

Ministry of Grace

Matthew 10

The 12 Apostles

Matthew 10:1-4

¹And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. ²The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Mark 3:13-19 – ¹³And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. ¹⁴And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ¹⁵and have authority to cast out demons. ¹⁶He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); ¹⁸Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Luke 6:12-16 – ¹²In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. ¹³And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: ¹⁴Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, ¹⁵and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Notes on the Apostles

The first thing we notice from the opening part of this chapter is that Jesus gathered the 12 disciples that He had chosen to be His followers and gave them authority over unclean spirits and authority to heal every disease and affliction. In Mark's gospel account, he says that Jesus gave them authority to "cast out *demons*." So we see that "unclean spirits" are "demons."

disciple = *mathētēs*, which means "a learner" or "a student."

authority = *exousia*, which means "permission, authority, or power."

apostle = *apostolos*, which is made up of *apo*, meaning "from" or "away from" and a form of *stellō*, meaning "to send off." An apostle is someone who is sent on a specific mission. The word *apostolos* was used by the Greeks for the personal representatives of the king. They were ambassadors who functioned with the king's authority and were to be treated as such.

In order to qualify as an apostle of Jesus Christ, the man had to have seen the risen Christ (Paul claimed this in **1 Corinthians 9:1**). He also had to have been specifically chosen by the Lord. We

see these two things considered as part of selecting Judas' replacement ([Acts 1:21-26](#)). Thus, in order for someone today to be an authentic apostle of Jesus Christ, he must have seen Jesus in the flesh and he must have been sent specifically by Him.

If we compare the list of apostles in Matthew chapter 10 to what is written in Mark's and Luke's gospel accounts, we see some similarities and some differences. All three lists start off with Simon (Peter) and all three lists end with Judas Iscariot. Incidentally, the term Iscariot means "an inhabitant of Kerioth" which was a city in Judea. It points to the fact that Judas was the only one of the 12 who was not a Galilean.

Who were the 12 Apostles?

The chart below shows the 12 chosen Apostles as listed by Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Matthew	Mark	Luke
Simon (called Peter)	Simon (called Peter)	Simon (called Peter)
Andrew (Peter's brother)	James (son of Zebedee)	Andrew (Peter's brother)
James (son of Zebedee)	John (James' brother)	James
John (James' brother)	Andrew	John
Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew
Matthew (tax collector)	Thomas	Thomas
James (son of Alphaeus)	James (son of Alphaeus)	James (son of Alphaeus)
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon (the Zealot)
Simon (the Cananaean)	Simon (the Cananaean)	Judas (son of James)
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot

Here are some interesting facts about the 12 Apostles. In Matthew's list, the Apostles are listed in pairs. This is probably because Jesus sent them out in pairs (see [Mark 6:7](#)). Notice that Matthew and Mark refer to the second Simon as the Cananaean but Luke refers to him as Simon the Zealot. Cananaean is a transliteration of the Chaldean word *kananaios*, which means "zealous." So, it appears that this Simon was formerly a member of the Jewish sect called the Zealots. The other oddity in the lists is that Thaddaeus is mentioned by both Matthew and Mark, but in his place, Luke lists Judas the son of James. Apparently, these refer to the same person. Nothing is known about Bartholomew except that he is possibly known as Nathanael (see [John 1:45-51](#)). Thomas is also called Didymus (twin) in John's gospel ([John 11:16](#)), and James son of Alphaeus is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture outside these lists.

The 12 Apostles are Sent Forth

Matthew 10:5-15

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷And

proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. ⁹Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, ¹⁰no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. ¹¹And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. ¹²As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. ¹⁵Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

Mark 6:7-13 – ⁷And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff--no bread, no bag, no money in their belts-- ⁹but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. ¹⁰And he said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. ¹¹And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. ¹³And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

Luke 9:1-6 – ¹And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, ²and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. ³And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. ⁴And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. ⁵And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." ⁶And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

Notes on the sending forth of the Apostles

⁵... Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

The Apostles were specifically told to go only to the Jews (the house of Israel) and they were told to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom (not the same as our gospel of salvation by grace through faith). Remember that Jesus was there as their Messiah and His purpose (if they would accept Him) was to establish the Kingdom. Therefore, they were not to proclaim this message to the Gentiles or Samaritans (half Israelites).

⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons ...

They were all given powers similar to what Jesus already had, although there is no evidence that any of them raised the dead until after Jesus' crucifixion.

⁸... You received without paying; give without pay. ⁹Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, ¹⁰no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.

