

Church Growth

by Voddie Baucham

Voddie Baucham's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of a biblical vision for the church's mission, rooted in worship and the authority of Christ.

Duration: 54:10

Scripture: Matthew 28:18-19

Topics: "Church Growth", "Evangelism"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of a biblical vision that transforms individuals and churches, highlighting the need to align with biblical truth, prioritize doctrine, and engage in thorough evangelism with a global perspective. It stresses the inseparable link between worship, Christ's authority, evangelism, and the impossibility of fulfilling the mission without relying on God's presence and power.

Transcript

Well, good evening. It's good to be here with you tonight. I live in Houston, Texas, so I'm a couple of hours ahead of you.

So when Brother Ed Stetzer finished, I said to myself, Self, I'm tired. We ought to leave right now. But Self didn't want to miss the last guy, so we stayed.

Would you join me in a word of prayer? Father, thank you for the privilege of being in your presence and being among your people and the opportunity that we have to gather together around your word. We're grateful. Thank you for what we've heard, the challenge that has been laid down for us already.

Father, may we hear and heed what it is that you have to say to us. Father, I ask that you would grant me grace and power from on high, that I might preach your word faithfully and accurately, that you might protect us from my opinion, that you might protect us from my frailty, that you would protect us from my sinfulness, my unworthiness, and that you might do so by the power of the blood of Jesus, in whose name we pray and ask all these things. Amen.

Amen. My assignment tonight was very clear, and that was to speak to you on the issue of transforming biblical vision or a biblical vision that transforms. Not that we're trying to transform the biblical vision, but a biblical vision that is transforming, one that will transform us.

And I think that that assignment is a very poignant one because when we recognize that a biblical vision would actually have a transforming impact on us, we recognize that we have moved away from biblical truth. Did you catch that? We recognize that we've moved away from biblical truth, and we have, for a number of reasons and in a number of ways. We have moved away from biblical truth.

Sometimes in the name of evangelism, no less. We've moved away from biblical truth. I hear people say things like this, and I do conferences like this in lots of parts of the country and different parts of the world, and I'm always amazed at the applause that this line gets.

You know, it's time for us to stop fussing and fighting over theological issues and just love Jesus and love people. And the room just erupts, and amen, praise the Lord, enough of that theology. Really? Really? But you know, that's where we are, where people will say things like that.

Doctrine divides, we say. Let's just love Jesus and love people. Okay, that sounds good until you recognize that first, we have to determine doctrinally who Jesus is.

Second, we have to determine doctrinally what love looks like. Number one, love for Jesus doctrinally. Number two, love for people doctrinally.

Then we have to determine doctrinally that that is the most important thing for us to do. So we've got five doctrinal assignments for us to get away from doctrine. But it sounds so good, and it's so appealing to us.

You know why we want to get away from doctrine? Because we don't know it. We're uncomfortable with doctrine. And it just feels a lot better to just say, I'm going to do this because God told me.

Really? Now you've got another doctrinal issue. That is the doctrine of Revelation. What do you mean God told you? Now you're messing with the doctrine of Revelation.

Now the canon is no longer closed? Well, that's not what we mean, but that's what we say. If you don't mean it, don't say it. So what is this biblical mission of ours? I'd like for us to look in the place that is very familiar to us, but oftentimes those are the places that are the most dangerous.

The ones that are most familiar. Those are the ones that we take for granted. So let's go to that familiar place when we look at our mission in the church.

And that is the Great Commission. Matthew chapter 28. Let's look at Matthew chapter 28.

Beginning at verse 16. Matthew 28 beginning at verse 16. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him. But some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

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. Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Amen. Hallelujah.

Praise the Lord. That is our mission. Now before I unpack this for you, let me just give you a little snapshot of me, who I am, why I'm here.

I grew up in Southern California. I grew up in drug-infested, gang-infested, South Central Los Angeles, California. I was raised by a single teenage Buddhist mother.

I never heard the gospel until my freshman year in college. I was thoroughly unchurched as a young man growing up here in Southern California. Well I went to college in Houston, Texas at Rice University.

And I am now officially the worst kind of Texan. I am a Texan by choice. Yep.

Wasn't born there. Just got there as quick as I could. And I ain't leaving.

But in all seriousness, I do love coming back and visiting my home here in Southern California. Couldn't afford to live here, but I do enjoy coming back and visiting my home here in Southern California. I've had the opportunity to do a lot of things in ministry.

