

The Church's Great Co-Mission

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[0 : 00] Matthew 28, 16 through 20. And of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Thank you, Charlie, for leading us. What a great joy to be with you again. Again, this church is precious to us and to our network. Some of you may not know that in a very critical time of my co-pastor's life, he and Lydia a number of years ago, Pastor John and Josie were of just particular help in a very down time and gave more than a cup of cold water in Jesus' name.

But we're really a great elixir to their soul. And I want to say is before we begin, I'm thinking of Philemon 7 as I think of.

Brother John, for you, as you've hosted us for four nights, put up with my pain. I hope that you don't think I'm a pain, but you've endured my pain. There's a difference.

[1 : 47] That Paul writes to Philemon, he says, For I've derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

So thank you for your friendship and your care for us. We've had chances to pray together and encourage one another, walk even in their neighborhood.

And thank you so much for your warm welcome and hospitality. Well, tonight, I'd like to bring a message called The Church's Great Commission.

Not commission, but The Church's Great Co-mission. I appreciate Charlie reading for us a moment ago.

I want to give you three words that will help you as you think of this text. And here it is. Confidence, if you're taking notes. Confidence, commission, and comfort.

[3 : 02] In fact, I'll lay it out for us in a moment. But what I'd like to do is for us to go to the Lord together one more time.

Jesus said that a man can receive nothing except it be given him from God. And even our hearing, we're great. My experience is that we're great consumers and even Epicureans of the Word in many things.

And we want to remember, as Paul wrote to the church at Colossae, that he commended them for receiving the Word, not as the Word of men, but for what it is, is the Word of God.

And so, may I be but a conduit and instrument of that tonight as we think of this commission of our Lord Jesus to the church, which endures to this very moment. So let's go to the throne of grace one more time.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Father, we beg you now in the name that is above every name.

[4 : 07] And by the help of your Spirit, the Comforter, whom your Son said would come as the Spirit of Truth, to help us to bring to remembrance all those things that you had said to your disciples and to bear witness of you.

And so we pray now for your help. We ask that as we hear the Word, that we would hear with great attentiveness and humility.

As we read in Isaiah 66 that you've said to this one, you will look to him who is humble and contrite of heart and who trembles at your Word. Thank you for our brothers and sisters here at Bremen who've been part of Grace Fellowship Church for many, many years and that you've had a blazing gospel right in this part of northern Indiana for a long, long time.

Thank you for them. Thank you even for the great fruit in their life. I think of their faith in our Lord Jesus and their love for all the saints that has gone out even to places like Isiola, Kenya where Ebenezer and Michelle with their little daughter Amy are laboring with those other couples.

And so thank you for their partnership in the gospel even as the church here has been that for many years, for so many. So be with us as we hear the Word.

[5 : 50] We pray for your grace. We need your help. We need your Spirit to enlighten this Word to us to help us receive it as the Word. We pray this in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. Six years ago at Canyon Lake in Texas, it was a day like so many late days. Michael Talley was a dad. I think he was a single dad from Houston. He had two twin daughters. They were turning 12. So it was a daddy daughter's birthday date.

And in fact, I'm remembering that he was a single dad and the girl's mom had died nine years earlier when they were just three.

Michael was on a jet ski with his daughter Daja and he made this sharp turn like dads like to do, maybe feigning as though I'll throw you off or we'll have a little fun or splash, but their craft overturned.

[6 : 58] And Michael and daughter Daja were thrown off. And Daja had a life jacket on, but for some strange reason she began to sink and Dad saw this.

So he quickly took off his own. He threw it to her daughter. She grabbed it and got upright, floating. And another jet ski came by and rescued Daja. But Michael could not get himself up on the rescuer's jet ski just too hard.

And he slipped out of sight into the waters of Canyon Lake. A couple of hours later, the EMT personnel found his body.

You see, for Michael, his daughter's life was a great cause for which he was willing to give his own. The greatest causes always cause the call for the greatest effort, the sharpest focus, and really the most significant preparation.

