

The Essential Elements of the Great Commission

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes the essential elements of the Great Commission, highlighting the authority of Christ, the need for Spirit-empowered mission, and the sufficiency of Scripture in fulfilling this task.

Duration: 1:02:40

Scripture: Matthew 28:16

Topics: "Great Commission"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the greatest encouragement of the Great Commission and the missionary's journey. He highlights the importance of looking to Jesus in times of fear and uncertainty, as Jesus declares that all authority has been given to him in heaven and on earth. The preacher urges believers to have a regenerate heart in order to love God more and understand his attributes. He also criticizes the lack of preaching on who God is and emphasizes the need for missions to be founded on God's word and empowered by his spirit. The sermon concludes with a prayer for the truth of the text to be proclaimed clearly and for all human strategies to be torn down in favor of God's plan.

Transcript

Please open your Bibles to Matthew 28, Matthew 28, beginning in verse 16. But the 11 disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some were doubtful.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying. All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Teaching them to observe all that I command you and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Let's pray. Our great God and father, rarely have I ever desired so strongly that the truth of this text.

Would be proclaimed clearly. And understood clearly. That the missions that we do around the world would be founded upon your word.

And empowered by your spirit. That all strategy. Of the flesh, every scheme.

From the mind and heart of man would be torn down. And that your people would go forward. With your weapons of warfare, with your word.

Empowered by your spirit. Spirit. And that, oh, God, we might see a mighty harvest in the land, in all the lands to the end of the earth.

That your church would be glorious. That your name. Would be hallowed, your kingdom would come and your will would be done, Lord, please help me.

To preach, help us to understand, father, please, please have mercy in Jesus name. Amen. Let's go to verse 16.

Says, but the 11 proceeded to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some were doubtful. Here we do not see men of great faith, but we see men like us, men like us, a mixture of faith, obedience, doubt, uncertainty, hesitancy. The word doubt here is the Greek word distaso, which means literally a double standing.

It's the word that is used of Peter when he steps out by the command of the Lord. He steps out of the boat to walk on the water and then begins to doubt whether or not he would be able to accomplish the thing he was called to do. Now, the doubt that are in these men.

The doubt that is in these men, it's not just because of their weakness, it's not just because of their dullness of heart. The doubt that is found in these men is also because of the magnitude of what they're being called to believe, what they're being called to do. To walk out on the raging sea of Galilee is nothing compared to the Great Commission.

These men are being called to go out into the land like sheep in the midst of wolves. They're being called to go out and cast down every mountain, every earthly mountain of authority and power only by faith in the name of Jesus and only by the proclamation of a singular message, the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They're being called to do an incredible, incredible task.

They were men. Like us. Put yourself in their place, do not deify the apostles, put yourself in their place.

They were like us. But look what's going on here, look at our text, but the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some were doubtful. And look at 18.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, Jesus knew their weakness and he came to them. To strengthen them. And what would happen to these men eventually? These men who are like us would be transformed.

They would become something other than what they were. And how would that happen? They would be transformed by a greater comprehension. Of the authority of Jesus Christ, they would be transformed by the magnificent, limitless power of the Holy Spirit, men just like us, but they would be made to be something different, not by strategy, not by scheme, not by human wisdom, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Brethren, I will not allow a group of unbiblical men to steal from me my inheritance, which is the indwelling and empowering of the Holy Spirit. Not to shake me, not to draw me into confusion, but to make me strong

and able to do that which no man is able to do. Preach the gospel to the world, and this is our great need today.

This is our great need. What what kind of missionary do we need? What do we need today? We need a greater comprehension of the person and work of Christ through the study of the scriptures. We need a deep and enduring renunciation of every strategy.

That comes out of the imagination of men, and we need a constant, constant crying out for greater and greater manifestations of the power of God, the power of God. Now, I want us to go on. Let's look at verse 18, and Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Jesus knows their weakness and he goes out to meet them. He goes out to strengthen them and he will do the same for us. He knows our frame.

He knows that we are just dust. He knows that we're subject to the same weakness. But as Augustine said, God does not call a man because he is worthy, but God makes a man worthy and able by virtue of the call.