They were also told to rely on God's provision as they ministered.

¹¹And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. ¹²As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.

The Apostles were about to learn that not everyone was welcoming of the kingdom message or of them as the King's ambassadors. If anyone refused to accommodate them, they were not to retaliate, but to simply walk away shaking the dust off themselves as a demonstration of God's coming judgment on them.

¹⁵Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

Sodom and Gomorrah were judged severely by God when He rained down fire and brimstone on them because of their extreme wickedness. These people and towns that reject the Kingdom as offered by the Apostles will receive even more severe punishment when they stand before the great Judge. In the next chapter of Matthew's gospel account we will see that Jesus personally condemns Capernaum for not believing:

And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you. (Matthew 11:23-24)

Persecution Will Come

Matthew 10:16-23

¹⁶Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, ¹⁸and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. ²⁰For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, ²²and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ²³When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Matthew 24:9-14 – ⁹Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Mark 13:9-13 – ⁹But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. ¹⁰And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. ¹¹And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say

whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹²And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. ¹³And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Luke 21:12-19 – ¹²But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. ¹³This will be your opportunity to bear witness. ¹⁴Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, ¹⁵for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. ¹⁷You will be hated by all for my name's sake. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By your endurance you will gain your lives.

Notes on Persecution to Come

This section is somewhat of an enigma. Although Jesus gave this message to the 12 when He sent them out, the instructions were not just for this mission. This message was given for the church age witnessing (the time after Jesus crucifixion) and for the period of the Tribulation. For instance, there is no evidence that any of the 12 were flogged or dragged before governors and kings during this particular mission. These predictions of abuse and persecution did come true after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (see [Acts 5:40](#)). It also appears that this is a reference to how the kingdom messengers will be treated during the Tribulation. These warnings are very similar to what Jesus told His disciples when they asked him what would be the signs of the end of the age and of the time of His coming. Notice one statement in particular:

But the one who endures to the end will be saved ([Matthew 10:22](#); [Mark 13:13](#); [Matthew 24:13](#))

By your endurance you will gain your lives. ([Luke 21:19](#))

This is clearly a tribulation description that was documented by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It has nothing to do with personal salvation in this present age of grace. "The end" does not mean the end of this life; it refers to the end of the age. Those believers on earth during this terrible period, who endure in their faith, will be saved when the Lord comes at the end and delivers them.

Also look at:

you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes ([Matthew 10:23b](#))

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. ([Matthew 24:14](#))

Notice particularly that it is the *gospel of the kingdom* that will be proclaimed throughout the whole world before the end. It is NOT the gospel that we preach today. This is more evidence that this is a reference to the Tribulation

²¹Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, ²²and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Although this is a statement that is clearly directed toward those who witness about the coming Kingdom during the Tribulation, there is a general principle here that we can take

note of during the current church age. As we witness for Jesus Christ, our adversary will stir up animosity toward us simply because we belong to Christ. We will be hated by some simply for His name's sake. Also, consider that if we must endure opposition from our adversary during the current church age, how much greater will be the persecution of believers during the Tribulation!

Have No Fear

Matthew 10:24-33

²⁴A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. ²⁶So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ²⁷What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³²So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Luke 12:4-12 – ⁴I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. ⁵But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! ⁶Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. ⁷Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows. ⁸And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, ⁹but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. ¹⁰And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. ¹¹And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, ¹²for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

Notes on "Have No Fear"

²⁴A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. ²⁶So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.

Although this entire chapter of Matthew's gospel has its emphasis on kingdom witnessing, verses 24 through 26 seem to have special significance for the time we are living in today, the last days of the "church age." We are encouraged to become more Christ-like and not to fear those who oppose us. Remember what Paul said to the Christians in Rome?

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing

you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
(Romans 12:1-2)

We should count it a privilege to suffer because we call ourselves Christians and are an outspoken witness for Him.

and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. (Acts 5:40-41)

that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (Philippians 3:10)

God is on our side

²⁸And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Pastor Rob McCoy is pastor of Godspcak Calvary Chapel in Thousand Oaks, California. I like his comments when told he would be arrested for allowing church services in opposition to the order by Ventura County, proclaiming churches to be non-essential:

There is nothing of mine that they can take away. It all belongs to God. Even my life is His.

Our opponents will increasingly use fear to suppress our right to gather and worship God. They will use secret and deceptive means to silence us and the gospel message. I am prepared to face that opposition without fear. Keep in mind that those who oppose us are not our enemies, they are opportunities. The worst they can do to us is to take our lives and those belong to Christ.

