



THE STORY Sermon Study Guide

Week 9: The Great Commission - A People Called by God to Reach the Nations

Simon Longden

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Before ascending to heaven, Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission. It wasn't just a nice farewell or a comforting blessing, it was a charge—for them and for us—one that combines belief, obedience and trust in Jesus' ongoing presence.

This week we hear from guest speaker, Simon Longden, National Director of Pioneers Australia, as we explore what it really means to be a disciple, and how ordinary people, with doubts and all, can live out the mission of Jesus in the world.

Read Matthew 28:16-20

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

To call Jesus "Lord" is to recognise His authority, stretching from the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3 & 14) to the end of time (Revelation 22:12-13). When Jesus commands us to make disciples, He does so as the One with the right to direct our lives.

Submitting to Christ's authority means letting His purposes shape our agendas, our priorities, and even our daily routines. We can easily fill our lives with important activities and good things, but we must be careful not to neglect the call to make disciples as we walk in step with Christ and share His hope with others.

1. What does it look like practically to submit your plans and desires to the One who holds all authority in heaven and on earth?
2. In what areas of your life do you find it hardest to do this?



Verse 19 & 20a: Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

In the original Greek, the word “go” carries the sense of “*as you go*.” It’s not about waiting for the perfect moment or for someone to come to us. It’s about a lifestyle of disciple-making wherever we are. “Go” means stepping out—from the places where people already know Jesus to the places where He isn’t known yet. Sometimes that’s across an office, classroom or across the fence to a neighbour. Sometimes it’s across an ocean.

The heart of it is this: disciple-making happens in the everyday. At work, at school, in the mechanic’s shop, at home, on holidays, as you travel. Wherever you go, you carry Jesus with you. And, the most loving thing we can do for others is to introduce them to Him.

1. Think about your current relationships and circumstances. Where is God already positioning you to make disciples “as you go”?
2. In the church we’ve sometimes seen evangelism (winning people to Christ) and discipleship (helping believers grow) as two separate tasks. But Jesus’ command to “go and make disciples” doesn’t separate one from the other. It’s about journeying together towards faith *and* maturity in Christ. How does seeing evangelism and discipleship as one process shift your perspective?

Verse 17: When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

Matthew’s gospel tells us that when the disciples saw the risen Jesus, they worshipped Him—*but some doubted*. Even in that moment of glory, standing face to face with the resurrected Lord, doubt was still present.

What’s striking is Jesus’ response. He doesn’t divide the confident from the doubters and send only the strong ones out. He calls all of them to the mission, even those with doubts. Obedience in the face of doubt is where faith grows deepest. God delights to use ordinary people who are willing to trust Him enough to act, even when they feel unqualified. If you feel inadequate or unsure, remember that you are in good company, and that God’s call is for you.

1. Do you ever feel like doubt holds you back in following Jesus? What would it look like to step forward in obedience anyway?
2. Simon spoke of three dimensions of belief as we read the Bible and follow Jesus’ call: cognitive (what we know), emotional (how it moves us), and evaluative (how we respond). Which of these three dimensions comes most



naturally to you—head, heart or hands? Which one do you find most challenging, and why?

Verse 20b: And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

The task of making disciples can feel overwhelming, especially in a world that is often resistant or indifferent to the gospel. Yet Jesus promises, “I am with you always.” This is not just a comforting thought, but the very foundation of our mission. We do not go alone; Christ Himself goes with us, empowering, comforting, and sustaining us every step of the way.

His presence is what enables us to persevere when we feel weak, to speak when we feel afraid, and to love when it is difficult. No matter how dark or uncertain the path may seem, Jesus’ face is turned toward us. As you step out in obedience this week, rest in the assurance that you are never alone—His abiding presence is your strength.

1. What specific fears or obstacles prevent you from being more intentional about making disciples? How might Jesus’ promise “I am with you always” speak to those fears?
2. Simon used the story of the little boy asking if his father’s face was turned toward him in the dark. How does knowing that Jesus’ “face is turned your way” change your perspective on the challenges of discipleship?

Closing Activity

Take a few minutes for silent reflection, then share one specific way you sense God calling you to respond to this message. This might be:

- Praying for opportunities to share Christ in your current contexts
- Taking a step of faith to “go” where Jesus is not yet known
- Committing to more consistent Bible reading with your head, heart and hands (cognitive, emotional and evaluative response)

Consider together:

- How can your small group become more intentional about making disciples?
- How can you encourage and support each other in this calling?

Pray for:

- **Submission** - That you would live more fully under Christ’s lordship



- **Nations** - Specific unreached people groups and cross-cultural workers. (Your group might like to sign up to receive the monthly Global Email with prayer requests from our NewHope Partners ministering around the world. See newhope.net.au/global to find out more.)
- **Obedience** - Courage to act on what God has shown you through His word
- **Presence** - Awareness of Jesus' constant companionship in the mission
- **Opportunities** - Open doors and receptive hearts in your spheres of influence

Suggested Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for the call to go and make disciples, and for the promise that you are always with us. Give us courage to trust you, wisdom to walk with others, and faithfulness to live under your authority and call. May we see your Kingdom grow. In your precious name we pray, Amen.

Bible Reading Plan & Resources

As we engage in this sermon series and reflect on 'The Story' of God's redemptive pursuit of humanity, we invite you to practise the discipline of regular Bible reading. You may like to use the [NewHope Bible Reading Plan](#) which has been developed to accompany each sermon over the next 12-weeks. Get a physical copy at church, download a digital copy from our website or follow NewHope in the Bible App for daily updates.

There are also many other wonderful ways to engage with Scripture and you can find a collection of resources, such as books, apps, courses, and more at newhope.net.au/the-story.