He does don't come whimpering to me about your weakness or your inability, of course, you're weak, your problem is that you don't understand how weak. Our weakness is the catalyst to strength, if it drives us to the person of Christ, Jesus comes up to them and he counters their weakness and their doubt. How with a declaration of his authority, his authority over all things without exception, without limitation, without restriction.

I want you to listen to the old commentary writer, David Brown. He says, what must have been the feelings that such a commission awakened in these men? We conquer the earth for the Lord who have scarce conquered our own misgivings, we fishermen of Galilee with no letter. With no means, with no influence, even over the humblest creature, nay, mock us not, Lord.

And the Lord responds, I mock thee not, nor do I send thee to warfare on your own charge. But go ye therefore, for all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth, go ye therefore, because, lo, I am with you even to the end of the age, John Trapp wrote, go ye in this my strength as Gideon against the Midianites. And though you be but a barley cake, coarse and contemptible, yet you shall overthrow the world's tents, yea, even the fortresses of Satan.

And though you have but a picture and a lamp in each hand, you shall achieve great matters. Oh, that the evangelical church, that those who call themselves Christians would throw away all these foolish little toys of ministry. And go out with nothing but the singular message of the gospel of Jesus Christ and under his authority, that's what we need, that's what we need.

You talk about authority, go to the life of Joseph. The life of Joseph and Pharaoh said to Joseph, though I am Pharaoh. Yet without your permission.

Not one hand or foot will be raised in all of Egypt. Jesus died for the sins of his people. Jesus rose again from the dead.

Jesus ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high, and the father said to him without your permission, not one, not one hand or foot will be raised in all the cosmos. That's authority. And know this,

the very hand that was raised to throw the first stone at Stephen was under the direct authority of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

He rules over all now, what does this mean for us? What does this kind of authority mean for us? For the pastor, for the missionary, for the evangelist, I'll tell you what it means. He who goes to and fro, weeping, carrying his bag of seed will return with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him, that's what it means. What does it mean? I'll tell you what it means.

It means there shall be a multitude which no man can count from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb, and each one of them will be clothed in white and they will have palm branches in their hands and they will be crying out with a loud voice, salvation to our God who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb. That's what it means. I'm so tired of all this doomsday talk among so many reformed people with all your rightness.

Can you not believe God? Do you not realize that there are enough covenants, promises and commissions in the New Testament for us to have the greatest confidence and not only to work for, but to and to expect a mighty harvest? You say, but there's so little it's because there's so little preaching. And so little praying warriors fight with real armament, little boys with make believe toys and the strategies that are so put forth in missions today, most of them are nothing but little boys wanting to play army. The weapons of your warfare are the proclamation of the word of God and intercessory prayer.

We're in this for victory. Because he's already promised us that this gospel thing was not something that was just done in some little corner of the world. But it is magnificent, utterly magnificent now, I believe that most people involved in missions would probably agree with most of the things I've said about the authority of Jesus Christ.

But here is something we often overlook. Those who would go out in Christ's authority must go out under Christ's authority. Now, what does that mean? You listen to me careful.

This is screaming sufficiency of scripture to go out under Christ's authority means that everything we believe, everything we preach and every so-called missionary and church planting strategy must be warranted by the written word of God. And if it is not, you can have no confidence whatsoever. It must be found in this book.

It must come out of this book through proper exegesis and not through some magician making a soup. To find verses to back up what he's already determined to do in the flesh. It must come forth from this book, and that is why I want to tell you something.

Now, listen to me. Our mission strategies and our church planting strategies, if you can say such a thing, should never come forth from the anthropologist, the sociologist and the expert in leading cultural trends. Our strategy must come forth from the scriptures and through the working of the exegete.

The theologian and in the context of church history, you listen to me. This is so important, much of much of what is being done today is being done completely and totally with a secular mind, abandoning the scriptures. And don't tell me you're reformed, you're Calvinistic or anything, unless all that talk of yours bleeds down to you submitting to scripture with regard to all the things in your life.

So many people think they're they're in this reformed trend or whatever you want to call it. I prefer to say biblical. But but listen to me, just because you think you understand something of the doctrines of grace

does not mean you understand anything about the Reformation, the Reformation was not about Calvinism, it was not even about the doctrines of grace.

The Reformation was about sufficiency of scripture, and it was out of the sufficiency of scripture that all these other doctrines came. So don't just grab a hold of one little thing because you're entirely missing the foundation of all of it now. I want to go on, listen to what God said to Moses, see that you make.