In the first century it did not cost very much to purchase a sparrow in the market. According to Matthew's gospel, two sparrows were sold for a penny. But if you look at Luke's gospel, we find that a free one was thrown in if you bought four (Luke 12:6). Nevertheless, we are told that God knows when a sparrow falls to the ground, and we are told here that we are much more valuable than many sparrows.

Not Peace But A Sword

Matthew 10:34-36

³⁴Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

Luke 12:49-53 – ⁴⁹I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! ⁵⁰I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! ⁵¹Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. ⁵²For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter

against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

Notes on Not Peace But a Sword

As long as we have an adversary (Satan) and our sin nature, there will not be peace. While Satan is roaming freely, he and his minions will oppose all that is right and godly. This was true before the cross and it is still true today. There are places in the world today where anyone who converts to Christianity is rejected by their family and friends. In some countries it is against the law to become a Christian and prison awaits those who do. During the Tribulation this will be especially true as the forces of evil will react against the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments of a Righteous God and will persecute all who believe in Him.

It will be only temporarily better during the Millennial reign of Christ, for even though Satan will be bound, mankind will still be plagued by a sin nature that places self above God. Then, when Satan is released, there will be the ultimate in rebellion and warfare (the second Gog and Magog war).

Today, however, as Christians we have this promise of peace from God that Paul told the Christians in Ephesus:

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

(Ephesians 2:14-17)

But, even though we can have peace with God now, in the last days the sinfulness of mankind will produce much conflict.

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power ...

(2 Timothy 3:1-5)

Take Up Your Cross

Matthew 10:37-39

³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, ³⁸and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Mark 8:34-38 – ³⁴And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this

adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Luke 9:23-27 – ²³And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. ²⁷But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

Notes on Taking Up Your Cross

³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, ³⁸and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

As with many of the previous verses, these verses have applicability to all people of all time. In order to have a successful relationship with God, we have to make Him, and our relationship with Him, our singular focus. Anything that takes our focus off of God becomes our idol and separates us from fellowship with Him.

Family is very important to me. Anyone who knows me knows that I will do anything for my children and for my wife. But, God is even more important to me than they are. Even if that means that I must suffer for Him. That's why Jesus said that whoever loves family more than Him is not worthy of Him. Luke summarized this in his gospel account.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26-27)

What Luke is recording here is the fact that no matter how much we love our family members, it should look like hate compared to how we feel about Jesus.

Self-preservation is a natural human characteristic. But even love of life should vanish in comparison to our desire to serve and worship God.

Rewards

Mat 10:40-42

⁴⁰Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. ⁴¹The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴²And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

This section is talking about discipleship, not son-ship. We become a child of God through faith. We become a disciple of Jesus Christ through study and faithful obedience. We, in the church age, especially those of us who believe in salvation by grace through faith, sometimes get so focused on faith that we lose the blessing that comes through obedient service. Yes, everyone who has confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will enter into His glory. However, many of

us will enter in without rewards because we became so focused on our faith that we lost track of the necessity for obedient service. This verse is evidence that there will be different levels of reward in heaven based on the works we do while we are here in the physical world.

So What?

Jesus choose twelve special disciples and called them Apostles because He sent them out with a mission to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom. We, too have been chosen, called, and sent out with a mission.

He chose us:

even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love (**Ephesians 1:4**)

He called us:

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are (the) **called** according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.** (**Romans 8:28-30**)

He sent us out with a mission:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (**Matthew 28:18-20**)

The only part of this mission statement that is a command is “make disciples.” This involves baptizing them and teaching them. We are not commanded to “preach the gospel,” we are commanded to make disciples. However, until someone hears the gospel and believes it, we can’t make them a disciple.

Question: What are you doing to fulfill the great commission?

We are to be disciples and are to be serving Him throughout our Christian life. That means our life focus needs to be on Him and not on our own personal hopes and dreams. Our hopes and our dreams are in Paradise and in the eternal state. As I said earlier, there is evidence here and in other portions of the New Testament that there will be different levels of reward in Heaven. So, let me ask you a question that I have asked you before and that I will be asking again in the future:

Are you sitting on your free pass into heaven, content with the knowledge that you will go there when you die. Or, are you laying up treasures in heaven that you will have for all eternity.

Don’t neglect your heavenly retirement fund. Do all you can now for Him and His kingdom so you won’t have any “heavenly regrets.”

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