

## The Great Co-Mission ( Matthew 28) 12 April

Turn your bible, if you would please, today, to the book of Matthew - Matthew chapter 28. We are gonna come to our Lord's last words here in Matthew chapter 28, a passage that is familiar to all of us and it's called The Great Commission.

Today, Pastor Jason, after the message, is going to share about some of our ministries. And they are all outreach ministries so it is fitting, this morning, that we preach a little bit upon outreach. And there's no greater passage on outreach than Matthew chapter 28 - a passage that we call The Great Commission.

It is said today that our planet Earth boasts of over 7 billion in population. And every time you finish moving around the sun, some 200,000 more people are added to planet Earth. And the multiples tell us that within the next 20 years, Earth will reach its ultimate population size of some 10 billion people. Now that's a lot of people. Can you imagine planet Earth with 10 billion people on it? It's sometimes hard to imagine because we've lost the concept of the word 'billion', haven't we? I mean, when we hear of people like, you know, Bill Gates when he was at the peak and pinnacle of success making \$2.8 billion a day or Ted Turner giving a billion dollars away to the United Nations, it seems the word 'billion' has lost its impact within our lives.

But if we can remove the word 'billion' from money and place it into the realm of time, it takes on for us a more realistic view, for example, a billion days ago, planet Earth upon which you stand was not yet created, a billion hours ago, when the book of Genesis was not yet written, a billion minutes ago, when Jesus Christ was still walking upon planet Earth and a billion seconds ago, the atomic bomb in Japan had not yet been dropped. Now, I don't know if that helps you to understand the concept of the word 'billion' but the fact remains today that there are some 7 billion people on planet Earth. And out of those 7 billion people that occupy this earth, 4 1/2 billion of those do not know Christ and 2 1/2 billion of those have never heard the name of Jesus Christ even one time.

Now, I don't know about you, but that stirs me, considering the world in which we live. I mean, we have so much technology, I mean, we can transmit information so rapidly and yet, today, there are some 2 1/2 billion people on planet Earth that have never heard the name of Jesus Christ even one time.

I was in Mumbai, India, a few years back and I was riding in a taxi with a national pastor. And the pastor asked the taxi driver, he said, 'Sir, do you know who Jesus is?' And the taxi driver responded with absolute sincerity and he said, as he looked up in the rear view mirror, he said, 'Sir, I do not go to the movies and I do not keep up with the stars.' (Laughter in the congregation). You see, here is a man who had never heard the name of Jesus Christ and yet he represents one of some 2 1/2 billion people who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. (02:57)

It is these un-evangelized multitudes that concerns our Lord here in Matthew chapter 28, this passage called The Great Commission. And, in speaking these words, Jesus was giving to us as a church. He was giving to us as a body of believers, our mission. He was telling us the very reason we exist - and that is to 'go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations'. In fact, do you realize that if you fail to grasp these closing words of Matthew chapter 28 and yet you can understand the book of Matthew chapter to chapter and all that's said there and you fail to grasp these closing words, you miss the entire point of the book of Matthew.

In fact, we could say, even in a greater sense, these closing words in Matthew - The Great Commission or The Climax - they are the focal point of the entire bible itself. In fact, the central theme of Scripture is this : that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost. That is the central theme of Scripture. Jesus left the glory of heaven that he might seek and to save the lost. And at one point, you were lost and if you know Jesus Christ, today, you are saved, you are born again, because of what he did for you. In fact, Jesus said this in John 20 and verse 21, he says,

"As the Father sent me, so I send you."

In other words, as the Father sent His Son in the world to reach the world, so the Son sent us into the world, likewise, to reach our world; and you realize that that message is our mission. That's the very reason that we exist. And, if we're going to fulfil our mission, which is the mission of 'going therefore and making disciples of all nations', there are some things about this mission that we need to understand. So, I want us today, to just kind of look into this very familiar passage and let's trust the Holy Spirit, today, to share with us and to teach us some things that we desperately need to know - The Great Commission. Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 28, verse 19. He said,

"Go therefore and make disciples."

