



Series: The Great Pursuit

Date: September 29, 2024

Speaker: Mike Herman, Campus Pastor

Text: Matthew 28:18-20

Title: The King is with you, Go Make Disciples

Good morning Mercy Church! It is good to be with you this morning.

If I have not met you yet, my name is Mike Herman and I serve as the Campus Pastor for our Union County Campus.

We are continuing through a sermon series called The Great Pursuit, in this series we discuss:

God's Great Pursuit of You & God's Great Pursuit of the WORLD through YOU

We kicked this series off at our All Church Gathering last week:

Y'all, last week was so much fun. I found myself in awe of how God has moved through Mercy Church over the past 9 years.

And it got me so pumped for what the next 9 years could look like.

If you are new with us, last week was a big moment for our church. On a typical Sunday, we are one church in three locations. But last week, we all got together and worshiped in one room at one time and it was incredible.

I think it was a catalytic moment for our church and it set the tone for the next chapter in our church's story.

So, we started the Great Pursuit series by posturing our hearts correctly for the mission of God.

We went through Isaiah 6 and saw that Isaiah experienced the glory of the Lord and then experienced the forgiveness of the Lord and his response was **HERE I AM LORD, SEND ME!**

Then we all recognized that we who are in Christ have experienced the same glory and forgiveness, so our response is, rightfully, the same as Isaiah's, **HERE I AM LORD, SEND ME.**

Today we are going to walk through the Great Commission in Matthew 28.

So, Christian, when you raised your phone, saying yes I will go, this commission what you are saying yes to..

The Great Commission is exactly how God charges us to participate in his pursuit of the world.

If you have your Bible, go ahead and flip to Matthew chapter 28. We will read through it together in just a moment.

Before we dive in I am going to give you guys a road map of where we are going.

The King is with You, Go Make Disciples

1. Recognize Christ as King and Trust That He is With You.
2. Carry Out the King's Instruction
3. Go to your Neighbor and the Nations

The central charge for today is:

In order for us to respond appropriately, I think we need to do three things.

So let's read this passage together.

If you are able and willing, would you stand with me to read God's word?

18 Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 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, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." -- Matthew 28:17-20 (CSB)

Pray and Sit People Down

Just a disclaimer, preparing the message has been incredibly heavy for me.

I feel compelled to say some pretty challenging things, and I feel compelled because of my love for God and my love for y'all.

Sometimes the bible makes you feel warm and fuzzy, sometimes it feels like a kick in the rear. Today has a little bit of both.

So I hope you know that if you feel condemnation or judgment, you know - that is not coming from me or the Lord -that is from the enemy,



But if you feel conviction or feel empowered to respond - please lean into that. Do not ignore what the Holy Spirit is counseling you to do.

The Lord is moving through our church and the way he will continue to move is the same way he always has moved - he will use his faithful followers who take steps of obedience towards what he is calling them into.

It will be very easy for us to hear this message and think it is for someone else, but the Lord has an assignment for all of us individually to participate in the great commission.

And I hope that last week the process of understanding what your assignment is began and will continue to get more and more clear.

So, let's dive in and see if we can unpack everything that God has for us in this passage.

The first thing we need to do to be obedient to this command is:

Recognize Christ as King and Trust that He is With You

This passage starts off by declaring that all authority has been given to Jesus. In Heaven and on Earth.

18 Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth."

In a lot of ways, this sentence is a summary of the Gospel of Matthew.

In the gospel of Matthew we see

that Jesus is

the Messiah,

the one prophesied about,

Jesus is the incarnate God that we saw in Isaiah 6 last week - the one whose robe fills the throne room and his glory fills the earth.

The God whose holiness is so majestic that angels made of fire have to shield their eyes when they are in his presence.

That God becomes a man and then is the one that

healed diseases,

cast out demons,

raised a little girl from the dead,

walked on water,

calmed the wind and the waves,

died on the cross,

bore the wrath of God for the sin of all mankind,

rose from the grave and then appeared to many.

