

The Mandate of the Great Commission

Lesson for Sunday, May 10, 2026

TEXT: Matthew 28:19-20

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Discuss why the Great Commission makes some people nervous. What are some of the common fears Christians have when trying to obey the GC?
- ⇒ There is no question that Jesus has given us a mandate – a command that we must choose to obey. But God has also given us a detailed strategy for carrying out our mandate. That is our subject for today.

CONTEXT:

- ⇒ What is the authoritative command of Jesus in verse 19?
 - In the KJV we read, “teach all nations.”
 - In the Greek, the word for “teach” is literally “disciple.”
 - The command of Jesus could be read, “make disciples of all nations.”
- ⇒ Looking at it grammatically:
 - The command/imperative verb is “make disciples.”
 - It is followed by three participles: going, baptizing and teaching.
 - As a result, there are four required actions to fulfill the Great Commission. We will look at each in our outline below.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. **Move** to Potential Disciples (Matthew 28:19)
 - a. The first action that we must take to fulfill the GC is to move from where we are to where lost people are.
 - b. We find this in the very first word of verse 19: “Go!”
 - i. This is a verb that can be translated literally “**as you are going.**”
 - ii. This is a direct command from Jesus for each Christian to share the Gospel.
 - iii. This isn’t the only time we hear Jesus give the command to go.
 1. Mark 16:15 – “Go into all the world...”
 2. Luke 14:23 – “Go out into the highways and hedges...”
 3. Mark 5:19 – “Go home to thy friends and tell them...”
 - c. The Lord has clearly commanded His followers to go to those who do not know Him and communicate the good news.
 - d. This means that Christians must move to where the lost people are in order that the unsaved can hear the message of salvation.
 - e. Unless someone goes and tells them how to be saved, they cannot hear and respond to the Gospel message (Romans 10:13-17).
 - f. DISCUSS: What does this mean for us in Florence? What are the challenges of this? How intentional are we in going to the lost and unchurched?
2. **Make** Disciples (vs. 19)
 - a. As we explained earlier, this is the central and only command of this text.
 - b. What does it mean to make disciples? *Allow for some input...*

- c. The simple explanation is that we are to win the lost to faith in Christ by sharing with them the Gospel. “Teach all nations” could be translated “make disciples” or “win disciples.”
 - i. The specific Greek word that Jesus used is not referring to the ongoing process of discipleship. That is addressed in verse 20.
 - ii. The mandate is to proclaim the Gospel to the lost and to seek to lead them to Christ.
 - iii. This makes sense logically. We cannot move on to the other parts of the Great Commission until a person is saved.
 - d. You will be surprised how many opportunities God will give you if you become a going Christian, sharing the Gospel on your way. Discuss what this means in practical terms.
 - i. We must be **prayed** up, asking the Lord to make us aware of opportunities.
 - ii. We must be **prepared**. Can you share the Gospel? Do you carry Gospel literature?
 - iii. We must be **bold**. When opportunities come up, we must be willing to step up and to speak out.
3. **Mark** Disciples (vs. 19)
- a. The third action necessary to fulfill our GC mandate is to mark disciples by “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”
 - b. Baptism is an **outward** picture of an **inward** transformation.
 - i. The Christian identifies with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus through this symbolic act.
 - ii. The new convert gives testimony of death to his former life, the cleansing of his sin, and the new life he has received from Christ.
 - iii. Simultaneously, the new believer identifies with the **local church** in which they are baptized.
 - c. Baptism marks the new Christian as a **disciple** of Jesus and a **member** of the local body of Christ.
 - d. DISCUSS: If you have people in your class that need to be baptized, this could be a time for discussion. Don’t single anyone out, but you may give a brief challenge, offer the date for the next scheduled baptism, etc.
4. **Mature** Disciples (vs. 20).
- a. The final action necessary if we are going to be obedient to the GC is to help the new converts to mature spiritually. We see this in verse 20a.
 - b. The goal is to see them become fully functional, faithful, fruitful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c. This refers to the process of discipleship, and it requires the willingness of older, mature believers coming alongside the new convert to help equip them in their new Christian faith.
 - i. They need to learn to **walk** with the Lord. This includes the basics such as learning God’s Word, learning to pray, etc.
 - ii. They need to learn to **worship** the Lord both corporately within the local church as well as in their personal life.
 - iii. The need to learn to **witness** for the Lord. The GC is a never-ending cycle. What is accomplished in an individual life is to be repeated in the lives of others.

- d. The key to discipleship is **obedience**. The new Christian must be taught “to observe all things.” It is much more than head-knowledge; it is life transformation.

APPLICATION: *Teachers, you must discuss this first point.*

- ⇒ Obedience to the GC begins with a willingness to go. This has two specific applications to discuss:
- First, we have a **personal** responsibility to go to our world.
 - As we branch out all over the Pee Dee Region this week, we each must assume responsibility for “our world” where we work, live and play.
 - Use this as an opportunity to work on your class “Come and See” list. Those names are our world that we have been commissioned to reach.
 - Second, we have a **church** responsibility.
 - This is why we have opportunities like our Summer Evangelism Strategy with the door-to-door and new move visits.
 - Use this as a time to talk about Monday nights you are scheduled to come out as a class.
- ⇒ Another practical discussion point is how we prepare ourselves.
- Discuss the use of Gospel tracts and literature. Encourage the class to always have 1 or 2 tracts with them to hand to others when opportunities arise.
 - Also encourage people to spend time familiarizing themselves with the literature so they are comfortable using it.