

The Great Commission

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, March 16, 2025
PASSAGES	John 5; Judges 6; Matthew 2; Luke 4
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:01:32 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Jesus does not say “I am sending you” in a vacuum. He says *as the Father has sent me* — and the Father sent him present, active, and focused on one thing. So the Great Commission is not an errand handed to us while heaven waits to see how we do. It is God’s own project, and he is the one doing the heavy lifting.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” sets the terms of our sending. Get the Father’s manner of sending wrong and the whole Commission goes wrong with it.
- ◆ The Father was never a passive sender. “My Father is working until now, and I am working.” Jesus was not an errand boy sent to do the dirty work alone.
- ◆ Jesus was not accumulating a critical mass of good deeds. He left towns with sick people still in them, and turned down the Greeks, because he was focused on falling into the ground and dying.
- ◆ In Matthew 28 “go” is not the command — *make disciples* is. Herod says “go and search”; Jesus says “go and learn.” The distance is never the point.
- ◆ Jesus keeps his authority. He does not say “therefore I give it to you.” He says “therefore go.”
- ◆ “I am with you” is not a Hallmark card. Everywhere God says it — Isaac, Moses, Joshua, Gideon — it means he is doing the work.
- ◆ Gideon’s three hundred were kept at one percent so no one could claim the win. The church’s obvious inadequacy is not a disqualification; it is the setup.

- ◆ If it is his project, you can obey without panic. Paul rejoiced when Christ was preached out of envy and rivalry — because the mission is the point, not the quality of our performance.

► 1:01:32

Having finished the Gospel according to John, Matt jumped back into it — “not completely chaotic but a little odd,” as he put it — because one verse had unfinished business in it. He first recapped the previous week: John wrote so that we would have faith, know Jesus, and have life in him, and if you find yourself hungry for more of the resurrection power of Christ than you are currently seeing, that appetite was given to you on purpose. His practical challenge had been to find the area where obedience is missing. “I wanted to see people healed,” he said, “and I realized I wasn’t praying for any sick people.” He and a friend started driving to the ER and sitting in the waiting room to see who they could pray for. Same with evangelism: he wanted converts and was not sharing the gospel. The point was to stretch into a place where God has to move — because “Jesus is not boring. I don’t think there’s a single thing boring about Jesus.”

1. As the Father sent me

► 1:04:59

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.’”

JOHN 20:19-21 ↗

Everything hangs on the first half of that sentence. Evangelism and the Great Commission are core topics — like the character of God itself, if your view of them is bent, it bends everything downstream. So: how did the Father send Jesus?

► 1:07:31

Matt ran the bad answers out loud. Was it a hazing ritual — you get crowned Lord of lords, but first we rough you up, and then Jesus passes it down out of bitterness because he had to go through it too? Was Jesus an errand boy, *you go, I’ll stay*? Was he the Father’s rubber glove for touching a humanity God cannot stand to be near? All absurd, and worth saying out loud precisely because versions of them sit unexamined in a lot of Christians.

“But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I am working.’”

JOHN 5:17 ↗

▶ 1:09:38

“Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.”

JOHN 5:19–20 ↗

What Jesus saw the Father doing was healing people, setting people free, casting out demons, raising the dead — which is why Jesus did those things. The Father was in it.

2. Sent with a focus, not a quota

▶ 1:11:32

The other half of “as the Father sent me” is that Jesus was aimed at something. He did not come to bank a critical mass of good deeds. In [Luke 4:40–43](#) he leaves a town that still wants him, with sick people still in it. If the goal were sheer volume of healing, he would have stayed until the town was empty of illness and then moved on.

▶ 1:12:40

Nor was the goal to go global on the obvious terms. In the middle of the Jerusalem procession, Greeks show up asking for him — which, Matt observed with some relish, looks like the franchising opportunity of the age. Break out of Galilee and Judea. Get the Greek speakers. Get the Platonists. Philip tells Andrew, Andrew and Philip tell Jesus, and the answer is not what the pitch deserved:

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

JOHN 12:23–24 ↗

His focus was on falling and dying and bearing much fruit. So when he sends us, we should expect the same shape: not random good deeds, but a purpose — and a sender who is active in it.

3. The one command in Matthew 28

► 1:14:47

“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 ↗

Three observations, in order. First, “all that I have commanded you” is not confined to the red letters. Jesus spoke plainly to the small group that was with him constantly and in parables to the crowds — and that same group received Paul into their fellowship, and they and their students wrote the New Testament. Read the whole thing.

► 1:16:32

Second, Jesus keeps his authority. There is a common assumption that he receives all authority, delegates it to us, ascends, and says *finish the job* — “a funny assumption that he held on to this authority for about a minute.” He does not say “therefore I give it to you.” He says “therefore go.”

Third, “go” is not the load-bearing word. Herod tells the wise men “Go and search diligently for the child” — the idea is *search*, not mileage. Jesus tells the Pharisees “Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice” — how far would you have to walk to learn that? So “go and make disciples” means *make disciples*. It can be at the ends of the earth, which in the technical sense is where Austin already is, or it can be here. Some are called far, some are called to stay. The distance was never the assignment.

4. What “I am with you” has always meant

► 1:20:29

The Commission ends with a promise we tend to shrink to comfort — nice for lonely days, and it is true on lonely days. But trace the phrase and something bigger shows up. To Isaac in the famine: “Sojourn in this land and I will be with you” — Genesis 26:2-3, where the very next lines spell it out: *I will bless you, I will give these lands, I will establish the oath*. That is what being with him meant.

