

# The Great Commission

by Alfred P. Gibbs

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*The Great Commission is a call to every Christian to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, with the promise of the joy of the Lord and personal joy and peace.*

**Duration:** 33:53

**Topics:** "Great Commission"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the Great Commission given by Jesus to all believers. The sermon focuses on seven aspects of the Great Commission: the person who gave it (Jesus), the authority behind it (all power in heaven and earth), the persons to whom it was given (believers), the content of it (preaching the gospel to every creature), the cost of obeying it, the profit of obeying it, and the promise that Jesus will be with us always. The speaker encourages believers to have a balanced approach, being mindful of both local and foreign missions. The sermon emphasizes the urgency and responsibility of every believer to carry out the commands of Jesus and to live for Him.

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## Transcript

So we turn, if you please, to Matthew 28, the 28th chapter of Matthew, verses 19 and 20, well-known words, often quoted in meetings of this character. Verse 18, And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power, or authority, is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.

Mark, chapter 16, verses 15 and 16, And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. Now, the 24th chapter of Luke, verse 44, And he, Christ, said unto them, his disciples, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And finally, the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, verse 6, When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time

restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, those in whom I am a witness.

And in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the evermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. May God add his blessing to the reading of his word.

The scriptures that we have read together combine to form what has been called the Great Commission, given by the Risen Lord to his disciples. Think of those wonderful forty days in which, we are told, he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible truths, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. What wonderful days those must have been! The cross is past, the glory is before, now he unfolds these wonderful truths to those disciples.

To these disciples, our Lord gave the Commission, which we have read together, and by the word Commission we mean the delivering to a person or persons of a specific trust, a charge, or a duty, by one who is in the position to do so. Paul spoke of the gospel committed to his trust. 1 Corinthians 9, he spoke of a dispensation, or a stewardship of the gospel being committed to him.

And this commission is still in force. It has not been abrogated, and it is essential that each Christian who is a disciple of Christ should make himself well acquainted with this Great Commission, and then seek by God's grace to carry out that commission, and thus become a missionary in the true sense of that term. We often think of missionaries as those whose whole time is confined to the work of the Lord, nothing of the kind.

Every believer in Christ is a missionary, and there is no substitute for obedience. Every Christian is responsible to his Lord, not only to know, but also to carry out the commands given by his Commander-in-Chief. So let us examine this Great Commission, and we'll think of seven things in regard to it.

First, the person who gave it. Second, the authority behind it. Third, the persons to whom it was given.

Fourth, the content of it. Fifth, the cost of obeying this commission. Sixth, the profit, or the recompense, of obeying this commission.

And finally, the promise with this commission, though I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. First, then, the person who gave it. It is the signature and the rank at the foot of the Army Orders that gives it its authority, its importance.

Now, the person who gives this Great Commission, first of all, is the Eternal Son of God, incarnate. Never man was born like this man. Never man lived like this man.

Never man wrought like this man. Never man spake like this man. Never man died like this man.

Never man rose again like this man. Never man ascended like this man. Never man shall come back again like this man.

The unique Son of God, the mighty Creator, the Upholder of all things, the King Immortal, Invisible, God Blessed Forever, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, the One who came from the mystery of eternal

light into the simplicity of a human body, God manifest in the flesh. But more, He is the Author and the Completer of our faith, the One who, for the joy that was before Him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on High. Still more, He is our Lord and our Master.

You recall in John 13, our Saviour said to His disciples, you call me Master and Lord, and you do well, for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master, He reverses the order. Christ can be the Master of a person without necessarily being his Lord.

But if Christ is the Lord of an individual, He becomes the Master of all His service. For if He is not Lord of all, then He is not Lord at all. And surely no grander Lord, no better Master, could be found than our Lord Jesus.

And then He is the Saviour, the One who loves us and the One who gave Himself for us, the One who bore our sins, assumed the liability of all our guilt. And expiated that guilt by the sacrifice of Himself. And then rose again, triumphant, to make good in us all that He accomplished for us, by the sacrifice of Himself.

Jesus, Jehovah's Saviour. This, then, is the person who gave the commission. Second, the authority behind it.

All power, all authority is given unto me in heaven, where I am going, on earth, where I am leaving you. What more do you want? That takes care of heaven, it takes care of earth. And Christ is pre-eminent in both spheres.

