

## The Great Commission – Zoom Service 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020

### Welcome

Welcome to our Zoom service,

- Hope you were able to participate in the on-line worship prepared for us by the Worship Team.
- If not, I recommend you click on the U-tube links on the website after the service.
- Also, there will be a second Zoom meeting immediately after the service
- This gives us a chance to catch up with each other's news and encourage on another with prayer
- This morning we will take this opportunity to conduct our church meeting during this time.
- Even though we are kept apart we can still continue to be the body of Christ together.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, we come to you this morning knowing we belong to you  
 You are our Lord, our saviour and amazingly our friend,  
 Help us to trust you with our lives as we offer ourselves to you this morning,  
 We offer you our hopes and our fears, our successes and our failures  
 Those things we are proud of and the things of which we are ashamed.  
 We ask that you forgive us, heal us and strengthen us  
 That you use all of us to make something good, something worthwhile,  
 Something that is honouring to you.

We ask that we may know your presence with us through your Holy Spirit  
 Fill us with your Joy, your peace and your hope  
 So that our lives may be a witness to your great love  
 And that we may be a blessing to those around us.

We ask this in your great name,  
 That name at which, one day, every knee will bow  
 Jesus, our saviour  
 Amen

### Preamble:

Over the last few weeks, we have been following the last few weeks of Jesus' life on earth.

- We talked about the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday
- How the disciples were still full of hope and excitement
- We followed the events of each day of Holy week.
- With Jesus was preparing himself to face the terrible ordeal of the crucifixion.

After these awful events of Good Friday, we remembered the despair of the disciples

- Despair that turned to Joy and amazement as Jesus rose from the dead
- Over the last two weeks we have reminded ourselves of some of these occasions.
- The meeting on the road to Emmaus
- Where Jesus opened the scriptures to the disciples
- Explaining all the bible says about himself

Last week Jenny talked about the meeting on the beach

- Where Jesus reinstates Peter
- Challenging him with the question “Do you love Me?”
- This week I want to look at another occasion where Jesus meets the disciples.
- Then next week we will look at the Ascension
- And think about ‘What Jesus Did Next’

Today, we are looking at the short account Matthew gives of the disciples meeting Jesus.

### **Reading: Matthew 28:16-20**

*Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

### **Introduction**

This passage is known as the great commission.

- It is seen as the standing order for the church
- The basis of everything we should be doing.

If fact, it is our motto text for the church

- When we were founded by Parkwood Christian fellowship
- This was the text given to inspire all we would do in following Jesus.
- However, it is something we all feel hard
- Often, we feel uncomfortable thinking we should be ‘pushing our faith on others’
- We fear to be too pushy in case we offend and push people away
- At the same time, we feel guilty we are missing opportunities to share our faith

It really shouldn’t be like this,

- It was not Jesus’ intention to burden us
- But to set us free to serve him.
- He told these same disciples back in Matthew 11:29-30  
*“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

So, in the light of this,

- Let's have another look at this passage and see what we can learn from it.
- I have four thoughts this morning
- And they all begin with the letter A
  1. Adoration (Worship)
  2. Authority
  3. Assignment (Mission)
  4. Always with you

## 1. Adoration (Worship)

I think it's significant that the passage begins with the disciples worshipping Jesus. (vs 17)

- In some ways this is the whole key understanding the passage
- If our evangelism is derived from worship, it is much less likely to be offensive
- Much less likely to come across as arrogant or bigoted.

I am using worship and adoration as synonymous here

- I think this is correct
- Jesus tells us the Greatest commandment is to
- *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*  
(Matthew 22:36)

The English word worship is derived from the word Worth

- My Bible dictionary says
- *"It (worship) originally referred to the action of human beings in expressing homage to God because he is worthy of it."* (New Bible Dictionary, IVP, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)
- It goes on to say
- *"It covers such activities as adoration, thanksgiving, prayers of all kinds, the offering of sacrifice and the making of vows"*
- In other words, it is giving God the honour he is due.
- And what God is due, first and foremost, is our love.

Worship is not about bolstering God's Ego by telling Him how great he is.

- That is not what God is like
- Worship is about responding to His great love for us by telling Him we love him.
- This is what Jenny was talking about last week
- In the reinstatement of Peter
- Jesus, did not require him to grovel at his feet
- He did not even ask him to apologise for letting Him down

Jesus, didn't demand a repeat of Peter's great revelation of truth

- To tell him *"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."* (Matthew 16:16)
- No, He asked him, *"Do you Love me?"* (John 21:15ff)

The Greek word for worship used in the Gospels is POSKUNEO

- It means to make obeisance, do reverence to
- And comes from 'Pros', meaning towards and 'Kuneo', to kiss).
- So, it literally, means to come towards to kiss.
- Worship is to do with adoration

We mustn't mistake this to mean familiarity or disrespect

- The implication of God's superiority is not lost.
- He is still the all-powerful, creator God
- And we are his creation

Interestingly, 'Proskuneo' is the same word used to describe a dog licking his master's hand

- It is an awesome privilege to come to God and offer him our love
- And we can only do it because He loved us
- And sent Jesus to earn the right to allow us to come into his presence.

If we look at verse 17 again

- There is a little parenthesis to their worship  
*When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.*
- Some doubted
- According to my study bible this could be translated. (Zondervan Study Bible)
- *'they worshiped but they doubted'.*

I find this comment very comforting

- Even standing in front of the resurrected Christ
- They admitted to doubts
- In the midst of worship, they had questions

Is it not true that, in much of our worship?

