

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

**Ephesians 4:8-16**

**Lesson #28**

**The Great Commission**

**07/21/2019**

## Matthew 28

“18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,** 20 **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.””

This has become the mission statement for the church to evangelize the world.  
**It is termed the “Great Commission”.**

1

**Loren Cunningham** (founder of Youth with a Mission)

“You’re either a missionary or a mission field.”

**Bill Bright** (founder of Campus Crusade for Christ)

“There is no higher calling or greater privilege known to man than being involved in helping fulfill the Great Commission.”

**John Wesley** (founder of the Methodist church)

“You have one business on earth – to save souls.”

**A.B. Simpson** (founder of CMA)

“The Christian is not obedient unless he is doing all in his power to send the Gospel to the heathen world.”

**Oswald J Smith** (pastor / author)

“Any church not involved in the Great Commission has forfeited its biblical right to exist.”

2

## Why don’t we see:

- the Apostles **reiterating** the “Great Commission” to the church?
- the Apostles **emphasizing** world evangelism in their letters?
- more **attention to world missions** before the 19th century?

**Is this really the Biblical purpose for the church?**



3

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- In each of the gospel accounts, these words are directed to the **Apostles**. (Mk. 16:15-16, Lk. 24:46-47, Jn. 20:21)
- Until the 17th cent. this text was applied only to the Apostles who were the **eyewitnesses** to Jesus words, works, and resurrection. (Acts 1:21-26) and performed **signs** (2 Cor. 12:12).

4

## Matthew 28

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“Go” in the Greek text is a participle

**“While going . . .”**

5

*Matthew 28*

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**The command is not “go”  
but rather  
“disciple all the nations”**

**Evangelism  
is just one step in the process.**

6

*Matthew 28*

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**The shocking element in this commission was  
the **extension of the Gospel to Gentiles**.**

*Matthew 10*

Same Greek word  
(most common translation)

“5 These twelve Jesus sent out after **instructing** them, saying, “Do not go in the way of the **Gentiles**, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

7

**The early church seemed to believe that the “Great Commission” was **fulfilled in the 1st century**.**

*Colossians 1:23*

“if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of **the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven**, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.”

*Romans 16*

“25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been **made known to all the nations**, leading to obedience of faith;”

8



## Old Covenant understanding



*Genesis 12*

“2 and **I will make you a great nation**, and I will bless, you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; 3 and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and **in you** all families of the earth will be blessed.”

1. **Zionism**: God promised Abraham that a great nation (Israel) **would be the object of His blessing**.
2. **Law (Tora)**: The Gentiles will be blessed “in Israel” **as they submit to the Law as proselytes**.

9

Promised blessing to Abraham  
Genesis 12:1-3

through  
the Law



To Jews  
only

God's  
Glorious Kingdom



Gentiles  
could be included  
only by becoming  
Jewish proselytes

10

Promised blessing to Abraham  
Genesis 12:1-3

through  
Christ



To all  
who believe

Jews and Gentiles were both included  
on the basis of their faith in Christ



To all  
who believe

11

### Matthew 28

“<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.””

### John 15:17

“This I command you,  
that you love one another.”

NOTE: The focus is  
on **LOVE** and **ONE**  
**ANOTHER**.

NOTE: What is  
not mentioned!

12

### Matthew 22

“<sup>34</sup> But when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered themselves together. <sup>35</sup> And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup> And He said to him, ‘**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.**’ <sup>38</sup> This is the great and foremost commandment. <sup>39</sup> The second is like it, ‘**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**’

<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

**Biblically, is this the  
Great Commission?**

13

### John 14

“<sup>25</sup> These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**”

### John 16:13

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; . . . and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

**This is to be understood as Jesus’  
endorsement of the **apostles’ teaching.****

14

**The Apostles **never repeat** Jesus’ Great  
Commission as it appears in the Gospels.**

**They teach a special (expanded) version  
to the church in **Eph.4** and **Rom.12.****

### Ephesians 4

“<sup>8</sup> Therefore it says, “When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men.” . . . <sup>11</sup> And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the **building up of the body of Christ;**”

15

## The Mission

This is the ball-  
game when  
evangelism is  
central.

**Christ  
THROUGH us**

**+** **Christ  
FOR us**

**Christ  
IN us**

16

## The Mission

This is the ball-  
game when the  
new spiritual  
experience  
is central.

