



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion
96 – The "Other" Commission

Announcements:

11/29 @7:30 -

Prayer

11/30 @6:30 -

Grace Group

12/3 @8:30 -

Sunday School

12/3 @6:00 -

Family Night

PSALM 8

READ: Matthew 28:16-20

By now you all might even have memorized this passage, we have been hearing it, and I have been harping on it, for over 2 years at this point. So how can we finish up our series through the book of Matthew and look at all that this great commission is all about? Today we will try and get a more full picture by looking at how Luke relays the same sort of information. He does it a little differently, and he gives us a slightly different context. It is important that we note first the context. Luke places this commissioning at the moment of the ascension. In this way these things become literally the last words that Jesus speaks before going back to heaven. This gives them an added weight and importance. Understanding this we can see what exactly Jesus says.

READ: Acts 1:6-9

It is helpful to think of this passage with the help of three “P’s”. On Sunday we talked about the “backing” of our commission, which was the authority of Jesus. Here it is given to us even more personally. It opens by noting that when the Holy Spirit comes on the believers they will receive “POWER” (Power is the first “P”). So not only has The high king of heaven told us that we HAVE to go do this (that tis the point in Matthew), but the Holy Spirit is coming and making sure that we CAN do this by giving us power. So the authority of Jesus is with us backing us, and the Holy Spirit is in us empowering us. In other words, there is absolutely no excuse that we can make to not go. He has given us all the power we need to do whatever he will ask of us.

DISCUSS: What does it mean that we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit?

Next we can look at our POSITION. We are called here to be “witnesses”. A few weeks ago I was called to jury duty (thankfully not selected to be on the jury!) and so I have been recently thinking about witnesses more than normal. The first thing that I think of here is that all that it takes to be a witness is to have seen something. So our position here is to be people who talk about the Jesus that we have seen. We have seen him change and work in our hearts. We have seen his goodness and grace. We have seen his power and truth. We have seen Jesus and we are called to tell people all about that. But then we can think a little more. Sometimes we call “expert witnesses” to give testimony. These are people who have spent their lives becoming knowledgeable in an area. So too we are to be “expert witnesses” on the goodness of Jesus. Devoting our lives to know and love him. In other words, at the beginning we may just be witnesses to what we have seen, but our whole lives we seek to be better and better witnesses by seeing and knowing and savoring the goodness of Jesus.

DISCUSS: In what ways do you see yourself as a witness for Jesus? In what ways could you be better?

The final thing is that Luke gives us a more insightful “where” or the third “P” knowing the PLACE that we are to be his witnesses. Here, we have an ever increasing sphere. In Jerusalem - This is the place that you are right now. These are your people. This is your city, maybe your neighborhood or just your street. In Judea - this is the larger area. Still people like you, in a similar situation, people that you share something in common with who live near. Here for you it might be the county, or the state that you live in. Think local missions. In Samaria -- This is missions to the people around you that are different from you. The Samaritans were neighbors (think of the parable) but they were very different and in some sense far off. But we go there. Finally, to the ends of the earth - pretty self explanatory, but it is still here. We are to go be witnesses in circles that expand until the whole world knows his name!

DISCUSS: What do you think of these for increasing circles? What do they look like in your life?