

**Introduction:** I remember the first person I ever led to faith in Jesus. His name was Billy. Billy was a tall, stocky kid in Highschool with shoulder length blonde hair, always wore a 1970's Dishiki Poncho, smoked weed behind the gym, slept through class and was generally vulgar in his interactions with girls. He sat right next to me in 6<sup>th</sup> period study hall and saw me reading my Bible one morning. He said, "Why you reading that? What are you a Christian Bible Thumper?" I said, "As a matter of fact I am. Did you know that you were lost in your sins, headed for hell, but that God his son to die for your sins on the cross and save your soul for eternity?" I wish somehow I could translate the look on his face so you could see it. It was more than just the shock of some bold Christian kid. It was the power of that sentence that took root in his heart and grew into faith. Over the next few weeks, his mocking morphed into questions like: 1) why did you decided to follow Jesus? 2) Where will I go when I die? 3) I'm worried that if I commit to Jesus I will not be able to really change.

Fast forward I'm 3 years into a Biblical Literacy and Biblical language degree in Seattle—I go up one night to the prayer chapel on campus and realize, It's been a long time since I stopped someone cold and called them to repentance.

We must remind ourselves and keep our mission given to us by Jesus central to all that we do.

I took a seminary course from Mark Mittleberg who wrote the Classic Book ***Contagious Christianity***:

When asked, "Why, statistically are so few evangelical churches *evangelical*, meaning, they expend great effort and focus on reaching the lost and dying people in our culture? Response: "I call it 'evangelistic entropy' or 'the second law of spiritual dynamics.' It goes like this: any Christian, any church, any denomination left to itself for long enough will tend to see the value of evangelism diminish to the point where it becomes almost normal to just not reach out.'" (Mark Mittleberg, author of *Contagious Christianity*)

This is something every church and every person experiences. **We tend toward mission drift.**

**Our Mission:** (Upward) Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus who **gather to worship** God in Spirit and in Truth; (Inward) who **grow** in the **grace** and **knowledge** of the Lord Jesus Christ; (Outward) and who **go** into all the world **proclaiming the Gospel.**

**We'll look at a text today where Jesus gives the Church led by the Apostles their commission to do just that.**

**Background:** The disciples are told to meet him on a mountain in Galilee

Matthew 28:16-20 “The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

We can remember the imperatives, the urgencies of this text with four words: (1) **worship**, (2) **authority**, (3) **commission**, (4) **presence**. Let's take a few minutes and unpack each of these...

## **1. Worship**

28:17 “When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted.”

The text says “but some doubted” Of course. This just doesn't happen. And it has never happened that a man has risen from the dead never to die again. Defeating death. In his resurrected body—the Disciples worship him and some are cautious because they can hardly believe what their eyes are seeing.

- **Their priority is the worship of God.** If God is not in his rightful place among the saints—if God is not highly exalted and the pursuit of his glory isn't our chief aim—we will not be making disciples of Jesus. We may make disciples of ourselves. We may make disciples of church, or of our denomination. But we won't be having a transformational impact for the Gospel of Jesus in anyone's life.

John 12:32 “As for me, if I am **lifted up** from the earth I will **draw all people** to myself.”

**Evangelism cannot happen without a church radiant in worship of the one true God.** A gathering of saints who prioritize the glory, the majesty, and adoration of our Mighty God in heaven—exalting Christ together

**Our greatest witness is our worship—lifting Jesus high; just as the disciples did on that hillside in Galilee.**

## 2. Authority

Matt 28:18 “Jesus came near and said to them, **“All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.”**

Jesus’s authority claim is vindicated by his resurrection from the dead. The basis of our evangelism is our claim that Christ is indeed risen. And if God raised his Son from the dead then everything is new. Everything is different. The world is upended and things will never be the same.

“Messiah” (Heb. *meshiach*); “Christ” (Gk. *Christos*)—“an Israelite king; Israel’s expected anointed ruler”

Jesus is not going to be king someday, Jesus is the king. **SO what authority has been put under him?**

### Human governments and those in positions of power

Romans 13:1-2 “Let everyone submit to the **governing authorities**”

Here, he is referring to the governing authorities—the rulers, human authorities, and powers

### Supernatural powers of evil seeking to influence those human governments

Ephesians 6:10-12 “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand **against the devil’s schemes**. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the **rulers**, against the **authorities**, against the **powers** of this dark world and against the **spiritual forces** of evil in the **heavenly realms**.

All authority—both earthly and heavenly—has been given to Christ. Earthly and supernatural forces. Worldly systems and the spiritual powers in heavenly realms attempting to influence them—they are all under the King’s dominion.

Heb 2:8 “For in **subjecting everything** to him, he left **nothing** that is not subject to him. As it is, we do not yet **see everything subjected** to him.”

*This means that there is no culture, no nation, no government no power on earth, no legislation—nothing absolutely nothing can stop us.* The risen Lord of the cosmos has received from the Father all authority in heaven and on earth—and has authorized his Church to penetrate the darkness with the love and truth of the Gospel.

**Illus. Look, there was no more totalitarian regime than Rome.** And they were exceedingly efficient at killing new illegal religions. For 250 years they **ignored**, then **persecuted**, then tried to **exterminate** Christians from the face of the earth—with extreme prejudice. And after 250 years of that? The whole world was Christian.