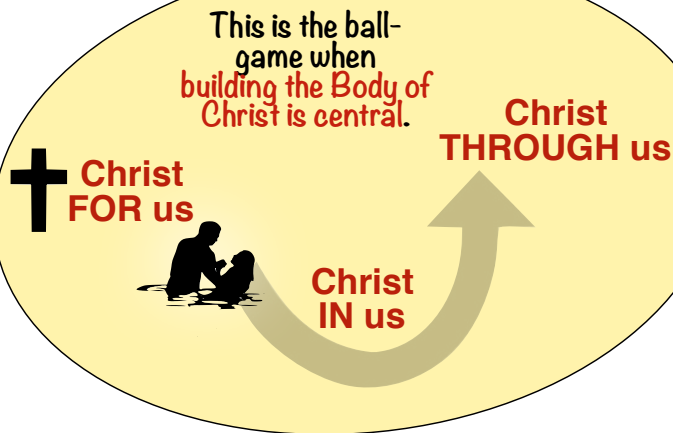
**Christ  
THROUGH us**

**+** **Christ  
FOR us**

**Christ  
IN us**

17

## The Mission



18

“<sup>11</sup> And He gave some as **apostles**, and some as **prophets**, and some as **evangelists**, and some as **pastors and teachers**,”

## Equipping ministries

(Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastor / teachers)

## Work of service ministries

(everything from signs / wonders, to managing community, to listening, to supporting, etc.)

19

## The dysfunctional church

- is where the ministers minister and the congregation congregates to consume, complain, and criticize.
- is where leaders feel entitled to lord it over, manipulate around, and prey upon the sheep.
- is where members are expected to look busy, act holy, and be happy as they show up, shut up and cough up.



**is a church that does not get it.**

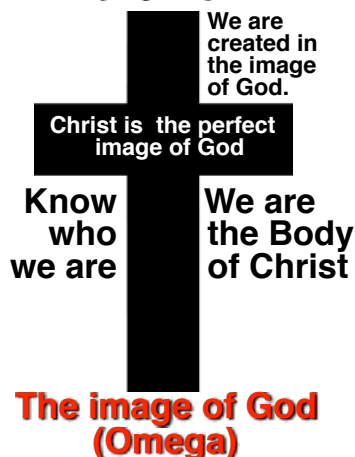
20

“<sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the **unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.**” <sup>14</sup> As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup> but speaking the truth in love, we are **to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,** <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

21

## The image of God (Alpha)

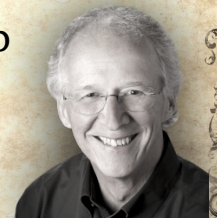
**Our calling is to be true to ourselves as created in God's image.**



22

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't.”

John Piper



23

## Images of the church in Ephesians



**Building** and  
Cornerstone  
2:21



**Body** and  
Head  
4:4



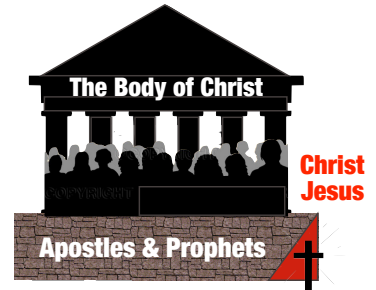
**Bride** and  
Bridegroom  
5:32

**Key images: Relationship & Response**

24

**The church (as the Body of Christ)  
is the endgame in God's plan**  
not a means to another end  
like world evangelism.

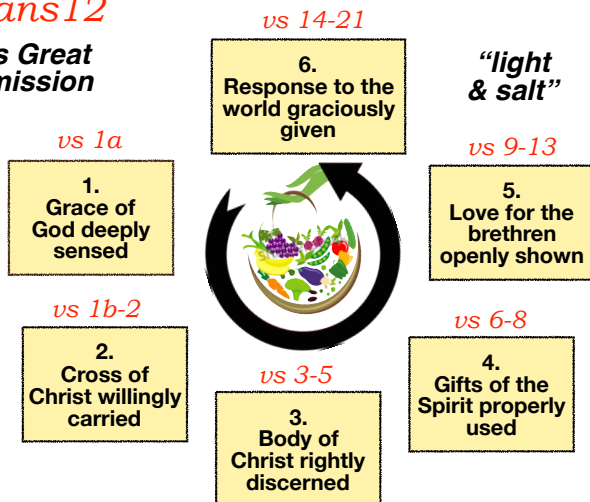
World evangelism  
is an important  
**(but not central)**  
part of the  
church's calling.  
New birth is not  
the end goal  
**but the start**  
of long process.



25

## Romans 12

### Paul's Great Commission



26

## Romans 12

"3 For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if **prophecy**, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if **service**, in his serving; or he who **teaches**, in his teaching; 8 or he who **exhorts**, in his exhortation; he who **gives**, with liberality; he who **leads**, with diligence; he who shows **mercy**, with cheerfulness."

27

## 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

"Now there are **varieties** of **gifts**, but the same Spirit. And there are **varieties** of **ministries**, and the same Lord. And there are **varieties** of **effects**, but the same God who works all things in all persons."