And, you know, when Jesus Christ made the statement, he was giving to us as a body of believers. He was giving us a command. This is a mandate from Almighty God to every single child of God. This is a non-option. This is not something that you and I can choose to do or not to do. You see, this is a command from Almighty God to you and I. And the command is to make disciples. The little word 'go' simply tells us how to do it. In other words, if we're going to live in obedience to this great commission, then we must be going after souls. And here's what this means, practically - it means it's not enough for you and I simply to be praying for souls to be saved. Now, if we are living in obedience, and we are going forth making disciples, then we need to be praying without a doubt. But, you see, prayer alone is not enough to win this lost and dying world. We need to go. It means this : that it's not enough to simply live a good and a godly life before people hoping, you know, that my Christlike character will point people to Jesus. Now, we need to live godly lives, don't get me wrong, but you see, simply living a godly life before people is not enough. You see, we need to be going after souls. (06:13)

I remember reading a story some years ago about a man who had been saved in a gospel meeting and he was excited about his newfound faith in Christ. And so when he came to work the next day, he told

his boss that he had just trusted the Lord the night before. And the boss was excited. He says, 'Wow, you know, that's great! I too am a Christian and I have been praying for you for years.' And the man who had just been converted was shocked. He says, 'What? You're a believer?' And the man was shocked. He says, 'Yah, I'm a believer.' He says, 'Well, you are the very reason I have not placed my faith and trust in Jesus Christ all of these years. Now the man was horrified. He says, 'What? You know I have always tried to live a good and a godly life before you.' And the man says, 'Well, that's just the problem. You live such a good moral life before me but you never told me it was Jesus that made the difference, and so I reasoned that if you can live such a good life without Jesus, then so can I.' Because, you see, it's not enough simply to live a good and a godly life before people. Friends, we must be going after souls. Remember what Jesus said? Jesus made this great statement in Luke 14. He says,

"Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

Luke 14:23

You know the word 'compel' is a very powerful word. I remember when I was a young man attending church many years ago, that my pastor used to often preach on this passage and he would explain to us what the word 'compel' means and it was one of those churches where, you know, all the staff would, kind of, sit up front on chairs, you know. I don't understand why they did that like the real priesthood up there looking down at you guys. Anyway, they used to sit up there. And I remember my pastor, you know, would explain this word 'compel' and so he'd walk over and he would say, 'I tell you what 'compel' means.' And he would reach out and grab people by the lapel, you know, and he would compel them. So he grabbed them by the lapel and he would yank them up out of their seat and say, 'That's what it means.'

I began to think about that. I thought, you know, we can't twist a person's arm to get them in the kingdom of God and I want to say that it is not necessarily what that means. But here's what that word means : It refers to energy, right? It refers to breaking a sweat, it refers to energy. See, we need to go to the hedges and the highways and we need with energy, with sweat, going forth preaching the Word so people can hear, so people can be saved. It's not enough just to sit back, twiddling our thumbs, praying and living a godly life before people hoping that that's enough to bring them to Christ. We need to go. Go, therefore, and make disciples, that Paul put it this way and you know the verses :

"How shall they call on him whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him who they have not heard? (You know, in other words, you need to hear in order to believe). And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written : How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good news."

Romans 10:14-15.

We must, if we're going to live in obedience to this great commission, friends, we must be going forward taking this lovely life-changing message of Jesus Christ to a lost and to a dying world. In fact, isn't that the example of Jesus? Jesus never sat back upon his blessed assurance twiddling his thumbs,

hoping the world would be reached. He went out, he broke a sweat, he worked tirelessly. In fact, was it not Jesus, the bible says, who went after Andrew and brought Andrew to himself? Was it not Andrew, following the example of Jesus, that went after Philip and brought Philip to himself? Was it not Philip then, following the example of Andrew and Jesus, that went after that Ethiopian eunuch and they brought that Ethiopian eunuch to the foot of the cross. You see, the fact is, if we're going to reach this unreached world, then we must, in obedience to this great commission, we must be going. (10:12)

I remember years ago when I was pastoring another church, we had, as all churches do, including this one here, we had a church camp. And, one of the ladies in our church camp invited her mother. Her mother was a Buddhist, never been in a Christian assembly before in her life, and, at the insistence of her daughter, she came. And we had a guest speaker at that time and he preached ten messages on the Christian life. And at the very last message, he preached the message entitled 'The Fields are White unto Harvest'. And I remember, at the end of the sermon, he gave an invitation for people to respond to the message and trust Christ the Saviour. But nobody responded.

And so after the service, everybody dismissed and they went back to their hotel rooms. And one of the ladies within our church got deeply burdened for this unsaved elderly lady who was invited by her daughter and so, being prompted by the Holy Spirit late at night, she got up, dressed herself, walked out of her hotel room, went over and knocked upon this elderly lady's door. And the lady opened the door. She was fully dressed and she looked at this lady, this Christian lady, and she said, 'Come, reap me. I am white already unto the harvest.' And there she was wonderfully born again because, friends, there are people just like her all around us who are ripe and ready to be reached. But they will not be reached until we live in obedience to this great commission and we start going forth making disciples. And you'd notice what Jesus said in this same passage in Matthew chapter 28 verse 19. Notice he says,

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." Matthew 28:19

You see, living in obedience to this great commission demands not only taking the gospel across the street but also demands you and I be willing to take the gospel across the seas. So it is a responsibility we have not only to share the gospel with our family and our friends and our colleagues and our city, but it's taking the gospel around the world. Each and every one of us be willing to do that, however God would have you to do it. You see, this is a command to every child of God that we are to be available, you see, to take the gospel, to make disciples, to share that wonderful life-changing message of Jesus to all nations.