All things this is regarding the temple, see that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain, how much more could it be said by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, see to it that you carry out my greatest cause, the great commission by the pattern that I have shown you in the scriptures. Remember what I said a few days ago, it is not, brother, it is not your church, it's his church, it's not your commission, it's not your endeavor, it is his and he expects you to do everything he commanded you to fulfill it according to the letter. To restrict you only to his will, God has given the church and her ministers the scriptures that we might be adequately equipped for every good work God has given.

His church and her ministers, the scriptures that we might know how to conduct ourselves in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the support of the truth. You have no right to go anywhere to find out how to design your church, your mission, your strategy, except the scriptures that God has given us. Now.

I want to say this. When someone comes after all these years and so much talk about inerrancy and infallibility, when someone comes to me and says that they believe that the scriptures are inerrant, I want to be honest with you, it means nothing to me, it means absolutely nothing to me. Because I've seen enough of these guys.

Because if you're not going to add. The twin doctrine of the sufficiency of scripture, you've said nothing, there are two sides of the same coin, if you believe the scriptures are inerrant, you believe the scriptures are sufficient, and I will know if you really believe both these things the moment I hear you preach and the moment I walk in your church. So it's not just inerrancy, it is sufficiency.

Brothers, we must if we're actually going to do a work in the land, we must lay aside our carnal strategies and designs and we must return to the scriptures to discover what our true weapons of warfare are. I've mentioned two, I'm going to add two more. The first two are the proclamation of the word of God and intercessory prayer.

And if you want to dress it up and add something to it, then add these two things, sacrificial love and suffering. Because those are the weapons of our warfare. We must do you read rightly the Old Testament and look through that every time the arm of the flesh.

Is revealed, there is nothing but weakness, death and destruction, and every time the arm of the flesh is cut off, we behold the power of God, the more we trust in ourselves, the less we will see the power of God. We must shun Saul's armor and we must pick up the smooth stones of the gospel that for too long have been neglected. This is the only way the giant can be slaughtered and the work of the Great Commission can go on.

It is the only way. It is the only way. Now, let's go on, let's look at a communication of the church's preeminent task, let's look at verse 19 and 20.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I command you and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. First of all, recognize this, that I'm calling the Great Commission the preeminent task and not the preeminent command. The preeminent command is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and the second is like it to love your neighbor as yourself.

We must all always in the scriptures and in the night watch check our hearts. Brother, you find a man with a blazing heart for God. The rest will fall into place.

To love the Lord your God. To be passionate for him. To delight in him, to seek him, to love his face, to in some ways.

When the preacher gets up to preach. And he has his opening prayer, he doesn't want to open his eyes and he doesn't want to quit praying, he doesn't even want to start preaching, he just wants to stay there for a while and be with him. You must cultivate your relationship with Christ, he must be beautiful to you.

And how do you do that? I know preachers are always telling you you should love God more. Ask them just how you're supposed to do that and you'll really mess up their sermon. I'll tell you how you're supposed to love God more, how you can do it.

I love my wife now. After more than 20 years of marriage, I love her far more than I loved her. When I married her.

Why? I see more virtue than I saw. Twenty two years ago. And that virtue draws out my affections.

How can you love God more, do you have to send all your youth to some acquire the fire conference? I mean, look at what we're doing. How do you love God more? Well, first of all, you must have a regenerate heart, because if you don't, the more you see of God, the more you'll hate him. How do you love God more? This is how.

The more you know of his virtue, the more you know of his beauty, the more you know of his excellency, the more you understand his attributes, if you have a regenerate heart, then your affections will be drawn out. But hold your God. And this is the great crime.

Of the American preacher. How many of them have even preached the series on who God is, that's what the people need to see that his beauty is limitless, his beauty, I am convinced from the scriptures and from experience that if it were not for the Holy Spirit strengthening our hearts, that sometimes when the beauty of God is revealed, it would drive us mad. This is what propels men and women into the Great Commission, and this is why the Great Commission is a labor of love.

You love the Lord, your God, and therefore you long that his name be great among the nations from the rising to the setting of the sun and that the lamb receive the full reward for his suffering. As the Moravian said, I love that statement. And you love people to say that everything is about the glory of God, that is true.