**Motivations**

"gifts"

**Ministries**

"ministries"

**Manifestation**

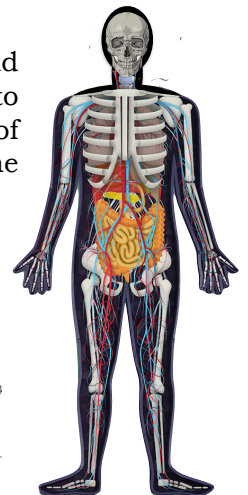
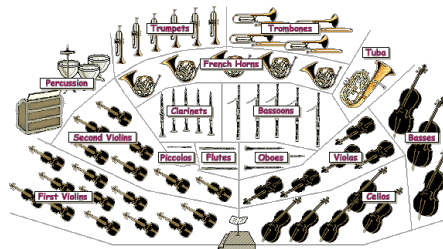
"effects"

**One Spirit - many different parts.**  
**One Master - many different roles.**  
**One God - many different results.**

28

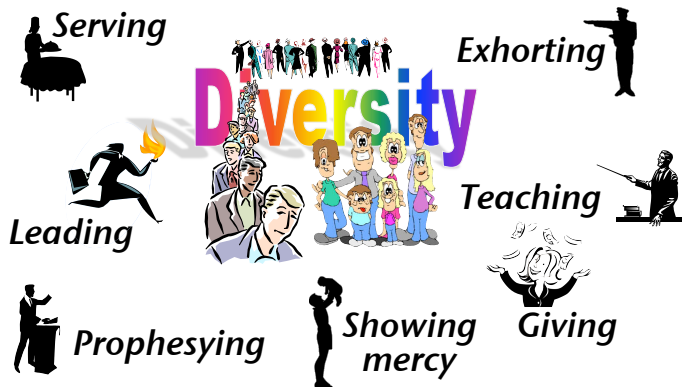
## Matthew 25:40

"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'"



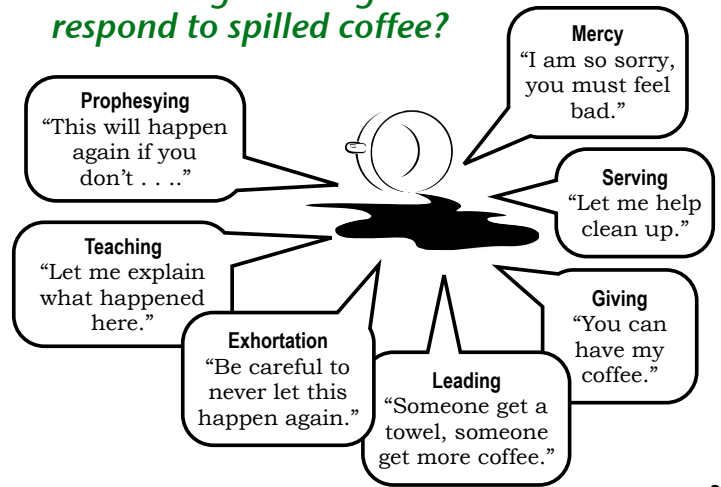
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*We are not all created equal, nor are we called to the same role, nor do we share the same perspective.*



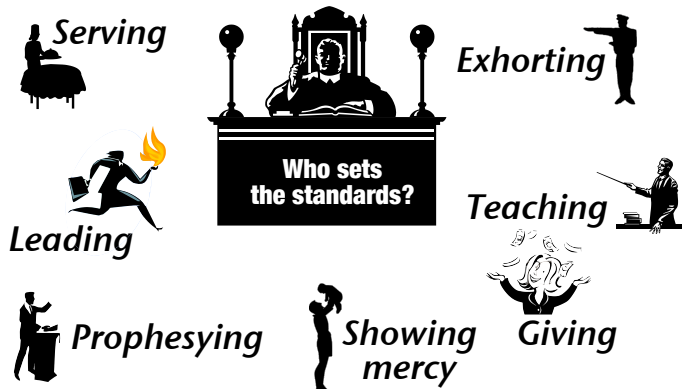
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*How might each gift respond to spilled coffee?*



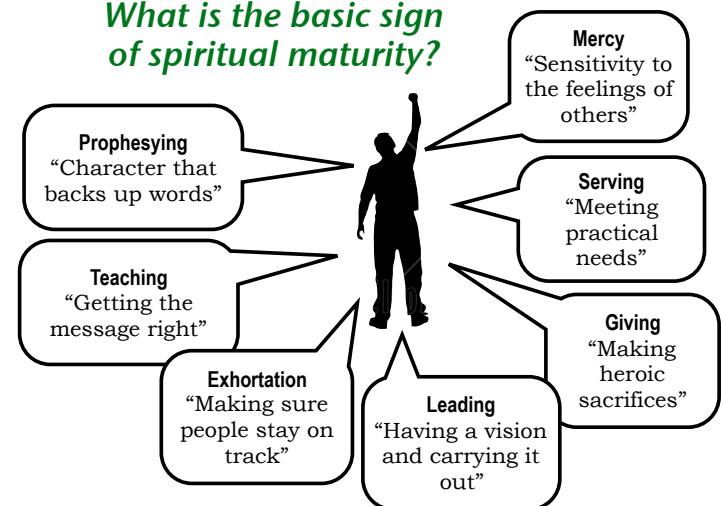
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*Each has a different strength which can become a standard for scorekeeping.*