None of them has been more exciting or rewarding than the last year and a half as a church planter. Now I've served for about 10 years in a number of different churches, as the minister mentions, sending teams out to plant churches, teaching pastors in a number of churches. But this is the first opportunity that I've had to lead a church planting team.

And so we planted a church two years ago in April. And our goal as a church was to plant 10 churches in our first 10 years of existence. I'm currently personally training seven church planters so that we can plant those 10 churches in our first 10 years of existence as a church.

We heard earlier about these barriers that we reach and how we get over these barriers. And our church is currently dealing with a barrier. We have 250 people coming, and we're trying to figure out how to get rid of 75 of them.

Training up church planters so we can run folks off. Amen. That's how we're going to deal with that barrier.

We have too many people. And I know that's a radical idea for us because of the idea that we live with. We just assume that the right thing to do and the biblical thing to do is to always make this thing bigger.

That's actually the only kind of growth that we think about. You know, I would love for us to have 1,000 people. I would.

But I'd love to have 1,000 people meeting in four or five different churches that we planted. Amen. Hallelujah.

Praise the Lord. So we got pastors with manageable flocks that they can actually know and shepherd. I love that idea.

I love it. Am I against the other? No, I'm not necessarily against the other. But I say that because I'm afraid that we're falling into a trap, the American trap of bigger is better and bigger is best.

Therefore, whoever's biggest is right. Nothing could be further from the truth. Remember, folks, nothing grows faster than cancer.

A brother asked earlier this afternoon, you know, if any of us knew of any churches that were actually growing by compromising the gospel. I wanted to stand up and scream, come back to Houston with me. Can't say amen.

You ought to say ouch. Yes, there are churches, monstrosities that are growing while compromising the gospel. And so I believe in the growth of the church.

But 80% of all church growth happens in churches that are less than two years old. We need to plant churches. Amen.

Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. It's an effective growth strategy, planting churches.

And so I just want to put that out there so we can think about that as well. Just want to put that out there on the table so we can mull that over as well. I also want to put that out there because oftentimes when we come to a conference like this, we hear from the guys with the big ginormous churches.

A lot of times we leave here feeling inadequate, okay? Because somehow that guy's better than me because that guy's got 1,000 people. That guy's got 5,000 people. And when we talk to people, even when they're introduced, when you write a guy's bio, what do we write in the guy's bio? Well, we write, well, he started with this many people.

Now he has this many people. He started with this much, and now he has that much. He started with a building this size, and now he has a building this size.

In other words, you should listen to him because his church is bigger than yours. And we can leave here feeling inadequate. I stand here as a guy who's got 250 people meeting in his church, and if I come back next year, hopefully we'll have gotten rid of 75 of them, and hopefully they'll have been replaced by people that we want to the Lord.

So I'm not standing before you as the megachurch pastor. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but I'm just glad to be able to tell you that not everybody who's coming up here before you is coming up here before you because of that. So as we look here at the mission of the church, there's several things I want you to see.

And I went back to verse 16 because we have to put this in context. Jesus has been resurrected. His disciples have gone to meet him.

They're going to meet him on this mountain, and Jesus has appeared to them at the place where he directed them to meet him. And the first thing we see there in verse 17, when they saw him, they worshiped him. The mission of the church is communicated in the context of worship.

Don't miss that. The mission of the church was communicated in the context of worship. Christ is in their midst.

And what they do is they don't sit down and begin to take notes. They bow down and they worship him. And it is in the context of bowing down and worshipping Christ, not in the context of a lecture situation, but in the context of the worship of Christ, the worship of the resurrected one, of lifting high the name of Jesus, of bowing down before him and acknowledging his worth and being inspired to all by him.

It was given in the context of worship. Here's what's amazing to me. Oftentimes we look at worship as solely this idea or this aspect of our singing.

And we so cheapen this idea or this concept of worship. Let me do a couple of things for you. Look at this.

Listen to this from the Cambridge Declaration from the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals. I love this statement. God does not exist to satisfy human ambition, cravings, the appetite of consumption, or our own private spiritual interests.

We must focus on God in our worship rather than the satisfaction of our personal needs. God is sovereign in worship. We are not.