In fact, you realize today that there are some 11,000 people groups around the world, many of which have never heard the name of Jesus Christ even one time. Until today, that there's one Christian for every 3500 people in the Middle East. There's one Christian for every 2500 people here in Asia and there's one Christian for every 900 people in Europe. In fact, we live not far from the largest Islamic country in the world. It's the country of .... Indonesia, right? 400 million people, 95% of them are Islamic by religion, and yet, do you realize, today, that Indonesia has not always been an Islamic

country? It converted to Islam. You say, how? It was back in the 16th century, an Islamic leader from the Middle East, by the name of Hameed, said, I think that we can evangelize the Indonesians. And, therefore, he sent forth missionaries, and the rest is history.

And yet, friends, you realize that we have a great commission too? And that is to go forth, and the bible says, that we are to be making disciples of all nations. You see, we are to be willing to take the gospel, yes, across the street but we must be willing to take the gospel across the seas. In fact, it is interesting to me all it demands, all it takes, to reach this world is one person burdened to reach one person. It always amazes me when I speak in a church and the church hasn't grown. It always amazes me when churches just kind of stagnate, you know what I mean? You know, they stagnate at 1000, they stagnate at 500. They stagnate at 100. And it is easy. All I say is this : Listen, all it takes to double this church, all it takes to reach this world is one person burdened to reach one person. Are you tracking with me? You guys with me?

I was in a church not long ago. A military colonel was preaching. He kept using the phrase 'Are you tracking with me? Are you tracking with me?' And I wondered what 'tracking' means, you know. I realized it's a modern term. So I am going to ask you, 'Are you tracking with me? Okay. 'Are you with me, right? Hey, listen. All it takes is just one person burdened to reach one person and we can reach this world. This church could double overnight. If we got burdened for one person, we begin to pray for them. We begin to ask God to give us opportunities and then when the door was open, we share with them the life-changing message of Jesus. And we bring them to the cross. We get them in church and disciple them. This church could grow overnight. Are you tracking? Hey, that's all it takes - just one person burdened to reach one person. Hey, that's how the world has been changed with the gospel : one person (15:08)

Think about this : It was in 1807 that a young man by the name - er, what was his name - a young man by the name of Robert Morrison. There it is. That's a lack of one cup of coffee this morning. That would not have happened if I had two. Robert Morrison, 1807. He got burdened for the land of China. In 1807, when he landed in China, he was the first Christian since the Nestorians some 900 years earlier. Think about that. And he was the only known Christian in the day. 200 years later, here we are. China boasts of a Christian population of some 100 million people, probably the largest Christian population of any other country in the world today. Why? Because one man got burdened.

It was in 1817, a young man by the name of Adoniram Judson got burdened for the dark and unknown land of Myanmar. And so, having gone there, he won for Christ a man, a Karen man in his home. And now this Karen man converted to Christ realizing that this is a wonderful life-changing message. And so he got burdened for his own people. And so Adoniram Judson sent a young couple, George and Sarah Boardman, to take the gospel back to the Karen tribe, and, within a few short years, thousands upon thousands of Karens were converted to Christ, now saved and born again. They got burdened for their neighbours and so over a span of some 90 years, over 250,000 Kachin people were converted to

Christ. You know why? Because one person got burdened. And that's all it takes, you see, if we're going to fulfil this mission,

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" Matthew 28:19

here's what it demands : It's not just living in obedience to the great commission, it's you and I being burdened for what the Lord is burdened with. And you know what the Lord was burdened with? He was burdened for you. He came to seek and to save you. And what the Lord started, he wants us to finish. And we lose our burden, don't we, to the hustle and bustle of life, the lure and the lust of the age? It seems that the fire that had burned so bright at one point of our life is but a mere flicker. And when you come to the God of Heaven and say, 'Yes, Lord, I understand that this is your mission. That's a great mission and Lord, I want to bear but you need to give me a burden to do it because all it takes is a burden. One person reaching one person, we can change this world for the glory of God.

Years ago when I came and I've been here about 25 years. And 25 years ago, I came as a pastor of a very, very large church. We had about 50, 60 people in our church. You're tracking with me? That's good. I had an extremely large youth group, all right? I had 7 people in my youth group, okay? 7 people. And when I became the pastor of the church, I immediately recognized that these 50 adults were glad I was there because they were tired of doing the work of the ministry. They did without a pastor for years and they have been doing all the work and, finally, when I came, it was like, 'I'm glad you're here. It's yours, okay?'