Many of earth's commissions fail because of a lack of power or authority behind them to make them good. One thing for a general to give orders, another thing for those orders to be carried out. And very often, those orders are not carried out due to a lack of power.

But with Christ, there is omniscience, all knowledge of all things, and nothing can take Him by surprise. Omnipotence is His, all power, to bring to a successful accomplishment all that He has planned in His omniscience. Omnipresence is His, for He is everywhere with His people unto the end of the age.

Inreadability, unchangeableness is His, in all the possession of His divine attributes. It's interesting to notice the word power in connection with our Lord Jesus. At His birth, the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.

Therefore, that holy thing that shall come upon thee, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. His ministry was with power. His word, we are told, was with power.

He spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes. And you recall on one occasion He said, that ye may know the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins. His death was with power.

No man taketh my life from me. I have authority to lay down, I have authority to take it again, in the calm dignity of His eternal Godhead. He laid down that life, and then, on the third day, took it up, and now lives in the power of an endless life.

For His resurrection was by the power of God. He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from among the dead. His ascension was with power.

That ye may know the exceeding greatness of His power to us who are to believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand. His present ministry is in power. For as our great High Priest, He lives in the power of an endless life by which we are saved to the very utmost.

His second coming shall be accompanied by power. The Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. All power, then, is vested in our Lord Jesus, and He gives His power to those who go forth with the gospel, which itself is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

Believers are not storage batteries. They are wires directly connected with a great dynamo of power. Many years ago, letters coming from Niagara Falls, New York, used to be franked by the Post Office Department, Locate at the seat of power.

Brethren, you and I are located at the seat of power for those who are in Christ, in touch with Him, and in touch with one to whom belongeth all power. Third, the presence to whom it was given. His own disciples, those who believed on Him.

The unsaved have no part, no lot, whatever, in this matter. And what was true of His disciples then is true of His disciples in 1961. The commission was given, first of all, to believers.

They had believed on Him. That He was the Son of the Living God. That He had redeemed them by His most precious blood.

They had trusted Him as their Savior, and owned Him as the Lord of their lives. They were disciples. They had been taught by Him.

Not only had they come to Him to discover relief from their burden, but they had sat at His feet, and like Mary, they had heard His word. True, a great deal of what He taught them didn't seem to make much impression. But the Spirit of God brought back to their remembrance and applied with force and power the ministry He had passed on to them during the days of His flesh.

They were His servants, literally bond slaves. They belonged lock, stock, and barrel to the Son of God, and as such, they were commissioned by Him. You have not chosen me, said Christ, but I have chosen you, that you should go forth and bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain.

But more, they were His friends. I have called you friends. For all things I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.

And so to those simple, uncuted people who had believed on Him, who had learned of Him, who were His bond slaves, now His friends. He committed His greatest of all treasures, this great treasure which we have in earthen vessels. Thus, He trusted them, as His friends, to fulfill His commission.

Forth, the content of this commission. First, the command, and it is an imperative command. Go! And this demands action.

It connotes effort. He did not say, if you cannot go, send somebody else. Here am I, send my sister.

He didn't say, if you cannot go, pray for somebody else to go. Or, if you cannot go, pray for somebody else to go. He said, go! And this is incumbent upon each one, and implies vitality, earnestness, movement, continuance.

Today, we witness the tragedy of missing Christians. And why are they missing? The explanation is simple. They didn't go, so consequently, they've gone.

No go, no love. Second, the sphere. Into all the world.

By the word, world, is meant that sphere in which a person lives and moves and has his being, and where he exercises influence upon others. Your world may be larger than mine, mine may be larger than yours, but into that world we are to go and proclaim the gospel. Some time ago, a Christian was asked in a Bible reading, how far is a Christian justified in going into the world? And a rather simple brother replied, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, which is a good answer.

Lift up your eyes and look, lift up your heart and pray, lift up your hands and give, lift up your feet and go. We need both the near and the far look. Some are so interested in foreign missionary work, they do no work at home.

Some are so interested in homework, they have no eyes for the foreign field. Our eyes need to be focused on the far and the near, and let us never forget that the light that shines the farthest, shines the brightest where? Nearest home. Many people who are greatly interested in the poor Chinese never talk to the Chinese laundromat.