And so it is, brothers and sisters, with the kingdom and with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes, maybe you can relate to this.

[8 : 14] I find that I piddle with unimportant things. You can find it's 8 o'clock and 45 minutes later it's 8.45 and if someone said, what did you accomplish?

And you say, nothing. I just messed around. And unless something's really important, I've realized sometimes I don't give it attention or enough attention. The reality is that most of life is just pedestrian, right?

There just don't seem to be that many earth-shattering moments in terms of importance. Life is just a series of fairly insignificant moments on one level.

And if you're like me, maybe you find that life is just this continual series of mostly unexciting moments and duties, if you'll think about this. Really, much of life is mundane.

It's why it can become such a grind. If you think about it, it's just so daily. There's work and laundry and meals and grocery shopping, diaper changes, getting the kids to school or getting them started if you're homeschooling the kids at the dining room table, opening the mail, paying the bills, preparing for a test, blowing leaves, cutting the grass, posting something on Facebook, calling your children or parents, etc., etc., etc.

[9 : 39] You know what this is like. And then you wake up tomorrow only to do the same thing all over again. In many ways, right? Tuesday, November 5th, will seem likely very similar to Monday, November 4th.

And very rarely do you and I have moments like the one Michael Talley had and faced on Canyon Lake six years ago. It's moments that call for our greatest effort because the cause is so great. But the church, as we see here, if you'll turn with me to Matthew 28, is called to greatness. The church is called to God's greatest cause to accomplish something so great that coordinates with His purpose.

And He calls us to His greatest cause through the greatest commission. And you'll notice if you've got an ESV Bible, it's not an inspired heading, but it says, the great commission there.

You have these five verses, verses 16 through 18. We call what's for many years, for a long time, the great commission.

[10 : 57] And it's the great commission that's the basis for our, these three words, our confidence, our commission, and then our comfort.

Okay? Those three words. They were given by Jesus, this great commission, in His final mandate to the disciples.

And the greatest cause, no doubt, is the great commission. And this greatest cause calls for our greatest effort.

And I know some of you parents can recognize this sometimes with your children. Kids, maybe you know this. Mom and dad are saying, you can do better. Try harder. Okay? It looks like that.

Just do a little better. Pay a little more attention. But with the great commission, the great cause called the great commission, it calls for us, it calls us to give our greatest effort.

[11 : 55] I want you to think about the context just for the moment of this passage. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record a version, a sample of the great commission for God's great cause.

And each sample has an equally inspired but slightly different emphasis. Luke even does it twice. Once in Luke 24, but also in Acts 1.

They all kind of include some mention of the message for their witness, the power for their witness, and then even the geographical expansion of their witness, like we referenced this morning from Acts 1, 7, and 8, from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth, which actually forms an outline for Luke's history.

The book of Acts is the history of the early church. And Mark, for example, includes this in Mark 16, 15.

He says, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. There is the message of the apostles' witness. What was it they were to proclaim?

[13 : 10] The gospel. Okay? We see then in Acts 1, 8, right, that Jesus promised the gathered apostles this.

He says, You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. There's the power for the apostles in their message. The message, the gospel, the power from the Holy Spirit.

And as Sinclair Ferguson says, it's in Acts 2, at Pentecost, that we find this inaugural outpouring of the Holy Spirit informing and shaping the charter of the church.

All right? And then finally, as we saw earlier in Matthew 28, 19, the scope is this. Jesus says that the apostles, he calls them to make disciples of all nations.

And that parallels this wording in Mark 16 to go into all the world. Mark 16, go into all the world. Matthew 28, make disciples of all the nations.

[14 : 14] There's to be no people group that's left unchallenged with the great life-saving message of the gospel.

And the idea there, when Jesus says go into all the nations, that term *ethnos* is not so much geographically oriented, but people group oriented.

That's why we speak of UPGs, unreached people groups. Right? Now, so here's this word of the finally from Acts 1-8 that he says that Jesus says we would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the end of the earth.

