

The Great Commission - Message #1

Sept. 9, 2007 (AM) - Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

PRELUDE TO THE COMMISSION

The Text:

- A. Mark 16:14 *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. 15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*
- B. Luke 24:45 *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things. 49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*
- C. Matt. 28:17 *And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*
- D. Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*
1. From these texts we will examine the doctrine of what is called The Great Commission.
 2. Later we shall consider the integral message of this commission, but today we shall consider the “Prelude To The Commission,” some things that happened before the Lord actually spoke the words of the commission.

I. **WORSHIP AND DOUBT**, Matt. 28:17

A. Text: Matt 28:17 *And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.*

B. The Worshipers

1. It seems from this verse in Matthew that everyone who saw him worshiped him. It was an almost automatic thing for them to do so.
2. They had either seen or heard his messages and miracles. The man Jesus was a man who demanded attention, admiration, praise and, yes, worship.

3. The wise men came at his birth to worship him. Mt 2:2 *Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*
4. Jesus told Satan in Matt 4:10 *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*
5. Some worshiped in vain. Matt 15:9 *But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*
6. He must be worshiped in spirit and in truth. John 4:23 *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*
7. In Heaven Jesus is worshiped. Rev 4:10 *The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*
8. So, before the commission was ever spoken, some people came to Jesus and worshiped him; whether it was true or vain worship, it was worship.
9. The One who gives a commission to those who will go into the world and carry the Gospel to every creature must be a man who can be worshiped.
10. What good would it do for us to follow a commander who is not worthy of our worship. We may as well follow any other man.

C. Doubters

1. In every church service where we worship Jesus Christ, there are almost always doubters.
2. Can we forget that the disciples themselves even doubted the Lord?
3. Doubtful worshipers still give God glory. Any time any man raises his voice to God in praise with a sincere heart, God is honored, even if that praise is not what it should be.
4. Psalm 148:3 *Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.*
5. So, even the sun, moon and stars praise him.
6. But why did these doubt?
 - a. Peter doubted when he was ready to fall into the sea. Matt 14:31 *And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*
 - b. Those who do not believe doubt. John 10:24 *Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.*

II. **REBUKE**, Mark 16:14

- A. Text: Mark 16:14 *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*
- B. Notice Luke 24:25 *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:*
- C. The disciples should have known that Jesus was to be raised from the dead, but they were slow of heart to believe. They hesitated in their faith.
- D. So, the Lord rebuked them for it. If these men were to do the work of God in giving the Gospel, they must have much faith; they must be assured that God will do a work in the

hearts of men; they must know that Jesus died, was buried and resurrected; they must sell that which they themselves would believe and accept as true and worth passing on, therefore winning people to a hearing of this wonderful Gospel message that is the power of God unto salvation.

- E. God's word rebukes us, also. If we will read it, we will find rebuke as well as blessings. We need God's rebuke to keep us on the narrow path of God's righteousness. We cannot let down our guard; we must go on with faith.

III. UNDERSTANDING, Luke 24:45

- A. Text: Luke 24:45 *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,*
- B. After Jesus rebuked the disciples, he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures.
- C. Oh, that God would today open our understanding of the word of God! Oh, that he might give us insight into his precious word! Oh, that he might burn those words in our hearts to worship and serve him daily!
- D. What understanding did he open to them?
 1. The possibility of a world-wide mission, though some would not immediately surrender to that understanding. Isaiah 66:19 *And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.*
 2. To have a burning desire to serve Jesus Christ and be close to Him. Luke 24:32 *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*
 3. To believe that He actually did resurrect from the dead. Peter said in Acts 4:10 *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.*

IV. A REMINDER, Luke 24:46

- A. Text: Luke 24:46 *And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:*
- B. Jesus reminded these disciples that the message of his resurrection was not a new thing, that it had been mentioned before in his personal ministry as well as in the prophets of the Old Testament.
 1. Luke 24:25 *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:*
 2. Matt 16:21 *From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*

Conclusion

We are not ready to carry out the commission that Jesus gave to His disciples until we worship Him, even though we may doubt. We must be rebuked by the word of God as we read and live it. God must give us understanding, and He must remind us often of the Gospel message.

May God's Spirit give us the insight, the understanding, the rebuke, and the reminder to preach the Gospel to every creature.