And I realized very quickly that they were not going to help me build the kingdom of God through that little local church in Serangoon Garden. And so I turned my attention to the only life in the church and they were the teenagers. You tracking? Okay. So I began to invest my time in them. I challenged my teenagers this way : I said, 'Listen, if you bring an unsaved friend to church on Sunday, I'll share the gospel with them.' Now, that's not hard to do when you have 7 teenagers. It will be pretty hard to do here at GLCC, right, with multiple services and all that? I challenged them, and so one of the young men in our church got deeply burdened for his friend who was going to Chinese High and he brought 5 of his friends on a Sunday morning and all 5 of those young men placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ and were wonderfully born again.

They got excited and so they brought friends the next Sunday, and you know what happened? This is a no-brainer, okay? You know what happened? Yes, some of those got saved and the next Sunday, they brought more and they brought more. It was like popcorn. You ever popped popcorn? Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop. And, over a span of about 14 to 17 months, our youth group of some 70 kids grew to 140 teenagers. You know why? Because one young person got burdened for his friends. And friends, that's all it takes. (19:25)

You see, we who have the truth must take the truth to those who don't if we are going to fulfil this, the mission of the church. And having said all that, by way of introduction today, let's get to our message. Are you ready? Because having said that, I want you to know this : You know the Lord never asks you

to do something without giving you the power to do it. Good news? I want to say it again. That should excite you. If we were not so conservative, we would stand up and shout, 'Glory!' Because it's a glorious truth, all right? Hey, here it is : God never asks you to do something without giving you the power to do it. Are you tracking? Yes. I'm so glad about that. I'll jump for you. It's exciting...to the great truth. Hey! he'll never ask you to do something without giving you the power to do it. And so he asked us to do something - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. And, as you realize, he has given us the power to fulfil this, the mission of the church. In fact, here are some words that we sometimes miss in this great commission passage. He says,

"All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth." Matthew 28:18

He's talking about delegated authority just as the Heavenly Father delegated to the Son power and authority to do what he was commissioned to do ~ die upon the cross for our sins. You realize the Father and the Son have delegated to us power to do what Jesus has commanded us to do and that power has been delegated to you and to me in 3 ways?

Number 1, we have the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. God has asked you to do something and has given you the power to do it and has given you the power of the Holy Spirit. You know this verse - Acts 1:8 - it says,

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses ...."

Where? In Jerusalem, Singapore, Judea, Samaria, and yet even to the uttermost parts of the earth. Now here's a question : Why has the Lord given us power? Why has he given His Holy Spirit power? The answer is simple : That we might be a witness. Now why do we need the Spirit's power to witness? Because the Holy Spirit can do through you what you can't do for yourself. Are you tracking? The Spirit of God lives within you to enable you to do what you can't do for yourself. Here's something that we can't do but only the Holy Spirit can do. Do you realize that you cannot convince a person of sin, righteousness, and God's coming judgment? You can't convince them. You cannot convince a person they are a sinner.

You ever sat with somebody and talk to them and he says, 'I'm not a sinner.'? You've ever been there? Years ago, I was sharing the gospel with a guy in Malaysia. He is a Hong Kong student on tour. He said, 'I'm not a sinner. I'm not a sinner.' I showed him the ten commandments, explained to him and, after explaining, he said, 'Ah, if that's what sin is,' he said, 'then I'm a sinner.' Okay. But we can't convince people of truth, we can't convince people that evolution is not true and Jesus Christ is true. In fact, that's not our job. That is the Spirit's job because notice what Jesus said, regarding the Holy Spirit, he said,

"And when He (that is the Spirit of God) has come, he will convict the world of sin and of righteousness, and of (God's coming) judgment." John 16:8

I want you to know something. It's exciting to know that as you sit down and share the gospel with somebody, you don't have to try to convince them by being clever. You don't have to try to convince them by having a better argument than they have. You don't try to convince people because you have a lot of charisma or you know you can speak well or whatever it may be. You see, we sit down and depend on the Spirit of God and we declare the truth of the gospel. And the Spirit of God opens eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to receive that wonderful life-changing message of Jesus. Amen? Okay. Tracking? Tracking is better than Amen? I don't know.

I'll tell you a story. I'll loosen you up a little bit. You guys seem a little tight. You okay? I'll loosen you up. Story : Several years ago, my wife and I went to the Philippines and we were doing some evangelism and so on. And so my wife took a group of ladies out to do some evangelism on the streets of a city in the Philippines. And one of the ladies on the team my wife was training, was very cynical, very critical of what we are doing because, you see, she had shared the gospel faithfully every day passing out tracts; was very, very faithful in her church and doing what she thought she should do, but she was never seeing anybody come to know the Lord. And so she realized, or she thought to herself, reasoned falsely, that nobody in her city can be reached; that her city was different than any other city and you just can't see people saved. And so she wanted to prove to my wife, and thus to me, that what we were teaching about the power of the Holy Spirit was wrong.

