



Unit .27

Session .04

Jesus Commissions His Disciples

Scripture



Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:4-11

16 The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. **17** When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted. **18** Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. **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, **20** teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” ... **4** While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father’s promise. “Which,” he said, “you have heard me speak about; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days.” **6** So when they had come together, they

asked him, “Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?” **7** He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. **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 end of the earth.” **9** After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. **10** While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. **11** They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven.”

How do we see Jesus possessing divine authority in other places in Scripture? (See Rom. 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:9-10; Phil. 2:9-10; Col. 2:9-10.)



What fears do you have that could keep you from obeying the mission Jesus has given to us?

99 Essential Doctrines

Work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Christian

The Spirit's work in the life of a Christian begins in the work of salvation in bringing a person to faith in Christ and is continued through the work of sanctification in helping the Christian to become progressively more like Christ throughout the course of his or her life. He also empowers and indwells believers, intercedes on their behalf, and equips them with special gifts for the service of God's kingdom. He is the Comforter to the believer and aids us in properly interpreting the Bible.

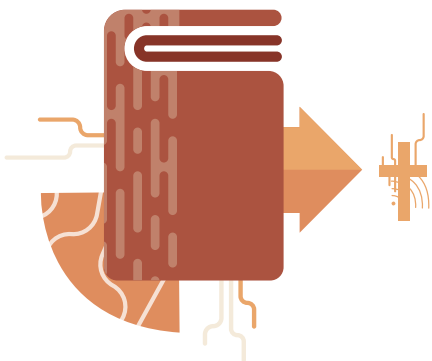
Main Point

Jesus commands all of His followers to go and make disciples.

How does the reality of Jesus' authority over all of heaven and earth overcome those fears?

How do you see the Holy Spirit making a difference in the life of your church or small group?

Like the disciples not knowing God's plan or timing regarding the kingdom, how do you handle the mysteries of life (what is God's plan, how is God working, etc.)?



Christ Connection

Before Jesus ascended to the Father, He commissioned His disciples to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. Under the authority of Jesus, and with the power of the Holy Spirit, we make disciples of all peoples as we anticipate the return of Christ.



Head

Why do you think we often find it difficult to live out the mission of talking to others about Jesus?

How do these passages encourage you to share Jesus without fear?



Heart

Do you think it was difficult for the disciples to be patient and wait for the Spirit's arrival (v. 4)? How can waiting be a good thing for you personally?

What are some areas of life where you are tempted to have an unsettled heart and lack of faith in God and His promises?

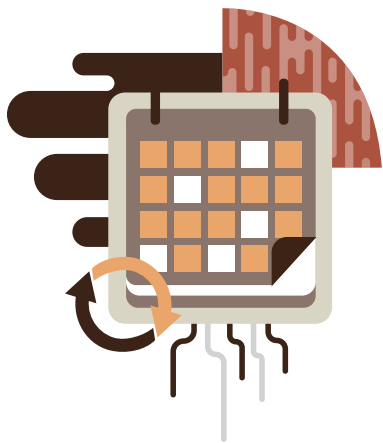


Hands

What places have you gone in order to share Jesus and make disciples?

How can your small group/church work together and support one another in this shared mission of making disciples among the nations?

Daily Devotions



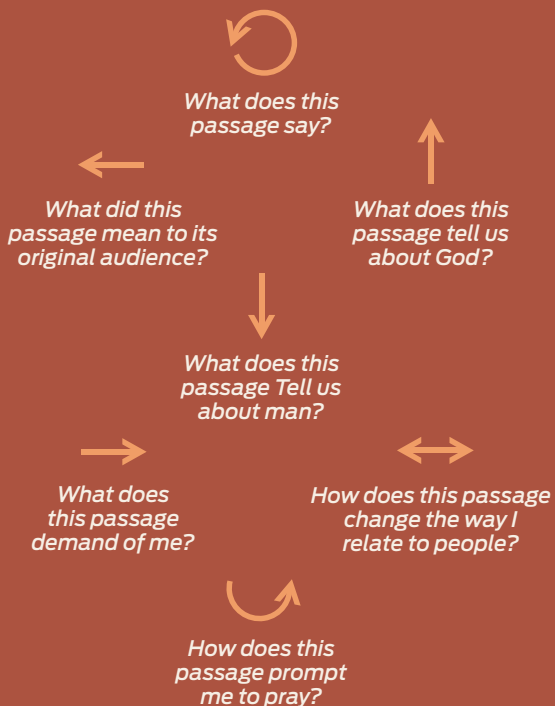
Day 1

Matthew 28:16-20

What doubts do you have about Christianity? Do you have questions that have gone unanswered? There is nothing wrong with doubt—in fact, our faith is strengthened when we take the time to wrestle through our doubts and find answers. We see here that even the disciples themselves—who were in the physical presence of Jesus—had doubts. What’s incredible though is that their doubts did not cause Jesus to turn away; He instead chose to come near.

