

Making Disciples Together

COME TOGETHER #4 – Pastor Gary Combs – July 2, 2023 – Matthew 28:18-20

INTRO: (Interview Robin on LOLD) Good morning church! Today, we're continuing our series entitled, "Come Together." We are discussing how God has created us to be a relational people, a people meant for fellowship with God and with one another. Yet, because of sin, we are relationally separated from God and we have ongoing brokenness in our relationships with one another.

What's the solution? Give your life to Jesus. Become a disciple of Jesus and learn to come together to make disciples. Jesus has given us a Great Commission to be and make disciples together! Yet, we often neglect this command. This led Dallas Willard to write the book, *The Great Omission– Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings On Discipleship*. He says:



"Most people have never been offered a meaningful opportunity to become a disciple." — Dallas Willard

Willard calls this failure by the modern Church the "great omission." He notes that the "word 'disciple' occurs 269 times in the New Testament, while 'Christian' is found only three times. He goes on: "For at least several decades the churches of the Western world have not made discipleship a condition of being a Christian. One is not required to be, or to intend to be, a disciple in order to become a Christian, and one may remain a Christian without any signs of progress toward or in discipleship."

"A disciple is a learner, a student, an apprentice – a practitioner... Disciples of Jesus are people who do not just profess certain views as their own but apply their growing understanding of life in the Kingdom of Heaven to every aspect of their life on earth" — Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*, p.10

Need: Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ? A life-long learner, follower, apprentice of God's only begotten Son? Have you made Jesus your sole authority and focus in life? Some of you have never surrendered your life to Jesus. You don't know the peace with God and others that only He can give. Others have believed in Him, but you haven't been disciplined to follow Him. And this has cost you the abiding peace and abundant life that Christ promises. You believe, but... you haven't given Him ultimate allegiance. You still haven't pulled your affections off of your idols of security, reputation, wealth, sensual indulgence and put all your affection and focus on Jesus.

Trans: But you can do something about this today. You can decide to be a disciple of Jesus and to obey His command to come together and make disciples.

BODY: In the gospel of Matthew, the resurrected Jesus commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all nations. We call this the Great Commission. This commission was given to all of His disciples together, which is another way of saying He commissioned the Church. We can obey Christ's commission to the Church by making disciples together. How can we make disciples together? The text gives three steps on making disciples of Jesus together.

Read text: Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV) ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

HOW TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS TOGETHER:

1. We can recognize Christ's great authority.

EXP: (18) And Jesus came and said to **them**, "**All authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

"**Them**" (18) - Christ's disciples gathered together with Him on a mountain in Galilee (16). There He gave the Great Commission to His disciples. This may be the event when He "appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time (1 Cor. 15:6). Dr. Taylor Marshall calls this the "majority position" of Bible scholars. Many think this took place on Mt. Tabor, also called the Mount of Transfiguration.

"**All**" (18) - (πᾶσα, *pasa*) - all, every, the whole, all things, always. 4X in text: "All power, all nations, all things, always." Christ's use of superlatives is great here!

"**Authority**" (18) - (ἐξουσία, *exousia*) - "Authority, power," ie. "power of rule." "Omnipotent." Spurgeon said:

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“What mind shall conceive, what tongue shall set in order before you, the meaning of all power? We cannot grasp it; it is high, we cannot attain unto it. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us. The power of self-existence, the power of creation, the power of sustaining that which is made, the power of fashioning and destroying, the power of opening and shutting, of overthrowing or establishing, of killing and making alive, the power to pardon and to condemn, to give and to withhold, to decree and to fulfil, to be, in a word, “head over all things to his church,” — all this is vested in Jesus Christ our Lord.” — Charles Spurgeon, *The Power of the Risen Saviour*, October 25, 1874

ARG: **The incredible greatness of God’s power and authority given to Jesus.**

Ephesians 1:19-22 (NLT) ¹⁹ I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power ²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. ²¹ Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. ²² God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church.

Christ is able to empower us by His Spirit for bearing witness of Him.

Acts 1:8 (ESV) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses...

ILL: **Jesus exercised authority over the wind and waves.**

Mark 4:37-41 (ESV) ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” ⁴¹ **And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”**

APP: When we recognize and willingly come under the authority of Christ, we have Christ’s authority to do what He commands. If you are experiencing fatigue, frustration and even failure in doing what Christ has commanded, it may be because you are laboring outside of Christ’s authority, trying to live according to your own power. Or it may be because you’re laboring alone without serving together with your church family. There is no keeping Christ’s great commission without coming under His great authority. And He has commissioned us follow Him together. Will you recognize Christ’s great authority?

