

Bible Studies for Life: April 25

Our Commission • Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

By Don Schuman



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This week's lesson begins a new unit about sharing Christ. This first lesson emphasizes the responsibility and privilege of fulfilling the Great Commission, sharing the message of reconciliation between God and sinners, and representing Christ on earth as His ambassadors.

The Commission – Our Mission (Matt. 28:18-20). A town councilman has authority from the citizens of the town and the responsibility to work for the good of the town. National leaders have the authority from the nation's citizens and the responsibility to work for the good of nation.

Each member of the church has authority from the Lord Jesus Christ and the responsibility to promote the good news of the Gospel. The risen Christ has all power and authority given to Him by the Father and He, through the Holy Spirit, empowers His body to further the kingdom of God.

The commission involves going. As you study Jesus' ministry in the Gospels, notice the motion in His mission: "Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude" (Matt. 14:14 AV). "And He

went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto Him, and He taught them" (Mark 2:13). Matt. 20:30 states, "And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David."

We *come* to church for worship services and we *go from* church for mission services.

The commission involves making disciples. Our commission is to make disciples like Christ (Phil. 2:5, Rom. 12:1-2), not like ourselves. Making disciples requires the patience of a gardener, knowing that growth may be slow and steady. However, the joys of their bearing spiritual fruit far outweigh the obstacles.

The commission involves baptism. Baptism is a public profession of Christ and an identification with Christ. The commission involves teaching. Following Christ is by transformation and information. We are changed and our direction is changed, but we need to know the right way. The commandments of Christ are that right direction.

Reconciliation – Our Ministry (2 Cor. 5:16-19). The Gospel is an astonishing message of sinners reconciled to God the Father through the Son. Because believers have been miraculously reconciled and made new creatures, we have a ministry of reconciliation (v. 18).

While God reserves some ministries to those called and gifted specifically for those ministries, He calls every believer to the ministry of reconciliation. God has equipped the minister of reconciliation with the message of reconciliation (v. 19).

Not only has Christ empowered the believer to go and make disciples, He has given us the words for that ministry. Jim Futral is the executive director-treasurer emeritus of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. In his

book of daily devotions, Directions for Each Day of the Year, he labels the July 20 devotion, "Make a Difference."

One of greatest differences we can make is, as he writes, to "tell someone, at least one person, about Jesus. ...That, my friends, will make 'Make a Difference Day' a day of eternal consequences."

Our message of the greatest reconciliation ever between sinners and God through faith in Jesus Christ is life changing and world changing. What a difference the Gospel message makes in this sin-cursed world!

Representation – Our Mandate (2 Cor. 5:20-21). Following Christ includes representing Him in this world as His ambassadors. The hymn, Let Others See Jesus in You, by B. B. McKinney, says, "Your life's a book before their eyes, They're reading it through and through; Say, does it point them to the skies, Do others see Jesus in you?" As ambassadors, we reflect the kingdom of God, but we also reflect Christ in us.

Jesus knew no sin (v. 21), did no sin (2 Pet. 2:22), and had no sin (1 John 3:5), yet God made Jesus to be the sin sacrifice for believers. The purpose of this substitution was that believers might be made the righteousness of God in Christ. How well do we represent the righteousness of God as His ambassadors?

Three ways in which we fulfill the Great Commission are in our character, our conversation, and our conduct. Our character ought to reflect the reconciliation with God that transformed us into new creations. Our conversation ought to be the message of reconciliation that can transform anyone and everyone who believes. Our conduct ought to be going out making disciples, seeing them baptized, and teaching them in the ways of Christ.

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