That's who Jesus is, and he is the one coming near to you and saying, in case you didn't realize this yet, I have authority over heaven and earth. I am King.

My kingdom is those who follow me and wherever my people go— That is where my kingdom is.

That King, King Jesus, is the one who is speaking and he is commissioning you to Go, make disciples!

This isn't a command given to certain personality types or even someone with a certain set of spiritual gifts, it's a command given to all who consider Christ as King.

Do you recognize that Christ has all authority in heaven and earth, that he is your king?

Human nature functions in that if Christ isn't your King, something else is...

You are following some sort of authority in your life, whether it's politics, health, money, work, or sports.

Something functions as your King - something is the authority in your life

Something is the recipient of your worship and the object of your obedience.

If you are a follower of Jesus, then *he* is your king.

What does the King tell you the commission of your life is?

Go, Make Disciples!

I love how this command begins with telling us the authority of the one giving the command,

then it ends with one of the most beautiful promises in scripture:

I am with you always, to the end of the age.

That all-powerful, mighty king, he commands you to go then he tells you that he is with you as you go.

Christ is with you, always.

Salvation that was initiated by the Father, was accomplished by Jesus, and is now applied by the Holy Spirit living within you.

The great king that gives you this command is living inside of you as you carry it out. You are not alone.



How often do you think about this as a believer? It is vital that we understand this if we are going to carry out the Great Commission.

Jesus is with you. We just spent a few months going through Exodus where the presence of God followed Israel as a cloud in the wilderness.

That presence, because Christ has given you his righteousness, is able to enter into you and work through you.

And so you may feel incapable of carrying out the great commission, you may feel terrified to raise your hand and say here I am Lord send me.

You feel that way because on your own, you *are* incapable of carrying it out. But the presence of the Lord inside you is what gives you the power to walk in obedience.

The Lord working through you,
with all your inadequacies front and center,

Him working through you, his presence with you, while you carry out this commission is exactly how he designed for the kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

He is a King with all authority, and he commands us to go, but he doesn't command us like a tyrant king that just tells us to go do his bidding,

He emptied himself to the point of death on a cross so that he can be with us as we go. He is a great king and a loving father.

The King is with you, so go make disciples.

The Next thing that we need to do is actually carry out the King's Instructions.

Carry Out the King's Instruction

Because:

Acknowledging with words that Christ is King, without steps of obedience, is self-deception. You are lying to yourself.

I think the church as a whole, myself included, far too often, hears instruction, and learns about it, even gets excited about, but then falls short in actually being obedient to the command.

It makes me think of an illustration I heard a while back that was super convicting.

It goes something like this:

A father tells his son that he will be out of town for a few days and that his main instruction while he is gone is that his son cleaned his room. He actually wrote a whole set of instructions for him to teach him how to clean his room.

When he returned, he saw his son at the door and was like, “Hey Son!” And after greeting him and catching up he asks, “How Did cleaning your room go?”

The Son responded

Well, I read the instructions about cleaning my room, and let me tell you, Dad, they were super encouraging.

It was so encouraging that I actually got together with my siblings and we studied the instructions together.

We were all so pumped about cleaning, that we went to a “cleaning your room” conference!

And then, we wrote and sang songs about cleaning our room!

Dad, we were so excited about cleaning our room, I got a tattoo about cleaning my room and got a motivational poster on my wall about cleaning my room. I even memorized some of the instructions and learned how to say clean your room in Greek!

And the Father responded, that's great, I can't wait to see how clean your room is!

The son responded, well, I have yet to actually get around to cleaning it quite yet. I think someone else might be more gifted to clean my room.

Everyone would look at this situation and say that the son has failed to be obedient to his father's command.

Can you imagine how that Dad would feel about his son's response?

How ridiculous does that sound?

Why do we think that when Jesus, who is our King, tells us to go, and make disciples we can treat him the way this son treated his father?

We cannot be a people that does a lot of churchy things, without being a people that makes disciples.

If we are going to recognize Christ as King, then we have to respond to his commands as if he actually does have authority over our lives.