Our concern must be for God's kingdom, not our own empire's popularity or success. When we gather together for the worship of God, what we are gathering for is not for a cathartic experience, but for an encounter with the most high God. That's what worship is all about.

Not a means to an end, but an end in itself. There's a definition of worship I've come up with for our people to try to help them to get past this whole idea of worship equals singing. Because when you say worship to a person, that's what they think.

I mean, everywhere I go, what do they say? They say, we're gonna have some worship and then you're gonna get up. To which I always respond, oh no, no, no, no. No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

We're gonna have some singing and then I'm gonna get up and worship is going to continue. There's a definition that we give to our people. Worship is a two-way conversation wherein we say things to and about God that we know and believe to be true and anxiously anticipate those moments where He in turn speaks to us clearly and powerfully through His Word to the end that our lives would be touched, challenged, changed, transformed, and conformed to the very image of Christ.

By no means does worship end when we begin the proclamation of the Word. All that we do is about the worship of Christ. And the mission of the church was communicated in the context of worship.

Oftentimes, if we're having a difficult time understanding our mission as a church, it would help us. It would behoove us to ask ourselves a very simple question. What's our worship like? Are you a worshiper? Well, you know, I'm a pastor.

I'm a priest. I didn't ask you that. Well, you know, I serve the church.

I work... I didn't ask you that. Well, you know, I lead the music in our church. Didn't ask you that either.

Because you can do all of those things and not be a worshiper. You can do all of those things and not ascribe worth to the resurrected Christ. You can do all of those things and not give Him all that you have and all that you are.

Are you a worshiper? Because worship is about our attitude before the Most High. And if our attitude is incorrect, and if we are coming to the Lord to do something other than describe worth to Him and to humble and submit ourselves before Him, how do we expect to get marching orders? If we gather to hear ourselves, it becomes an echo chamber. You don't get your marching orders in an echo chamber.

So the mission of the church is communicated in the context of worship. Secondly, look at this, the mission of the church is tied inexorably to the authority of Christ. Verse 18, Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. If I believe that, that all authority on heaven and on earth has been given to Christ, and if I'm looking for the mission of the church, then the place that I look

for the mission of the church is where? The person and work and word of Christ. That's where I go to look for the mission of the church.

Here's what we've been told. If you want to understand the mission of the church, start with lost people. That's a lie from the pit of hell.

That's like understanding the nutrition that your child needs by starting with your two-year-old and what they want. You do that and their teeth will rot out. It begins with the authority of Christ.

For a long time in Baptist life we fought. And praise God that we fought. You know all these people who say, I just wish we'd quit fussing and fighting.

That's what we hear down south all the time. All this fussing and fighting. Why are we fussing and fighting? Well, one of the things we were fussing and fighting over was the inerrancy of Scripture.

And every denomination that has lost that fight is now dying. I'm glad we fought that fight and would gladly fight that fight again. Some things are worth fighting for.

The inerrancy of Scripture being one. But here's the problem. That's not enough.

Who cares if we believe in the inerrancy of Scripture if we don't believe in the sufficiency of Scripture? What good is a closed, inerrant Bible? The Bible is the inerrant Word of God. Great. So how are you structuring your ministry? Well, based on the church down the road that's growing.

Wait a minute. You said this was the inerrant Word of God, but you're basing the structure of your church upon something that happens to be working somewhere else and not upon what Christ, who said that He would build His church and that all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him, actually said about what the church ought to look like? If we believe in the authority of Christ, then we build our ministries and our evangelism strategies from Scripture. And I say that and people think, oh, yeah, that sounds really good and sure.

We all believe. Yes, absolutely. I mean, we assume that.

No, don't assume that. That's like a man who says he assumes that his wife knows that he loves her. You've talked to this guy, haven't you? You've counseled him.

She knows I love her. Well, how does she know you love her? Well, I told her so when we got married. If I'd changed my mind, I'd have said so.

Well, yeah, we're based on the authority of the Word. Really? Yeah. You know, we've got a charter back there somewhere, and it's got Bible verses in it.

But does every decision that you make in your church go back to the Word of God? Listen again to the Cambridge Declaration. Scripture alone is the inerrant rule of the church's life, but the evangelical church today has separated Scripture from its authoritative function. In practice, the church is guided far too often by the culture.