That's the missional and geographical expansion of the apostles' witness to the world. There's no missions without going. And there's no going without sending.

At some point, just like you see these three risers on these steps, there are cultural, there are ethnical, and there are linguistic barriers and boundaries that we must cross to bring the gospel to the nations.

[15 : 30] That's missions. All right? Even to distinguish it a bit from local outreach. Missions is crossing some cultural, ethnical, or linguistic boundary or barrier to bring the gospel to those to whom, to those who have not received it.

Now, so what are the details? And I want to encourage you, keep your eyes on these five verses. I want you to really focus here as we look at the details of our commission to the greatest cause.

I think you know the three words already. Confidence, the commission itself, and then our comfort. Let's look first, then, at our confidence. And our confidence is this.

It's that the Lord Jesus is an enthroned and exalted Christ. And I want to say at the outset that the three goals we're going to see of evangelism, if you will, in this message, I derive from a message by Pastor Al Martin from Montville, New Jersey, roughly around 1980.

I heard it on a tape, I made some notes, and I preached, taken the essence of this and preached it with some shaping and nuancing. But so, we'll get to that under the commission itself.

[16 : 54] But first, let's start with our confidence. The Lord Jesus is an enthroned and exalted Christ. And we see that in verse 18.

Jesus says, even to some, you'll notice the distinction in verse 17, not everyone's response to the resurrected Christ is the same.

Some worship what? But some doubt. That's right. Some doubt it. But the Lord Jesus speaks without any equivocation here.

All authority, He says, in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And so the church knows who has sent her out on mission.

We're not going to China unless our church sends us. And we wouldn't go to China unless the Lord Jesus' words will reverberate in our ears where He says, all authority, not some authority, has been given to me.

[18 : 01] Alright? In heaven and on earth has been given to me. And that sender is none other than the Lord of glory.

Yes, He came. Yes, He lived. Yes, He suffered. And He died on the cross as the Son of God crucified. But He was raised to our everlasting joy and hope.

He was raised incorruptible by the ultimate power that is God's power. Listen to this. He was raised victorious over death, over the grave, over hell and sin.

And then He was imminently to be enthroned in exalted glory at the right hand of God which is a place of authority.

The God who dwells in unapproachable light. light. And so Jesus there as the risen, exalted, enthroned, and seated Lord Jesus who at this moment tonight on November 3rd, 2024 as that risen, exalted, ascended, seated, and praying Lord Jesus as the prophet, priest, king of the church has said all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[19 : 36] And it's been rightfully given to Him as the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, the one who said to the Father and to the Spirit, here am I, I will give my life for the life of the sheep.

And so our confidence is found in this person in character of the one who has commissioned us in this great cause. How else could we go?

We just sang the song where else can we go but how else can we go but in the authority of this one who's seated at the right hand of God who ever lives to make intercession for us.

all authority brothers and sisters not some is His. His authority His rule extends everywhere into all persons into all created things.

No place think about this no place in any created sphere can escape the influence of His authority. It was that great Dutchman who was both theologian and really a statesman Abraham Kuyper that said there's not one square inch some of you know the quote there's not one square inch under creation that Jesus Christ does not place His finger on and say my my all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him.

[21 : 10] Right? No place escapes the influence of His authority but we have then more than His permission Jesus is not simply conceding to His disciples that they may go He's commanding them to go and they go in His authority.

We have more than just His power. We then when we go are Jesus' personal representatives in this great work of preaching the gospel and making disciples of the nations.

And I can tell you by personal testimony when we went to China 11 years ago and we were learning Chinese and we were slammed in the face with the cross cultural stress of moving from Greenville, South Carolina to a mega urban city.

No car living on a 33rd floor apartment being learning Chinese trying to figure out the subway packed in like sardines trying to get to language school.

I can tell you the only way that we endured that and made it through that first smack was to know that we went with Him who says all authority in heaven and in earth has been given to me.