But to say it so many times, it turns into a cliché and modern evangelicalism is very sad. Let me tell you something, young man. If you're all about the glory of God.

You're going to love people and you are going to be moved with compassion. And. Over their suffering.

And you are going to want their salvation to the point where you say with Spurgeon, save the elect and elect some more now, I know I'm going to get all kinds of hate mail from that now. He says, therefore. Those prepositions are so important, aren't they, those things that just put one thing to another, why are we supposed to go out not in our own inherent authority? Or our strength.

Why do we go out because of what he's declared? All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. And you see that authority protects the preacher, protects the missionary, protects every believer. And he knows every hair on your head and do not fear because you're worth far more than birds.

And he sees every one of them when they fall. That's why the weakest man imaginable, the weakest woman imaginable can become a tower of strength because they understand the Lord is with me. Because they dwell in the shadow of the most high, they live under his wing and they're aware of it, therefore make disciples.

Make disciples. The word means teach, teach. Instruct.

And therefore make disciples now, our Lord made it very clear what a disciple is, a disciple is someone who is like his master. And therefore, in the work of missions and evangelism and church planting and pastoring, we are not called to count converts nor to record decisions. We are called to evangelize the lost, and once these lost are soundly converted.

We are called to teach them the full counsel of God and enter into the lifelong labor of their conformity to the image of Jesus Christ. That is a disciple and that is discipleship making now, he also says to all nations, don't ever. Be content, don't be content with your own ministry.

Don't be content because you got up and you preached this marvelous demonstration of expository preaching. Because it tells me that you're just all about yourself. Health.

Do not be content until the banner of Jesus Christ flies over every inch of this planet. Until the world, the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, like the waters cover the sea and again and again, I say it a thousand times, do not be content until the lamb, the lamb has received the full reward for his suffering to every one of them is brought in. Remember what I taught you about Ezekiel? Can these bones live? Ezekiel said basically to the Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty, nor do I involve myself in things that are difficult.

It is not unto me, O Lord, to know the times and the seasons that you have fixed by your own authority, but I will put my hand to the plow and I will preach, I will prophesy, I will prophesy until all these bones are converted into living men or I join them in death. I will preach. And it is our faith and belief in the sovereignty of God that encourages us to preach in the deadest places of the world.

Now, he says. Go. Now, all of you are probably familiar, you've heard many, many times that the command here in this text is not go, it's make disciples, and that's true.

But the commentary writer, Craig Blomberg, he just nails it on this, he does an exceptional job and this is what he says. He said this observation. That the command is to make disciples and not go has been emphasized in some cases too much, and in some cases it's been emphasized too little.

Now, how has it been emphasized too much that we're just supposed to make disciples and go is not the command when a pastor and a church begins to assume that they're only responsible to evangelize the

people around them where they are planted to the neglect of the Great Commission. Now, when is it not emphasized enough when people think that, you know, going is the important thing? It's when churches. Think that going, going, going, sending, sending, sending is the thing that we ought to do, and they become frantic and they become pragmatic.

And what usually happens when this happens in a church and a denomination, usually two things you mark these down. One. They begin sending people to the field who are not qualified to go.

They begin sending anyone to the field that wants to go to the field, and they neglect the direct commands given us in First Timothy chapter three and Titus one. Now, the response I've received from that from some people is, yeah, but they're not going out as elders. They don't have to meet those requirements.

You're reading the text wrong. I want you to realize something. First Timothy three and Titus one.

It is talking about the requirements of elders, but only in this way, he's giving us a picture of a mature Christian, and in order to be an elder, you must be a mature Christian. It doesn't mean that only elders need to meet up to those qualifications and no one else needs to. He's giving us a picture of a mature Christian, and if you're going to be an elder, you're going to be a missionary, then you must be mature.

And this is what a mature man looks like. You see that. Another way in which this frantic pragmatism reveals itself is when a church or a denomination leaves aside the scripture and begins to design and accept strategies that that supposedly produce results.

Now, I am describing most of the strategies, church planting ideas, mission strategies and programs and plans that come down through the pike almost every year, and they do not last even that long. Am I describing anything that you're familiar with? I'm describing most of evangelicalism is what I'm doing. People desperate to fulfill the Great Commission, frantically moving around and doing things that are not warranted by the scriptures.

