

The Great Commission (The Work of the Church)

Were going to study this morning the great commission and the lesser or minor commission. This is a two part series.

The commission that Jesus is about to give his disciples is the work of the church. The Great commission is the continuing work that we have today. The work of the church. There is a big difference between the work of the church and “church work”.

Some examples of church work:

Building maintenance; Cleaning the sanctuary; Putting out song books; The upkeep of the kitchen and bathrooms; Sweeping and mopping and doing all the work around here that needs to be done etc.

The work of the church is what we are going to study today and that’s the Great Commission.

There were two commissions that Jesus gave to His disciples The Great Commission and the Lesser or minor commission.

Two distinct differences between the Great commission and the minor Commission is this:

- 1. a. The minor commission was to the Jews only**
b. The Great commission is to everyone
- 2. a. The Minor Commission preaches “The Kingdom of heaven is at hand!”**
b. The Great Commission preaches “The Kingdom of heaven is Here!” And the Gospel is the way to it. The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. We must obey it.

In Matt 10:5 Jesus gives the minor commission to the disciples to proclaim to the Jews.

Please open your bibles with me to Matt 10:5ff

Matt 10:5ff

Let’s begin with verse one:

Mt 10:1 ¶ And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Notice here Jesus gives the apostles power-exousia-authority to do miracles before the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. *Verses 5 through 7 is what is called the minor commission or lesser commission in which the disciples, who were just appointed apostles, were commanded by Jesus to perform.*

The Lesser or Minor Commission:

5 ¶ These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: *this commission was strictly to the Jews not the half Jews, not the non Jews, but strictly to the Jews. Paul makes mention of this in Romans.*

Ro 1:16 ¶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Ro 2:10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: {Gentile: Gr. Greek}.

In Luke 10:1-12 it shows in this lesser commission that Jesus appoints seventy also and sends them two by two.

Matt 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. *The condition of the Jews were as lost sheep. Their false shepherds*

have deceived them and had not fed them. They had not taken care of them as they should. Thus fulfilling the Scriptures:

In Ezekiel 34:2

Eze 34:2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

And Jeremiah 23:1-6

Jer 23:1 ¶ Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.

2 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

3 And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

4 And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

The Jews were in a desolate fearful condition whose end is very tragic, for they as sheep were let as prey for the ravening wolves and beasts of the field, without the protection and guidance of their Good Shepherd.

Jesus is that Good Shepherd.

Joh 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Joh 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

Back to Matt 10:7

Matt 10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

This was to raise the consciousness of the people. To get them to expect that something extremely great and wonderful was about to happen. "The Kingdom of Heaven is very close!"

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Do this without price, sell no miracles (as we see done today) where some say "give so much and you will receive healing and a blessing". "Pay such and such a price and you will receive your breakthrough miracle".

He who preaches to get rich (for the sake of riches) is a servant of the devil.

We should preach for the sake of winning souls to Christ.

Don't take any bribe. Don't be a hireling. The gift of God is free. C.f. Rom 5:15-18.

Ro 5:15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Who ever done a miracle in the Bible and got paid? What true prophet of God ever did a miracle, sign or wonder in the Scripture for a price?

Do you remember the story of Naaman the leper, who after he was

healed by Elisha the prophet Elisha would take no money nor any gift. And why should he? It was God that healed him. But Gehazi, Elisha's servant went afterwards and received gifts from Naaman, and as a result became leprous. Ref. II Ki 5:1ff.

Back to Matt 10:9,

Matt 10:9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, God forbid if some say "I'll listen to you, but you have to pay me for my time". Those are not worthy of the Kingdom. And they're worse than a hireling.

10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

Lean on the everlasting arms of God. Learn to depend on Him to provide for you.

11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

12 And when ye come into an house, salute it. *In Luke 10:5, we see that the salutation was peace (shalom). Lu 10:5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.*

Jesus Himself uses this salutation: Lu 24:36 ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. *Those who would hear and believe what the disciples had to say were worthy.*

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

Isa 52:1 ¶ Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

52:2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem:

loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

Ac 18:5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

Ac 13:50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Isa 35:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy (of the Holy Spirit) upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. This city was going to be destroyed with a destruction worse than the land of Sodom and Gomorrha.

The Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD was more horrific than it. The tense of the verb “shall be” is used because at this time Jerusalem’s destruction had not happen yet. The phrase “In the day of judgment”

Jesus says this foretelling of this destruction. Judgment day for the Jews was in 70 AD.