[22 : 28] That was our confidence and that may be your confidence as you continue in this great cause of sending the gospel and gospel workers to the nations. There is our confidence.

Let's move now to our commission. We know what He has sent us to do. He tells the apostles as we like to say it's like hitting a golf ball 300 yards.

Alright? It's not complicated but it's not easy. It's like hitting a 100 mile an hour fastball and you're standing at the plate.

Not complicated but that doesn't make it easy. But here it is. He tells the apostles specifically what their commission is.

And by telling the apostles He provides by extension instructions for us and every successive generation of the church.

[23 : 30] And so kids just for a moment I want you to think about this. Alright? When you become a Christian and you become part of the church and even now what do we want to do?

We want to make Jesus great. We want to make His name great to all the nations. It doesn't matter whether they're rich or poor whether they're in Africa or North America or Central America or South America or Europe or Asia we want to make disciples of the nations.

Alright? And we find these instructions in verse 19 in the first half of verse 20. How many commands are there in the Great Commission? Have you ever thought about this? There's really one command and that command is to what?

Make disciples. There are three participles that's words that end in I-N-G that shape that. And it begins with going. So there's this one command make disciples and that command if it was like soft like putty or clay is shaped by these three words going baptizing and teaching.

And for the church to be faithful in receiving this great commission and the confidence we have in our Lord Jesus who says all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me then we take heed to the command itself and the three participles the three shaping words to that commission.

[25 : 15] Alright? And so the first right answer to how many commands are there is that we're to make disciples of all the nations or literally disciple the nations.

And we can't be ambivalent about that. The second right answer is found in those three participles going baptizing and teaching. In those three participles action words give that shape they give shape to the command itself.

And so that brings us to thinking about these three goals of evangelism or the working out of this commission. And again I want to give credit to Pastor Al Martin for his sermon in 1980 thereabouts about that.

Here's the first goal as we make disciples of all the nations. Number one it's implicit in the command itself it's embedded there.

It's to bring every person into a radical relationship of faith Jesus Christ. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations or going therefore make disciples of all the nations.

[26 : 31] It's Carl Dalfred who makes this point. It was Christ's commission to go and make disciples was given to the entire church not just to individual Christians.

Like it's understandable maybe some of you are thinking I'm discipling so and so but the reality is is that the church is given in a corporate way this responsibility to make disciples of the nations.

And it was more than eleven men could do in their lifetime. Think about this. Could you imagine being one of the eleven? Jesus is saying go into all the world make disciples of all the nations.

I don't know about you but I'm exhausted just thinking about it. Okay. It's more than they could have ever done in a lifetime. Ten lifetimes. The scale of the work. The limits of time and physical energy. The scope of unreached people groups ensured listen to this that many generations of the church would be required to fulfill this mandate and that includes us in the 21st century here in northern Indiana.

[27 : 44] Think about this even now. Today there are some 11,000 ethno linguistic people groups in the world today. And our goal is to bring the gospel to every man woman and child with the hope that God in his saving grace and the power of his right arm might bring them to faith.

That's the first step of making disciples. Faithfulness let's be clear here. What we're called to is faithfulness in bringing the message that's our responsibility.

Saving and saving action is God's alone. We must incarnate the gospel. We know with technology it's easier than ever and some of you get right.

We could we could quote preach a sermon on zoom but there's something about incarnating the gospel by going. and can't we assume that these words preserved in Matthew 28 go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.

We're inspired by a spirit that no doubt was aware that at the end of the 20th century in the beginning of the 21st century he knew that there would be technology that would allow us to connect from a distance and yet preserved in the scripture or the words to go.

[29 : 13] We must go. But let's not make the mistake and again this is cannot this is Carl Dalfred who makes his point.

Let's not make the mistake of thinking that every disciple is called to a remote region of the planet and I want to read from him here. This is what he said. Jesus took for granted that some of his disciples would go to the uttermost parts of the earth.