Third, the theme. The gospel. Go ye into all the world, that's the sphere, and the theme, preach the gospel, the good news.

The good news of God's love for sinners, lost, guilty and undone. The good news of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice, how he bore our sins in his own body on the tree. The good news of his glorious resurrection.

The good news of God's easy, artless, unencumbered plan of salvation. The good news of the assurance of salvation, made certain by the written word of God. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.

The good news of the security of salvation. I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands. And the good news of the responsibilities as well as the privileges of salvation.

To live for that one who loved them and gave himself for them. Thought the scope. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

God is no respecter of persons. In a coming day they're going to sing the new song, and those that sing that song will have been gathered out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation. And they shall all sing in perfect unison, and with exquisite harmony, thou art worthy, for thou art slain, and thus redeemed is the God by thy blood.

That the instruction, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. The work is not completed by merely preaching the gospel. Now, those who have believed the gospel must be taught.

They must be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament knows nothing whatever about an unbaptized believer. Every believer should be baptized upon his confession of faith in Christ, and a show to the world by that act, his identification with Christ in his

death, and burial, and resurrection.

Then the convert should be taught the foundation truths of Christianity, the great fundamental doctrines of our most holy faith, once we're all delivered to the saints. And then he must be taught all things commanded by Christ. Whatever our Lord Jesus commanded in the gospels must be taught the convert by that person who goes at his command, and preaches the gospel to every creature.

Now, fifth, the cost of obeying this commission. To go means to leave something. You recall the case of Rebecca, don't you? The unnamed servant of Abraham has demonstrated the son of his master's affection for the girl.

She wears the bracelets on her hand. The next morning the servant says, let me go. I must depart to my master.

Oh, wait at least ten days, urges Laban. Perhaps taking some more presents were in the offing. No, said the man, hinder me not.

I must be on my way. Well, says father, and brother, she's of age. Let her answer the question herself.

Rebecca? Yes, papa. Come here, Rebecca. This man wants to leave today, take a long journey across the wilderness, so that you may be united to a person that you've never seen.

You have the evidences of his affection in the gifts, the man has told you, of his personality. Willst thou go with this man? And you remember what happens. She wills it.

I will go. And the moment she said, I will go, what was the next thing she did? Goodbye. Goodbye.

You can't go without saying goodbye. What's the question? She's ready to say, I will go, but they're not ready to say, well, world, goodbye. I'm through with it.

Well, there's nothing left to give. It has no new, no pure delight. Goodbye, world.

Goodbye, my worldly companions. Goodbye, my worldly prospects. So there's a cost attached to this commission, and each one will do well to count the cost.

Our Lord advised people to count the cost. Man's going to build a tower, he calculates whether he's able, with the money he has at his disposal, to finish the job. Otherwise, it becomes a monument to his folly.

Now, what's the cost? Fleshly ease. It'll cost us our fleshly ease. Now is the accepted time.

Now is the day of salvation. That scripture is addressed to Christians, not to the unsaved. People say, oh yes, sometime in the dim and mysterious future, I'll go forth with that gospel.

No, says God, now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation, not tomorrow or some future time. Fleshly ease.

No flowery beds of ease have been promised. In season, out of season, always abounding, everlastingly at it. Second, it'll cost us our material prosperity.

Real estate is never quite so unreal as when we lie on our deathbed. Those corner lots, what are they worth, when you're lying on your deathbed, looking into eternity? What are they worth? Nothing. Abraham

was intensely interested in real estate.

He would have made a wonderful real estate agent in Miami, but he wouldn't have sold a lot in Miami. He was interested in a city whose architect and builder was God. I don't think you'll find that at Miami Beach.

Can we interest you, Abraham, in a few choice corner lots in Sodom? Who was the architect and the builder of this town? Is it God? Oh no, sorry, I'm not interested. I'm only interested in real estate, material prosperity. Once sold, far more value than all the world.

Third, it'll cost us the world's popularity, and it will be very good riddance to very bad rubbish. You won't have their smiles, you'll have their frowns, their rejection, their persecution. For they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

And fourth, it may cost you your life. He who will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever loses his life for my sake, the same shall save it. And the noble army of martyrs who love not their lives unto death bears eloquent testimony to the fact it cost them all they had, and was well worth the price.