Therapeutic technique, marketing techniques, and the beat of the entertainment world often have far more to say about what the church wants, how it functions, and what it offers than does the Word of God. What's the structure of your services like at church? And based on what biblical texts? What's your

approach to evangelism like at your church? And based on what biblical texts? What's the authority structure in your church? And based on what biblical texts? What are the staffing positions that you've placed in your church? And based on what biblical texts? Do we believe that the mission of the church comes to us from an authoritative Christ? Or have we merely assumed that Jesus has spoken and His words were relevant 2,000 years ago, but Jesus did not live in and therefore cannot possibly have comprehended the day in which we live, therefore we need something more. We need something better.

We need something newer. We need something more sophisticated than just going back to the antiquated words of Scripture to determine how it is that we will minister to and win a lost and hurting and dying world. Newsflash, He said all authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth.

That's why this first context, it's birthed out of this posture of worship. When we come to Christ with an appropriate posture of worship, our attitude is one of obedience. We cannot be properly worshipful and not be obedient.

If you're being disobedient, you're not a worshiper. I don't care how passionate you are when you sing to God. I don't care how passionate you are when you preach the Word.

If we're not being obedient to the authority of the Word of God, we are not true worshipers. The mission of the church is based on Christ and His authority. There are so many things that we give our time, so many things that we give our energy, but there's a very simple question.

Based on what biblical texts? That's the question we have to ask. And I know, I know, I understand. We're passionate about lost souls, but here's the mistake that we make.

We fall into the trap of pragmatic utilitarianism. And here's what happens. I'm passionate about souls.

I want souls to come to the kingdom. And by the way, that's why we exist. We exist to see souls come to the kingdom.

Therefore, whatever we end up doing that brings more souls is justifiable. It's called relativism. It's the spirit of the age.

The ends justifies the means. It's okay if we destroy a few embryos. We might help somebody to walk.

The end justifies the means. All authority is given to me in heaven and on earth, Christ says. So the mission of the church is birthed in this context of worship.

The mission of the church is inexorably linked to the authority of Christ. Thirdly, the mission of the church is thoroughly evangelistic. Look at the next part of this.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. It's important that we read that whole thing. It's thoroughly evangelistic.

And we hear that and we go, amen, that's why I'm here. It's an evangelism conference and I'm here for evangelism. We are trying to grow.

We are trying to reach people. We're all about evangelism. You know, one of the things that I enjoy doing is ministering to young couples.

My wife and I have a goal of having two families a week in our home. Sometimes that is a young couple. Sometimes that's a whole family.

Sometimes that's a couple who's engaged or whatever. And taking under our wings young couples and mentoring young couples and ministering to young couples. And one of the things that we tell young couples all the time, because we get this a lot, you know, these young couples who come in and they're talking about when they're going to get married and they're engaged.

Oh, we're going to get married in spring of 2010. Huh? Spring of 2010? What are you... Huh? Well, yeah, and sometimes they'll say that they're going to get married in spring of 2010 because there's a certain amount of money that they have to save and a certain place that they wanted to book. And the only way that they can get that certain place and save that kind of money is if they wait until spring of 2010.

And there's always a couple of things that we tell them, all right? Just a couple of things. Just real quick. Listen.

Hey, you're here over our house for dinner. This is not marriage counseling, but can we give you a few principles, all right? Principle number one. If y'all want each other, don't wait.

Amen. Strongest man in the Bible, wisest man in the Bible, most godly man in the Bible, they all fell into sexual sin. So unless you're stronger than Samson, wiser than Solomon, or more godly than David, y'all better get married in a hurry, all right? So that's principle number one.

Okay? Here's principle number two. Principle number two. How long do y'all need to be engaged? Long enough to plan a wedding.

Principle number three. How much wedding do you need? How much can you afford without going in hot when you first get married? And then we look at them when we say this. Don't pay so much attention to the wedding that you forget the marriage.

Now be careful how loud you amen, because I'm about to bring that home. Because that's exactly how we treat evangelism. According to this text, evangelism is not just about conversion.

He says, and teach them to observe all the things that I've taught you. You can't separate evangelism from discipleship. But our attitude about evangelism is like that couple who's paying all the attention to the wedding and none to the marriage.

That is why we're dunking so many people who are falling away. Sealing them in their unbelief. Because we've moved from evangelism to salesmanship.

We believe evangelism is about doing anything necessary to get a person to repeat after us and to get into the waters of baptism. News flash. Parable of the soils.