Now, let me say this, missions is actually a very simple thing, and as a matter of fact, we could say that missions is primarily divided up into two ministries. You are either called to go or you are called to send, and either way. Devotion and dedication is required.

William Carey said this to the brothers who were around him, I will go down into the mine. That is India. But you men must hold the rope.

So either we're called to go down into the mine or in some way as individuals and churches, we are called to hold the rope for those who go down. Either way, there will be scars on our hands and there will be exhaustion on our faces. Also, I want to say this.

We live in an age of media. Multimedia, Internet, cyberspace, and there have been some great advances in technology that has also been beneficial to the advancement of the kingdom of heaven, especially in areas that are off limits to missionaries. But I want you to know this.

We will never accomplish the Great Commission online, biblical missions is incarnational, sending people to people, when God reached out to humanity, did not write the gospel in the sky, he clothed himself in flesh and he dwelt among us. And we must do the same. We must continue sending flesh and blood missionaries to flesh and blood people.

Now, not only are we to go, but we're to baptize. Now, many times people look at this word, well, baptized and just go on as though it doesn't really have that important of a place, but Jesus did put it here. And he gives it a very important place.

And I want to give you at least some some of the implications of him putting this here. First of all. Our disciples must receive or embrace the whole of the unique Christian message to the exclusion of all other gods, all other religions and all other teachings.

You say, how do you get that out of baptizing? Well, this the name. Of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. This unique Christian message, the God of the Bible is not the God of the Koran.

We are not offering the nations their same God with another name, nor are we offering the nations an option among many. We are offering the nations the only name by which men must be saved. And you say, Brother Paul, there's no need to really talk about this because, you know, we're all evangelical.

You mark my words, evangelicalism in a matter of less than a decade or more, you will begin to see evangelicals fall to the point where not universalist, but inclusivist. Anybody believes anything and they're OK. It has already begun.

As a matter of fact, the word evangelical means nothing. It has no meaning anymore. None.

We must guard this doctrine, you see, the Christians of the early church were actually persecuted for being atheist. Yes, because everyone's having a party in Rome, everyone is affirming each other's gods, trading gods like baseball cards. And then the Christian shows up and says, no, they are no gods.

There is one Lord, Jesus Christ. Crucified and resurrected from the dead, you see the hostility between the world and Christianity could be resolved in just one swipe. All we have to do is change our definite article to an indefinite article instead of saying he is the way, the truth and the life.

All we have to do is say he is a way, a truth, a life. And we will be the toast of the secular world, but in doing so, we will remove the scandal from Christianity. It will lose its power and whoever does it will lose their soul.

Another thing about baptizing, they must openly and publicly identify with Christ. Now, I know this is a cause of great controversy in modern missions today, and I also know. That there must be wisdom.

And yet know this, we find nowhere in the New Testament where the apostles are trying to teach their disciples how to hide from persecution and suffering. Nowhere, and yet that is a part of the great missionary conversation today in contemporary Christianity. What the apostles did was this, even in their evangelistic messages, they told the people they would suffer.

And then through the teaching of the word of God, they prepared the people to suffer. They did. My dear friend, no, there's.

Missions and suffering go hand in hand. And if you don't want to suffer, don't be a missionary. And in many places, the advancement of the kingdom.

Brings suffering, is it not true that all those who seek to live a pious life will be persecuted? Another thing I want you to say, and I've seen this firsthand in the places I have personally lived. A person can tell their family, tell their friends, everyone. I believe in Jesus now and no one will have a problem with it.

Oftentimes, even in the most persecuted countries, people will not have a problem with one of their family members saying, I believe in Jesus now. But it is when. They are baptized in the name of Jesus and they identify themselves with Jesus to the exclusion of all other gods that the persecution comes.

I can't tell you how many people in my first church plant in Peru, they would go home and tell their mother and father they were now believing in Jesus and thoroughly explain the gospel to them. And there was no problem. But when they said we are going to be baptized into this Baptist church, all hell broke loose.

Jesus Christ, brothers, Jesus Christ said. But although he is the prince of peace at the same time, he came to bring division, there would be division in this time of the Messiah's trouble. There would be warfare, many of the strategies that come out of North America with regard to missions are simply designed so that Americans can go over into dangerous lands, play missionary without the worry of persecution.

