

Called to Go

August 10, 2025

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:14-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20

Session Outline

1. The Great Commission Is a Command (Matthew 28:18-20)
2. We Are Christ's Ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20)
3. Believing Comes from Hearing (Romans 10:14-17)

Theological Theme

We are *all* called to go and teach people about Jesus.

Call to Action

Identify one person in your life who needs to hear the gospel. Pray daily that God would open a door for you to share the gospel with that person. Keep praying until the prayer is answered.



Leader Guide

Called to Go

Introduction

How can someone believe in Jesus if they haven't heard the truth about Him? This profound question has spurred generations of Christians into action. This includes Christians like Henry Gerecke, a US Army Chaplain who ministered to Nazi leaders during the Nuremberg trial;¹ Christians like Lottie Moon, who left America in her thirties and dedicated her life to sharing the gospel in China;² and Christians like Burl Cain, former Senior Warden of Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola), who founded a seminary in Angola, opening doors for the gospel to be shared with inmates.³

There is a wide world of people who need to hear about Jesus today, and they don't all live abroad in places we might normally imagine a missionary is needed. They are in our neighborhoods, workplaces, grocery stores, and cities, and God wants to use us to reach them.



How did you first hear about Jesus?



Who do you know that doesn't have a relationship with Jesus yet?

Session Summary

Jesus gave the Great Commission, telling His followers to take action (go) and teach everyone (all nations) what it means to follow Jesus (make disciples, baptize, and teach them). This command is meant for all Christians, whether they are vocational ministers, overseas missionaries, or simply have the spiritual gift of evangelism.

Paul wrote that we are Christ's ambassadors. He explained that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13), but how can someone call on Jesus's name if they don't know the truth about Him? It's our job to represent Christ to those who don't yet know Him.

1. The Great Commission Is a Command (Matthew 28:18-20)



What did Jesus say about Himself in these verses? Why does this matter?



What did Jesus tell His disciples to do?

This text is better known as the Great Commission. It wasn't just meant for the disciples who heard it the first time, and it isn't just meant for believers who are specially gifted for evangelism or called into missions today. The Great Commission is meant for all believers.

Let's break down what Jesus said here:

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

All authority has been given to Jesus by the Father. That means Jesus had authority and dominion over the disciples' lives, and it means He has authority and dominion over our lives (and everyone else), too! With this authority, He was about to issue a command to His followers, including us.

"Go, therefore" (v. 19).

Jesus began by telling them to go. This requires action. Does that mean we need to move to another country to tell people about Jesus? Maybe. God does call people into this type of ministry. He doesn't call everyone to literally pick up and move, but He does call everyone into action. Some have interpreted this command as "as you are going." As we go throughout our lives, God will put people into our path who don't yet know Jesus.

When we start taking the command to go seriously, we do change directions! We move from a place where we are sitting on the sidelines to a place where we are actively sharing about Jesus as we walk through our lives—and not just at church but also with people who've not heard of Jesus yet.

"Make disciples" (v.19).

In Jesus's day, a disciple would study under a rabbi, a Jewish religious teacher. A disciple would live with the rabbi, following him around. The rabbi's lessons weren't only reserved for times at the temple; a good rabbi would teach as he went about his day, using examples that were physically around him and taking advantage of every learning opportunity. A rabbi

would teach how he interpreted the Scriptures and how to live. The disciple was along for the ride, soaking in wisdom as it was offered by his teacher.

Our Rabbi, and the Rabbi we are to introduce others to, is Jesus. When we make disciples, with the power of the Holy Spirit, we introduce people to Jesus and help them learn from Jesus's teaching, just as we are seeking to do also. We share what Jesus teaches us and how He is working in our lives. We study the Bible together, and we pray together.

Notice Jesus implied disciples are made, and we are a part of that process! Learning about Jesus and how to live like Him doesn't happen instantly; it is a process and a journey that we continue for our entire lives.

“Of all nations” (v.19).

The gospel being for all nations is a concept that would have been radical for the first-century Jew. Salvation through Jesus wasn't just for the Jews; it was for the Gentiles, too! There is no distinction in God's kingdom. Still today, the good news is for everyone. That includes people we don't like and people we think will reject the idea of Jesus.

“Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (v.19).

Baptism isn't necessary for salvation but is an outward sign of an inward change. In Judaism, a new male convert would be circumcised, but Jesus didn't command that here. Baptism would be the new symbol of a believer's faith.

“Teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you” (v. 20).


Jesus said to teach everything He commanded. We don't get to pick and choose. When we make disciples, we teach them everything, not just the things that are easy to live by or the things that our society accepts.

