

FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSION

(Matthew 28:18-20)

The Great Commission is the marching orders of the church. This last command of our Lord Jesus must be the first priority of the church. The mission of our own local church is anchored upon the Great Commission of Christ: *We are a Gospel-Commissioned, Disciple-Making Church which proclaims God's Word, equips God's people and witnesses to the lost.* **Since the Great Commission is not yet completed, we must fulfill our role in carrying out our Lord's mission in our own generation.** Reflecting on Matthew 28:18-20, let's consider three ways on how we could fulfill our role in carrying out the Great Commission.

1. Fulfill the Great Commission _____.

When our Lord Jesus issued the Great Commission, He addressed the eleven disciples not individually but collectively as a community of believers (Matthew 28:18). We must not miss the emphasis our Lord places on the communal aspect of the Great Commission. The local church as the community of Christ's followers is at the very center of God's plan for accomplishing His redemptive mission. In God's design, the local church is the place where disciples are made. It is also the community where faithful commitment to the Lord and His people is most visibly and compellingly displayed for the world to see (Acts 2:46-47). One of the critical lessons that the Great Commission teaches us is this: You cannot be a true disciple of Christ without committing yourself to the body of Christ which is the church (John 13:34-35; Romans 12:10; Galatians 5:13; 6:2; Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:2; 1 Peter 4:9; 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; James 5:16).

2. Fulfill the Great Commission according to _____.

The Great Commission specifies the mission strategy of our Lord: *"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). The main and central command is to make disciples. A disciple is someone who trusts in Christ alone for salvation and follows Jesus in lifelong learning, obedience, self-denial and submission (Romans 10:9; Matthew 16:24; 11:29; John 8:31). The components of disciple-making can be summed up into two simple directives: bring them in and build them up. We bring people in by going and reaching out to unbelieving people with the gospel of Christ. Bringing people in also involves the command to baptize Jesus' disciples in the name of the Triune God (Matthew 28:19). Through baptism, a believer identifies himself with Christ and the body of Christ. Disciple-making further involves building up believers unto spiritual maturity by teaching them to obey all the commands of Christ (Matthew 28:20). The goal of our teaching is not merely the transfer of biblical information, but lifelong obedience to Christ.

3. Fulfill the Great Commission with confidence in _____.

Jesus begins and ends the Great Commission with His encouraging promise to build and strengthen our confidence as we fulfill our mission. Our greatest comfort when it comes to the Great Commission is this: We carry out our mission with the reassuring promise of the unstoppable power of Christ and the unfailing presence of Christ (Matthew 28:18,20; Revelation 11:15).
