

Reconnect: The Great Commission

Good morning church. So very good to continue our time of worship together as we open the Word. I love this book. Let me tell you, I love this book. I hope you know how much we at RCM value this book – it's why the preaching time takes up such a priority in our corporate worship.

This morning as we continue our Reconnect Theme – Remember we're using a softball tee as a visualization of the need to keep staying in the basics. Some things, so very fundamental to following Jesus that we never get over them. Just like a USA Olympic Softball player never stops hitting off a tee. That's where they start, and continue.

Kids: What 'Basics' have we come back to so far?

- The Gospel
- Generosity
- Prayer

Today's basic is the Great Commission. Now, kids, who can tell me what the great commission is? It's the last words of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel. "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, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And behold, I will be with you always, even to the end of the ages.”

Now, think about last words. Do we save important things for the end, or unimportant things for the end? Sometimes we save the most important thing for the very end.

Illustration: Phone call with Victoria. Regardless of what we’ve spoken to already, the most important thing isn’t what time we’re coming home, what’s on the grocery list, or even how one of the kids did at their concert, game, or whatever. The most important thing is the last thing that I tell her – I love her.

It’s this that we need to keep in mind when we read these last words that Matthew records. Jesus had live a life of public ministry for 3 years – healing, teaching, proclaiming the Kingdom of God, calling men, women, boys and girls to repent. He was tried, crucified, graveyard dead as my friend Charles calls it, but then on that first Easter Sunday he rose from the grave. He appeared to the disciples, and a couple hundred people, ministered, taught some more, and then is about to ascend to the Father when he gathers the 11 (remember Judas has already killed himself) on this mountain, and gives them their marching orders. And hear me, in case you want to know where I stand – these are your and my marching orders as well. These are the orders for every single

person who, by grace alone, through faith alone has turned from their sin and trusting in Jesus alone. These are your marching orders.

And it starts with His Authority

READ 28:18

¹⁸ Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Before we get to the orders, we need to remember the basis on which Jesus gives us these orders. The Father has given him ALL AUTHORITY ON HEAVEN AND ON EARTH. Period. All authority. Not some. All.

Just a few weeks back I had this talk with my kids – a reminder that there is no democracy in the Helton home. There is no democratic republic or representative democracy in the Helton home. Victoria and I, we call the shots. We give them options, as they prove themselves trustworthy and capable of making good choices, but hear me, Victoria and I are in charge.

In the church, Jesus is the head. He has been given all authority by the Father. All authority. And it was clear to all who saw him, or heard him teach that he carried a different type of authority.

- When the people heard him teaching – they marveled at the authority with which he taught, unlike the religious teachers of their day.
- When people saw his miracles – they knew immediately something was different.
- Then, when he appeared after the resurrection, they knew his authority was unmatched.

And now, summoning the 11 he points them to his authority before he gives them these last words.

There's a difference between recognizing his authority and submitting to his authority. The call to follow Jesus is a call to submit to HIS authority.

We trust in Jesus alone to save us, and we SUBMIT to Him alone as Lord. And can I tell you, we live in a radically individualistic society. You do you. Ain't nobody gonna tell me what to do. Let me tell you, where there's an authority in my life I can figure out a way to rebel against it. One of the ongoing battles in my own life is to put to death this little rebel that lives inside of me, and is just waiting to get out.

But Jesus has ALL authority. And we must choose to submit to it. Every day. And out of his authority comes this final command.

The Command:

Go, make disciples, baptize, teach

Now, the way we read this in our English Bibles, we see 4 actions here; but what I want us to see is the central action is the “making disciples” and that the other 3 are what it means to make disciples. The central command is MAKE DISCIPLES. Hear me – it’s not “make nice church people,” or “gather huge crowds,” or any other thing we may think of. It’s make disciples. **WHOLEHEARTED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS.**

For the 1 or 2 of you that may remember, our organizing documents lay out our purpose clause for our church – “**RCM exists to glorify God by making disciples.**” Now, also written in there are some ways that we make disciples, but never miss this friends, the reason our church exists is to glorify God by making disciples.

And the how...is by going, baptizing, teaching. Going, baptizing, teaching

Going:

- Every single one of us is called to go somewhere.
 - The fundamental difference between the mission strategy of the Old Testament and the New Testament is the GOING part.

- In the OT, the mission strategy was COME AND SEE how great the God of Israel is.
- In the NT, the mission strategy is GO AND TELL how great King Jesus is.
- And understanding this will impact the way we do church, the way we live, the way we work, even the way we retire.
- Every single one of us, if you are indeed a Christian, is called to go somewhere
 - But so often, we use “Church Activity” as an excuse for personal obedience. Sounds something like “well I counted the kids as they came into the bouncy house” or “well I’m on the parking lot team at church” or “I’m on the setup/tear down team at church” or “I’m on the music team,” OR...how about this one “I’m the pastor of the church, I preach sermons, and lead Bible studies, I don’t have a personal role outside of my professional role.”
 - All of those things can be good, but none of them excuse personal disobedience. **CHURCH ACTIVITY DOESN’T EXCUSE PERSONAL DISOBEDIENCE!**
 - Church activity is good – so long as it’s in line with the mission of God in the world. But hear me, know amount of church activity will ever excuse personal disobedience. But sadly, being in the church my whole life, I’ve seen this over and over again, churches and church people get so wrapped up in their own church stuff, putting on their shows on Sunday, volunteer staffing all of their activities throughout the week, that people have no

time for personal obedience to the Great Commission → and they get praised for it!