It is self-preservation. We must realize that you're not going to win the world without spilling some of your own blood. Now, let's go on, finally, baptizing is important.

Because Jesus Christ did not die to leave in his wake. Individual disconnected. Disciples.

He died. That from his blood, a church would be born, we have throughout the entire New Testament. Believers being brought together in local churches that openly and publicly identify themselves with Jesus Christ, the church is beautiful to him.

The local church, the gathering of people together. And this is one of the reasons why baptizing is so important, it begins that step of publicly identifying not only with Christ, but publicly identifying with his people. Now.

Let's go on. He says not only baptizing, but teaching. The Great Commission is primarily didactic.

It's not about sending missionaries, it's about sending God's truth through missionaries. Then he says to observe the goal of teaching is not merely gnosis. The goal of teaching is praxis, it's not merely orthodoxy, although it must begin with orthodoxy, it is also about orthopraxis.

And this is the reason why Jesus said, take my yoke upon you and learn from me. To learn from him, you cannot learn from him as an uninvolved bystander, you learn from him as one who takes this teaching. Upon yourself and you submit to it.

And this goes against everything in our culture and it goes against everything and everybody else's culture, but that's the Bible in a fallen world now, he says, all that I command you, what are we to teach? Now, listen to me, because this is extremely important, brothers. Listen. He says, teach all that I commanded you teach his word, teach the word of God.

I want to quote a very famous Baptist here by the name of Broadus, and I want you to think about what he says, because it would literally bring missions back to where it needs to be if someone would just listen to him. This is what he said. Our Lord.

Did not foresee a time or a circumstance when any part of his teaching. Any part of his teaching would be antiquated or untrue, inappropriate or needless. Furthermore, he did not foresee any extra revelation being added.

Now, that's that's sound exegesis, my friend. Teach them what what I commanded you, teach them what I commanded you. I'm hearing so many missionary people use language like this.

We cannot be restricted by the scriptures. Brothers. I'm even hearing arguments from the book of Acts, particularly Acts 15, that the disciples didn't make the decision with regard to the Gentiles because of something they got out of scripture, but from what they were experiencing all around them.

And through that experience, they reinterpreted the scriptures. Sometimes it is almost appropriate for a preacher to cuss, isn't it? I'm not going to say it, but if someone will write it all down on paper, I'll sign it. Brothers, what on earth are we talking about? What are we talking about? You know what's sad, two things are at stake, the glory of God and beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, precious, precious souls.

Know this also, young men, just as a side note, I talk a lot about radical depravity. But never forget, at the same time, men were made in the image of God. God does not delight in the death of the wicked.

And people are precious, they are. All of them. All of them.

Don't go to the mission field, you can't go with that. Let's go on. Truth to be gleaned, missions is not about sending missionaries, but about sending God's truth.

Through missionaries. Therefore, all the sending and all the missionary activity in the world is of little use unless it results in the proclamation. The proclamation of the scriptures resulting in the transformation of lives in accordance with what is written.

Another thing I want you to see, the missionary must be a man of the word, the missionary must be an exegete and a theologian. Guys come to me all the time, young guys, and they'll go, they'll go, Brother Paul, I want to go to seminary. Why? Well, I want to be a missionary.

OK, why are you going to seminary? Well, you know, I want to learn about how to do missions. I said, then don't go to seminary. Well, then why should I go to seminary? I'll tell you why to go to seminary.

You listen to me. Here are the reasons you go to seminary. You go to seminary to learn the languages.

You go to seminary to learn how to exegete a text without contradiction. You go to seminary to study systematic theology so that you can learn to think without contradiction, both theology and ethics, and you go to seminary to learn church history so that you won't keep making the same mistakes and so that you will have at least the sounding board of two thousand years of godly men by which you can judge your own interpretations, because we've got enough cults running around who say, I only read the Bible. And what they're saying, I only live by my own interpretation of the Bible, and I disregard what other godly men down through history have ever believed.

That's why you go to seminary. And then if you have that, guess what? These are only tools so that you might study the Bible. You say, well, I'm going to seminary to study the Bible, you're going to seminary to gain the tools to be able to spend the rest of your life studying the Bible, because it's going to take that long and you still won't even reach the foothills of understanding the glories of the gospel.