I've come to this conclusion for the following reasons:

1. This commission was given to the Jews only, thus there was to be a judgment to the Jews only.

2. The great commission is to everyone, thus there is a great judgment for the whole world, when Jesus comes in the clouds, This is called the Perousia or second coming of the Lord.

In Matthew 24:1-3, after Jesus speaks of the temple, where there would be left not one stone upon another. The disciples ask Him two questions:

Mt 24:1 ¶ And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down (Jesus is foretelling of Jerusalem's destruction)

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be?(1st question) and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (2nd question).

In Matt 24:4ff, Jesus gives the answers to both questions:

In Verses 4-34. Jesus is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem with warning and signs.

Mt 24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation (the Jews) shall not pass, till all these things be

fulfilled.

In Verses 35ff. Jesus speaks of His second coming, which will be without warning.

Mt 24:35-36.

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

36 But of that day (the day when heaven and earth passes) and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. That is why Jesus says to watch and pray.

Mr 13:33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

Matt 10:16 ¶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Christ directed his followers here to imitate the serpent in its caution in avoiding danger. No animal equals them in the rapidity and skill which they evince in escaping danger. So said Christ to his disciples, You need caution and wisdom, in the midst of a world that will seek your lives.

The serpent is wise in that it avoids and escapes danger. Christ is telling His disciples that they need to use caution in avoiding danger.

Pr 14:16 ¶ A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

Turn with me now to Luke Chapter 10:

This is where Jesus commissions the seventy also.

Lu 10:1 ¶ After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

The twelve were associated with the twelve tribes of Israel, but the

seventy were associated with the seventy elders that were appointed by Moses. Which had now become the Great Sanhedrin court, which was comprised of seventy members. The word Sanhedrin is the greek word for council.

Ex 24:1 ¶ And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off

Nu 11:16 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

Lu 10:2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

***“The shepherds are lazy and the harvest is spoiling in the fields”
In America today, about twenty percent of all produce grown spoil because they are not harvested. Not because there is a lack of people to harvest. But because of laziness. People don’t want to do the work needed. They’d rather be doing something else, or nothing at all.***

The harvest: these are the souls who are ready to receive the truth and they are very numerous; but the labourers are few. There are multitudes of scribes, Pharisees, and priests; but there are few that actually work. Jesus wishes for labourers, not bums, who are either idle drones, or slaves to the pleasures sin, and perversion of riches.

Lu 10:3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

As laborers of the Lord, we should expect suffering.

2Ti 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

God's business vs. personal business. Be about God's business, don't get too caught up in the affairs of men while you're trying to do the will of God. Don't spent too much time doing nothing. Wasting time. Manage time wisely. Although take time for rest. Don't be about people that'll get you in trouble, who lead you astray. Stay with good people.

Pr 13:20 ¶ He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

1Co 15:33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace (*shalom*) be to this house. *again this was the common Jewish salutation.*

6 And if the son of peace be there (*if they are of good report, willing to hear*), your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. *If that house be worthy] If that family be proper for a preacher to lodge in, and the master be ready to embrace the message of salvation.*

7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

DON'T GET GREEDY, don't go from house to house as a glutton or lustful, grabbing everything that your lustful eye desires. Don't double dip. If we're doing what God wants us to do, he will provide enough. If we rely upon God, He will Provide.

The Lesser or minor commission is different from the Great

commission in that it was to the Jews only. They were to go from city to city to tell them of the coming Kingdom, the church of Christ.

Lu 10:8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

The dust of heathen lands was considered to be polluted, and Israel was considered to be Holy land because of God's presence as God told Moses and Joshua Ex 3:5; Jos 5:15 to take the shoes off their feet for the place where they stood was holy ground. Every place that did not receive the message of the Kingdom of God, would become like the heathen lands.

Whether the people received it or not, the disciples were still to tell them that the Kingdom of God was at hand.

In the Great Commission we see the Kingdom of God has arrived and we must obey the Gospel to enter into it. The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven are one and the same. This is the church of Christ. One must obey the gospel to be added to the church.

Ac 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Ac 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

What is the gospel? I Corinthians 15:1-4

How does one obey? Jo 1:12; Heb 11:6; Rom 10:9; Ac17:30; Rom 6:3-6