There's four soils. Three of them spring up. Only one of them bears fruit.

That means over 66% of those who look like something happened didn't. J. M. Pendleton in his manual of church order says it is incumbent upon pastors to examine carefully those candidates for baptism. I don't know what you do in your church.

In our church we won't baptize anybody under 12. We don't baptize anybody under 12. Well, that's arbitrary.

Of course it's arbitrary. If we'd said four, that would be arbitrary. Southern Baptist Convention last year.

Brother's standing up preaching at the Southern Baptist Convention last year. I'm standing in the back of the room and I hear him say this. And I almost said... After I heard him say what he said, I paused for a minute because I thought there would be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

But there wasn't. Which kind of went on. But his comment was the only category where we improved in baptisms last year was under age 6. To which I responded to a friend of mine, you know what? We need to leave the Presbyterians alone.

They baptize infants. We just wait a couple of years. Infant baptism, no.

Toddler baptism, absolutely. We'll count that. Being Baptist means that we're committed to the baptism of believers by immersion.

That first part is very important. How do you know if a person's a believer? My Bible says they're supposed to bear certain fruit. If you can't say amen, you ought to say ouch.

How many of you have had the conversation with a 21-year-old who says the same thing? If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times. When I was 5, I walked the aisle and they asked me where Jesus was and I said, in my heart. And I was baptized.

We heard it on the video earlier today, didn't we? I had no idea what I was doing. I did not understand. I did not know.

And I've been confused about it ever since. Am I saved or am I not? The fruit in my life says I'm not. But when I walked the aisle as a 5-year-old or as a 6-year-old, they looked at me and they said, if you prayed that prayer and you meant it, you're saved and you're going to heaven when you die.

I have to be honest with you. The first thing I do when people say that to me is call preachers liars. And I look at them and I say, sweetheart, I'm sorry.

But some preacher lied to you because hell is going to be full of people who prayed the sinner's prayer and meant it. Huh? And meant it? Yeah. Yeah.

They meant it. They really meant it. They hadn't heard the gospel yet because somebody looked at them and gave them a version of the gospel, something that was almost a gospel, something that sounds like your life is terrible, but if you want it to be better, you need to pray and ask Jesus into your heart and everything will be better.

Do you want to do that? Heck yeah, I want to do that. Pray this prayer. OK.

Did you mean it? Yeah, I mean it. Because I want that stuff you just told me about. I want to feel better.

I want to sleep better at night. I want to go to heaven when I die. Yes, I mean that.

But they're absolutely unregenerate. The mission of the church is thoroughly evangelistic. And being thoroughly evangelistic means more than just giving people a few propositions and then dunking them.

It means proclaiming the gospel with clarity. Listen to this. Again, the Cambridge Declaration.

I love this. We reaffirm that our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historic Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father.

We deny that the gospel is preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared and faith in Christ and His work is not solicited. Unwarranted confidence in human ability is a product of fallen human nature. The false confidence now fills the evangelical world.

From the self-esteem gospel to the health and wealth gospel. From those who have transformed the gospel into a product to be sold and sinners into consumers who want to buy. To others who treat the Christian faith as being true simply because it works.

This silences the doctrine of justification regardless of the official commitments of our churches. We got real official sounding statements at our churches. But how many of us prostitute the gospel? Bring in speakers who are incredibly motivational and incredibly manipulative who preach around the gospel but don't preach the gospel? How many of us bring in big muscle bound men who break things and have people standing around slack jawed and basically say, if you want to be big and break things like me you need to pray to receive Christ.

People respond to that stuff and we dunk them and count them at the next annual meeting. Who cares that we're losing around 70% of the young people who are growing up in our churches? Doesn't matter. We're dunking them and we're counting them on our records.

See here's the thing. As Brother Ed said earlier, what we see time after time after time is this. Things like the Barner Report will come out and they will say Christians behave the same way as lost people do in this area and that area and the other area.

How many times have we seen research that shows that? Christians don't behave any different than non-Christians. First of all, according to 1 John that's a lie. They behave like that because they're not Christians.

Their behavior is evidence of the fact that they remain unregenerate. Anybody who behaves like the world belongs to the world. Read 1 John again.

They're unconverted. And we have not been thoroughly evangelistic. We're not communicating the gospel clearly and completely to people.