Jesus addresses this type of Christianity in Luke 6:46

46 “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do the things I say? Luke 6:46 (CSB)

Jesus says this four different ways in John 14–



23 Jesus answered, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word -- John 14:23 (CSB)

Church, how could we call Jesus our King and not listen to him?

Scripture gives us strong warnings about hearing without doing.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. -- Matthew 7:21 (CSB)

So I pray, with as much reverence, as much love, and pastoral care as I can

–that as we hear these words from Jesus today, and that we don't let the familiarity of these words cause us to not hear what is being said.

Christ, our king, comes near to you and says all authority has been given to me and I will be with you, so go.

Go make disciples.

If you are in Christ, then this command *burdens* you to respond in some way.

It's not called the eh Commision. Or for the gen zer's out there is not called the "mid" commission it's the GREAT COMMISSION.

And it is great, (as a millennial, I admit, I had to fight the urge to do a Tony the Tiger voice there)

But seriously, there is no greater joy that I have experienced than to watch someone go from hurting and wondering to becoming a disciple of Jesus.

A life on mission with Jesus is a great life, I believe it's the only life that actually fills the desires of our heart. It's how we were wired to live. It is a great commission.

Living out this commission reflects that the true affections of our hearts are towards Christ.

We aren't earning favor with God, but

Obedience to this command is evidence that our allegiance is to Christ.

Our King has spoken and he says GO!!

Now, hopefully, we feel the weight of Jesus's command in this passage and are asking the question, okay what exactly is it that he is asking us to do?

If you will allow me, I am going to get nerdy for a a few minutes, but I think it will be helpful.

I am going to put this up on the screen and I have some words underlined and some words bolded, I



think this will be helpful to understand exactly what it is that Christ is telling us to do as we go.

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, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you

The grammar in English can make it hard to clearly see how this passage is meant to be heard. But the central command of this passage is

“Make disciples”, and then the words “go, baptize, and teach” describe what the action of making disciples looks like.

For the English majors out there, “make disciples” is the verb, and go, baptize, and teach are the participles.

In other words, our instructions are to make disciples, the words go, baptize, and teach explain how we execute the command.

That's why our mission statement is to make disciples that love God, love each other, and love the world. This is exactly what we aim to do.

So, before I keep going I want to zoom in one more time and define what it means to be a disciple, we can't make disciples unless we actually know what a disciple is, right?

A lot of us might think of discipleship as going to community groups, maybe just showing up to church frequently means that we are being a disciple, or maybe when we hear of discipleship we think of one-on-one meetings with someone who mentors us.

While those are those things that are good and are places where discipleship can take place, alone that is not a representation of what Jesus is calling us into when he says go make disciples.

This is what a disciple is:

A disciple is someone who is with Jesus, who is being changed by Jesus, and who is on Mission with Jesus.

Being a disciple has to begin with being with Jesus and being changed by Jesus.

The first thing that Jesus said to his disciples in the gospel of Matthew is come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. Then they followed him and he taught them how to live as a disciple.

There is an old saying from the time that Jesus walked the earth that goes something like, you should be covered in the dust of your rabbi or teacher.

The idea is that you should follow your teacher so closely that the dust that kicks up from his sandals gets all over you.

In order to be disciples of Jesus, we should follow Christ in this way so closely that we get covered in his dust and become like him.

For too many of us, the gospel was just a prayer that we prayed that got us out of hell and into heaven, but the gospel is so much more than that.

The gospel doesn't just teach you how to die, it teaches you how to live.

This means that we live like Christ, we become like him in every possible way.

We are with Jesus so much so that we get covered by the dust of our savior and therefore become more like our savior.

And our savior was deeply burdened for people that are lost. He left his throne in heaven for the lost and so as we are with him and changed by him, we too become deeply burdened for the lost.

We have no ability to go make disciples of Jesus unless we are disciples of Jesus.

So a disciple is with Jesus so much so that we are changed by him - then simultaneously goes on mission with Jesus.

In order to say that we are on mission with Jesus, we need to be able to say that we are participating in the following things.

