

Carrying the Torch

Lesson for Sunday, September 28, 2025

NOTE: We are taking a week off of our Essential Virtues series to point our attention to our upcoming Friend Day on November 2. There will be a handout for you to use in your attendance folder this Sunday. PLEASE USE IT!

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Every four years the summer Olympics begins with an event that captures the imagination of the world – the lighting of the Olympic flame.
- ⇒ After traveling by foot, by bicycle, by boat, or by air, sometimes over thousands of miles, the torch enters the stadium in the hands of a final runner who ignites the enormous flame.
- ⇒ Can you imagine if you had the chance to be that last runner? Your family would talk about you for generations (“My grandpa carried the torch!”). Can you imagine the thrill you would experience knowing the entire world was watching you in that moment?
- ⇒ As Christians, we carry a **torch**.
- ⇒ We carry a flame of so much greater value that there is no comparison. The pomp and circumstance of the Olympics pales against the significance of the assignment which Jesus Christ has entrusted us.
- ⇒ And the angels are watching! Waiting to celebrate when we fulfill our mission!
- ⇒ Friend Day is only five weeks away and it won’t be Friend Day without any friends! But Friend Day is more than simply inviting people to church. It is an opportunity for each of us to carry the torch for our Lord and Savior.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. The Great **Handoff** (Matthew 28:16-20)
 - a. Matthew records what we call the Great Commission at the very end of his gospel.
 - b. The fact that we call this passage the “Great” Commission may intimidate you. We may think that the commission is given to “great” Christians or “great” missionaries. We may be tempted to think, “I can’t do that!”
 - c. Jesus’s final words to His disciples were nothing more than a few short words to summarize Christ’s life. The disciples’ job, Jesus was saying, was to do for the rest of their lives what He had done in His.
 - d. It was an **everyday** commission, given to every believer for every moment of his or her life. The Great Commission is **every** Christian’s task.
 - e. It’s important to note that Jesus didn’t commission His disciples to take on this task in their own strength.
 - i. Before the commission in vs. 18 – “All power is given unto Me...”
 - ii. At the end of the commission in vs. 20 – “I am with you always...”
 - iii. Wrapped around this Great Commission is a promise of the active and manifest presence of the Lord.
 - f. This is no small promise! Jesus invites us to share His life, His passion, His calling. He promises that any person, any family, any church that commits itself to doing what Jesus did can expect and claim that active manifest Presence in their midst!
 - g. QUESTION: Can you see yourself doing this? Are you ready to accept the assignment?
2. The Great **Commission**
 - a. There is one central command in the Great Commission: “Go and make disciples.”
 - i. In the KJV, it reads, “Go and teach all nations.”
 - ii. In the Greek, this literally means to make disciples.
 - iii. As we go throughout the course of our lives, we are to look for opportunities to make disciples of everyone who is willing to respond.

- b. This command to make disciples has three verb forms that modify it.
 - c. The first is “**Go.**”
 - i. This is better translated “going” or “as you go.”
 - ii. Jesus is saying that the GC is not a special event. Instead, we are to make disciples as we go to work, as we go to school, as we go out into our neighborhood.
 - iii. This is truly an everyday command you are to live every day *as you go* – wherever you go.
 - d. The second is “**Baptizing.**”
 - i. Who do we baptize? Those who have accepted the Gospel!
 - ii. The first step of making disciples is sharing the Gospel and winning people to Christ.
 - iii. Once they are saved, they are baptized and brought into the church family where they can continue to grow spiritually.
 - e. The third is “**Teaching**” in verse 20.
 - i. This involves a lifetime of following and learning.
 - ii. Jesus gives more than 400 commands in the Gospels.
 - iii. Becoming a disciple does not mean completing a curriculum or attending Sunday School. It is a **lifestyle** of becoming more like Jesus.
 - f. **IDENTIFY:** Encourage people to take their handout and think about this question: Who has God consistently placed in your path as you “go” through life?
 - i. It could be a waitress, a co-worker, a neighbor, a family member, etc.
 - ii. The key is recognizing that God has placed certain people in your daily “going” that need the Gospel.
 - iii. Why do you think God has placed them in your life?
 - iv. Give your class members a chance to try and list three.
 - g. What is the first step in reaching these people for Christ? Praying for them – or **INTERCESSION**. Will you commit to begin praying for these three names daily? You may be the only person in the world that is praying for them.
3. The Great **Commandment** (Matthew 22:37-40)
- a. While the Great Commission deals with our **mission**, the Great Commandment speaks to our **motives**.
 - b. The Great Commission establishes our **priorities**. The Great Commandment clarifies our **passion**.
 - c. Love is the greatest Christian motive. Walking like Jesus walked means we must walk in love. Moreover, loving God means loving people, and loving people means loving God. You cannot separate the two. (See 1 John 4:20-21 for support.)
 - d. It is natural to wonder who we are supposed to love. Jesus was asked this question in Luke 10. Jesus answered with the parable of the Good Samaritan.
 - e. Jesus’s point that day was that anyone who crosses your path is your neighbor.
 - f. The three people you have identified and have committed to intercede for need you to love them. The greatest need they have is the Gospel, and God has placed you in their lives to share it with them.
 - g. After you have identified and begun to intercede, what can we do next?
 - i. **INVEST:** Take intentional effort to invest in their lives. Get to know them. Let them know that you care for them.
 - ii. **INVITE:** Then you can invite them.
 - 1. First, invite them to Friend Day. Promise to meet them, sit with them, take them to lunch when it is over, etc.
 - 2. Second, when the Holy Spirit opens the door, invite them to Jesus. Pray for and look for opportunities to share a Gospel tract, to read the Bible together, etc.

CLOSE:

- ⇒ Could there be a better friend, than someone who shares the Gospel with another?
- ⇒ Salvation is our greatest need. The Gospel is the greatest news.
- ⇒ This is why Paul could write in Romans 10:15, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace.”

TO DO:

1. Identify your three people.
2. Intercede for them daily.
3. Invest in their lives intentionally.
4. Invite them to Friend Day.