So the lady said to my wife, 'I will take you to a place to share the gospel.' Of course my wife, not knowing anything, said okay. So she took my wife to the front of this Roman Catholic Church and in the front of the church was a bench. And on that bench was an elderly lady. And this elderly lady was one of those women who went to mass every single day, all right, and she was faithful in her religious system. And so my wife, not understanding, you know, what really was going on, sat down and engaged this elderly lady in conversation.

About forty minutes into it, this elderly lady believed and yet so did this woman with the critical and caustic spirit. They both believed. You see, the elderly lady believe in Jesus Christ who saved her from sin, death and hell and the lady who was critical of the ministry of the Holy Spirit believed in the power of the Holy Spirit to do what we and our own energy and our own strength can't do. You see, friends, the Spirit of God lives within you to enable you to do what? To witness. Through you, he convicts people of their need of Jesus, the need of his righteousness, and the fear of his coming judgment. (25:28)

You realize the primary reason people don't share the gospel? It's fear. Is that right? Here's what I know. I'm going to share this message with you today and I'm going to challenge you at the end. Some are going to imbibe and see blessing, others are going to say, well, that was a good message but they will not apply to their life. In other words, some are not going to take this message on and this message won't change the lives of, I would say, some of you. And the reason being it's simply due to fear. The primary reason people don't share the gospel is : they fear. Am I tracking up the right stream here? It's fear.



And here's one of our fears. We fear that if we engage someone in spiritual conversation but they might ask me a question that I cannot answer. But may I say that that's something that you never have to worry about? There's not a fear that that is true because do you realize that if you've been in church for any length of time and you're paying attention in church - you tracking?- you're not sleeping, it's a great time for a siesta, you know; you are actually listening and you have been reading your bible and you have been in church for any length of time, you realize that you have so much bible on the inside. You have more than you actually know. Do you realize that when you sit down and begin to share the gospel with somebody, you know the Spirit of God can take the Sword of the Spirit and he can reach down in the depths of your being, and bring that to your mind what that person needs at that hour? You're with me? You say, 'how do you know that?' Here's what Jesus said in John 14:26, he said,

"He (Holy Spirit) will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

In other words, the Spirit of God is our teacher and he has the ability to give us the words that we need when we need them. And, friends, we don't have to worry about xxx? sitting down (27:21) and someone asking a question we don't know. And, by the way, if someone asks you a question and you do not know, and the Spirit of God doesn't give you an answer, you know your answer is : 'I don't know.' And that's okay because who knows everything, right? I had to come to grips with that, you know? I am a preacher and I am supposed to know everything about the bible. I got news for you. It doesn't work that way. I have myself been stumped, but we can trust the Spirit of God to take the Word of God and give us the words to say, when we need to say them.

Some years ago, I was in Johannesburg, South Africa, and I was doing some gospel meetings and doing some evangelistic training. And one afternoon, we decided that we wanted to go door-to-door and share the gospel. And so, where we were, we could not actually go to the door. Everything was gated. So, I have never shaken on a gate and, you know, just kind of shake on the gate and get some attention. 'Hello!' And someone came out. And we got to be as bold as a lion in that kind of evangelism but I was training, so I had to be bold with my trainees, right? So, not my favorite kind of evangelism. But anyway, we were shaking on the gate, you know. This lady came out. She had two big dogs. So I kind of took a step back and, thankfully, she didn't open the gates.

We kind of talked over the gates. The gates were about that high (Pastor indicated chest-high). We were kind of at head level so things were cool and I began to share with her the gospel. And she was open. She listened and she was, you know, asking good questions and I brought her down to a point where I asked her this question : I said, 'Since Jesus Christ died for your sins, are you willing to ask him to be your Saviour right now?' And she looked at me. And I saw her eyes. Bam! they kind of opened bright, you know. She looked around, looked up, looked down, looked to the sides. She says, 'Right here?' I say, 'Yah, right here.' She says, 'Right now?' I say, 'Yes, right now.' She says, 'Outside?' And I say, 'Yah, outside.' She says, 'No! This is such an important decision. This needs be made, you know, in a church or in a pastor's office but not outside. (29:20)

And, you know, I have shared the gospel a few times and that was kind of a new one for me, you know. And, I didn't quite know, so I kind of took a step back, not to get away from the dogs but just to take a deep breath and I said, 'Lord, help.' And immediately, the Spirit of God brought back to my mind a bible story found in Acts chapter 8. And I said to this lady, 'Can I tell you a bible story?' She said, 'Sure.'

