

Kingdom: A Journey Through Matthew

Commissioned by the King

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COMMISSIONED BY THE KING Matthew 28:16-20

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, then open with me to Matthew 28. Today we come to the conclusion of a journey that we began last December walking with Jesus from the beginning of the book of Matthew through His birth, life, His teaching, His miracles, His death, and His resurrection. Last week, we walked through Matthew 25, and if you'll remember, during two weeks at Easter, we walked through Matthew 26-27, and the first part of Matthew 28.

So now we come to the conclusion of this gospel—this account of the good news of Christ—and we come to a passage that's pretty familiar to us at Brook Hills. We've studied it before, we talk about it all the time, it's central in everything we say and do as a church. Every Sunday we send one another out by saying this passage to one another. And yet today, I am praying that this Word will fall fresh on some of your hearts like you're hearing it for the first time.

Well, first of all, for those who are visiting with us, who are not a part of The Church at Brook Hills or maybe you're not even a follower of Christ, my prayer and my hope for you this morning is that you will see for the first time in your life the love and beauty and glory of Jesus, the Son of God who was born, who lived, and who died for your sins, and who rose from the grave in victory over sin. My prayer is that you would see that He is the Lord of the universe and that you would for the first time gladly submit your life to His lordship.

Others of you may be followers of Jesus. Maybe you're visiting from another church, maybe you're from out of town – and my prayer is that you would be encouraged today to make disciples of all nations through the local church of which you are a part. My prayers has been that God might ordain today in your life to fuel in you a passion to make disciples of all nations, maybe even that He might initiate or solidify a call in your life for you to go to another nation.

As Followers of Jesus in The Church at Brook Hills...

Which leads to what I want to say specifically to The Church at Brook Hills. I've framed our journey through this text specifically as followers of Jesus in The Church at Brook Hills. So that's not to exclude those who are visiting today, but I have prayed (am praying) that God might do something unique through His Word today in the life of this faith family, and in the lives of individual brothers and sisters who are a part of this faith family. I'm praying that He might awaken in our hearts, individually and collectively, a fresh and renewed zeal to make disciples of all nations, many of you from right here in Birmingham.

And then for others, for some, maybe even for hundreds today, that God might through this text today, in the power of His Spirit, call you to spend your life among an unreached people

group in the world; that today might be a pivotal, life-changing moment for many, many people.

So I want to read this text, and then I want to pray toward that end.

"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'" (Matt. 28:16-20).

Father, I pray for every single person here, that You would by Your grace speak to our hearts. Open them, we pray. We pray that You would open hearts to see the salvation of Christ for the first time today. And we pray that You would open our lives and our families and our church to however You want to use each of us and all of us to make disciples of all nations. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

One commentator said that Matthew 28:16-20 "is the climax and major focal point not only of this gospel but of the entire New Testament. It is not an exaggeration to say that, in its broadest sense, it is the focal point of all Scripture, Old Testament as well as New." Now, whether or not it can truly be said that *this* passage is "*the focal point of all Scripture*" is up for debate, but at the very least this is a reminder of the extreme significance of the words before us.

I love how Matthew ends this gospel. We know that his ultimate point in writing this book was not just to show us that Jesus is King. If that was his point, he would have stopped in the middle of this chapter. Jesus was born, He lived a perfect life, He died a substitutionary death for the sins of men and women throughout history, and then He rose from the grave. He's King! End of story.

But that's not the end of the story. Instead, Matthew ends by telling us how Jesus sent out His disciples to proclaim Jesus as King to the ends of the earth, and that's a story that continues even today. And the beauty of this text is that you and I are a part of this story. You and I are disciples of Jesus the King, commissioned by Him—sent out by Him—to proclaim His life, His death, and His resurrection all over the planet.

So then, three takeaways for us from this text; three implications for us as disciples/followers of Jesus in The Church at Brook Hills, based on this text and all that we've seen in the book of Matthew.

We Will Believe in the Authority of Christ

Number one, we will believe in the authority of Christ. As Jesus gathers his disciples on this mountain, he doesn't start with a command; he starts with a claim—"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18). What a massive statement! The fulfillment of Daniel's promise centuries before in Daniel 7:13-14 – the "son of man" who "was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and

his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." And *this* statement is *the* basis for everything else that follows in this text. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth.