If you have questions that have gone unanswered, it’s highly likely that the people in your life—that God wants you to share the gospel with—also have unanswered questions. So what if instead of being hard on yourself and thinking you’re disqualified from doing evangelism because of your doubts you took the time to wrestle through them? And what if while you’re in the process of wrestling through your doubts, God was actually preparing you to share the gospel and make disciples of all nations, beginning with the people presently in your life?

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



When you're being honest, what are the foremost doubts you have about Christianity?

Luke 24:44-53

If you ever have a hard time understanding the Scriptures, don't worry; you're not the only one. In fact, as we read in this passage, even the disciples experienced this. The advantage that we have over the disciples is that we no longer have to be physically in the presence of Jesus to have our heart and mind opened to understand the Scriptures. After Jesus ascended into heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to empower us and fill us with His presence. So, the great news is that God's presence is with us always and continually!

The next time you open up the Scriptures, start by asking God to open your heart and mind to both understand and apply the Scriptures through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. In fact, you should do this right now and before re-reading today's passage.

In what ways are we at a greater advantage in reading the Bible today than were the disciples during the first century?

Acts 1:1-3

To be an eyewitness of the resurrected Jesus would have been a surreal experience. Imagine how you would have responded. Maybe you might have tried to stick your finger through the holes where the nails went through. Or maybe you would speak with Jesus about His apparent ability to walk through walls.

However you would have opted to act around Jesus, we should take note that He is not some fairy tale. He is not a myth. He is not a fictional character that a group of religious leaders conjured up. In fact, the early believers would have had nothing to gain by pretending these events happened. Rather, it's a historical fact that He lived, died, rose from the dead, and then appeared to more than five hundred eyewitnesses over a forty-day period before ascending to heaven. This is how Luke, both a physician and the author of this book, wanted to set the stage for the rest of the book. He wanted his readers to understand that the Book of Acts is a continuation of the Gospels, intended to provide the story of what happened in the lives of the early believers after Jesus' ascension to heaven.

How does Jesus' spending time with His disciples after He rose help you to perceive the resurrection as a historical fact?

Acts 1:4-8

The Holy Spirit is as much God as Jesus is God and the Father is God. Why is it, though, that the Holy Spirit often feels like the neglected one? If you have not studied the Holy Spirit and do not know the distinct ministry of the Holy Spirit, you are missing out. You are failing to learn more deeply about the very one who empowers you to live the Christian life, the Lord and Giver of life.

To live the Christian life entails living an empowered life through the Holy Spirit because all who belong to Christ also possess the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9). In other words, the Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus throughout His ministry on earth is the same Holy Spirit that empowered the disciples in the early church and empowers us today. Persuasive preaching and evangelism can be helpful to point people to God, but without the power of the Holy Spirit, it's ultimately ineffective. Only the Holy Spirit has the power to change hearts and move people from darkness to light.

What are some reasons the Holy Spirit is equally God with the Father and God the Son? Therefore, how is the Holy Spirit worthy of our praise and worship?

Acts 1:9-11

If Jesus came back today in the same way He was taken to heaven, what would your response be? If He were to return today, what would He say to you? What would He say about your priorities, the decisions you made in the last 48 hours, and what your plans were going to look like in the next 48 hours?

Jesus' return is imminent. As Jesus said, no one knows the specific day or the hour other than God the Father (Matt. 24:36). Yet, the fact is, Jesus' return can happen at any time. So how can you live today in light of this truth? What needs to change about your priorities and your schedule so that His return sparks joy rather than shame in your heart? Our lives should lead us to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, come," rather than, "Just another day! Not yet, Lord!"

Does Jesus' return spark joy or shame in your heart? Why?

