



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion
The OTHER Great Commission

Announcements:

4/18 @6:30 -

Women's
Bible Study

4/19 @7:00 -

Prayer

4/20 @6:30 -

Grace Group

4/23 @8:30 -

Sunday School

4/24 @6:30 -

Men's Discipleship
- Question 9

ICE BREAKER: Finish this sentence: I am called to share the Gospel with _____ .

If you have been around for a while, you might have noticed that when a missionary comes and speaks, my go-to GracePoint would be something on Matthew 29:18-20, also known as the great commission. However, it feels like we have heard that passage every Sunday for like the last 2 years, and we will be having a whole sermon on it coming up as we end Matthew. So trying not to overdo it on that passage, I was left with a bit of a conundrum: What do we write about? Enter Luke's version of the great commission, or as I would lovingly call it, the OTHER great commission (kinda like last week where we had Mary and the other Mary!).

READ: Acts 1:8-11

The first thing that I would like to note is that Luke here ties the timing of the commissioning to share the Gospel with the whole world to two important things. One is the Ascension, and the other is the return of Christ. It is *immediately* after he says these things in verse 9 that he is "lifted up" and taken out of sight. This is critical because it is for us the last thing that Jesus said. As such it is meant to stick with us, and motivate us and ring in our hearts in a particular way. But then two men in white robes appear on the scene. "Ok, why are you sitting up here looking to heaven. He is coming back!" This reminder is important because time is short. Jesus is returning and when he does the time of sharing the Gospel is over. In other words the twofold timing that Luke gives us is telling us one important thing. **GET TO WORK!** These are the last words of Jesus - follow them! And he is coming back, so do what he said!

DISCUSS: Why is it that we often do NOT have a sense of urgency when sharing the Gospel? How can seeing the context of this great commission help?

The next thing that we should note is that Luke gives us a particular *source* of our ability to proclaim the truth of Who Jesus was and what he did. Whereas in Matthew, the focus is on the authority of Jesus - in Luke it is on a precious gift given to us: The Holy Spirit. Really the whole book of Acts (long name being "The Acts of the Apostles") could be "The Acts of the Holy Spirit Indwelt Apostles" for this is really the focus of the whole book. That it is in the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of not just the Apostles, but all believers that miracles happen, that the church blooms and flourishes, that the person and power of Christ is magnified. And for us it is important to note that the same Spirit will come upon US and therefore the same empowerment that led Peter and James and John and Paul can and should lead us!

DISCUSS: Why is understanding the work of the Holy Spirit so important to following the great commission?

Finally I want to look at something else beautiful that Luke does here. He explains the sharing of the Gospel in a series of expanding circles. Verse 8: "you will be my witnesses in *Jerusalem* and in all *Judea*, and *Samaria*, and to the *end of the earth*. If I were to try and show this in a local context it would be like this: We are to share the gospel in Las Cruces, in all of New Mexico, in Mexico and to the Ends of the earth. It starts local, in your hometown, it grows to the larger area you are in, then to the people that are maybe geographically close but culturally possibly far away and then extends to all people everywhere. What a beautiful picture of *our* call to share the Gospel to all people!

DISCUSS: In what ways can we be witnesses in these four areas?