

Going Out
Series: Dare2Share
Matthew 28:16-20
June 17, 2018

Welcome again to worship. It's great to be together this morning.

While you all were getting pummeled by yesterday's storm, Myra and I were in Miami County as I was officiating the wedding for my first wife's sister. We were celebrating Jean finding love again, and for us, the weather cooperated.

Life changing events, like a wedding, happen all the time, for good and for bad. Winning the lottery. Losing a child or a spouse. Having a baby. Boy, having babies is really a life changer, isn't it?

What do you think might be the greatest life changing event a person can experience? Might it be the birth of a child? Getting hit by a tornado? Death of someone close to you?

We are in the midst of our series "Dare2Share" as we talk about how we can share our faith in Christ with others. Please turn in your bulletin to page 4-5 to take some notes. Today, we jump just past the biggest life changer ever in the history of human kind.

Jesus had been crucified, but now, somehow, He is alive again. Can you imagine what the disciples were thinking? And can you imagine their mood? Here is their teacher, thought to be dead, now He is alive, and they realize that this had been the plan all along.¹ Can you imagine what it would have been like? This guy had done some incredible things in 3 years. Fed 5,000. Healed blind men. Cast out demons. Now, He goes and gets crucified, but comes back to life. Don't you think they are going to pay even more attention to Him now than ever before?

Before Jesus ascends into heaven, He gives the disciples some instructions. In Matthew's Gospel, he ends his account of Jesus with this passage.

Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted! Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."²

These final directions from Jesus to His followers are often called, "The Great Commission." You've heard me talk about "The Great Commandment": love God, love people.³ This passage is "The Great Commission." Unfortunately, it has become "The Great Omission" for many believers because they don't share their faith, they have never led someone to Christ, they cannot look at one person whom they have discipled.

Why do people need to hear the message or be led to Christ or be discipled? Well, the Gospel tells us why. The word "gospel" means "good news" and is explained by the following six key truths of the Gospel Journey.

¹ See Psalm 16:10 49:15; 71:20; Hosea 13:14

² Matthew 28:16-20 (New Living Translation, Second Edition)

³ Matthew 22:37-39 and Mark 12:28-34

G – God created us to be with Him.

In Genesis 1-2, God created the universe and everything in it. God made Adam and Eve to be in complete fellowship with Him and with each other. Their nakedness represented the fact that they had no sin, therefore no shame, therefore nothing to hide before God or each other.⁴ They regularly communed with God in the garden and had sheer bliss, pure happiness and unadulterated joy. It was during this time that they were living everyday as God intended, in right relationship with each other, God and His creation. The only command God gave to them was not to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In the same way, God made us to be in fellowship with Him. His original plan was that you and I would be in absolute and perfect relationship with Him and with each other in total unity. But that plan was disrupted by one evil act.

O – Our sins separate us from God.

Genesis 3 tells us that when Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and thereby sinned. They sewed fig leaves together to cover their shame and hid in the Garden from God. Now they were hiding from the One that they used to fellowship with regularly. People have been hiding from God ever since, covering their sin and shame with the fig leaves of religion or philosophy.

God confronted them face to face. Because of their sin, there were immediate and future consequences. The immediate consequences included being banished from the Garden. The future consequence was death. God had promised death if they ate from the forbidden tree. Spiritually, Adam and Eve died the day they sinned in the garden. Their souls became immediately polluted by sin and selfishness. As a result, their offspring (and that includes you and me) were born sinful and selfish. Through Adam and Eve, every person ever born is born deprived and depraved, deprived of God's fellowship and depraved to the core.⁵

S – Sins cannot be removed by good deeds.

From the beginning, humanity has attempted to remove the stain of sin by good deeds. When Cain made an offering to God as an appeasement for his sin, God rejected it⁶. Cain was infuriated and killed his brother Abel.

