

**Matt 28:18-20**  
**Doing Good**

Doing good things for other people feels good. Maybe not always, but most times. It not only feels good but makes one feel good about one's self. However, doing good can feel like a burden, sometimes. It can even become weary. Especially when the good seems to be making no lasting change in the life of that person or persons. Also, when doing good seems to make you a target for manipulation or being taken advantage of. But when the good we do has a greater purpose in mind we find the strength to carry on, knowing that all lives won't be eternally changed but some will. And it is the "some" that makes the weariness of doing good worth it. Maybe this is what Paul is getting at by his words in **Gal 6:9**, "So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up." **NLT** Now, what is that greater purpose. For the church and parachurch organizations it is evangelism. Which is nothing more or less than the faithful proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ, with the aim that people would repent, believe, and follow Him. Not follow a political party. Not any particular national movement or domination, but follow him, Jesus. There should be no question in the mind of disciples of Jesus given our text today that evangelism is at the heart of the mission Jesus has given to his church. Now, considering the context of today, Mission Sunday, and being led by the Holy Spirit back to this familiar text I asked the question of our prayer group this past week, what don't we hear in Jesus words here? I want to share a few of the things we uncovered that I believe will prove helpful to us in our faithfulness to the mission, or great commission as its formally known.

**First thing we don't hear is that there is another authority. V18**

“<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’” The question that everyone of us must contend with here and it is the question we must contend with when we encounter much of Jesus’ teaching, if not all of his teaching, is, “Is Jesus who he claims to be?” This statement of his emphatically establishes him as the one in authority over all creation, all dominion and powers in heaven and on earth. **He is literally King of kings and Lord of Lords. And if this be true, and it is, his words must be taken with all seriousness.** I fear that, too often, we treat Jesus’ identity with a casualness it does not deserve.

**Phil 2:9-11** “Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” **NLT**

**Second thing we do not hear is that failure is an option. Because it's not. V19a**

“<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” Jesus does not say go give it your best. He does not say go and try to make disciples when you have time or when it's convenient. No, his words infer not only a guarantee of success but also as his disciples that we have no choice in the matter. **The great commission is not mission impossible.** So, if we fail it will be because we did not faithfully attend to the mission. That is, we stopped making disciples and some other thing or things took the place of this mission. Which, by the way, is the reason for our existence.

**2 Cor 5:19-21** “<sup>19</sup> For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> So we are Christ's

ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” <sup>21</sup> For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.” **NLT**

**Third thing we don’t hear is that the mission is customizable. V19-20a** “<sup>19</sup> 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, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

**We do not get to say which aspects of the mission we will or won’t attend to or submit to.** It’s *all* or nothing. So, we proclaim (in word and deed), we baptize and are baptized, and we teach and submit to being taught. If you profess to follow him, why wouldn’t you do and submit to these things? Unless you don’t truly belong to him.

**James 1:22** “<sup>22</sup> But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.” **NLT**

**Final thing I want to share that we don’t hear is that we are alone in this work. V20b** “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” If it were solely dependent upon us to accomplish the mission, to remain faithful to it, we would have reason for despair. But we are not alone in this work because Jesus assures us that he is with us to the end of the age. Which is that time when the work will be no more. Because of this assurance there is no excuse for apathy towards, laziness about, unfaithfulness to, and/or abandonment of the mission. I say it again, if we fail it is our own doing.

**Acts 1:8** “<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

In closing, I've heard it said in this Presbytery and the Presbytery I came from that when a congregation dies; that is, it is no longer able to carry forth the mission of our Lord Jesus, that is the will of God for that congregation. I do not agree with this statement because God is not the purveyor of dead things. He raises dead things to new life. Maybe the reason congregations die is because they stopped attending to the mission. Doing good things. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**