That's the cost of this commission. Sixth, the prophet of this commission. First of all, it's a great prophet to the Lord Jesus himself.

He shall see in the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. He expressed his delight in the salvation of a soul by that lovely parable of the lost sheep who, when the shepherd found it, laid it on his shoulders with rejoicing. Do you remember his reward to the faithful servant? Enter thou into what? The joy of thy Lord.

What joy was that? The joy of accomplishing the Father's will. It is not the will of your father, but one of his little ones you perish. Every time you win a soul for Christ, you bring joy to the heart of God, for there's joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner of the repentant, and who dwells in the presence of the angels but God himself.

You bring joy to the heart of the Lord Jesus himself, who for that joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised the shame. Second, you bring joy to your own heart. The joy and peace that flows from obedience to Christ.

The Lord will be no man's debtor. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his seed with him. Do you want to be a happy Christian? Get busy and preach the gospel.

Keep the gospel iron in the fire. Keep it red hot all the while, and his compensating joy will repay you. Third, the prophet to the assembly of believers with whom you are associated.

My, how delighted they are when they see souls brought in, taking of the Lord's supper. Good to have lambs in the flock, like they had a crying of babies in an assembly. They make an awful noise and an awful mess, but no one wants to fill them out.

Rear them up, see them grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. How sad to see an assembly of believers compose only a gray-headed book. Where are the lambs? Pull up to the saved sinner himself.

Think of the priceless blessing that has come to him. Old Alexander Marshall used to say years ago, a soul saved brings into that soul's possession more joy, more peace, more blessing than has ever been

enjoyed by all the people of God from the beginning of time to the end of time. For that soul has been brought into eternal blessedness, and the soul that is lost is brought into possession of more torment, more suffering, more agony than has ever been endured by all the people from the beginning of time until this time, and from this time to the end of time.

For that person goes out into eternal punishment, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. My, I'm glad my twin brother pointed me to Christ. He rested not until he led me to a knowledge of the Son of God.

I'm jolly glad my twin brother got saved, and my twin brother has become my father in the faith. I sometimes tell girls and boys, I've got a twin brother, and though I am 20 minutes older than he, he's nine months older than I, and he's my father. Chill on that one for a while, brother.

Yes, wonderful. How nice in an assembly to look around and remember this one and that one, whom he had the joy of leading to Christ. The joy of the soul winner.

Go in for soul winning. Talk about profit making. If you want to be really profitable, that's how to become profitable.

Preach the gospel. And lastly, the promise with it. Lo, I am with you all the way, here and unto the end of the age.

This is, yes, three things. First, the promise with it. Lo, I am with you all the way, here and unto the end of the age.

This is, yes, three things. First, his presence with us. I will never leave thee.

I'll never forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper. What can man do unto me? Second, his provision for us.

My peace I give unto you. Not as the world give it, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

My joy is going to be yours. My joy shall be fillful in you. My father, your father.

My God, your God. My grace, in all its sufficiency, is completely at your disposal. My grace is sufficient for thee.

And that is not a promise, it's a fact. Help yourself, it's there. And finally, my home is going to be your home.

In my father's house are many mansions. Where I am, there ye shall also be. How wonderful.

And lastly, his protection over us. The Christian is immortal until his work is done. He that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

Do you recall the words of Queen Elizabeth I to Sir Walter Raleigh as he was about to start on one of his epoch-making journeys? Says she, Walter, make my business your business. And I'll make your business my business. So let's commence our Christian life and continue our Christian life in the same way that our Lord Jesus did.

Do you recall his first recorded words? Wished he not that I must be about my father's business? Let's get busy in his business, and he'll not fail in his part of the business, taking care of all our interests. This, then, is the great commission. The person who gave it, the Lord Jesus.

The authority behind it, all power in heaven and earth. The persons to whom it was given, believers, disciples, servants, friends. The content of it, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and then baptize them, teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

The cost of it is great, but it is exceeded only by the higher cost of not obeying that commission, failing in our responsibility. The profit of it, to the Lord Jesus, to the believer himself, to the assembly of believers, and to the one who is brought through the hearing of the word to faith in Christ. And finally, the promise with it.

Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.

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