Kingdom Commission

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Preacher: Lloyd Kim

[0:00] Today's scripture passage comes from Matthew chapter 28 verses 16 to 20.! 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.
Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. This is the word of God. You may be seated.
Good morning, New City Fellowship.
Thank you again for the honor and privilege to come and to open up God's word. I am so grateful for Pastor Kevin. If you didn't catch it, he is on CMTW, the Committee to Mission the World, which is actually the board overseeing me.
So he is my boss. Very grateful that you have let him serve in this way. He and this congregation have been a blessing for many years.
[1:38] Would you just pray with me once more as we enter in this time of hearing God's word preached? Father, would you bless our time with your Holy Spirit? Would you help me to speak the words you have for us today?

In Jesus' name, amen. Recently, I was at an area retreat for our folks. It was for those who served in Africa and in our global Muslim ministries.
So missionaries from all over the world come to a location and they are fed, physically fed, spiritually fed, and emotionally fed.
It is a great opportunity for me to connect with our missionaries and their families. The kids come. The whole group of them gather together. I was walking one day up to our seminar and I met a missionary mother with her two boys.
And the mother turned to her boys and said, do you know who he is? And one of them nodded and said, he's the king. I laughed out loud like you are because I thought, if you only knew how little power I really have.
[2:57] I am not the king of MTW. But beloved, we do have a king. His name is Jesus. And he's not only the king of MTW, he is the king over all of creation.

But I wonder, I wonder if people would recognize that Jesus is our king by how we live, by our priorities, by our obedience.
And so today we're going to reflect on this commission that our king gives, well, he gives us. And we will see in this command that this is, number one, a commission of grace.
Number two, commission with authority. And finally, a commission for all of his disciples. You ready? So I think the first thing the Lord is telling us this morning is that we really don't deserve to be a part of his kingdom building work.
If you remember, the great commission comes in the context of the resurrection. And so can you imagine what his disciples felt?
[4:22] What must have been going on in their minds when they heard early Sunday morning from Mary Magdalene that Jesus is risen. That he's alive. Three days earlier, he was crucified on a cross.

So how could he be alive in that he wants to meet them in Galilee? Remember, where was Galilee? It was about 60 to 75 miles from Jerusalem. And so we can imagine his disciples gathering together, walking to the place where they would meet Jesus.
Can you imagine what they must have been talking about? Maybe their minds flashed back to the last time they were all gathered together.
Remember where that was? The Garden of Gethsemane. Maybe echoing in their ears were the last words they heard from their Lord.

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You can't even keep watching. Pray for me for one hour? Rise, behold, my betrayer is at hand. And when Judas came with an angry mob with clubs and spears, what did his disciples do?
[5:35] They fled. They ran. They abandoned him in his time of greatest need. Certainly Peter must have remembered how Jesus turned and looked at him in the courtyard of the high priest when that rooster crowed.

So I can imagine these disciples walking to the place where they would meet Jesus filled with conflicting emotions. Right?
Not only this wonder and awe that maybe Jesus really is alive. But also perhaps shame and fear that they would have to face the one that they abandoned.
The one they denied. When I was about 10 years old, my older brother, he's about a year older than me, and a neighborhood friend, we were attacked by these neighborhood bullies.
We were minding our own business, playing in a park a couple blocks from our house. And we saw these high school boys off in the distance. And they started yelling at us. They started calling us names.
[6:38] And as 8 to 10-year-old rascally boys, of course, we yelled back. Probably said some things we shouldn't have said. Not expecting what would happen next. He started chasing after us.

Of course, at the time, we all had our bikes. And so we hopped on our bikes and we pedaled as fast as we could back home, back where it was safe, on our front lawn. And we were screaming our heads off. And I heard all this screaming. And of course, I was first back home.
And my friend came. And I turned my head and I saw my brother a block away. The chain had fallen off his bike. So sure enough, those bullies came and they took a couple of cheap shots and took off.
And there was my brother, humiliated, angry, crying, weeping, mad. He took his bike. He walked it over to where we were standing. He threw it down.
He came up to me. He slugged me in the stomach. He said, where were you? Didn't you hear me cry for help? Well, after this incident, we asked our dad to teach us Taekwondo.
[7:40] It only lasted a couple of weeks. We should expect Jesus to meet his disciples on that mountain and to slug them, right? At least rebuke them.