In fact the truth is that where Ebenezer and Michelle are with these two other couples and then Stanley who's about to be married with Marvin and Maureen and Shaki and Anne Mokiio where you get to very sparsely populated northern Kenya where you have a chance to have camel meat in your stew.

And where the language is become more complex is you also can begin to hear Arabic as you move from the Christian south to the Muslim north.

These as Carl Dalford speaks of he says some would go to the uttermost parts of the earth. But he adds he says he did not but he did not envision all of his disciples hopping on a boat or plane to some far-flung part of the world.

[30 : 39] The New Testament puts a much greater emphasis on faithfulness in the situation that we find ourselves than it does upon physical travel.

So moms with little children when you give a cup of cold water or a loaf of bread to the unconverted mom down your street or next to you who's just given birth.

Or you encourage her as she's struggling with postpartum depression. You're just a friend. You're embedded. You're contemplated here even in the Great Commission.

You be faithful to bring the word and give a cup of water in Jesus' name there. Let me move on quickly to the second goal. I understand in two weeks.

There's a number that are being baptized here and we really rejoice in that on the 17th. And so we bring our second goal. The first again is to bring every person into a radical relationship of faith with Jesus Christ.

[31 : 46] The second goal in our commission, this great commission to the greatest cause is to bring every believer into vital connection with his church.

And you see it in the words, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The word there, the name is in the singular. In the one name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And so believers are not only united by faith with Jesus Christ, but also with his church. church. And it is fair, if you've ever thought about this, it is as fair to say that when we are united by faith with Christ, solid line, we are united with one another just as truly by virtue of our union with Christ.

And it is much a solid line as is that. This is not dotted and therefore it causes us and it calls us to be ever attentive to preserve the unity of the faith and the bond of peace as the first implication of the gospel from Ephesians 4.

Because we're to bring every believer into this vital connection with his church. You see, for a person to come to faith in Christ, but to not also come in a living and vital connection to his church is absolutely unthinkable.

[33 : 27] Life with him is life with one another. Baptizing is this initializing rite or symbol of connecting every believer not just with the church, but with a church.

And an implication of this is in coming weeks, don't let the baptism of these four or five be the end of a line, but be eager to take these that have professed faith in Christ and you're baptizing to press them into the life of the church, to be intentional.

Okay? It's easy to reach out and befriend and draw in one another into the bonds of fellowship. It's just easier not to.

It's easy to do it. It's just easier not to. And so I encourage you to do that in a very practical way. All right? Give me just a second here.

There's this incarnational ministry, right? Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. Now this initializing ministry, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[34 : 43] Spirit, right? A believer is not simply baptized. The Lord of the church, the captain of our faith, says that we as the church are to mark the public entrance of new believers.

We're literally welcoming them into the church by this public symbol of baptism. And that baptism is to take place in the single or the one name of the triune God who saves.

Think about this with me for a moment. In the name of the Father who elected his own before the foundations of the world. In the name of the Son who accomplished redemption for those elect by

his cross.

And in the name of the Spirit who applies redemption to the elect by his regenerating power. So now believers are to be baptized in that name and with the authority that's vested or invested in that name.

and this action must always be done if you will to connect them to the church whose salvation was envisioned, purchased, accomplished, and applied by the saving right arm.

[35 : 57] If we could, I would put the baptism font right here, get the whole church to gather around and have Pastor John baptize them with such force that everyone is splashed with the water and you get wet in such a way that you're reminded that they've been baptized into a fellowship and that they are your blood-bought brothers and sisters and you have this ongoing commitment to them.

Does that make sense? Yeah. That's the second goal of our commission. There's a third goal and that's to bring every believer into practical obedience with his word.

Jesus says here, teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you. Another way to translate that word observe is to keep. You know in John 14, 15, Jesus says if you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Right? Love then, right? Love is the very root of obedience which is then the fruit, you could say is the fruit of that love that we first experience from our heavenly father.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. We've already seen the concept. I want you to think of this. The concepts of incarnational ministry going therefore, initializing ministry, baptizing them in the name of the father and the son in those first two goals of the great commission.