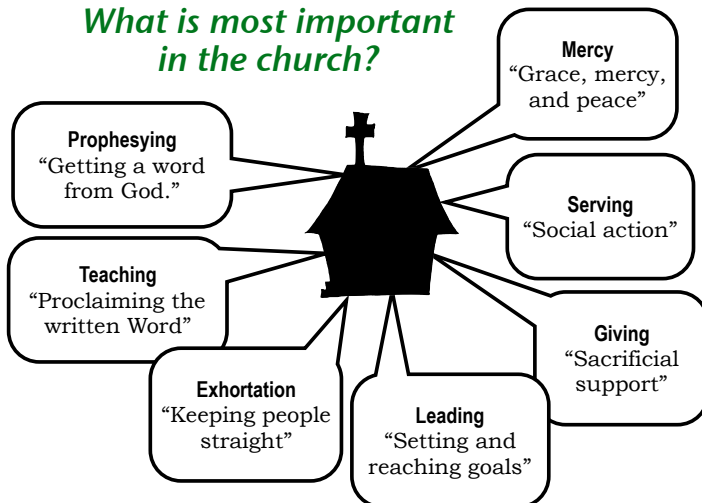
32

*What is the basic sign of spiritual maturity?*



33

*What is most important in the church?*



34

*1 Corinthians 12*

"28 And God has appointed in the church, first **apostles**, second **prophets**, third **teachers**, then **miracles**, then gifts of **healings**, **helps**, **administrations**, various kinds of **tongues**. 29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? 30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? 31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts"

**Certain gifts are "greater" than others in that they affect the whole body not just one other person.**

*1 Corinthians 14*

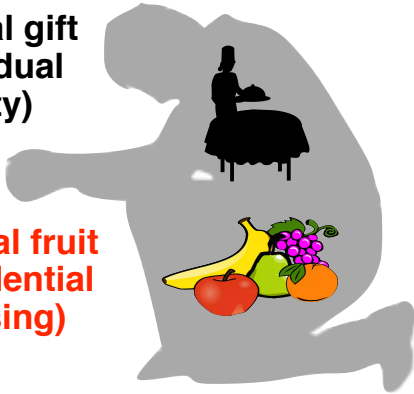
"39 Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to **prophecy**, and do not forbid to **speak in tongues**. 40 But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."

35

## Don't confuse character with gifts or fruit.

Spiritual gift  
(individual  
ability)

Spiritual fruit  
(providential  
blessing)



Spiritual character (universal calling)

36

## Paul's Great Commission

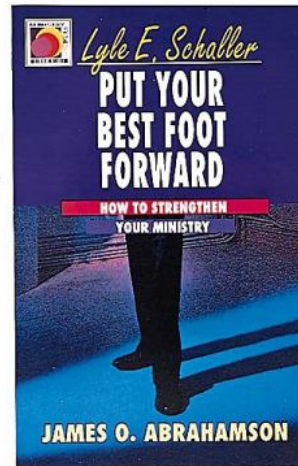
1. It is **church (Body of Christ)** building.
2. Evangelism is but **one step** in the process.
3. It involves **every** believer but in **different** ways.
4. The goal is the **Body of Christ** functioning as such.
5. The Apostles give the most attention to the **development** of converts in the community of faith.

37

## Lessons

1. The main thing is to keep the main thing the **main thing**.
2. **There is a place for you**. You don't have to be an evangelist.
3. **Get serious** about building the Body of Christ, reflecting God's image in life, selflessly serving one another, responding to circumstances with faith, hope, and love.
4. **Put your best foot forward** without losing your balance, kicking your neighbor, or feeling like Jesus is not enough.

38



Put Your Best  
Foot Forward

without losing  
your balance  
or kicking your  
neighbor.

39

## The Great Commission (true or false)

- F** World evangelism is **the purpose of the church** according to the Apostles' teaching.
- F** Every believer is **commanded** to evangelize.
- F** Our basic calling is to **win - build - and send** believers to evangelize the lost.
- T** The church (historically) has ordained only the **mature & gifted** to do mission work.
- T** The N.T. suggests that every nation **was reached** in the first century.
- F** You can identify a healthy church by the % of attention given to **world missions**.

40