Jesus is not just the personal Lord and Savior over us.

Do we realize what this means? Jesus is not just the personal Lord and Savior over us. When people share about the moment when they trusted Christ to save them from their sins, they will often say, "I decided to make Jesus my personal Lord and Savior." And while there's grains of truth in that statement, overall, that statement misses the whole point.

Number one, you don't decide to make Jesus Lord. He is Lord regardless of what you decide. Jesus has died on the cross and risen from the grave. He is exalted at the Father's right hand as the Lord over all creation, regardless of what you think. Philippians 2:9-11 makes this clear: "*Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*" One day every knee is going to bow and every tongue is going to confess, "Jesus is Lord" – that's a guarantee. So you don't decide to make Jesus Lord; you decide to submit to Jesus' lordship, and every single person here and every single person in all history will do this.

The question is: will you confess Him as Lord now, or will you confess Him as Lord when it is too late? Which leads to the other problem with the statement, "I've decided to make Jesus my personal Lord and Savior" – now again, there's a grain of truth here, for Jesus does save us personally, and He does love us personally, and He does rule over us personally, but there's so much more here.

Jesus is the universal Lord and Savior over all.

The whole point of this text is that Jesus is not just the personal Lord and Savior over you or me or a select group of people. The whole point of this text is that Jesus is the universal Lord and Savior over all. He didn't die just to save you or me; He died to save people from every nation and tongue and tribe.

This was huge for these Jewish disciples who were following this Jewish Messiah – we've seen from the beginning of the book of Matthew Jesus' Jewish heritage starting with Abraham and then through the line of David, King of Israel. We've seen Jesus born King of the Jews. But the whole point here in the end is to show these Jewish disciples that Jesus is not just Lord and King over them; He is Lord and King over all nations. He is not just Lord and King over some people in some places; He is Lord and King over all people in every place in heaven and on earth.

And it's what we've seen all throughout the book of Matthew. We've seen that Jesus has authority over all nature and all nations. Jesus has authority to raise His hand and calm the seas. And He is worshiped as Lord by Jews and Gentiles alike. He has authority over disease and demons. He speaks, and the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are healed, disease is gone. He speaks, and demons flee.

And most remarkable of all, Jesus has authority over sin and death. He has authority to forgive transgression against God. And He has authority to overcome man's ultimate enemy, the payment for sin—death. Because we sin, we all die. But Jesus conquered death.

Everything is under His authority, which means that He has authority over our lives. Jesus' authority is not localized to certain people; Jesus' authority is applied to every person. Oh friend, if you have not submitted your life to Jesus' authority, then I invite you to do that

today. I invite you to see that Jesus, God in the flesh, has conquered sin and death on your behalf, so that all who confess with their mouth that He is Lord and believe in their heart that God raised Him from the dead will be saved, will be reconciled to God. Confess Him as Lord today. He has authority over your life; loving authority over your life. Submit to His lordship.

And then Christian, live under His lordship—under His authority. This is why I’m praying that God might raise up hundreds today in this text to go to unreached peoples. Some might say, “Hundreds?” “Yes, hundreds.” And here’s why: because every follower of Christ here has surrendered the right to determine the direction of your life.

You and I don’t determine where we live. It is not a given that any Christian here will stay in the United States the rest of their life—*any* Christian here. Because there are well over a billion people, most of whom live outside the United States, who have never heard that Jesus is Lord, and our God wants to make the lordship of Christ known to all of them.

You put that together and you realize all of us are at His disposal for Him to use us wherever He wants and it just makes sense that in this gospel-saturated environment we find ourselves in, He’s going to lead many of us (maybe me...maybe you...maybe my family...maybe your family) to go. Blank checks, right? We talk about this all the time. A blank check with your life, no strings attached. Saying, “God, wherever You want me to go, whatever You want me to give. If that means selling everything here and moving to the Middle East for the glory of Your name, I will do it.”

And so I want to call every follower of Christ to put the blank check on the table and ask, sincerely ask, “Lord, are you leading me to go?” And wait for the answer. Some of you know the answer, and it’s time to act on it. Some of you are afraid to ask the question, but this is the key: Jesus has authority over our lives. Oh, don’t be afraid to ask the question! You have trusted Jesus to save you, now trust Jesus to lead you! This is what it means to be a follower of Jesus, to have no strings attached to your obedience to Him. And He doesn’t just have authority over our lives, He has authority over every life. He has authority over every life in this world.

