesus as their savior and acknowledgment of his authority.

2) Teach them what he has taught you. We've been taught how to love Christ, teach others to do that. We've been taught how to follow Christ, teach others to do that.

If I were to hand out a post-it note to each one of you this morning, and ask you to write down the names of those you've discipled in the last three years...how many names would be on that list?

Inverse that. If I were to ask you to write down a list of those who have personally discipled you, how many of you would have something written down?

If I can encourage you with this hard truth...

If you are able to write down a name of someone who has discipled you, but you are unable to write down the name of someone you're discipling...you are letting the gospel stop in you.

The gospel was meant to pass THROUGH YOU. Not stop IN YOU.

The sad truth of the Church at large today is that we don't disciple. We consume services, and music, and sermons. We attend events and conferences. We spend our mornings in prayer or reading the word...but far too often the gospel hits our hearts but never **leaves our mouths.**

The world is seeing less and less stories like those of Robby Gallaty.

*****Picture*****

If you've never heard of him, he's now a pastor at Longhollow Baptist in Tennessee. While he has now dedicated his life to serving God, it wasn't always like that. Robby by the time he hit his young adult years was addicted to narcotics and other drugs. He made his money dealing those drugs to customers through several different scams. And then the Lord got a hold of his life. It was shortly after that he met a young man at church. A young man by the name of David Platt *****Picture*****, who was attending New Orleans Seminary. Maybe you know David Platt as the author of Radical or the former president of the International Mission Board, but back then he was just a seminary student.

David invited Robby to get lunch with him every week to discuss what they were reading in the bible, and encourage each other in scripture memory. It shaped Robby's life to head to seminary, become a pastor, and begin preaching. It was through meeting with David, that Robby memorized all of

Romans 8...which he recited at a Thanksgiving dinner to his family...of nonbelievers...who eventually all gave their lives to Christ because of Robby.

All because a young man, who loved Jesus, decided to eat chinese food once a week with a fellow believer.

Do you know what the driving factor in starting the college ministry was? Fewer and fewer college aged students are able to point to someone like this in their life. Less and less young adults have someone willing to meet with them and live life with them....and they need it...badly.

Our world needs people that are committed to discipleship. Those committed to discipling unreached people groups, neighbors, co-workers, children...and the list goes on and on.

It's a response that we must take when reading the Great Commission. Be committed to discipleship, both personally and to others.

And our final response...**Be Confident in His Word.**

One of the biggest hindrances to discipling others is our feelings of inadequacy. Our thinking that we can't possibly disciple others when our own lives are not in order.

Jesus' answer to that is right in his commission to us. Be confident in his word.

Look back at verse 19 with me.

"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."

Take note. The authority in which we disciple others does not come from us. It comes from Jesus, who as he said earlier, is the authority in heaven and earth.

You are not the one giving the commandments. Jesus is. So, be confident in his word by being confident **In His Teachings.** They are not your teachings, they are his. You are simply being called to relay what he has taught you.

Recall the time in our church when Pastor Rob led us through the book of Acts. The disciples did not teach their own commandments. They did not come in their own authority. In fact, it was only after the Holy Spirit had come...the Spirit of Christ as we learned last week from Pastor Rob...it's only after the spirit had come that they began teaching his commandments.

When you disciple others, when you sit down to teach them what you've been taught...you are not on your own. You are not calling on your own authority...you are speaking of his authority. Be confident in his teachings...because they are his, not yours.

But it's not just the teachings of his word we can be confident in..it's **In His Promises.** As well.

Jesus starts off this passage by calling upon his authority to declare his Great Commission. But don't miss the fact that he is also calling upon his authority to say this to you....behold, I am with you always until the end of the age.

That was the promise the disciples had entering into life after Jesus' earthly ministry. And it's the promise that we still have today. We can be confident, that the God who spoke life into existence, now speaks assurance to us...that he will never leave us.

Our discipleship of others is not on our own authority, and we are certainly not alone in it. Christ is with us. Just as Christ was with each of the disciples as they left that mountain and lived their lives for his glory and building up of his kingdom.

Centered. Committed. Confident.

These form the basis of our mission in the college ministry. We glorify God by creating disciples who are centered on Christ, committed to discipleship, and confident in the word of God.

But, the college ministry is not where these responses to the Great Commission should end.

These responses are lifelong. They are meant to persist our entire life, just as the Great Commission has persisted for thousands of years.