Later, God gave the Israelites the 10 Commandments⁷, not to save them from their sin, but to show them that they couldn't live up to His perfect standards on their own.⁸ Instead of looking to Him in faith, many of the Jews looked to themselves and thought they could please God in their own strength. But God saw their "righteous" deeds like filthy rags.⁹ Even the best of their good deeds were corrupted by selfish motives.

God gave the Israelites the sacrificial system. Every time a Jew sinned he or she was to sacrifice a goat without any blemishes.¹⁰ Think about that. If you were a Jew in the Old Testament and had to make a sacrifice every time you lied, lusted, gossiped, or complained, you would soon run out of goats.

⁴ Genesis 2:25

⁵ Romans 5:12-14

⁶ Genesis 4:1-4

⁷ Exodus 20:1-17

⁸ Galatians 3:23-24

⁹ Isaiah 64:6

¹⁰ Leviticus 4:27-31

The sacrificial system was meant to point inward and upward. It pointed inward to convince you of your sinfulness. If you were honest before God then you would soon realize that you could never make enough sacrifices for your sin. It pointed upward to make you trust in God for your salvation instead of sacrifices that you could make.¹¹

P – Paying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again.

When Jesus came to the earth, He came to be the ultimate sacrifice.¹² He lived the perfect life that we could not live and died in our place, for our sin. When He died upon the cross, He screamed the words, “It is finished!”¹³ What He meant by these words was that the price for our sins was paid completely. He was fully God and entirely man. As a perfect human, He could die for other humans. As the true and living God, His payment for sin was infinite.

E – Everyone who trusts in Him alone has eternal life.

The amazing thing about eternal life is that it is a free gift given to us by God through faith alone and not by any of our good deeds.¹⁴ Jesus paid the price for our sins when He died on the cross; all we must do is receive the gift of forgiveness through faith.

L – Life with Jesus starts now and lasts forever.

Because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, we will be with Jesus forever in heaven. When we trust in Jesus, we enter into a personal relationship with God called “eternal life.”

Part of the reality of eternal life is that it doesn’t start after you die but as soon as you believe.¹⁵ This life is the joy of a real, exciting relationship with Jesus every single day through prayer, worship and living in the strength that God provides through his Holy Spirit.¹⁶ The other part of the reality of eternal life is that all who have it will be with Jesus forever and ever in heaven someday.

That’s the Gospel, and that’s what everyone needs to hear, because one day, we will all be held accountable for the things we have done here in this life, and ultimately, what we have done with Jesus. If we have rejected Him, nothing we have done could ever save us, but if we accept Him, God accepts us into eternal life.

This is the message that Jesus gave to His first disciples, and when He commissioned them to “Go and make disciples”, He expected them, and us, to do what He said. Jesus says three things to them and to us:

First, He assures us of His power.

“I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.”¹⁷

Surely nothing was outside the power of Him who had died and conquered death. Now they were the servants of a Master whose authority upon earth and in heaven was beyond all question.

That thing that you have hanging over your head, that situation at work or at home; Jesus has authority over that. That thing that you can’t seem to get rid of; Jesus

¹¹ Psalm 51:16,17

¹² Luke 24:46

¹³ John 19:30

¹⁴ Ephesians 2:8,9

¹⁵ John 10:10

¹⁶ Ephesians 5:18

¹⁷ Matthew 28:18 (New Living Translation, Second Edition)

has authority over that. Your plans, your future, your worries, your needs, your very self; Jesus has authority over that.

Second, He gives us a commission.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.”¹⁸

Jesus sent them out to make all the world his disciples. The commission of Jesus is to win all people.

Third, He promises us His presence.

“And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”¹⁹

It must have been a staggering thing for 11 humble Galileans to be sent forth to the conquest of the world. Even as they heard it, their hearts must have failed them. But, no sooner was the command given that the promise followed. They were sent out, as we are, on the greatest task in history, but with them there was the greatest presence in the world.

So just before He left, Jesus said:

1. I’m in control of everything
2. Go out
3. I’m with you always

Ok, that’s the what, but why not? Why are we not doing what Jesus told us to do? Why has the Great Commission become the Great Omission?