Jesus’ authority compels us to go.

And this is why we go! Jesus’ authority compels us to go. Think about this. Missions only makes sense if Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. Think about northern India—600 million people, 0.5% of whom know and believe the gospel. So that is 597 million people who don’t know Christ—they’re Hindu and Muslim and Buddhist and Sikh. If Jesus is the only true God, if Jesus is the only one who can save those 597 million people from their sins, if Jesus is the only one who has conquered death and provided salvation for all people, then we must go to northern India and make this good news known. We must! He’s Lord! Not just over you and me, but over everyone.

Oh, see it! His worth is the fuel of our mission. We go because He’s worthy. Jesus is worthy of the worship of every person on the planet. That’s why we go! We go and we plant churches across North America because there’s over 200 million people on this continent who don’t know Jesus, and He is worthy of all their worship. We go and we send church planting teams across Africa because there’s 3,000 animistic tribes in Africa that are following animistic religions that miss the whole point of the gospel and deny the truth of Christ as God, and Jesus is worthy of every single one of those tribes’ glory.

It’s why we go to Japan, Laos, and Vietnam, because there’s 350 million Buddhists in those countries who are following Buddhist rules and regulations, and Buddha is not worthy of

their glory. Jesus alone is worthy of all their glory. Its why we go to India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, because there's 950 million Hindus in those countries that are following more gods than you or I could even fathom, and there is only one God who is worthy of all their glory, and His name is Jesus. Its why we go to China, North Korea, and Cuba because there's over a billion people in these communistic nations who've grown up with atheistic philosophies that completely deny the existence of God.

It's why we go to the hardest places in the world, like the Middle East and Central Asia, because there's over 1.5+ billion Muslims who are fasting and giving alms and making holy pilgrimages to Mecca, and they are praying five times a day to a false god. And Jesus has died on the cross, risen from the grave, is now exalted at the Father's right hand and He is the only one who is worthy of all their glory. And a people who believe that He is worthy of that kind of glory will give their lives – even lose them if necessary – to make His glory known.

Jesus has authority over all of them. Jesus is Lord over all of them. And He loves them. So we give our lives to making His love and His lordship known among them. It's why we have life. Not to waste them on cozy, casual Christianity in the confines of comfortable churches. But to spend them on the front lines of the world proclaiming to people and peoples everywhere, "Jesus is Lord!"

His worth is the fuel of our mission, and His worship is the goal of our mission. It's what we're living for. We're living for the day when every tribe and tongue and people and nation gathers around our God to give Him the global glory that He is due.

Jesus' authority gives us confidence as we go.

Jesus' authority compels us to go, and Jesus' authority gives us confidence as we go. Think about how huge Jesus' authority is as we go. Who are you to go to northern India and tell 597 million Hindus and Muslims and Buddhists and Sikhs that they're wrong, that they're following false gods and they need to turn to Jesus and live or they will die forever? That doesn't make sense...unless this is true!

But *if* this is true—follow this—*if* Matthew's Gospel is true, *if* what we've been studying for the last 7 months is real, *if* Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world, and *if* Jesus rose from the grave in victory over sin and death, *if* there is no one like Him and *if* He reigns as Lord over all, then telling 597 million people in northern India this gospel is the only thing that makes sense! If this is true, then what doesn't make sense is millions of Christians sitting back and saying nothing about this to the nations!

Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, Jesus' authority gives us confidence as we go, because this gospel will save. I can sit in a Hindu home in the middle of an Indian slum like I did not long ago, surrounded by Hindu gods all over the walls, and I can share the good news of the one true God who loved us enough to send His Son as a perfect, full, and final sacrifice for sins. And I can share about how He rose from the grave in victory over sin so that everyone who believes in Him will be reconciled to God. I can share that news, and see a Hindu woman say, "I believe in Jesus, and I want Him to save me." This gospel is good! It will save! Do we believe that? And if we do, then why would we sit on it? This gospel will save!

And this mission will succeed. His authority guarantees it. Jesus spoke these words, commissioned out His disciples, and then the book of Acts tells us that He ascended to heaven, where at this moment He sits at the right hand of the Father. And do you know what He's doing there? He's not just watching what is happening on earth. He is

empowering His people. He is directing you and me, He is leading you and me, He is guiding you and me, and He is giving you and me everything we need to bring this mission to completion. He has promised – we read it a couple of weeks ago – *“This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come”* (Matt. 24:14).