I am trying to be as clear and specific as I can, because it is so important that we all walk in obedience here.

Someone who is a disciple of Jesus and therefore on mission with Jesus does the following things in their life in some way no matter the setting or circumstances...

- They testify of the goodness of God by being a witness.
- They share the good news of the cross.
- They baptize those who respond in faith (which doesn't mean that they are physical doing the baptism themselves, but participating in the other person's profession of faith),
- And then we teach those who respond in faith how to follow Jesus.

I'll repeat those. This is what someone who is on mission does with their life:

And I'm not saying that if you don't baptize every person you meet, then you aren't being obedient to Jesus, but followers of Christ have to be asking



ourselves, is there any evidence in my life at all that I am on mission with Jesus?

If going on mission with Jesus is overwhelming to you, I have found this super helpful —especially in regards to testifying of God's goodness and sharing the gospel.

If you believe these two things, then sharing your faith becomes a whole lot easier and more natural.

That salvation belongs to God and that faith comes from hearing.

This means we all recognize that it is not our words that save people, it is the work of the Father initiating, the Son redeeming, and the Holy Spirit Convicting.

Salvation belongs to GOD, but our role in this is to give people the opportunity to hear the truth.

Effective evangelists will say that on average people will hear the gospel 18 times before responding. (much higher than it used to be)

So you might be gospel share number 16, or 4-

it doesn't really matter

The person's response belongs to God, we just keep faithfully testifying and sharing.

Salvation belongs to God, and faith comes by hearing.

Guys, this is what being obedient to the command of our King looks like.

So in order for us to be able to say that we are being obedient...

Or if we use the illustration from earlier, in order for our dad to get home and us to be able to say yes, we actually cleaned our room:

We are someone that is with Jesus, changed by Jesus, and is on a mission with Jesus and then we are participating in other people becoming someone that is with Jesus, is changed by Jesus, and is on mission with Jesus.

Disciples by definition make more disciples.

This is what King Jesus says his followers will do. Be a disciple that makes disciples.

So I just want to sit here for a moment.

Again, I want to invite you guys with as much pastoral care and love as I can, to reflect on this and respond in faithful obedience.

And as the nerves pop up, all the insecurities and doubts about yourself bubble to the surface.



We begin to think things like “I can't make disciples, I'm not smart enough, I don't have enough time, I am too introverted.”

As all the lies of the enemy flood your mind, I want you to remember that God is with you always.

And in that space where you are terrified and insecure, but you move in obedience and get yourself out of the way so that God moves through you.

That space is where God moves. That is how he has worked and how he will continue to work to the end of the age.

That space is where God's pursuit of you moves towards God's pursuit of others through you.

The King is with you, so Go make disciples.

Pause long enough for reflection.

Now to finish up:

I want to circle back around to the phrase. “All nations”

It is clear that this passage is commissioning us to walk through our lives, be disciples and make disciples. And it really doesn't matter the setting, whenever you are, the great commission is your mission.

A Christian is a disciple maker in Monroe, in wadesboro, in Waxhaw, in Bangladesh, and Indonesia. But there is a clear command for these disciple makers collectively to be going to all nations. So when we hear “go” we should hear:

Go to your Neighbor *and* to the Nations

It's not an “either-or”, it's a “both-and”

With this command to make disciples, —We go to our neighbors and the Nations.

Everything I have said up to this point applies to your work, your family, your classmates, your roommates, your spouse, or whoever God has placed in your life, but it certainly does not end there.

The great commission reinforces God's plan to redeem all mankind that he promised in Genesis 22, that he will use his people to bless all nations.

In case you were wondering that phrase, all nations, it is not referring to a nation state like how we would use the word “country”.

Its closer to the ethnicity and its most helpful to translate this word for our context as “People Group”

And the reality is that there are entire people groups that do not have access to the hope of the gospel.



Like I said earlier, if you are a disciple of Jesus, hearing this should burden you deeply.

Here are some numbers that show the urgency that we should have in this pursuit.