First, a Lack of Gospel Knowledge.

How many times have you heard the gospel in a sermon, book, or conversation? If you’ve been a Christian, even for a short time, you have likely heard the gospel hundreds of times. Yet, many of us still struggle to articulate the truths of the gospel in a simple, coherent, and intelligible way. Could you share the essential message of the gospel in sixty seconds, right now? I’ve just given it to you.

Second, Apathy.

Some of us just don’t care that much about lost people. We wouldn’t ever say it, but our priorities and lives reveal it. We make no time in our busy schedules to interact and engage with those who don’t know Christ. We have long stopped praying for lost people in our neighborhoods and workplaces. We have no non-Christian friends, and barely any ties. Lost people are a low priority. For instance, when was the last time you invited someone into your home who did not know Christ?

Third, Fear.

What will others think of me? What if they don’t like me or my family? Some are paralyzed by the thought of being disliked, marginalized, laughed at, or openly mocked. We’re afraid we’ll lose business or get passed up for that promotion. What if they stop inviting my kids to the birthday parties? What if talking about Christ makes seeing my neighbors awkward? What if they lump me together with Ned Flanders of the Simpsons?

Fourth, Lack of Compassion.

We lack compassion for the lost. We have long forgotten what it was like to live without hope, lost and apart from Christ. We rarely consider that those who do not obey

¹⁸ Matthew 28:19-20 (New Living Translation, Second Edition)

¹⁹ Matthew 28:20 (New Living Translation, Second Edition)

Christ will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord.²⁰ We just don't care that much. We might say we care, but we rarely cry out to God for the salvation of our lost neighbors, coworkers, and classmates.

But my friends, if you know Jesus, then you have a faith story to tell. And we can't wait any longer. We can't just stand by and watch multitudes of souls go to hell because we are failing to fulfill the Great Commission. Everyone is responsible for preaching the Gospel, not just the pastor.

So here is the How. How can you Dare2Share?

First, Pray.

As Christians, we ought to make it a priority to pray for the lost in addition to our normal prayer concerns. Pray for the family member, the children and youth in the schools, your coworkers and neighbors – all those who do not know Christ. Pray earnestly and expectantly for their salvation and your part in it.

In Acts 4:23–31, after Peter and John are released from prison, the disciples gather to pray for God to give them boldness to speak His word. If the early church needed to pray for greater evangelistic zeal and boldness, how much more do we need to pray?

Second, Obey.

God calls for obedience. 63 times in the Bible, God says, "Obey Me." God commanded the people of Israel, "You must obey all my regulations and be careful to obey my decrees, for I am the Lord your God. If you obey my decrees and my regulations, you will find life through them."²¹ The Bible clearly states God expects obedience from His disciples.

Third, Engage.

SITTING IN PANERA WHILE AT ANDERSON HILLS

Be intentional in developing relationship with non-Christians.

Finally, Trust.

I love this meme I came across:

God says, "I have a plan for your life." And I might add that it involves sharing your faith. This is what it feels like. The Holy Spirit is holding your hand on this really fun plan while you are panicking.

If we do not believe the power and sufficiency of Christ and the Gospel, we will never share it boldly and simply. But if we truly believe that God's word does the work of conversion through the power of his Holy Spirit, we will unabashedly share the simple and unadorned truth of the gospel. A truncated and inadequate gospel will quickly be abandoned and never shared. But a Gospel that can save by grace through faith — apart from works — as a free gift²² is believed, treasured, and declared boldly.

With fellow believers, we must remind each other of the sufficiency of God's word to do His work for his purposes. If we are confident in the ability of the gospel to transform lives, we can boldly and indiscriminately proclaim this good news with sacrificial love to the lost in the hope that some will be saved.

²⁰ 2 Thessalonians 1:9

²¹ Leviticus 18:4-5 (New Living Translation, Second Edition)

²² Ephesians 2:8-9