Rebuke them for their cowardice. But he doesn't. He doesn't reject them. He doesn't rebuke them. In fact, when he meets Mary Magdalene, he tells her, go tell my brothers.
He still calls them his brothers, even Peter. And when he speaks to them on the mountain, he doesn't mention all of their sins. He doesn't mention their failures. He doesn't even mention the fact that some of them, even on that mountain, doubt him.
What's this picture of? It's a picture of grace. It's a picture of mercy. What do they deserve?
They deserve to be abandoned. They deserve to be denied before the Father. They deserve to be excluded from the kingdom. But what does Jesus do? He forgives him.
[8:47] He accepts him. He receives him. And then he enlists them in his kingdom service to complete what he began.

You know, this great commission is really, it's a picture of grace. It's a picture of God's mercy. And so we ask ourselves this morning, who are these disciples?
It's us. We just like them, right? Hesitant, doubtful, fearful, sometimes full of shame, maybe, fear.
Now, I don't know about you, but when someone that I've offended, that I actually respect, overlooks my offense, shows me grace, I can't help but respect that person even more.
And when he demonstrates to me that my relationship with him is so secure, there's no strings attached for his affection for me, I can't help but love that person even more.
[10:00] And when I am convinced that he sees me for who I am with all my pride and sins and ugliness and still loves me, I can't help but be passionate with what he is passionate for.

And so where does passion for our king's mission come from? It comes from a deep passion for our king who loves us and has given his life for us.
You see, this isn't guilt trip motivation for missions. We've heard a lot of that. But that which springs from a sincere love and devotion for our Lord, for Jesus, for our king.
And so the more that we dwell upon God's grace and mercy for us, the more fuel that we add to missions fire in our hearts. So we begin here.
We don't deserve to be a part of his mission. And yet he allows us by his grace. That was point number one. The second thing I think the Lord is telling us is that we don't have to be afraid.

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[11:22] We don't have to be afraid to engage in his mission, his kingdom mission. Why? Because the one who is sending us, the one who is commissioning us, has been given all authority both in heaven and on earth.

So when we go, and when we send, and when we give, and when we pray, we go with his authority. My fear is that we don't really believe this.
We don't really believe that when we engage and we step out in faith that we go with his authority. Oftentimes, we fall into one of two extremes.
The first extreme, which is probably more dangerous, is being overly confident in our own authority, our own gifts, our own talents, our own whatever we have.
Maybe because we're educated or wealthy or from the West that we think that we can just do it, right? This is the American way. And I would say this is very dangerous.
[12:35] But what's the opposite extreme? Well, that's being utterly fearful and anxious as we think about engaging in his kingdom mission.

And let's face it, the world has become a lot scarier, hasn't it? Ed and I, my wife and I, recently visited the Middle East. And we were visiting one country and before we went, she looked up on the State Department Travel Advisory for advice.
It was a number four location, which means do not travel. I said, honey, it's fine. It'll be fine. The missionaries say it's fine.
She said, those missionaries are not normal. When we arrived into the country, there were two lines. One line for nationals, another line for visitors.
We were the only ones in the visitor line. The whole plane, I don't know how many planes landed, but we were the only ones. And she turned to me, she said, why are we the only ones visiting this country?
[13:41] This is a bad sign. The missionary who'd been living there for 10 years had taken her out and showed her a website that tracked in real time the drone and missile attacks and where they landed in the country.

And he showed it to me. She said, she don't worry, they're only 20 kilometers away. To which she thought, 20 kilometers sounds pretty close. He said, I only get worried when they're only three kilometers away, which confirmed to her that he was not normal.
We have four kids, young kids that grew up in this country. They've been over there in this place over a decade. A week after we left the country, that's when the Iran war started.
And the missiles that came and went into his country and the neighboring country increased. You can imagine how exhausted and burnt out they would be living in this context.
You can imagine the fear that would paralyze any normal person. Yet when asked what his biggest burden was, he said, what keeps me up at night is that there are more people asking to be discipled than there are people to disciple them.
[15:05] How is his family able to stay, to serve, to live in this context for so many years? Behold, I am with you even to the end of the age.

Do we believe that Jesus has all authority both in heaven and on earth? Do we believe that we send support and go with our king's authority?
Only by the authority and power of Christ given to us by his Holy Spirit, by his presence, can we do anything of lasting value for his kingdom?
You know that promise at the end of the Great Commission I just quoted, behold, I am with you even to the end of the age. Sometimes we think that it's a picture of Jesus hovering over us, watching us.
I don't think that's what Matthew's saying. I think what he's talking about is the Holy Spirit indwelling us, equipping us, empowering us to this task.
[16:13] Do we believe this? Do we believe that the Spirit of Jesus is in us? You know, when it drops from our head to heart, two things happen at the same time.