So I began to share with her the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. I said, you know, here was Philip and he was travelling down a dirty, dusty road under the bright open sky and he came upon this chariot. And in that chariot was a politician. He was reading the book of Isaiah and his heart was open and Philip had the joy of leading this eunuch into a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. And, I said, you know, it happened on a dirty, dusty road under the bright blue sky and she looked at me and she said, 'Really?' I said, 'Really.' And I saw she thought for a moment. She says, 'Well, if it was okay with them, that's okay with me.' And there she bowed her heart and she put her faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

You know why, friends, because God has given to us what we need to do what he has called us to do. He has given to you the Spirit of the Living God and you need to make choices to depend upon him because he will, through you, convict the world of sin, unrighteousness and God's coming judgment. He will give you the words to say when you need to say them. But, not only has he given us the Spirit of God, the bible goes on to tell us he has also given to us the Word of God. And I want to remind you of something that you know : there is power in the Word. Paul put it this way, in Romans chapter 1, he says the gospel - now, the gospel is that message concerning the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ - the gospel, he says,

"...is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes." Romans 1:16

Friends, there is power in the Word of God. You see, we can choose to depend upon the Spirit of God to speak the Word of God through us and when that Word goes forth, friends, there is power. Power to do what? Power to open eyes that they might see and ears that they might hear and hearts to receive that wonderful truth of Jesus Christ. There's power in the Word. When we excuse away the power of God, when we excuse away the power of the Word of God, we fall into unbelief. Oftentimes I hear people say, 'Well, you don't know what the people are like in my neighbourhood' or 'You don't know what the people are like in my city' or 'You know, these people are religious' or 'You know, they will never believe' or 'You know, they are like this, they are like this'. Friends, all that is an excuse and all of that is unbelief in the power of God's Word. There's power in the Word. Are you tracking? There is power. There is power in the Word. Do you believe me?

Can I tell you a few stories then? I'm not sure. You are sitting there looking at me. Everybody has heroes. Do you have heroes? You guys have heroes? You guys are quiet because I have not spoken here in 6 months, you're not used to me. Let me tell Pastor Jason I am staying around 'cause you are not talking with me. If I am here regular, you're talking. We have a good conversation together. I tell you

all the time. I'm an open-air preacher. I love to preach to unsaved people. I love to preach to crowds. I love bantering. I don't mind if you do it to me as long as I duck and get out of the way. I love a little bantering, all right, and so I ask if you are tracking because I want to know if you are with me because we are talking about some good stuff here, all right? There's power in the .... There's power in the ....Word. Okay, so you're tracking.

There's power in the Word and everybody has heroes. I have heroes and one of my heroes of the faith is a man by the name of Jonathan Goforth. Jonathan Goforth was a missionary evangelist to China about 100 years ago and a story goes like this that one day when he arrived in China as a young missionary, he was met by an older senior missionary and the senior missionary gave Dr Goforth these words of advice. He said this : He said, 'Here in China, the people in this region are opposed to the name of Jesus. And so, if you're going to see them come to the Lord, here is what you should do : You should never mention the name of Jesus. But you should work at tearing down their false gods and their false religious system. And, if you have successfully torn down their religious system, if you're getting a second hearing, then you can bring in the name of Jesus.' To which Dr Goforth said - and I believe he said it in a very heated manner - he said, 'Never, never, never. This gospel, this message concerning life, death and burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it saved the men and women in Canada, down and out in Canada (using Canadian). This is the same gospel that can save these men and women in China.'

And from the very start, he preached the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and from the very start, he saw souls saved because there's power in the Word. As an older missionary, now seasoned, a young missionary came to Dr Goforth and he said, 'Sir, what is the secret to your soul-winning success?' And Dr Goforth said, 'I just give God a chance to speak to the hearts of men through his own words.' Friends, there is power in the Word. (34:40)

Maybe 17, 18 years ago, as it happened a man started a church here in Singapore, in the Bugis area. I remember how standing at the back door shaking hands with people coming in and this man in his early 30s came up to me. He was a brother of one of the church members and I remember he walked right up to me, stuck out his hand. He said, 'Hi, my name is so and so. I'm an atheist. I don't believe in Christianity and you'll never convince me it's true.' I said, 'Well, thank you. Welcome to church.' (Laughter in the congregation). And he walked in. Kind of funny, right? And I remember I preached that Sunday and when I said every head bowed and every eye closed, he got up and he left. So that week I prayed, 'Lord, bring this man back that I could talk to him about his soul.' And so the Lord brought him back. And so again after the service, I said every head bowed and every eye closed. And when every head bowed and every eye closed, he got up and he left.

