**Commissioned We Are!**

Acts 1:1-11; Colossians 3:16-17; Matthew 28:16-20; Psalm 100 8.4.19

Summary: Message for the commissioning of DCE Sarah.

 Have you ever noticed that as you are about to end a conversation with someone that you will not see for a long time, you end by saying what is most important to you? You use this last opportunity to tell them what is most important and personal… what you want them to remember. Perhaps you tell them you love them or to call you soon. The words may differ but the principle is the same: you end with what is most important.

 Authors also know the value of last impressions. They often use the last paragraph of a chapter or last chapter of a book to summarize their main points.

 Jesus knew this same secret. That is why he used this special time, His last words, to speak the words found in Acts 1:8, *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."*

 This was not a new teaching of Jesus. It was not some new responsibility that Jesus was adding to the disciples. This had been the central teaching of His life. It was the reason for his coming, His life, His death. It was the theme of His life ... SALVATION.

 In His own words, *"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."* A ransom had to be paid according to Romans. Jesus came to be that ransom. It was important for Him to come, to live, to die, and to save. It was very important that the story of what He had done, the Gospel, should be made known to all persons. Jesus used His last days, indeed His last words to express this. He was now leaving the earth. How would the world find out what He had done for them? Jesus had a plan ... His disciples were to make the gospel known to all men. He made the plan as simple as He could in Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18-20. He knew that the plan would work. If one Christian would witness to one person, then there would be two Christians. If those two witnessed to one each, there would be four, then eight ... 16… 32 ... etc. It would lead to a Christian world.

 There was only one weakness to the plan: it was based on man. It was based on man who had a free will and could choose not to tell others. The gospel is the pearl of great price. What will we do with that pearl? What will we do with His commission, the great commission, to spread the gospel to the entire world? It’s not just for me, or Sarah, but for us all.

 Let's take a look at that commission found in Acts and Matthew.

**1.** **The Power of the Commission.**

 As we strive to be obedient to the commission we will face interference. Satan does not want us to win souls. Those lost souls are his revenge, his way of getting even with God for his expulsion from heaven. As we face him we are out of our league. He is stronger than us. He is spirit. We have no power against him. However, Jesus promised us in Acts 1:8 that we would get spiritual power, that it would come to us, we would receive it. That means that someone has the power and will give it to us. Jesus is that one. He has the power. He has already defeated Satan, death and the grave. He has the power and gives it to us. He sends it by messenger ... the Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes as our comforter and brings with Him the power to overcome Satan. Satan cannot stop us because, *"greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.”* Satan is no match for a Spirit-filled Follower of Christ!

**2.** **The Plan of the Commission.**

 You can’t get more simple ... GO! Webster’s defines go as: "To proceed without delay or to move out from the place where one is." This definition fits in well to Jesus' plan. We are not to sit and wait for someone to come to us and ask us to tell them about Jesus. We are to move out from where we are to where they are. Then, we are to take advantage of the opportunity to witness. Jonah had to leave his city and GO to Nineveh. Moses had to leave the wilderness and GO to Pharaoh..

 "Go", however, is not the best translation of the Greek. In the Greek, the word we translate "Go" is a participle which means "as you go." Jesus is assuming we will go. We have no choice but to go into the world. Every day and in everything we do we are going into the world. When we go to the grocery store, barber shop, work, school, wherever, we are going. The choice is not in going or not going. It is in witnessing or not witnessing… in telling or not telling. Just as our Wednesday night Bible Study group has been learning, we are to simply to look around and see where Jesus is working, where he’s messing around in the lives of others, and then to go there.

**3.** **The Scope of the Commission.**

 In Matthew, Jesus said we were to go into the entire world. Acts is helpful here as it is more specific. In Acts Jesus said we were to go to Jerusalem ... Judea… Samaria… and the uttermost parts of the world. Where are these places? Jerusalem was the city that the disciples were in. Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit. Then; they were to begin witnessing RIGHT WHERE THEY WERE! Our place to begin witnessing is in our Jerusalem… RIGHT WHERE WE ARE. Maybe it is our close friends at home, work, or at school. It may be the people living under your roof. It is right where you are, right where you spend your time, the people close to you. The disciples weren't to stay in Jerusalem and neither are we. We are to go to Judea. Judea was the area though not the exact city where the disciples were. For us it is those people on our fringe, around us when we are in our little world. They are the people at work that we don't know, don't usually associate with. They are always around us, always close enough to see, we are aware of them though not close to them. Jesus wants us to get up, move out, and reach out to them. Then there are the Samaritans. Samaritans were Jews who were left behind in the deportation. They intermarried with gentiles. When the deported Jews returned they looked down on the Samaritans as half-breeds, impure, and not truly Jews. Self respecting Jews would not have anything to do with the Samaritans. Jesus said that His disciples were to go to the Samaritans too. WHO ARE OUR SAMARITANS? They are those who are not like us. Jerusalemites are like us, they are one of us. Judeans are not one of us but they are like us. They work in same place, live in the same neighborhood, etc. But the Samaritans are not like us, they are different. They are the ones we look down on, avoid, and ignore. Maybe we even dislike them. They are of a lower income, lesser education, lower social status, or a race we consider different. Jesus is saying that those distinctions exist in our minds, not His. These are our prejudices, not His. We are to lay aside our prejudices and GO to them and tell them of a God who loves them and died for them. Jesus wants us to realize that no one is outside the boundaries of His love. Consequently, no one is outside our responsibility to witness to. In fact, says Jesus, we are to go to every single person… no matter where, or who, or how far. We have the responsibility to see to it that all people have an opportunity to hear and respond to our Lord's offer of salvation.