To teach everything Jesus commanded, we must know what Jesus commanded. This doesn't only mean coming to church and listening to others teach us. We must study the Bible on our own, too. When we study God's Word, He meets us there. The Holy Spirit gives us special revelation—understanding of what His Word means and how He wants us to apply and share that knowledge. But we never “arrive” when it comes to studying Scripture; we will never know everything. Studying the Bible is a life-long pursuit during which the Lord continues to teach us.


“Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (v. 20).

What a comfort! When we go and make disciples, teaching them about Jesus and what it means to follow Him, the Lord is with us. The Holy Spirit dwells inside of all believers. He is here to work in us! We aren't doing it alone. We can't do it alone. He is always with us.

The Holy Spirit also gives growth to the seeds we plant. If the idea of telling people about Jesus makes you nervous because you're worried you won't say the right things, the presence of the Holy Spirit takes the pressure off giving a perfect message. Jesus gave us a lot of commands in the Great Commission, but changing hearts isn't one of them. That's the Lord's job, not ours, and He can work with anything we say. Sometimes vulnerable, honest, imperfect words make more impact than polished ones.

 Application: How does thinking about telling people about Jesus make you feel? Does it make you nervous? Is this something you already do regularly? How can you move forward in obedience in this area?

2. We Are Christ's Ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20)

 What does it mean to be an ambassador?

 What does it mean to be Jesus's ambassador?

When you think about an ambassador, what comes to mind? A diplomat, perhaps? A diplomat represents their country to others. They can speak, negotiate, and make suggestions on their country's behalf.

They might learn other languages, attend events, or participate in customs they know nothing about. All these things can be hard, but diplomats know they are worthwhile. They build relationships because they know this helps with their goal of peace and prosperity among the involved parties.

In 2 Corinthians 5:20, we read that we are ambassadors for Jesus in the spread of the gospel. What exactly does this mean? God has trusted us with a very important task! Paul wrote that, “God is making his appeal through us . . . be reconciled to God.” To be reconciled means to restore a broken relationship. The relationship in view in this passage is our relationship with God. God is perfect; we are not. We are all sinners (Romans 3:23), and we need reconciliation in our relationship with God because sin separates us from Him. We are reconciled with God—our

relationship with Him is restored—because Jesus paid the debt for our sin on the cross. He died for our sins and was raised three days later. Salvation is a gift we accept. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus.

As Christ's ambassadors, it's our job to point people to Jesus. Think about the modern-day diplomat's work and how that might help us understand our role better. Are we representing Jesus in our daily lives? Are we speaking the truth about Jesus? Are we building relationships, seeking to spread the gospel?

Believe and Confess

Paul argued that only a remnant of Israel ever believed (9:27–29). In rejecting Christ Israel was following a precedent already at work in earlier days. The Jews' zeal was commendable but nevertheless misguided. The only way of acceptance before God was faith in Christ and was (and is) within the reach of all. Those who believe in their heart and confess with their mouth "Jesus is Lord" will be saved. People cannot believe unless they can hear, and they cannot hear without a preacher. Though Israel heard, they still rejected God's message.

Just as an ambassador's job has big stakes for his or her country, our job as Jesus's ambassador has high stakes, too. Jesus is the only way to life (John 14:6), and those apart from Jesus need someone to tell them the truth about Him. God has called us to be those people.



Application: What are some ways we live as Jesus's ambassadors daily?

3. Believing Comes from Hearing (Romans 10:14–17)



What point did Paul make in these verses?



Why should this give us a sense of confident urgency?

Just before this passage, Paul wrote that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (v. 13), then he presented a problem we still have today: How can someone call on the name of the Lord if they've never heard about Jesus? How can someone hear and understand the gift of salvation Jesus is offering if no one has ever shared the truth with him or her?

There are a heartbreaking number of people in our neighborhoods, towns, state, and country who don't know Jesus. Some of those people have heard about Him, but many don't understand the truth. They need someone to tell them. They can't call on Jesus's name if they don't know the truth, and they can't understand the truth unless someone tells them.

God can accomplish His mission by any means He desires, but He wants to use us. Paul wrote in verse 15, “And how can they preach unless they are sent?” We have been sent by Jesus, commanded by Him to go and teach others about Him. Will we obey?



Application: Who needs to hear the truth about Jesus around you? How can you tell them?

Conclusion

Acting as a witness for Jesus and living out the Great Commission can feel scary, but getting started doesn't have to be. Think about the way God has shown up in your life. All believers have experienced the Lord's grace, mercy, and goodness. How have you experienced His provision? How has He shown up in your life when you were walking in a dark valley and needing help? How has He comforted you when you mourned? How has He brought peace into your life when you were in a tense situation? How is your life better because He is in it? We all have stories we can share with others. Remember, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us to lead and empower us! We were made for this.

- ❓ What are some tools we can use to share the gospel with others? Why is it important to be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance and not stuck on one method or approach?
- ❓ Think about how God has worked in your life. What is your story? How can you share it with others?
- ❓ Name one person in your life who needs to hear the gospel. As a group, pray over the names given and ask that God would create an opportunity to share Jesus with them.