[37 : 27] Now we come to what you might call instructional ministry. You know this, the church is to be a seedbed of constant learning. What is pastoral ministry but teaching ministry?

Church planner Victor Cruz says that if the church has been established to be a teaching ministry, then right, Christian ministry is mainly a teaching ministry.

And by learning, we don't simply mean the continual accumulation of more or the continual kind of accumulation of more information.

Paul David Tripp has a chapter in his book *Dangerous Calling* entitled *Big Theological Brains and Heart Disease*. Think about that just for a moment.

Big Theological Brains and Heart Disease. And this was his fear. Pastors and all of us who are swelled in arrogance by more theological knowledge rather than humbled and made grateful by the reality of the cross.

[38 : 38] And so what is the goal of learning within the community of the church? It's important if you look at those words and go, look at this very carefully. He says teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you.

He doesn't say teaching them to know as in simply the accumulation of more theological knowledge like some compendium like all of us are walking around like theological encyclopedias.

All right. He says teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you. All right. That's what he says. So what's the goal of our learning within the community of the church?

Here's an easy answer. Here it is. Gospel transformation where every area of my life is shaped by the implications of the cross.

And the aim of teaching and therefore learning within the church is to assist each of us to answer the question, how can I live a Godward life to live?

[39 : 48] You might say *Coram Deo*. A holy life, a life that is pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ, that is a continual fragrance of life to those around me.

And this is what it looks like. I change. You change. We change together through his word and by his spirit.

And so we become more and more like Jesus Christ, the very thing we're told in Romans 8 that we were predestined to.

Finally, I want to come to our comfort. And you see it there. It's not complicated. We've gone from our confidence to the commission itself and now our comfort.

And our comfort is this, that the Lord Jesus is an ever-present and everlasting Savior. He says, and behold, I'm with you always to the end of the age.

[40 : 50] I notice now, I was thinking about with our little granddaughters, they're seven and three and a half. And I've noticed that no matter whenever I go with them, if we're walking someplace in public, if they're beside me and I put my hand and it kind of touches their shoulder or their upper

arm, and I just kind of go like that, what do they do instinctively?

They grab Bubba's hand. That's my grandpa name. Okay, don't ask. There's a history to that name, but it's not worth getting into. You can ask me privately. For me in that moment, I'm ever-present to them.

You know what our comfort is as we think of this great commission? It's that the Lord Jesus is an ever-present and everlasting Savior. He says, and behold, I'm with you always to the end of the age.

Notice how that pairs with our confidence. He says, all authority, that's a big word, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And then finally, He says, as He bookends, as He bookends this word about the basis for our confidence, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

He bookends it with this word of comfort. And behold, look, I'm with you always to the end of the age. We've been granted His authority in our mission.

[42 : 18] That's the source of our confidence. We have been clearly commissioned with a three-fold goal in our evangelism. Bring everyone in faith to Jesus Christ.

Connect them to Jesus. Unite every believer to Jesus' church by this public and symbolic act of baptism in the single name of the triune God.

Connect them to Jesus. Connect them to the church. And then we disciple believers into practical obedience, not simply the knowing of His commands, but the obedience to His commands.

Some of you kids know Jesus says this, if you love me, you will do what I say. There's our mandate. But now finally we come to our comfort in this great cause.

The Lord Jesus is an ever-present and everlasting Savior. He's with His church in our mission. He supports us in the labor.

[43 : 22] He's alongside us every mile of the journey. The last two years we were in China, Cheryl and I thought any time it was possible that the authorities, the police could come and knock on our door and say, you have 48 hours to get out of the country.

We thought that was possible and we prepared ourselves for that. We pre-framed that moment by what that would look like. that pre-framing was aided by the thought and the comfort in these words. And behold, I'm with you always to the end of our age. Every mile of the journey He's there. You know that words like this are not in common in the Scriptures.