We become incredibly confident, become incredibly humble. It should give us who are anxious and fearful, full of fear, confidence knowing that Christ is calling us to a task that cannot fail and equipping us with a power and authority that has no boundaries.
At the same time, it should make us incredibly humble knowing it's not us. It's his Spirit in us. So the Lord is telling us, number one, we don't deserve to participate in his kingdom-building work, yet he calls us by his grace.

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second, he tells us, in fact, we cannot do this work by our own power and authority, but we can by his. And finally, the Lord is telling us this morning that all of us who are disciples of Jesus, followers of Christ, are to be engaged and involved in this kingdom-building work.
We're all called to make disciples. disciples. So, what are the two main tasks that Jesus associates with making disciples? Number one, it's baptism.
[17:46] Number two, it's teaching. So, baptism. Why baptism? Baptism signifies one's entrance into the community of Jesus' disciples.

It requires this radical commitment to the Lord saying, essentially, today I die, I'm buried. I walk through those waters of death and I'm reborn to live as a follower of Christ.
The indwelling spirit is in me. Why teaching? Teaching is the means that Jesus uses to grow and mature his disciples who belong to his kingdom even now here on earth as it is in heaven.
And so, not only are we to lead people to this radical commitment to following Jesus, receiving the sign of inclusion, but we are to nurture and teach them all these gospel truths to, as he says, to obey everything he commands.
What is included in that everything that he commands? Go and make disciples of all nations.
[18:55] You see, part of teaching others to obey everything that Jesus commands is this command to go and make disciples. Part and parcel of being a disciple is making disciples.

The truth is we can't make disciples unless we first are disciples. So, I'm going to ask you this morning, have you made that decision to live wholeheartedly for the Lord?
Have you received that sign of entrance into the God? I urge you, do so today. The gospel is true, Jesus is real and he invites you with open arms come and be accepted.
No matter what sins, what failures, what you bring today, he welcomes you. Are we committed to a lifetime of learning and growing in the gospel of grace?
Those who have the sign. Maybe you're thinking, we're not ready, we're not equipped. Isn't it the pastor's job to baptize and teach? Yes, God has his ordained servants to do some specific functions but you see, all of us who are called as followers of Jesus are to participate in this big picture of making more disciples, whether sending, whether supporting, or whether going to the nations.
[20:20] Four pastors go to a restaurant, they're seated and they wait for their waitress, she finally comes, she throws down the menus and says, what do you want? She acts so rude, their whole evening is ruined.

After they finish their meal, they pay the bill, the most senior pastor calls over, he wants to have a word with her. He looks her right in the eye and says, seems like you've had a hard day.
He hands her a hundred dollar bill. She's so moved by his generosity, she starts to weep, she starts to cry, she explains all that's going on, he shares the gospel with her right there in the restaurant, she comes to faith in Jesus.
Out in the parking lot the pastor turns to his colleagues and tells them, now I want each of you to give me $25. You see, every one of us can be involved in making disciples.
But of course, Jesus' teachings, what are they? Well, they're gospel teachings. We don't teach our disciples, they have to somehow have these perfect, pristine Christian lives.
[21:35] What is discipleship? Simply showing someone else how to apply the gospel to all the areas of our life, to our marriage, child rearing, work, place in society, all those things are full of sin and brokenness, yet there's grace and there's mercy.

So when the center of discipleship is the gospel, focus is not on us, it's on Jesus. You don't have to pretend to be something you're not.
In fact, our message is, I'm just as broken as you are. So what do we do as we teach everything Jesus commands?
We're just like beggars showing other beggars where to find food. Now we can certainly be involved in making disciples here in Chattanooga and beloved, I am so encouraged to hear all that this church is doing locally.
Warms my heart. But you see, our passage that we read today, in it we see the Lord calling his church to go. To go to other nations, to other places.
[22:52] Why? To fulfill God's redemptive purposes for his creation. That all the ends of the earth will sing the praise and the glory of our great God. And so Jesus, risen from the grave, exalted to the highest place, King of kings, Lord of lords, he calls us to carry forth his message of the kingdom.

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You see, this task isn't an option. It's not something we do if we have extra time. It's included in the very definition of what it means to be a disciple, namely to make more disciples.
And so here, this simple commission helps define our purpose and our calling in life as we remain here until he comes. Beloved, we have a king.
His name is Jesus. Do we respect our king? King has delivered us from all of our enemies, from our sin, from the evil one, from the world.
He set us free. So let us honor our king and may his vision for the nations be our vision as well. Amen? Amen.
[24:14] Father, thank you for this word you have given us. Thank you for your Holy Spirit which fills each of us. Spirit, speak to us, convict us, show us how you are calling each of us individually to engage in your great commission.

Bless the work of this expression of your body. Minister to them, fill them, encourage them, Lord, in this task both here and to the ends of the earth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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