### **3. Commission**

Matthew 28:19 “**Go**, therefore, and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> **teaching** them to observe everything I have commanded you.”

We are to make disciples by boldly calling men to faith in Jesus, to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

Teaching them to obey all that he has commanded. Learning Christ's grace-competency; biblical literacy and theological literacy.

We are to *go* into all the world—**Jesus built his church to be a going, sending, missional enterprise.**

**This is what we are by nature. This is just in our DNA**

- We are not a **business** and we are not marketing a product.
- We are not a **club**—like Costco where you pay your 60 bucks and get a membership card and you get to shop for Christian programs to keep you busy.
- We are not an entertainment company designed to wow an audience with the latest gadgetry and technological innovation—just look around you. You ever been to a more home spun sanctuary than this one? The hipster Christianity phenomenon has overtaken the church today. Today you've got have that cool hipster skinny jeans, suspenders, lumber-jack beard; worship has to have the smoke machines and the light show, and take the cross down because that makes seekers uncomfortable.

***The church will reach souls when Jesus is lifted high and exalted and when we go into the world, sending missionaries and evangelists, living on mission.***

## 4. Presence

Matthew 28:20 “And **remember**, I am **with you** always, **to the end** of the age.”

Christ is with us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The Spirit was sent to change the heart as the Father's new covenant promise.

The Spirit is the present, empowering agent of the Godhead. Empowering us to boldly share our stories.

God has not merely given us a procedure; nor given us a system; nor merely a compelling message.

**Our message is empowered by the Spirit to change minds and transform hearts.**

- “**Remember**” you and I have to be reminded of this
- “**I Am with you always**” Christ will never leave you. Never forsake you
- “**To the end of the age**” Remember what I told you—the end of all things is at hand

**What makes Evangelism and Outreach a reality** is when:

- 1) a church **radiant in worship**, exalting Jesus together
- 2) a church that has been **authorized** by the one who has **all authority** over the governments of men and the powers of hell
- 3) a church that is **commissioned** and commanded to make disciples by baptizing them into the body in His name; by teaching them to obey all that Christ commanded by his example and his direct teaching
- 4) a church that is **filled with the Spirit**—God's empowering transforming presence

## Practical Application

### **1. Strike up genuine friendships with unbelievers.**

Jesus didn't talk *at people* Jesus talked to them. Jesus saved his lecture for the religious leaders—the Pharisees. But Jesus sat and opened up conversation—he put himself in their fishing villages, in their streets, in their neighborhoods and hillsides. Jesus was present in the life of the unbeliever and he struck up genuine friendships.

98% of people who come to faith in Jesus say they came to Christ because someone—a parent, a friend, a relative, a spouse led them to Christ.

If I may be perfectly honest with you, this is why I don't have an evangelism program we bought of Lifeway.com. Because *you're the program*. You and I are God's plan A, B, C, D.

**2. Start spiritual conversations.** Spiritual conversations can start with a single question.

“Where are you with God?”

“Are you a praying person? Who do you pray to?”

“Do you think there is an afterlife? Where do you suppose people go?”

“Where do you think you stand with God?”

These kinds of questions can get you into a conversation about spiritual realities. Life and death issues. Eternal matters.

**3. Know your story.** Can you tell your story of salvation in 2-5 minutes? This is the elevator pitch. Take time to write it out, cut the fluff, highlight the main points, and *Tell his story by through your story.*

The NT word for this is “testimony.” One’s testimony is their personal story of life-change.

***As human beings we are wired to trust embodied facts.*** Embodied truth-claims. A lived-history that can personally attest “brother, I’ve been there, bought the T-shirt on this one”

This is one reason for the incarnation. God doesn’t just boom a Gospel message from the heavens but embodies in the life of a Jew from Nazareth.

- Start with BC (Before Christ). “Before I came to faith in Jesus I was...”
- The Cross. What were the circumstances that led you to seriously consider Jesus? What was the message of the Gospel that captivated your attention and brought you to faith?
- After Christ. Help them to see how trusting in Jesus has made all the difference in the world. Give them personal examples of joyous and difficult times you’ve walked through with Christ as your Savior and the Lord of your Life.

**4. Invite unbelieving friends to a Bible study.** Did you know that **Statistically 66% of people in the US say that they want to learn more about the Bible?** They didn't say they want to become believers in Jesus as God's one and only sent from by the father to save them from their sins and damnation.

Reading through the Bible and studying say, the Gospel of Matthew or John, is an effective way to share Jesus with friends.

- Make sure it's a comfortable setting.
- Keep your numbers small. Be wary of Bible scholars who come to your study and make your unsaved friends feel stupid.
- Keep it focused on Jesus. Jesus is the key to the knowledge of God—so keep it centered on Christ.
- Keep it interactive—make sure they have ample space to question what they're reading and pose objections and also share their opinions. ***People usually won't listen to what you have to say until they feel heard.***

**5. Boldly ask for a commitment.** At some point the Spirit may nudge you to offer them the opportunity to receive Christ. How does a person receive Christ and the forgiveness he offers?

**They believe in their heart the message of salvation.**

**They confess their sins and their need for a Savior.**

**They affirm the truth that Christ died for their sins and rose again victorious over death.**

You invite them to join the local church where they are baptized and publicly proclaim their testimony.