David says in Psalm 23, Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear. Fear no evil. Why? For you are with me.

And after Moses' death, the Lord said to Joshua, Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. And then the writer of the book of Hebrews, he quotes from these same words in Hebrews 13, verses 5 and 6.

[44 : 44] And he makes application from the words to Joshua in a different realm. He says this, Keep your life free from the love of money and be content with what you have.

For he has said, and there he quotes Joshua 1.9, I will never leave you nor forsake you. So we can confidently say, The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what can man do to me.

And just prior to the cross, Jesus had told the disciples, I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. John 14.18 I like what Garrett Scott Dawson says about these words when Jesus says, I am with you always.

He says this, he says, The biblical understanding of Jesus being with us is very different from an idea that Jesus' presence just gives us a helpful boost to the life that I'm trying to make for myself. I am with you always does not mean I have like this miniature Jesus inside my coat right here tucked inside me for my inspiration and in my ambitions or for comfort when things really just don't go my way.

[45 : 59] Rather, my little life, your little life, is taken up into the greatness of Jesus.

He is with us most profoundly, Dawson adds, because by the Spirit, we are in Christ. Christ. And our purpose is embedded in His life then.

And my purpose, your purpose, is directed by His mission for His people. In closing, to finish, next time you count your life, some of you think, my life is boring.

No one would know if I came or gone. It's boring. It's purposeless. It's full of very many unexciting moments. Too many, in fact. Let me invite you to return to Jesus' commission to the greatest cause.

Your confidence is found in the reality that you serve an enthroned and exalted Christ. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him.

[47 : 13] Your commission is threefold as a disciple within the context of Grace Fellowship Church. Here it is. Bring every person to faith in Jesus Christ. Connect them with Jesus' church.

Teach them to obey Jesus. Or teach them so that they obey Jesus and their lives reflect His mission.

And finally, your comfort is that you're not alone. The church is not alone. The author and finisher of our faith is with us every step.

That's our comfort. That He is the ever-present One who's called us to fulfill the mandate that He has given us. As Garrett Dawson says, He who is Emmanuel, God with us, promises to live up to His name in every way.

The nearness then of Christ's incarnation continues. A final word and we're done. I want to ask you this question. What progress would God's greatest cause, that is the gospel, make if we were all pulling together in the same direction?

[48 : 26] Where we weren't spending any time trying to pull those lagging behind or wanting to go the opposite direction? How would the gospel advance today, this year, among the nations if we were truly convicted and assured about the confidence, the mandate, and the comfort that we find in this great commission in the last five verses of Matthew's gospel?

That's a question for you, Grace Fellowship Church. We have our commission to the greatest cause. And the greatest cause calls for the greatest effort, the sharpest focus, the most noble sacrifices, and the most significant and painstaking preparation.

Human souls stand in the balance, humanly speaking. Let's send our best. I pray that the day will come that I'll hear that some of the boys and girls that are raised in Grace Fellowship Church more and more are sent even if hands are laid on them and tears are streaming down your eyes that the best of some of the sons and daughters of Grace Fellowship Church are sent to places on the globe where the name of our Lord Jesus is not yet known.

I pray this church will send out glory arrows, your children, your most prized possession so that our Lord Jesus might be known in every place.

We have the greatest calling in the world. We have the highest privilege to bring the gospel to the nations. We are of all people most to be envied because we have a real and lasting hope.

[50 : 18] For the sake of the cross, of His cross, let's band together as His personal representatives as we go with His full authority. For the sake of His name, let us go to the nations with the promise of His continued presence.

And in response to His faithfulness, let us cry in the words of that song, find us faithful as we labor to make obedient disciples of all the nations.

He said to Joshua, He says to us, I will never leave you nor forsake you. This is, brothers and sisters, the indelible, irreplaceable, unremovable promise of the great missionary God to His new covenant people.

May God be with us as we send and some of us go. Amen.