Next Sunday I said the same thing. I did the same things. So the 4th Sunday I decided that I was going to talk to the guy who was helping us. I said, 'Hey, listen, after I preached, I am going to step down and go to the back and lock the door so this guy can't get away. (Laughter in the congregation). And I want you to close in the invitation.' He said, 'Okay.' So, sure enough, I went to the back. I didn't lock the

door, by the way, but I did stand there like this (with bent elbows sticking out and both fists clenched in front of his chest), you know, okay, try to get by me, you know. Anyway, every head bowed and every eye closed, he got up and he walked to the back and I just engaged him in conversation. I said, 'Hey, listen, you've been coming for about four weeks. Can I take a few moments and to share with you what it means to be a Christian. He looked at me and said, 'Absolutely.'

So we sat down. I talked with him and shared the gospel with him. And, forty minutes later, he placed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ. And I asked the man afterwards, I said, 'Listen, four weeks ago, you walked in and you said, 'I don't believe in Christianity. You'll never convince me it's true.' I said, 'What convinced you?' And here's what he said, 'As I was just sitting there listening, as I was listening to the Word, I just knew what I heard is true.' You know why? There is power in the Word.

Friends, if we are going to fulfil this commission of the church then we must be dependent upon the Spirit of God. We must be declaring the Word of God. But if we declare the Word of God, and depend upon the Spirit of God, then we must be going forward upon our knees because there is also power in prayer. Now, although prayer alone won't save a soul, but if we're in obedience to the great commission we are going then we need to be praying. In fact, I love what Paul said in Colossians 4. He said,

"Pray also for us that God would open to us a door for the Word to speak the mystery of Christ, (in other words, pray that we might have an open door that we might go forward in that open door that we might preach the gospel) for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." Colossians 4:3-4

In other words, we should be praying that God will open doors because, you see, prayer opens doors, it opens hearts and it softens souls for the message of the gospel. Friends, if we are living in obedience, and we are going, we need to depend on the Spirit of God and if we are declaring the Word of God, we must go forward on our knees.

Heroes - we all have them. Jonathan Goforth was one of my heroes and he really set me in the right direction. I, today, am a missionary evangelist and I travel the region preaching the gospel because he set for me a wonderful example. Another hero of mine is a man by the name of George Mueller. Another hero of mine is a man by the name of Hudson Taylor. And one day, George Mueller heard that Hudson Taylor of China Inland Mission fame was going to inland China to share the gospel, to start a work. And he heard that Mr Taylor was going to an area that was very difficult and so he wrote Mr Taylor these words and he said this : 'Mr Taylor, that area of China is very difficult. If you are going to capture those souls for Jesus, you need to go forward on your knees.' And he did. And he established a beachhead there in that part of China for the gospel.

Years later, Hudson Taylor heard that Jonathan Goforth was going to an area in northern China. And so he wrote him a note. He says, 'Mr Goforth, we in China Inland Mission have for years been trying to pioneer a work in there. I want you to know something. It is the most anti-Christian area in all of

China. If you are going to capture the hearts of those people with the gospel, you need to go forward upon your knees.' And he did. For two years Jonathan Goforth prayed and he went. And he prayed and he went, and he prayed and he went. And every time he had opposition. But within those two years, God softened the heart and opened the mind for the gospel and soon thousands were converted to Christ and soon it became the strongest Christian settlement in all of China. You know why? Because they went forward on their knees.

Friends, if we are going to fulfil this, the mission of the church, then, we too, must clothe ourselves and all that the Lord has provided. You see, he's given you the Spirit of God to enable you to do what you in your own power, own energy and own strength cannot do. He wants you to depend upon that Spirit to go forth in faith, in confidence, declaring the Word of God, believing that there's power in the Word. But in your going, he wants you to go forward on your knees.

And there's one last thought and then we're done. I think Jesus, right now, topped it off right here and he says this : Go therefore and make disciples. Yes, clothe yourself with the power that I have provided but here's one last thing, Jesus says, one last thing. One thing I want you to know, Jesus says, 'I will go with you.' Listen to what he said in Matthew chapter 28 verse 20,

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Matthew 28:20

What a great promise, isn't it? And here it is : Where you go, he goes. When you're speaking to that individual, he is speaking with you. When you're knocking upon the door of their heart, hey, he is knocking with you. Wherever you go, he goes. If you, in obedience go forth, taking the gospel to all nations, listen, you never go alone. He is going with you. Are you tracking? Good news. (40:29)

I read a story some years ago. This is a true story. Sometimes, preachers like to tell cannibal stories. I'm going to tell a cannibal story. This is a true story. Years ago, a man was in the heart of Africa and he was trying to reach a group of people who are cannibals, right? It could be South America, wherever, that's where he was and as he was sharing the gospel, the sun went down and these unsaved cannibals looked over at what would be a good evening meal. So as they were preparing their supper with this man, by the miracle of God, he escaped.