~17,000 people groups in the world

There are a little over 17,000 people groups in the world.

What's your best guess on how many groups are considered "unreached" by the gospel?

~7,000 of them are considered unreached with the gospel.

7,000 people groups are considered unreached with the gospel.

7,000 people groups = 3.2 Billion people

7,000 people groups represent about 3.2 billion people.

3.2 Billion people have no access to the hope of the gospel.

That means about 41% of the world will be born and will die without zero access to hearing the truth of what Christ has done to save them.

Jesus commissioned his church to reach these people with the gospel.

Jesus, our King, commissioned you to participate in reaching these people.

70,000 Missionaries Needed

Experts say that in order to reach these 3.2 billion people we will need at least 70,000 missionaries to be sent into these places.

This is a big number, but it's not an impossible task. Charlotte can get 70,000 people to show up to watch the Panthers get smacked. The church should be able to get 70,000 people to say yes to their creator.

These people can be reached.

Jesus's words from a little earlier in the gospel of Matthew are still true.

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few." -- Matthew 9:37 (CSB)

For the church to be faithful to our King's commission we *all* participate in this pursuit,

We become disciples, we make disciples, and we ALL play a role in reaching the nations.

WE ALL HAVE A ROLE IN REACHING THE NATIONS.



If you are in Christ, you are sent. That's why we finish our services by saying you are sent.

We are all sent to be on mission where the Lord has you *and* to participate in reaching the nations.

So the question is not whether or not you are called to the nations, the question is, what is your role in taking the gospel to the nations.

Some of us will help send people to the nations and some of us actually go to the nations.

You are either a sender to the nations or a goer to the nations.

For most of us, our specific assignment is Monroe or Indian Trail, or Waxhaw, whatever it is

But while we live on mission here, we send our money, and our resources, we train people, equip people, and we pray for those whose assignment is to go to those 3.2 billion unreached people groups.

However, like I said, some of us are goers.

What that means is that every one of us needs to be praying and asking the Lord if we are going to be one of the 70,000 needed to go make disciples in these regions with no access to the gospel.

That means saying, Here I am Lord, Send Me and actually meaning it.....

50 by 2030

Mercy has set a goal to send 50 of the 70,000 by the year 2030.

I believe that some of the 50 are in this room today.

Some of us are called to go.

Is God calling you to bring the gospel to unreached people groups?

And if the Holy Spirit is pulling on your heart at all to move towards the nations,

to be one of the 50.

Please do not ignore those prompts from the Holy Spirit that lives inside you.

I know it's a big decision, I don't even want you to make that decision today, but if....if the Holy Spirit is compelling you in any way, it is not something to dismiss, but to work out diligently with your community and alongside one of your pastors.

Here at Mercy Church we actually have several things set up to both help you determine your exact role in



reaching the nations and to equip you in whatever role you are assigned.

And so, one main action step, and I want as many of us as possible to take this step:

Mission of God class. It starts next Sunday, so if at all possible prioritize this class. Take your Sunday evenings for 6 weeks and lean into the assignment that the Lord has for you in reaching your neighbor and the nations.

This is such a big deal that our church does our absolute best in helping you identify the Lord's assignment in your life, so we put a lot into walking through this with you.

From this class, , you can become a better disciple maker in your community, you can join a Discipleship Making Team, go on a Short term trip, or begin the process of being sent overseas.

and all the above help you determine where your assignment is. We will not send you to the nations without doing everything we possibly can to prepare you for your assignment. So please, sign up for the class and take your next step.

There is a station at the Next Steps Tent outside to sign up for the class.

If you have already taken the class and now want to know your next steps, or if you know you can't take the

class and still want to know your next step, or if you have any questions about what your next steps are, come talk to me after the service and I will do everything I can to help you move forward in obedience.

Lets bow our heads, the band can come on up. And I will lead us through a time in prayer.

Prayer Points:

To submit to Christ as king, here I am Lord, Send Me

To be a disciple and make disciples

To ask the Lord if you are called to the nations.

Respond in faith.