 Now let's be reasonable. We can't all cut all ties here in Jerusalem and hop a boat for Joppa. And we shouldn't. God has a job for us here. However, we still have an obligation to see to it that the man in Joppa, that woman in Cairo, that child in Afghanistan all have the opportunity. We can't go, but we have a financial responsibility to see that someone goes.

**4.** **The Persons of the Commission.**

 Who is to go? Jesus said, "*Go ye…”* To whom was He speaking? Is it ye Franklin Graham, or ye preacher, or even ye person with special training or a special calling to a Christian vocation? NO! Jesus was speaking to His disciples. He didn't distinguish certain ones because He was speaking to all. He still is. "Ye" means all ye who claim to be Christians, ye who profess Jesus as Lord, ye who claim to be my followers. Jesus is addressing EVERY CHRISTIAN.

**5.** **The Authority of the Commission.**

 By what authority do we tell others? Who or what gives us the authority to go? If a policeman wants to carry out his duty he has a badge. That badge is his authority to arrest, fine, or detain persons or to enforce the law. If I have a Costco credit card, then I have the authority to charge items at any Costco store. We, as Christians, also have an authority for our witnessing. It is found in the verse 18 and 19: *"All authority in heaven and earth is given to me. Therefore go…*."

 As a child it was my responsibility to empty the trash. If I forgot, my mother would say, "Get up and empty the trash." Instinctively, and invariably, I would ask, "Why?" At those times my mother had only one answer: "Because I said so." Well, that was all the reason or authority I needed. Jesus is saying that same thing here: "*Go ye, because I say so*." In verse eighteen He said, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto me."* Now He is saying that we are to go on that authority. We need no more and no other authority than that.

 Now let's look at the…

**6.** **The Privilege of the Commission.**

 There is a great opportunity for all who will be Jesus' witnesses. It is a privilege of growth and strength. There is no greater joy that one can experience than that of leading one to Christ. Alcohol, drugs, nothing can give you a high like that. Faith can be shared but not given away. The more we share, the more we receive. Alcoholics Anonymous uses this principle of strength through sharing. Some people try to help alcoholics. They try to sympathize and they say that they understand. The alcoholic thinks to him- self: "Man you don't understand anything. You've never felt the pain in my gut that cries out for alcohol. You don't understand the grip of the bottle.”

Or the guilt and pain of seeing your family, friends, and everything you have slipping away from you." However, another alcoholic can understand the pain. A "dry" alcoholic, one who has stopped drinking, can come to one who has not and say, "I understand, I've been there, but I've found a way to stop and you can too." Both alcoholics are helped this way. The one who is drinking can find a way out and the "dry" one can gain renewed strength to stay "dry". Each time one alcoholic helps another he becomes stronger. It is the same for Christians. We can go to lost people and say that we understand where they are, we too were once under the bondage of sin, but we have found a way out. Now we can share the answer… salvation through the blood of Jesus. Every time we share our faith we gain more faith and strength to face up to Satan's attacks on our faith.

 See what a privilege it is to witness? Finally, let's look at …

**7. The Promise of the Commission.**

 I love this priceless gem. It is in the last half of the twentieth verse: “*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

 He is with us when we go witness. Not "I will be with you" as if there were times He were not there. No! Jesus says "I AM with you... even to the end..." Even means without break or irregularity.

 Jesus says that He IS always with us in every place at every time. There is never a time that He will leave you. So what? So you don't have to worry about whether or not Jesus will be there to help you, to give you the word. You don't have to ask Him to be ... HE IS! That is how He gives us assurance and the courage to witness. Again, Jesus used the last part to say the most important thing... I AM WITH YOU.

Close:

 God has entrusted to man His pearl of great price, the gospel. He died for our salvation and has given us the privilege and responsibility to make the gospel known to all people. As we leave this place today we are going into the world. It is a world of persons lost in sin. We have the answer to their bondage. We have the light that this dark world needs. What will we do with that light? Hide it under a bushel? NO, we cannot. We've got to let it shine for the entire world to see.

**Let us pray:** Thank You God, that You consider us faithful and competent enough to join Jesus in the mission of bringing the Good News of the Gospel to people so that the Holy Spirit can impress that message on their hearts to hear it and turn to Jesus. In His strong name we pray. Amen.