But, being unfamiliar with the terrain, he went to the jungle, he tried to climb to the top of the tallest tree and as he was looking down, his would-be captors with a lit torch in hand, scouring the jungle floor looking for their missing meal, that man penned these words, and I quote : 'I never felt Jesus so near as I did that night on top of the tree. I would go back in that perilous hour if I could only feel again the presence of God with me as I did that dark night.' Here is a man that entered into the reality of "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

And friends, that promise is for you to know that wherever you go, he goes with you. You never go alone. It's that great bible expositor G. Campbell Morgan who one day was preaching to a group of ladies in a convalescent home and he was reading from the book of Matthew. When he came to

Matthew 20 verse 20, he said to the ladies, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." And he said, 'Ladies, isn't this a wonderful promise?' An elderly lady in the back stood up and said, 'No, Mr Morgan, this is not a wonderful promise. This is a glorious reality.' And friends, this is more than a promise. It is a glorious reality that where you go, he goes with you. You never go alone. So we, who have the truth, must take the truth to those who don't, if we are going to fulfil this, the mission of the church.

One last story about a hero, Hudson Taylor. One day, in inland China, he was preaching the gospel in a campaign and he led to the Lord a man who was the leader of a large Buddhist temple. The man, now excited about his newfound faith in Christ, came to Mr Taylor and said, 'Sir, how long have you had this, this life-changing message, in your country. Mr Taylor said, 'Well, we've had it for several hundred years, I suppose.' And the man was shocked. He said, 'Several hundred years! And you're just coming now?' He said, 'Mr Taylor, my father sought long and hard for the truth and he died without it.' And he said these tragic words, 'Mr Taylor, why didn't you come sooner?' Why didn't you come sooner?

Friends, we who have the truth, we must in obedience to the great commission, take this truth to those who don't. And we need to go. The power that God has provided and we need to realize that Jesus Christ is always with us. You never go alone. There are 4 1/2 billion people on planet Earth who do not know Christ. We can take these people and stretch them into a single file line. They would wrap our globe 25 times. Please imagine in your mind's eye 25 lines of people each marching step-by-step to eternal hell. It's these unevangelized multitudes that were heavy on our Lord's heart when he gave these words to you, to us as a church, that we must, in the power that he provides, go forward and we need to be making disciples, and we need to be making disciples of all nations. (44:30)

Every single person has a part to play. There's somebody for you to reach. Maybe what we need to do in the invitation hour, as we bow our heads and close our eyes in just a moment, maybe we need to ask God 'Who would you have me to reach? Lord, would you burden me with somebody?' Maybe today, your heart is cold to the lost world around you. And maybe you should ask God to warm you up. I understand that. We live in a busy world, the hustle and bustle of life, the lure and lust of the age kind of dampens that flame and so we need to ask God to set that flame ablaze. Lord, may we have your heart upon our hearts. May we have your compassion for the multitude and maybe that's what you need to pray today. Or maybe today you need to rise above that and say, Lord I want to reach somebody. Put somebody upon my heart. Who should I reach? Who can I witness to? Who can I share the gospel with this week, this month or this year? That's because we all have a part to play. And this world will be reached when we play our part for His glory.

Let's bow our heads in prayer, shall we? With every head bowed and every eye closed.

Lord, we just want to say 'thank you' today for your great love for us. Lord, we thank you that 2000 years ago, you left the glories of heaven. You came to this earth, and there you lived a sinless life. The

time was right, you willingly submitted yourself to the hands of sinful men, and you went to Calvary's cross. There, upon that cross, you died for our sins. On the third day, you rose again. Lord, we are thankful today that you're not in that tomb. It's empty. You are not on that cross. You are sitting on the right hand of God on high. When you went up, you sent that blessed Holy Spirit down. And, Holy Spirit, we are thankful today for your indwelling presence. We ask, blessed Holy Spirit, that you will take your Word and speak to our hearts that we might today see, as we ought to see, that we might be the very people that you want us to be, that we might, in your power, do what you want us to do that our lives, from top to bottom, would bring glory and honor and praise to your name. Lord, I pray for the people of God gathered in this room today. I pray that you would burden our hearts, mine included, burden us, Lord, to fulfil this, the mission of the church. Lay somebody upon our heart today. We can take this loving, this life-changing, this transforming message and share with them what was shared with us many years ago. Lord, I pray that you will help us that we would be the people you want us to be, bringing glory and honor and praise to your name and we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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