

## The Mission of Christ's Church

In Matthew 28:18-20, we find what is referred to as the *Great Commission*. Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age."

The *Great Commission* sets forth the mission of Christ's Church, which is to evangelize the world and disciple believers. Evangelical Christian churches are known for their interest in the *Great Commission*. Preaching the gospel and personal witnessing to those of every people group, language, and nation is an important act of obedience to the first part of Christ's commission. However, all too often, many churches in our day have dumbed down and narrowed the focus of Christ's *Great Commission* to focus primarily or even exclusively on conversion and catering to the unchurched and unbelieving through how they "do church." They have reimagined and reinvented the church's worship, practices, and even its teachings to cater to what is popular and what is effective in achieving their desired results. In doing so, it appears that these churches have forgotten, ignored, or suppressed the meaning of the rest of the *Great Commission*.

True Christian humility requires us to look to Christ to build His church (Matthew 16:18). Since Christ is the only Head and Master over His church, we must look to His Word to learn His mission for His Church. In setting forth the mission of the Church, Jesus called His disciples to "make disciples of all the nations." They were to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Jesus was not merely seeking converts to Christianity; He was and is seeking *disciples*. Disciples are faithful followers of Christ. Christ adds that disciples are to be baptized in the name of the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Water baptism is the holy ordinance that Christ instituted for believers and their children; it is the appointed rite of initiation into the membership of Christ's Church. Water baptism is the sign and seal of faith and of entrance into the covenant community, the congregation or assembly of God's people.

In addition to calling the leaders of His Church to baptize, Jesus also commanded them to teach these converts "to observe all things" that He commanded. Since Jesus is God, His commandments include not only all the commandments He taught in the New Testament, but also all of God's commandments as set forth in the Holy Scriptures. The *Great Commission* calls all Christians to observe or obey all that Christ commanded in His Word.

To make disciples the Church must teach. What is the Church to teach? Jesus says that the Church is to teach His commandments. The Church is to teach God's commandments, God's law, Christ's doctrine, Biblical doctrine.

Christians are to live by *every* word of God, no more and no less (Matthew 4:4: Luke 4:4). We are not to observe the Word of God *plus* the word of man. We are not to observe only *some* of the Word of God. No, we are commanded by God to observe *every word* of Scripture.

In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, we find a similar call to observe all God's commandments: "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:1-2). God said, "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it." (Deut. 12:32)

Likewise, the New Testament concludes with this stark warning: "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18-19)

These verses not only set forth the mission of the Church, but also they contribute to our belief in the regulative principle of worship and the sufficiency of Scripture. God, the Great Physician, has prescribed how He is to be worshipped. Christians are only to worship Him in the way that He has commanded, neither adding to nor subtracting from what He has commanded. God has given to us all that we need for life and godliness in His Word (2 Peter 1:3). In other words, Scripture is sufficient to teach us who God is and what His plan is for our lives. Scripture is sufficient for the Church's faith and practice, doctrine and worship. Outside the pages of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, no other book can authoritatively teach us about God, His church, His worship, or His will for how we are to live. The Old and New Testaments are the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; they are the complete, final, and authoritative revelation of God's will for His people.

This does not mean that Christian literature, commentaries, or sermons have no value. Quite to the contrary, God calls us to humble ourselves and listen to the teaching of those whom He has gifted and blessed with wisdom and a gift for

teaching the Scriptures; He has ordained men to teach His Word—pastors, teachers, elders. Yet, such teachings are only to be trusted, listened to, believed, and followed insofar as they are in accordance with what Scripture teaches. Whenever we read extra-Biblical literature regarding Christianity, we must be like the Bereans, who “searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:13).

Since the *Great Commission* calls the Church to make disciples (not just converts or professions of faith), the Church primarily is for believers. Of course, unbelievers should be welcome and encouraged to listen as the Lord draws them. However, the focus of the Church should be on building up and nurturing Christian disciples in their faith, not catering to the desires of the unchurched. The *Great Commission* calls the Church to provide education, to teach *all* the word of God, in order to produce faithful, mature followers of Christ.

A faithful Christian church seeks to teach Christian believers *all* the word of God, not just “positive and encouraging” messages about Jesus, grace, and love. Many churches add manmade tradition, self-help, self-esteem, and psychology. Many focus only on certain aspects of Jesus (e.g., Jesus is a friend; Jesus is love.) Some churches avoid wrestling with the “difficult” parts of Scripture.

In contrast, a faithful Christian church proclaims “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). God says that “*all* Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, emphasis added).

Churches that fail to teach Christ’s disciples to observe *all* that He commanded are not being faithful to the *Great Commission* of Christ. Faithfulness to God requires that the Church rediscover her God-given mission—to preach the good news of Christ, to baptize, *and* to teach Christ’s disciples to observe all that He commanded us in His Word.

This website is dedicated to exposing today’s generations to the truths proclaimed at the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s. The Church is called to be Reformed and always reforming. God calls us to engage in the continual practice of reforming our beliefs and practices and conforming our faith and practice to Scripture alone. As we renew our minds by immersing ourselves in the pages of God’s Word, we must reform ourselves by the power of the Holy Spirit. We must conform our beliefs about God, His Church, His worship, and His will for our lives to the teachings of God’s Word.

All Christians should embrace the regulative principle. In a nutshell, the regulative principle teaches us that Christ alone regulates the beliefs and practices of His Church; Scripture alone is sufficient to regulate Christian belief and practice.

God calls His faithful followers to embrace His mission for His Church. We must be missional; we must seek to carry out the Great Commission. We must observe *all* that Christ commanded us in His Word.

On this website, we seek to present the facts from Scripture about what God's Word teaches on a number of subjects, including Christian liberty, God's worship, Christian living, God's attributes, and many other topics. Our mission is to embrace God's mission—to proclaim the good news of the Gospel and call Christ's disciples to obey all that He commanded in His Word.

Protestant Reformer John Calvin wrote, "the obedience which God demands is particularly stated to be the obedience of His covenant, to teach us that we must not serve Him by human inventions, but confine ourselves within the prescription of His word" (*Commentary on Psalm 132:12*).

The apostle Paul declared, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23); and, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4).

Jesus taught that God's "word is truth" (John 17:17); all God's commandments are truth; God's law is truth; and the entirety of His word is truth (Psalm 119:151, 142, 160).

Will you embrace the sufficiency of Scripture and the regulative principle? Will you commit to let Christ alone regulate your beliefs about who He is, how He wants to be worshipped, how He wants His church to be run, and how He wants you to live? Will you seek to obey *all* of God's commandments? Will you seek truly to be *reformed* by God's Word and *conformed* to the perfect image and likeness of Christ (Ephesians 4:22-24)? If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, then He calls you to embrace His mission, which is "to observe all things" that He has commanded in His word.