- The words we sing or say express our desire rather than objective truth.
- When we tell Jesus, we love him with all our heart, we mean we want to
- In reality, like Peter, we are conscious of our failures to live up to our promises
- That is why Jesus asked Peter three times "Do you love me?"
- To allow him to rescind the three times he had denied Jesus

We are told

*"Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."*

John 21:17

- Jesus, reply on each occasion was a command
- *Feed my lambs, take care of my Sheep, feed my Sheep, (John 21, 15,16 &17)*
- Peter's commission was based in his love (or adoration) for Jesus

But before we look at our mission, we need to look at Jesus' authority

## 2. Authority

As we read in Matthew 28:18

*"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go"*

The command is followed by a declaration of authority

- Our evangelism is based not on our own righteousness or knowledge
- But on our love for Jesus and on His Authority.
- Matthew recounts the incident of a Roman Centurion coming to Jesus
- Asking for Jesus to heal his servant.
- He says to Jesus  
*"Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."* (Matthew 8:8-9)
- We are told  
*"When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. (Matthew 8:10)*

The centurion understood his authority came from the fact he was under authority

- He was given authority because he was obedient
- And exercised that authority on behalf of his Emperor
- In the same way Jesus had authority given from God
- Because he was obedient to God
- Jesus has total authority given to him for his total obedience

This is what Paul is talking about in his letter to the Philippians. (Philippians 1:5-11)

- He tells them to have *"the same mindset as Christ Jesus"*  
*"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!  
<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Paul is echoing the great messianic prophesy of Daniel, who wrote

*"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. <sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."* (Daniel 7:13-15)

Jesus has been given all authority

- This should encourage and inspire us
- But he does not exercise his authority in a harsh way
- He calls us to work with Him as friends not servants
- As we read in John 15:12-17

*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.*

This is our assignment

- Our task in following Jesus
- Is to love Him and to love each other
- He tells his disciples in John 13:35

*“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

### 3. Assignment (Mission -Commission)

So, now we come to the commission, Our assignment from Jesus

*Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20*

The word therefore suggests this command is the consequence of the previous truth

- We are to go because Jesus has been given ‘All Authority’
- And we are called to do three things
  1. Disciple
  2. Baptise
  3. Teach

That is all we are told to do.

- We are not told to judge who will go to heaven or hell
- We are not to command or dominate others because we have ‘Jesus’ authority’
- That is not how we are supposed to behave
- Jesus tells us in Matthew 20:25-28
 

*“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— <sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

So, let us look at what we are told to do

### 1. Discipling

Discipling is not the same as commanding

- It is not about giving people a list of rules to follow
- Or telling them how to live their lives
- It is about mentoring
- Coming alongside someone and walking with them
- Its intention is to bring them to a better place

Discipleship is a journey

- One we take together
- It works best where there is a building of trust between 'discipler' and disciple
- Where it is a partnership and is done by consent
- As J John says
- "People won't care what we know until they know that we care"

When we think about it, this is a description of how Jesus disciplined his followers

- It is the essence of the gospel.
- God came down to earth as a man to walk alongside us
- To lead us back to God

If we are to 'make disciples', we need to be willing to go to where people are

- To share our lives with them and walk beside them.
- Showing them by our lives and by our love how to follow Jesus

### 2. Baptising

We know what baptism is

- It is about being born to a new life in Christ.
- We are to baptise Jesus' disciples as a part of their discipleship
- It is to remind us that they are Jesus disciples not ours
- They are to be baptised into the name of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit

### 3. Teaching

Finally, teaching,

- Teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded them
- And everything Jesus has commanded has been summed up in two laws  
*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*
- *And*
- *'Love your neighbour as yourself.'*
- Jesus said, *"All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*
- (Matthew 22:37-40)

This is not vastly different from the commandments Moses gave to the Israelites

<sup>4</sup> *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.* <sup>5</sup> *Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.* <sup>6</sup> *These commandments*

*that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

It is the description of a life lived full of love for God

- So full of love that it spills out into acts of kindness to all those around us
- A life that so shines Jesus that others come to believe in him too.
- There was a testimony from a girl getting baptised
- Thanking her Christian friend who led her to Christ
- She said
- “My friend built a bridge between my life and hers, and Jesus walked over it”
- What a wonderful description of the great commission.

Remember our memory text for this year, Paul says in Romans 15:14-19

*I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another. <sup>15</sup> Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me <sup>16</sup> to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

*<sup>17</sup> Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. <sup>18</sup> I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— <sup>19</sup> by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So, from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.*

#### **4. Always with you**

Jesus finishes our assignment with words of encouragement

*And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* (vs. 20)

We know these words to be related to the coming of the Holy Spirit

- Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the disciples before he died
- We read in John 14: 15- 30 he says  
*“If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”*  
<sup>22</sup> Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”



<sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. <sup>24</sup> Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

<sup>25</sup> "All this I have spoken while still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. <sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

<sup>28</sup> "You heard me say, 'I am going away, and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. <sup>30</sup> I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, <sup>31</sup> but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

## Conclusion

Jesus is alive,

- He has gone to be with the Father
- And we will think more about this next week when we think about the ascension
- He has left us with an assignment
- A job to do until returns
- A job of discipling, baptising and teaching

It is a job we can only achieve in love

- Love and adoration for Jesus
- It has to begin with worship of him
- And through receiving his love for the lost and broken

It is also a job we can only do in his power

- Power we will receive from the Holy Spirit
- We will again think of Him more on Pentecost.

Amen

## Prayer

Let's finish with Paul's prayer from Ephesians 1:17-23

*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. <sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, <sup>19</sup> and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength <sup>20</sup> he exerted*

*when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup>And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*