Compel them to come to faith in Christ. Now let me make a clarification. Some of you are going to go out of here and you know if you preach long enough you know how people lie on you.

Somebody is prepared to leave here tonight saying Votibachan said a person can't get saved before 12. That ain't what I said. I just said we don't baptize them before then.

By the way, W.A. Criswell, he wouldn't baptize them before 10. So I'm not the first Baptist to do something like that. There are others historically who wouldn't do it before 18.

So I'm a liberal. That's not what I said. That's not what I said at all.

That's not my point. My point is we have to be careful before conferring on someone the fact that they have eternal life. The fact is when young ones come to us and they say they believe, we say, Amen.

Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Keep believing.

Keep trusting in Christ. Because therein is salvation. That's what we tell them.

And it's the truth. What we don't tell them is because you said Jesus is in my heart you're going to go to heaven when you die. You're saved.

You're a Christian. We don't tell them that because we don't know that. I can't read that in a five-year-old.

All I can read in a five-year-old is whether or not they can say what Mama told them to say when they walk the aisle. That's all I can read in a five-year-old. Not only is it thoroughly evangelistic, but it is also gloriously global.

Go and make disciples of every people group. You know, not all the people in our church know New Testament Greek. But everybody who's a member of our church knows this New Testament Greek phrase.

Panta ta ethne. Because we hammer it home again and again and again and again. We have a program that goes out every week in our church.

And every week in our program that goes out that we also pray through on Sunday mornings. There are several areas that we pray for. The more we pray for one another.

Scripture's clear about that. Pray for one another. So there's five families a week that we pray for.

And we list these different families out and pray for them. Scripture also says pray for kings and those in authority. So every week we pray for one state, one local, and one national leader.

Every week in our program. And the Scripture says that we're to pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers. So every week in our church we pray for an unreached people group.

Every week. And so this program that goes out every week reminds our people and constantly keeps before them the global nature of the mission of the church. Every people group.

You know, there's only two other black families in our church. My family and I have not been members of a church filled with people who look like us in over ten years. One reason why? God got a hold of us.

And we said, you know, if God's got this passion for His glory to reach across cultural lines, we choose not to be part of a fellowship where everybody looks like us. So we've invested our lives in cross-cultural ministry. Now that makes some of you uncomfortable.

Because for some of you, and you'll never admit it, but cross-cultural ministry is when white folks condescend to the lower classes. Amen, lights. We just decided, you know what? God loves everybody whether He gave them as much melanin as He gave us or not.

Just because God didn't give you as much melanin as He gave me, doesn't mean He doesn't love you as much. And so my family and I minister to melanin-challenged people. And it constantly reminds us that the mission of the church is not just about reaching people who look like us.

Does that mean that that's everybody's calling? Of course that's not everybody's calling. If it was everybody's calling, then, you know, you run in one direction, everybody else run in another direction, and they just went over there, and you just went over there. But here's my question.

What is it that you're committed to in your life that says you believe passionately that the mission of the church is gloriously global? And it's about the gospel going to people who don't necessarily look like you. I guess you could say that's why I'm in Texas. I'm a missionary to the promised land.

There's a final piece to this puzzle. The mission of the church was not only born out of this experience of worship, and not only is it tied inexorably to the authority of Christ, not only is it thoroughly evangelistic, and not only is it gloriously global, but it is also impossible in and of ourselves. Look at what he says.

And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Isn't this great? You know, I've taught my kids a lot of things. In fact, I'm a homeschool dad.

And we educate our children in our home. As a matter of fact, we are a homeschool family because of the Great Commission. I know that sounds strange to a lot of people, but it's the Great Commission that really led us.

It really pushed us over the edge as a homeschool family. Because I looked at what evangelism is supposed to be. Baptizing in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe everything that I've taught you.

How many people can I teach to observe everything that the Lord has taught me? Well, so far there's four of them. And they're the four in my home. And I'm committed to thoroughly evangelizing my children.

And Luke chapter 6 verse 40 says, But everyone, when he is fully trained, will be like his teacher. Whoever's educating our children is discipling our children. And so in an effort to obey the Great Commission, we are thoroughly discipling our children.

My oldest son is 15 years old. He turned 15 years old on yesterday. And he travels with me full time.

I gave him this trip off because it was his birthday. But Trey travels with me full time. He's 15 years old.

He's been in 35 states and 11 countries. He's 15 years old. He's studying logic.