Do you see that? You don't go just to learn some gimmicks and some strategies. I remember one time I had the privilege of sitting in just sitting in there in the back row, the chapel there at Masters. And I don't know, some teacher had said something crazy somewhere in in some part of the West or something, and I

guess Dr. MacArthur thought he needed to come in and make sure the young men didn't get carried away by that stupidity.

And I'll never forget the first time I saw him. And he walked up the pulpit and he says this, he goes, don't you ever forget you're here at this school, two reasons, two reasons, you understand me, you're here at this school for two reasons to learn how to interpret Scripture in order to preach Scripture. That's all we do here.

We interpret Scripture, we preach Scripture. You're here to interpret Scripture and preach Scripture. I went.

Yeah, that's right, and I was here when he said it, I would have said, amen, but I was too scared. Brothers. Brothers, study the word to preach the word, pray, preach, study, pray, preach.

I mean, why add anything to this? This is our mantle. This is our joy. This is our privilege.

Now, let's go on quickly. I had a young man call me and I want to use this as an illustration years and years ago, and I did have him come join me on the mission field. But he called me and he said, Brother Paul, I want to come down, work with you in Peru.

I said, OK, tell me about your personal Bible study, your time in the scriptures. He said, that's really not my gift, but I just want to come down there and I want to give my life away. I said, OK, I said, talk to me about your prayer life.

Well, you know, Brother Paul, that's just not a strong thing for me, but I just I want to come down there and I want to give my life away. And this is why I said to him, young man, no one here in Peru needs your life. They need someone who can come down here and open their mouth and tell them about God and then go back to God and open their mouth and tell God about them.

That's what they need. We don't need your life, we need God's life. And he came down and I taught him those things, he needed to hear it and we all need to hear it.

We need to have the heart of Ezra. What does it say? Ezra set his heart to study the law of God and to practice it and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel. Now, I want to say a few things I know I've got to hurry here, but the command to make disciples through preaching proves a few things.

The command to make disciples through teaching proves this. First of all, Christianity is a truth religion. Don't ever get away from that.

Christianity is all about truth, and these guys will throw up smoke screens to you young men, don't listen to them. Well, the truth is living and the truth is this and the truth is Jesus. And they use all kinds of really nice language to get away from the fact that the truth is also propositional and it's found in this book.

Christianity is about truth, it is a truth religion, and God knows our minds, the categories of our minds, he knows how we need to receive these things, he gave us truth in written word, so it's a truth religion. And the Great Commission is primarily a doctrinal endeavor. It is primarily a doctrinal endeavor, and that is proved by the fact that what do we do? We teach about Jesus, what did the apostles do? They would not abandon prayer and the word because their entire ministry was the prayer and the word.

Now, you only have to look a small glance at modern day missions and you realize that theology and doctrine and all this stuff does not have a very high priority. And because of that. Missions has become something of a contradiction.

Even an absurdity, and I want to give you a few glaring examples of what I'm talking about first, it has become popular opinion that Christians should lay aside their doctrine and rally around their confession of Christ. Here's the problem, there are many versions of Jesus Christ being taught by those who claim to follow him, how can we know which is the true Jesus, except through a careful and cautious study of the scripture and application of its doctrine? Do you see that? Or are we listen very carefully, are we to fill the world and the church, are we to preach. A Christ that is so vague and so general that we fill the world and the church with countless contradictory opinions of who he is and what he taught is that we're supposed to do.

Well, guess what? That's what we've done, you see that. That's what we have done now, I want to say something else. Secondly, it's been often stated that Christians should lay aside their theology and unite around the common cause of the Great Commission denominations and individual believers.

They think the Great Commission ought to be the thing that binds us and we ought to lay aside our theology to just work together in the Great Commission. Now, here's the problem. The Great Commission is primarily a doctrinal endeavor.

So are you going to lay aside doctrine to carry out a primarily doctrinal endeavor? Do you see how absurd that is? It is an absurdity to think that missions can be the thread that binds individuals together who have contradictory opinions with regard to Jesus Christ and the fundamentals of the Christian faith. It cannot happen, it will never work. Not in a biblical way, now, thirdly, it's become a major Christian idea or opinion that we should only concentrate ourselves on the major doctrines and not sweat the small stuff.