And so I’m asking you the question, “Where is He directing you?” You and I are on the front lines of a spiritual battle that is raging for the souls of men and women around the world, and the all-sovereign Son of God, our Savior, is sitting in the seat of heavenly command, bringing this mission to completion. And we’ve got 60, 70, 80 years here, to be spent for this mission. How does He want you to spend yours?

Oh, this is why the next words out of Jesus’ mouth are, “Go therefore...” “Go in light of this...” Jesus has all authority in heaven on earth. He’s not just the personal Lord and Savior over us; He’s the universal Lord and Savior over all. He has authority over us, He has authority over everyone, and so we’re compelled to go and we’re confident as we go. What will we do as we go?

We Will Obey the Command of Christ

This is not a comfortable call for most Christians to come, be baptized, and sit in one location.

We will believe in the authority of Christ, and we will obey the command of Christ. *“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”* (Matt. 28:19-20). This is not a comfortable call for most Christians to come, be baptized, and sit in one location. Yet that is exactly what we are tempted to turn it into. If we are not careful, this is what our Christianity will consist of. Coming to a worship service, participating in a church, maybe even serving in a church, giving to a church, doing things with the church...but not making disciples.

The church is filled with people who have been Christians for 5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, even 50 years, who have never led someone outside of their family to Christ in such a way that that person is now leading other people to Christ in their lives. We are tempted to engage in much religious activity with little kingdom productivity.

I remember the first time I read Dawson Trotman’s little book called *“Born To Reproduce.”* His words penetrated my heart, and ever since then, I’ve given out hundreds of copies of this little booklet. He said, “The curse of today is that we are too busy. I am not talking about being busy earning money to buy food. I am talking about being busy doing Christian things. We have spiritual activity with little productivity.” Talking about the disciples, he said, “The gospel spread to the known world during the first century without radio, television or the printing press, because these disciples produced men who were reproducing. But today,” he said,

“...we have a lot of pew-sitters...people who think that if they are faithful in church attendance, put good-sized gifts into the offering plate and get people to come, they have done their part. If I were the minister of a church and had deacons or elders to pass the plate and choir members to sing, I would say, ‘Thank God for your help. We need you. Praise the Lord for these extra things you do,’ but I would keep pressing home the big job: ‘Be fruitful and

multiply.' All these other things are incidental to the supreme task of leading a man or woman to Jesus Christ and then helping him or her to go on."

This is a costly command for every Christian to go, baptize, and make disciples of all nations.

Oh, Matthew 28:19 is not a comfortable call for most Christians to come, be baptized, and sit in one location. This is a costly command for every Christian to go, baptize, and make disciples of all nations—every Christian. It's been this way since the beginning. Do you remember Jesus' initial introduction to His disciples that we read in Matthew 4? "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." From the very beginning, He made clear that everyone who would followed Him would fish for men, lead men and women into the kingdom. Jesus' introduction in Matthew 4 was clear: every follower of Jesus is a fisher of men.

So that's how Matthew shows Jesus' disciples being introduced to Him in this gospel, and now we see Jesus' conclusion in Matthew 28: every disciple is a disciple-maker. Do you see this? This is huge. Biblically, to *be* a disciple is to *make* disciples. Scripture knows nothing of disciples who aren't making disciples.

Yet if you were to ask Christians today what it means to make disciples, you'd likely get jumbled thoughts, ambiguous answers, probably even some blank stares. This is not good. It's why we've walked through various series as a faith family through what it means to make disciples. Whether looking at John 17 or the book of Acts or passages like Matthew 4 and Matthew 28 here, we've talked about four non-negotiable facets of disciple-making, all based right here in Matthew 28:19.

We share the Word.

There's one imperative verb here – one command – for all of us, and that is "make disciples." And it's surrounded by three participles – "going, baptizing, and teaching." So what does it mean to make disciples? It means we go – we all go, every single one of us, and we share the Word. We proclaim, "Jesus is Lord." We tell people how they can be saved from their sins through Jesus' death on the cross.