Prayer of Response

Thank God for the gift of salvation, for finding and saving us, when we didn't deserve it. Pray over the names given today of those who need to hear the gospel. Pray and ask God to give your group boldness as you tell others about Jesus. Ask that He would give you the words to say and guide your actions. Ask that He would help your group be obedient to follow the Great Commission.

Memory Verse

How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? - Romans 10:14

Additional Resources

- *Exalting Jesus in Matthew* by David Platt
- *Romans 8–16 for You* by Timothy Keller
- *Exalting Jesus in 2 Corinthians* by Eric Mason

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



Historical Context of Matthew

Purpose

Matthew probably wrote his Gospel in order to preserve written eyewitness testimony about the ministry of Jesus. Matthew's Gospel emphasizes certain theological truths. First, Jesus is the Messiah, the long-awaited King of God's people. Second, Jesus is the new Abraham, the founder of a new spiritual Israel consisting of all people who choose to follow him. This new Israel will consist of both Jews and Gentiles. Third, Jesus is the new Moses, the deliverer and instructor of God's people. Fourth, Jesus is the Immanuel, the virgin-born Son of God who fulfills the promises of the OT.

Author

The author did not identify himself in the text. However, the title that ascribes this Gospel to Matthew appears in the earliest manuscripts and is possibly original. Titles became necessary to distinguish one Gospel from another when the four Gospels began to circulate as a single collection. Many early church fathers (Papias, Irenaeus, Pantaenus, and Origen) acknowledged Matthew as the author. Papias also contended that Matthew first wrote in Hebrew, implying that this Gospel was later translated into Greek.

Setting

Determining the date of composition of Matthew's Gospel depends largely on the relationship of the Gospels to one another. Most scholars believe that Matthew utilized Mark's Gospel in writing his own gospel. If this is correct, Matthew's Gospel must postdate Mark's. However, the date of Mark's Gospel is also shrouded in mystery. Irenaeus (ca AD 180) seems to claim that Mark wrote his Gospel after Peter's death in the mid-60s. However, Clement of Alexandria, who wrote only twenty years after Irenaeus, claimed that Mark wrote his Gospel while Peter was still alive. Given the ambiguity of the historical evidence, a decision must be based on other factors.

Special Features

This Gospel was written from a strong Jewish perspective to show that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

Extended Commentary

Matthew 28:18-20

28:18 Before the resurrection, Jesus had authority (7:29; 9:6, 8; 11:27; 21:23). However, through the resurrection, the Father granted him all authority over heaven and ... earth, an authority far greater than that which Satan had vainly promised him (see 4:8–9).

28:19 The command to extend their mission worldwide brings to a climax Matthew's repeated theme of Gentile participation in God's salvation. The inclusion of four Gentile women in Jesus's genealogy and the summons of the magi to worship the infant Christ foreshadowed the disciples' mission of making disciples of all nations. Baptism marked a person's entrance into the faith community. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is a reference to the Trinity. Matthew's language shows that a clear understanding of Jesus's nature and identity as God was required before baptism.

28:20 The Great Commission (vv. 19–20) is preceded by a reference to Jesus's authority and followed by the promise of Jesus's spiritual presence among us. Both are necessary if we are to fulfill our God-given mission.⁴

Romans 10:14-17

10:14–15 What must occur for someone to call on the name of the Lord? Someone must first be sent to proclaim the gospel message, and then listeners must pay attention and believe. In the absence of any one of these factors, no one can call on the name of the Lord.

10:16–21 Paul quoted several OT passages to show that the conditions described in vv. 14–15 had been met for Israel. The gospel message was proclaimed throughout the Roman Empire. The Jews listened and simply did not believe. The Gentiles heard too, and many embraced it. Paul's citations show that the Gentile conversion was predicted in the OT. Ultimately, all peoples are a disobedient and defiant people. Israel was singled out in this way due to their consistent rejection of God's message and messengers (see Ac 7:51–60).⁵

2 Corinthians 5:20

5:19–21 What Christ did, God did. Christ's death mainly affected the world, that is, human sinners (rather than evil supernatural beings, for whom no divine provision for reconciliation has been made). Christ's death upholds God's righteousness. Trespasses were placed on the one who did not know sin. In return, the righteousness of God is credited (imputed) to all who are in him. The message of reconciliation is known to others only when ambassadors for Christ spread it. The Great Commission is the responsibility of reconciled human beings, not angels (Mt 28:18–20).⁶

References

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2. “Lottie Moon,” About, International Mission Board, accessed May 15, 2025, <https://www.imb.org/about/lottie-moon/>.
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4. Charles L. Quarles, “Matthew,” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1553.
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6. Kendell H. Easley, “2 Corinthians,” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1845.