- Every single one of us is called to go somewhere
- For some of us, that simply means a renewed “**Gospel-Intentionality**” in our relationships.
 - Personal Confession – Riding bikes with Dean.
- Yet for others – maybe for some of the kids – you’re not going to buy the lie of our culture that all that matters is working hard so you can be comfortable in retirement.
- Missionaries, pastors, pastor wife.
- OR Ordinary businessmen and business women, teachers, accountants, photographers, cleaners – using their job to make disciples. Sharing and Showing Jesus with people.
- Going always involves **sacrifices**. Sometimes it’s money, sometimes it’s our time, sometimes it’s our own selfish desires – but going always involves sacrifice.
- Not only sacrifice, but going always takes a **risk**. Riskless Christianity is boring – but worse than that, I’d tell you flat out riskless Christianity is flat out disobedient and sinful.

As we go, with the greatest news in the history of the world, some people will respond and we **baptize**.

- Ordinance of the local church – normally connected to the local church unless there's an extenuating circumstance (why we don't baptize at youth camps or through other ministries).
- Always follows belief. That's why we call it BELIEVER'S BAPTISM. Anything before your point of belief, you're just getting wet.
- It's the first step of obedience in being a disciple of Jesus – the first picture of obedience as a follower of Jesus is to be baptized

We go, we baptize, and we **teach**

- I think there's a formal and an informal application here. Yes there's a time and a place for formal instruction, but there's also a HUGE place for informal teaching through the ordinary rhythms of life.

READ Deuteronomy 11:18-20

¹⁸ “Imprint these words of mine on your hearts and minds, bind them as a sign on your hands, and let them be a symbol^[e] on your foreheads.^[f] ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit in your house and when you

walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ²⁰ Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates

- The connection between the two though - **Real teaching always changes how we live**. Because the goal of teaching isn't to sit in a room and learn lots of stuff. The goal of Christian teaching is to more closely line up how we live with the truth of Scripture. Because we are to teach them to **OBEY**

So we see the authority that Jesus was given by the Father, the command that he gives the 11 and you and me by extension, last I want us to see this incredible promise that he makes

The Promise

V20B “And Remember, I am with you always to the end of the age.”

The presence of Jesus with you always – all the days – if you are a Christian. If you have turned from your sin and are trusting in Jesus alone.

Some things we just can't do on our own, or in our own strength. Making disciples of all nations – that's one of them. We can't do this without the presence of Christ. Sure, we can get a good job, have a nice home, raise moral kids, pay most of our bills on time →

all of that we can probably do without the presence of Christ in our lives. BUT...to live each day with the sole goal of glorifying God by making disciples – knowing that it takes sacrificial risks, knowing that it takes radical obedience – that won't happen apart from the presence of Jesus all of the days. But Jesus makes this promise and it's a guaranty.

CLOSING

Too many of us (myself at times) are content with a riskless Christian experience.

We're content to have our church be enjoyable, something we like, people we like, music we like, preaching we can tolerate that never asks too much of us → rather than seeing our church as our base camp, where we prepare to do battle as we go out into a lost and dying world to take the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone we come into contact with. Now when I say go into battle, not like argue on Facebook and Twitter about things. I mean do battle for the souls of people. Pushing back the darkness in our neighborhoods, in our families, at our workplaces, and in the world.

How does this make sense? **It only makes sense if Jesus is exactly who the Scriptures claim that he is.** Our view and understanding of who Jesus is must grow closer to the ABSOLUTE truth of Scripture.

READ Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ² Seraphim^[a] were standing above him; they each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³ And one called to another:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Armies;
his glory fills the whole earth.

⁴ The foundations of the doorways shook at the sound of their voices, and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ Then I said:

Woe is me for I am ruined^[b]

because I am a man of unclean lips
and live among a people of unclean lips,
and because my eyes have seen the King,
the Lord of Armies.

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a glowing coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. ⁷ He touched my mouth with it and said:

Now that this has touched your lips,
your iniquity is removed
and your sin is atoned for.

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord asking:

Who will I send?

Who will go for us?

I said:

Here I am. Send me.

One of the many incredible things about this vision that Isaiah got, was that the Lord told him in the very next verses that no one's going to listen to you. BUT, Isaiah pressed on and obeyed.

Jesus didn't come, to pay the penalty (the full penalty) of your sin and mine, to offer meaningful life in His name alone, so that we could play it safe. So that we could chase after the things of this world, be thoroughly distracted, as we watch people go straight to hell.

Where will you go?

Invitation – Band led today