We speak about the gospel as we live according to the gospel. Oh Christian, this is why you have the Spirit of God inside of you! Why has God put His very Spirit in you? Acts 1:8 – so that you would be a witness to the ends of the earth of this gospel!

This is where I remind you that the evangelistic strategy of this church, the way we are going to reach people for Christ. It's not built on bringing as many people as possible to hear me preach. The goal is not to get them all in here, because if it is, we'll have to keep building bigger buildings, and have better programs. The goal is to get every person in here out there. The goal is to equip all 4,000 people who are here to go into this city and around the world with the gospel as gospel-speaking, gospel-sharing, gospel-believing, gospel-living men and women who are spreading the good news of Christ in places I could never go and to people who would never come here.

We show the Word.

And when people come to Christ, we baptize them. We show the Word. Why is baptism so important here? Why does Jesus include in the command to make disciples instruction to baptize people? He includes it because baptism symbolizes identification with the person of Christ and inclusion in the body of Christ.

So we baptize people, which, of course, assumes that we have been baptized as disciples of Jesus. Every disciple of Jesus is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. See the importance of baptism here. Jesus commands it.

Let me pause here. I am always shocked at the number of people who say they are Christians but have not been baptized: if you are a follower of Christ and have not been baptized, you are living in direct disobedience to Christ. The New Testament knows nothing of unbaptized Christians. It's not that you have to be baptized in order to become a Christian, but once you are a Christian, your public declaration of faith in Christ involves baptism. And to neglect this is to dishonor and disobey Christ in such a way that if you continue in disobedience, not repenting of such sin, then there is serious reason to question whether or not you are a Christian at all.

So, be baptized, and then baptize. Lead other people to identify with the person of Christ and become a part of the body of Christ. And share life together. Disciple-making is not just what happens in a classroom for an hour or so a week. It's what happens when we walk through life together, showing one another how to follow Christ and we share life alongside one another. We show one another how to pray, how to study the Bible, how to grow in Christ, how to lead others to Christ. We say all the time, "If you lead a new believer to Christ, how is that person going to learn to pray or study the Bible?" God has this thing rigged! He's designed disciple-making for others and us to grow in Christ.

We teach the Word.

We share the Word, we show the Word, and we teach the Word—"Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you." Get the picture here: as followers of Jesus, we don't just receive the Word; we reproduce the Word.

The illustration I always go back to of those brothers and sisters in the Sudan. The whole time you're teaching the Bible to them, you never see their eyes or faces, not because they are sleeping, but because they are writing down every single thing you say. And they come up to you afterwards and say, "David, we know that we have a responsibility to take everything you've taught us from the Word, translate it into our tribes' languages, and teach it in our tribe." They are not just listening to receive; they are listening to reproduce.

Now there's obviously a sense in which some in the church are particularly gifted to teach, but every disciple of Jesus is intended to saturate our words with His Word, our conversations with His truth, so that we are teaching people all that Christ has taught us. So we go, baptize, and teach; we share, show, and teach the Word – and we do this in all nations.

We serve the world.

We serve the world. Make disciples of all nations – *panta ta ethnē*—in every people group. Remember, this is not just talking about nations like we think of countries. Around 200 geopolitical nations recognized in the world today. That's not what's being talked about here. This is tribes and families and clans and peoples – what we call people groups today.

They're what we see all over Scripture: Amorites and Hittites and Perizzites and Canaanites and Hivites and Jebusites, and today they include the Baloch and the Berber and the Hui and the Han and the list goes on and on. There are estimated over 11,000 people groups spread throughout the world. Groups of people that share similar language and heritage and cultural characteristics.

So when Jesus gives this command, He doesn't just give it generally. This is not just a general command to make disciples among as many people as possible. That's not what the Great Commission is. This is a specific command to make disciples among every people group in the world. And there are estimated 6,000 people groups who have still not been reached with the gospel. Therefore, obedience to the Great Commission necessarily involves intentionality in going after these 6,000 people groups.

That's why I'm praying that today, hundreds of people would be called out by God to go to unreached peoples. And I'm saying to us as a faith family, as The Church at Brook Hills: may we make disciples and multiply churches in Birmingham and beyond.