And then often there's a quote that's attributed to Augustine where the scholars are not really sure if he said it or not, but it goes something like this in essentials, unity in doubtful matters, liberty in all things, charity. And there's some truth in that problem is there's a lot of danger in that, especially in our contemporary context. And you say why? We live in a current Christian culture that increasingly depreciates absolute truth, and every year here's what's happening.

More and more doctrine is being relegated to the small stuff category. So that doctrines that only 10 or 15 years ago were considered absolute essentials to being evangelical, absolute essentials to being Christian are now considered not even worth arguing about, and if you bring them up, you're just a critical spirit. Right.

You see that another problem with this idea is if you just want to make the major things the thing you concern yourself about and not sweat the small stuff, that's OK if you want to philosophize and meditate in an ivory tower or you're a group of seminary students sitting in the student center talking all kinds of stuff. But if you're going to do real life ministry with real life people, if you're going to plant real churches, then that small stuff becomes incredibly important and it demands a definition. It demands it.

Another thing, it has been very frequent. That missionary organizations and denominations, they reduce their doctrinal confession down to the lowest common denominator so that they can involve themselves with as many missionary candidates as possible and also bring in just as many mission supporters as possible. Now, many times this is done with a sincere heart, the desire to do more in missions, but it is

blatantly pragmatic.

It is unbiblical and it always results in the weakness of the church and the Great Commission. Now, I'm going to read to you something from Walter Chantry in today's gospel and just listen to what he says. Those who believe in God's word have been grasping at the same superficial solutions that liberalism has adopted relevance, respectability, whether intellectual or social, and especially unity have become the aims of God's people with the hope that these will revitalize a weakened church.

If only Bible believing people joined together, the world would sit up and listen, thinks the church. Let's merge our mission boards to pool our funds and our personnel. Let's join giant evangelistic projects.

If every evangelical joins in a common organization, we can have greater depth of evangelism. Thus, organizational unity becomes the aim of gospel churches. Having accepted the theory that unity is all important for world evangelism, both the church and the individual must lower their estimate, the value of truth in a large congress on evangelism.

We could not insist on a truth of God's word that would offend any brother evangelical. Thus, we must find the lowest common denominator to which all so-called born-again Christians hold. The rest of the Bible will be labeled unessential for missions.

After all, unity among Christians is more essential than doctrinal precision. It is just for this reason that mission societies have been unwilling to carefully examine the root problem in preaching. Mission boards are hesitant to answer the question, what is the gospel? Thoroughly to answer that would condemn what many of their own missionaries preach.

It would destroy the mission society, which is a federation of churches who have differing answers to that question. To adopt the position of one church would be to lose the support of five others. The whole system built on unity and generality would crumble.

The local church may not get too specific about truth either. It may affect its harmony with the denomination or association to define the gospel carefully will bring conflict with the organizations working with teenagers. It will prompt irritating problems with mission boards and embarrassing disagreement with missionaries supported for years.

It may condemn the whole Sunday school program. Giving too much attention to the content of the gospel will mean friction with other evangelicals, and unity is the key to success. Does that sound familiar? Brothers, unity is so beautiful and so important, but unity can only be based on sound doctrine.

Now, let's finish, he says. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Lo is translated from the Greek particle, Ido, lo behold, look, you know what the greatest encouragement of the Great Commission is, you know, the greatest encouragement to the missionary alone in the dark jungle is, you know, the greatest encouragement is to the man who is surrounded in a house by enemies who want to kill him.

I will tell you this right here. Whenever you're afraid, this is what Jesus says, look at me. Look at me, he says, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Look at me. You talk about calm waters. Tis enough, Lord, tis enough.

I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Levertov calls this the greatest conclusion that any book could have. Brothers, this is not a time for narrow shoulders, small hearts, tight spirits.

It's not a time. For mumblers who do not speak clearly. It's not a time for angry men or critical spirits.

It is a time to go to baptize, to teach. And to do everything that has been given us to do in his power, his authority, let's pray. Father, thank you for your word.

I pray, dear God. I pray. Not for a revolution in missions, but a reformation in missions that men and women would go out with just a lamp and a picture.

And overthrow the tense of this world. By looking to your son and trusting in the power of God. Jesus name, amen.

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