2. We can obey Christ’s great command.

EXP: (19-20a) What is this great command? “Make disciples.” How? “Going, baptizing, and teaching.”

“Make disciples” (19) - (μαθητεύσατε, *mathēteuō* - Aorist, Active, Imperative) - To make a pupil, student, disciple. The aorist points to the command’s ultimate completion, ie until “all nations” are reached. This verb has three dependent participles: “go” (going), “baptizing” and “teaching.”

“All nations” (19) - (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, plural of ἔθνος, *ethnos*) - “Nations,” but not the countries themselves, but the peoples therein. (ie “Americans, Canadians, Mexicans,...”).

“Go” (19) - (πορευθέντες - Aorist, passive, participle) - Literally, “going,” or “as you are going.” This brings a new intentionality to our daily “goings.” Also, the aorist connects it to the “make disciples of all nations,” so that we are to be intentional about “going” to all nations to make disciples.

“Baptizing” (19) - (βαπτίζοντες, *baptizontes*) - Lit., “to immerse.” Here, the emphasis is less on the water and more on the “Name.” Baptism is an illustration of death-burial-resurrection. It is about taking on a new identity. Baptism is the public rite whereby we are given a new name and a new identity!

“Name” (19) - (ὄνομα, *onoma*) - Singular “Name,” not “names.” This points to the Oneness of the Trinity.

“Teaching” (20) - (διδάσκοντες, *didaskontes*) - teaching, imparting instruction, instilling doctrine. Not just passive learning, but disciplined learning, discipleship.

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“Observe all” (20) - (τηρεῖν, *terein*) - to observe, keep, attend to carefully, hold fast, guard... “all”...

“Commanded” (20) - commanded, commandment. “All” the commandments Christ gave to his disciples.

ARG: Who is to go? All “them” (Us/Church). Where/who? All the world/Everyone. We are sent!

Mark 16:15 (NLT) And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.

John 20:21 (ESV) Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

Christ’s strategy for going?

Acts 1:8 (ESV) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

ILL: Have you noticed the Heart statements that we have on a map of the world out in the hallway? It’s there to remind us of the Great Commission and also how we’re to start in our Jerusalem and move outward to the world in making disciples.



APP: First, has someone discipled you? Are you being mentored/discipled in following Jesus? Second, are you discipling someone else? The command is to “make disciples.” Who are you discipling? Sign up today for our LOLD process and we’ll learn together how to make disciples.



And as you are “going” this week, will you talk to people about Jesus? Will you invite people to bring their kids to KidzFest? Will you give prayerfully and financially to world missions? And be willing to go where Jesus sends you? Will you be intentional about taking the gospel to all the world? We all have a part in fulfilling the Great Commission together. Remember what Paul said, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” (1 Cor. 3:6)? Some of us plant, some water. Will you obey Christ’s great command?

3. We can remember Christ’s great promise.

EXP: (20b) “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” He promised His presence with us.

“Behold” (20) - (ἰδοῦ, *idou* - imperative) - “See, behold, look.” It’s like saying, “Remember!”

“With you always” (20) - Lit., “all days.” Christ promises to be present at all times and in all situations.

“End of the age” (20) (αἰών, *aion*) - “Completion, consummation, end. All days until the last day.

ARG: First, Christ offers his power (authority) and now He promises His presence.

Hebrews 13:5 (ESV) ... “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Romans 8:38-39 (ESV) For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ILL: When the Lord sent Joshua and the Israelites into the unknown Promised Land. He also gave them this command with a promise:

Joshua 1:9 (ESV) Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

APP: Just as Joshua was strong and courageous because the Lord promised to always be with him, so can we remember Christ’s promise to always be with us as we carry the gospel into the world. Will you remember Christ’s promise to help you overcome your fear to be discipled and to make disciples?

CONCLUSION: We’re offering you a meaningful opportunity today. You can receive Jesus and become His disciple. This will mean humbling yourself and allowing another to disciple you. We can... 1) Recognize Christ’s great authority, 2) Obey His great command, and 3) Remember His great promise. Let’s pray.