

The Method & The Means of the Great Commission

Lesson for Sunday, May 17, 2026

TEXT: Matthew 28:20 & Acts 1:8

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ The point of our current series is that the Great Commission is not just a command for pastors, missionaries, or especially gifted Christians. It is the marching orders of every follower of Jesus.
- ⇒ When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He did not present it as a suggestion for the enthusiastic or a calling for the few. He gave it to His church and every individual Christian.
- ⇒ That means each of us must ask a serious question: Am I personally taking part in what Christ has commanded? It is easy to assume that evangelism, discipleship, and witness belong to “someone else,” but the Lord has entrusted His mission to all His people.
- ⇒ The Great Commission is not only something we support; it is something we are responsible to obey.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. The **Method**

- a. Have you ever felt that the Great Commission is only for special people like pastors or missionaries? Why or why not?
- b. Read again Matthew 28:18-20 and ask: Which part of this passage feels most challenging to you?
- c. Remember what we have discussed in previous week:
 - i. This is Jesus’ final command before His ascension; it’s not a side note but His strategic plan for how His church will grow after He leaves.
 - ii. The question is not if this is the best way, or just another thing the church is supposed to do. This is the heart of what it means to be a disciple and ought to be the priority of every local church.
 - iii. The only real issue is whether we will choose to **obey**.
 - iv. There are two primary ways that God intends His commission to be carried out.
- d. The First Method: The **personal witness** of individual Christians.
 - i. Matthew 28:20 is the strategic frame; then contrast with Acts 1:8.
 - ii. In Acts 1:8 we read, “You shall be witnesses.”
 - iii. In your own words, what does it mean to be a *witness* of Jesus?
 - iv. Can you share a time when someone’s personal gospel-witness significantly impacted you spiritually?
 - v. Jesus’ command assumes that ordinary believers – not just the apostles – will go, speak, and teach as they live in everyday relationships.
 - vi. The phrase “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” fits naturally with one-on-one conversations, family discipleship, and relational evangelism.

- vii. God’s method includes the personal witness of Christian individuals – friends, coworkers, neighbors, and family members who share the Gospel with others.
- e. The Second Method: The **public proclamation** of the local church.
 - i. Return to Matthew 28:20 and emphasize: the command is not private only; it’s corporate and public (cf. baptizing “them... in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”).
 - ii. Baptism is a public act identifying someone with Christ and with His people, always done in the context of a local church.
 - iii. Preaching, teaching, and discipling in the church are the normal way believers are trained to “observe all that I have commanded you” across generations.
 - iv. What would be lost if the church stopped preaching the Gospel publicly (in services, outreach, etc.)?
- f. APPLICATION: Which method is yours? **BOTH!** Reflect on two questions:
 - i. What is one relationship where God might be calling you to begin a more intentional gospel witness this week?
 - ii. How can you be more involved in or supportive of your local church’s evangelism efforts?

2. The **Means**

- a. There is no question about it – the Great Commission (especially the personal application) can be intimidating. Jesus promised to do something about that!
- b. Jesus says, “I am with you always!” He doesn’t send us out alone!
- c. ILLUSTRATION:
 - i. Has there been a time in your life when you were more than you normally would be because of who was with you at that moment?
 - ii. Would you witness more if Jesus were to be with you in the flesh? Probably so!
 - iii. In a very real way, Jesus – through the Person of the Holy Spirit – is always with us.
- d. Jesus’ promise of His continual presence is the **foundation** of both personal witness and public proclamation.
- e. The means of the Great Commission is not mainly our cleverness, programs, or personalities, but the presence and power of the risen Christ through the Holy Spirit.
 - i. The Holy Spirit **convicts** hearts as the Gospel is shared. See John 16:8–11.
 - ii. The Holy Spirit gives boldness and **clarity** to those who witness. See Acts 4:31; 1 Corinthians 2:4–5.
- f. Personal witness is possible because the Spirit is with *each disciple*.
- g. Public proclamation by the church is effective because the Spirit is with *the whole Body*.
- h. The Great Commission is not ours to carry out in our strength, but to **obey** in dependence on the One who promised, “I am with you always.”

DISCUSSION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ Remind your class of your Come & See list. Who has God put in your life that needs the Gospel? Are we praying? Are we engaging? Are we inviting?

⇒ Questions to consider: Often, it is easier to focus on the other functions of the church or our spiritual responsibilities as individual Christians and neglect evangelism.

- If Jesus were to personally lead our church, what do you think His #1 priority would be?
- If Jesus were to organize your life, what do you think your #1 priority would be?
- Jesus spelled it out for us in Luke 19:10.