This is why, a year and a half or so ago, I challenged us to consider: what if none of this stuff was here? No building, no programs going on around us, no stuff – just 4,000 people called The Church at Brook Hills. Imagine 4,000 people living in a world of sin and rebellion and suffering and pain. A world where over three billion people live on less than \$2 a day, and a billion of those people live in absolute poverty in slums with hundreds of millions starving and dying of preventable diseases. Billions of people engrossed in false religions – over 1.5 billion of them have never even had a chance to hear the gospel. They are all – all – on a road that leads to an eternal hell – suffering for sin that will never, ever, ever, ever end.

But you and I know – all 4,000 of us know – that Jesus is Lord. We know that He has died on the cross for our sins and risen from the grave. The Spirit of God has opened our eyes and our hearts to see and to believe. He has saved us. He has saved us to know Him and enjoy Him and be with Him forever and ever in heaven – soon – very, very, very soon.

But while we're here, he has given us – every single one of us – His Spirit. He has given us a supernatural power in the person of the Holy Spirit to reside in every single one of us – for one purpose. We have been charged with reaching the world with the gospel.

So how would we do that? If we had a blank slate with nothing but just us – 4,000 people called The Church at Brook Hills – living in this world, having this salvation, and having been charged with making this salvation known all throughout this city and to the ends of the earth – where would we start? What would we do?

Would we pool together all our resources and say, "Let's spend \$20 million on a building?" Would we say, "Let's find the best teacher among us, or maybe best 2 or 3 teachers among us, and let's listen to them every week?" "Let's have the best music and let's hire a staff and organize a bunch of programs that revolve around us and our kids and our families?" Would we spend our time working on what is most comfortable, most entertaining, most pleasing to us? Is this the strategy we would design?

I don't think it is. Not if we realize what's going on in the world around us, and not if we believe this Word in front of us. If we realized that there are billions of people without the gospel, many of them have never even heard it, and there are hundreds of millions of people starving, and if we believe Jesus is Lord, then we would say, "We don't need to spend millions of dollars building a house of worship, because this Book says we are the house of worship. And this Book says there are a lot better ways to spend our money."

This Book never commands once for us to build a church building – not once. It says, "Get the gospel to the ends of the earth. Don't build a place and expect them to come to you – go to them." So let's go to them. Let's spend our lives going and sharing this gospel with

the people we work with, and the people we live next to. Like, we can do this. We've all got the Spirit of God in us – ha!

So let's go. Let's scatter, and as we do, we're going to need each other. Oh, we're going to need each other. So as we scatter, let's gather together with other believers. We don't have to gather together all at one time in one place. There are places we can gather together all over this city, this world – in our homes and offices and public settings. We can gather together and we can worship.

So let's gather in our homes and at other places in our community and let's worship together and let's share life together and let's care for each other's kids and support each other's marriages, and walk along each other in singleness or as widows. Let's share life and let's show the gospel – this is what we're here for – let's spend our lives as a community of faith taking this gospel to the ends of the earth. This is what we see in the New Testament. The book of Acts tells the story of a group of people much smaller than The Church at Brook Hills spreading the gospel literally all over the world.

We Will Depend on the Presence of Christ

May we never underestimate what God might do in and through a people who believe in His authority, obey His command, and third, depend on His presence. This is what makes Jesus' words at the end of Matthew 28 so comforting, and so encouraging. Do you remember how we were introduced to Jesus in the book of Matthew? Matthew 1:23, "*Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel' (which means, God with us).*" And this is how Matthew closes his gospel – with Jesus saying, "I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Oh, don't miss this: this mission is not based on who we are or what we can do. It's not a matter of what we bring to the table. This mission is not based on who we are or what we can do. This mission is based on who Jesus is and what He is able to do in and through our lives. And He is able to do far more than we could ever ask or imagine in this church, and in and through your life. Oh, put down small dreams. Put down worldly ambition. Give Christ a blank check with your life, and see where He leads. See what He does.

You do that, I do that... Oh, together let's do that, and as we do, then together, let's experience the power of His presence with us. Let's be a part of something that is beyond us. Let's be a part of something where we need His presence. Let's not be a part of a church filled with programs and practices that we can manage on our own. Let's be a part of something where day by day, month by month, year by year, we are desperate for the power of Jesus' presence with us. Knowing that it will not be easy. Knowing that it will be costly. But knowing that it will be worth it.

Let's believe in His authority, let's obey His command, and let's depend on His presence. Together, let's experience the power of His presence with us, and together, let's hope in the promise of His return for us.

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