He's studying systematic theology. He's studying biology. He's studying geometry.

And he's also in his second semester of New Testament Greek. Why? What would I be worth if I poured my life into the rest of the world and did not disciple my own children? In fact, in our little old church in Houston, Texas, we don't have any age-graded ministries of any kind. We don't have a children's ministry.

We don't have a youth ministry. We don't have a college ministry. We don't have any of that stuff.

You know what we have? We have men. And here's what we do. We look those men in the eye and we say basically this.

I double-dog dare you to practice the Great Commission in your home. We will equip you. We will teach you.

We will hold you accountable. But we ain't doing it for you. You will disciple your wife.

And you will disciple your children. Yeah, but my wife is ahead of me. Then that means when she's sleeping, you need to be up catching up.

And here's a question that we often get from people. Well, you know, what about if you've got a guy who's a new convert? How's a guy who's a new convert going to go home and disciple his family? It's this wonderful thing called catechism. Here's what we tell a guy who's a new convert.

You're going to disciple your family. You're going to catechize them. Well, I haven't been catechized myself.

And so we bring them over into a corner and we say, shh, be real quiet. When you're catechizing your family, you only have to be one day ahead. And so we got guys who've been saved a month who are now leading family worship, who are discipling their children in their home, catechizing their children in their home.

Been saved a month. Their wives are the happiest women you've ever seen in your life. You want to know why? You know why, pastor.

Because when you talk to a woman in your church, nine times out of ten, what does she say she wants more than anything else in the world? For her husband to step up and lead. Our entire church philosophy and structure is built to answer that prayer. And we do just that.

We have men who come to us sometimes. We've had this on a number of occasions. Pastor, I need to talk to you.

What's the matter? My kids. Were you having rebellion? No, it's not really that. Well, what is it? My daughter came up to me the other day and said, Daddy, we're about the only family in the church who's not having regular family worship.

Pastor, I don't know how to do that. So here's the deal. If I'm going to keep going home at night, you're going to teach me how to lead my family in family worship.

I'd gladly do it. And then we give them this last point. The Lord says, Lord, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age.

And here's how we explain it to them. You remember when you taught your kids how to ride the bike? Yeah. And all of a sudden, they were riding the bike and you held on to the back of the bike.

And the reason you held on to the back of the bike was because they didn't have their balance yet and they needed you to help them and hold them up. But they knew and you knew that the moment was going to come when they were finally strong enough and they finally had enough balance for you to let go of the bike and for them to ride themselves and to keep themselves upright. They knew the moment was coming and you knew the moment was coming.

Which meant your job was to build up their confidence and their own ability to balance themselves. Well, Jesus says to you, get on the bike and ride. And you look back at him and ask a very simple question, Lord, how good do I have to be at this for you to let go? And his response is, you can't get that good.

I'm never going to let go. In fact, your wanting me to let go means that you're in dangerous territory because you actually believe that this is something that you can do in and of yourself. You think a

marketing scheme can do what only I can do.

You think the right music can do what only I can do. You think the right staffing can do what only I can do. The right training, the right location, the right facility, the right PowerPoint.

When the fact of the matter is, until you get it through your thick skull that you can never ride this bike on your own, you will not enjoy the blessing and the freedom of ministering in the power of the resurrected Christ. He builds his church. Ride the bike, but don't ever expect him to let go.

Let's pray. Father, we are grateful to you for the opportunity to serve you. But we live in an age that is lying to us.

We live in an age that has caused us to depend on ourselves. We live in an age that has caused us to depend on our abilities. We live in an age that has caused us to look into the eyes of unregenerate, lost, God-hating men and women and ask them what they want instead of falling on our faces before the holy God and asking Him what they need.

Father, we repent. May we no longer be satisfied with mechanisms that are not thoroughly biblical. May we no longer offer our applause and our allegiance to individuals who give us man's wisdom just because it supposedly works.

May we no longer be duped into believing that we have outgrown or become too sophisticated for the simplicity of the gospel. And may we never for a moment believe that this is a ride that we can take apart from You. Our desire is to be thoroughly Yours and to be completely and utterly obedient to Your commands.

May the words that we've heard today be measured by their faithfulness to the word that we've heard from You. This is our prayer and we ask it because we believe it's in accordance with the will and the nature and the authority of Jesus who is the Christ.

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