► 1:21:47

To Moses it is the entire answer to an unanswerable objection:

“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?” — “But I will be with you.” Without that, Matt said, Moses is just a crazy old man throwing a stick on the ground and touching the Nile while nothing happens. Moses obeys in small ways — little messages, little prophetic acts — and God does the gigantic things.

► 1:23:41

To Joshua, taking over a war: “Be strong and courageous... it is the LORD your God who goes with you; he will not leave you or forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6–8). Joshua leads them in; God gives them possession. And to Israel in exile, the presence is intimate and close and unmistakably operational:

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned... Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you.”

ISAIAH 43:2–5 ↗

5. Gideon, and the arithmetic of one percent

► 1:26:04

Judges is the era with no king, where God raises up a judge to restore order and everyone else does what is right in their own eyes — moralism, Matt called it, where people try to do right by their own opinion of it. Gideon is hiding in a winepress to thresh wheat when the angel greets him:

“The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.” We remember the valor line. The first thing said was the other one.

► 1:27:50

Then a sending: “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?” A *go*, followed by the actual instruction. Save Israel is the project; how far Gideon walks is not.

► 1:29:07

And then God starts subtracting. Thirty-two thousand men gather against the dominant military power in the region, and the word comes down that there are too many.

“The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’”

JUDGES 7:2 ↗

Twenty-two thousand go home afraid. Ten thousand remain, which still sounds workable. Then the water test cuts it to three hundred (Judges 7:3–7). Matt did the math out loud — three percent of ten thousand, roughly one percent of the original muster — and imagined being in that formation, hearing from the chain of command that you have too many soldiers. “I’m not afraid, I didn’t want to go home, and I drink really weird. Now I’m thinking: what’s the plan? This is a diplomatic thing, right?”

The plan was the first thing God ever said to him. *I am with you*. Not a card — a statement of who was going to fight. “This is the Bible three hundred, where they’re holding torches and shouting and watching the Lord do the battle.”

6. Which is exactly the church’s position

► 1:32:41

Read an article about the state of the church and wonder whether we have what it takes, and Matt will save you the suspense: we don’t. He takes that as a reason to expect revival rather than dread — because nobody would be able to file it under competence. If Christians were famous for obeying the first time, for leaders who never fell out of grace and books that always balanced, you would look at a move of God and think, well, obviously. Discouragement comes from surveying the wrong thing: how many men on my left, how many on my right, do we have the weapons.

► 1:35:09

What follows is the liberating part. If he does the heavy lifting, obedience stops being a performance you can botch. “When he asks me to do something, I don’t have to lose my mind with stress — am I going to do it right, do I have enough people, did I pray hard enough this morning. I could just do it. And I could confidently do a bad job.” Then, aware of how that would travel: “Just do your bad job. Take that out of context — who’s tweeting this morning?”

The scriptural warrant for that is stranger than a joke:

“Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry... out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:15–18 ↗

Paul is content with preaching done for spite. That only makes sense if the mission is focused rather than a tally of sincerity. Matt admitted he can relate to the spite more easily than to the missionary biographies: “I don’t want to do that, but I could see myself doing that.”

7. His project, his bank account

► 1:38:17

So, the answer to the question the message opened with. The Father sent Jesus present, active and focused. Jesus sends us the same way. He is not dispatching errand boys and girls to do what he is unwilling to do, and this is not a cosmic hazing ritual. We are weaker and more incompetent than we realize — which sounds frightening until you notice who is fighting.

“The bride of Christ was totally his idea,” Matt said. “He’s going to win what he wants to win. He’s going to reach whom he wants to reach. We get to participate. We don’t have to shoulder the burden of the world, because we’re not Jesus — that role has already been filled.”

► 1:40:29

He closed back in the ranks of the three hundred: you could die in that skirmish and God still wins; you could hide in a bush and God still wins. Which makes charging the sane choice, because the alternative is hearing about the victory secondhand. And there is no scenario where you stand before him in glory and discover that something he wanted to do in someone else’s life simply failed because you were his last and only option. One thing we can do, if we want to see more of the resurrection power of Christ, is walk in obedience — not to keep the plan from collapsing, but to see the victory up close. Matt prayed that we would let go of the panic of failure and fear, and sense his presence in everything we do for him and with him.

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- John 20:19–21
- John 5:17
- John 5:19–20
- Luke 4:40–43
- John 12:23–24
- Matthew 28:18–20
- Matthew 2:8
- Matthew 9:13
- Genesis 26:2–3
- Exodus 3:11–12
- Deuteronomy 31:6–8
- Isaiah 43:2–5
- Judges 6:12
- Judges 6:14
- Judges 7:2
- Judges 7:3–7
- Philippians 1:15–18

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt described wanting to see healing while praying for no sick people. Where is there a gap like that between what you want to see God do and what you are actually doing?
2. Which of the bad answers to “how did the Father send Jesus” have you quietly believed — the errand boy, the hazing, the God who cannot be near sinners?
3. If “go” is not the command and “make disciples” is, what does that change about how you have been measuring your obedience?
4. Gideon was told “I am with you” before he was told anything else, and it meant God would fight. Where do you need that promise to mean more than encouragement right now?
5. Matt said you can confidently do a bad job because the project is his. What is one thing you have not attempted out of fear of doing it badly, and what would attempting it look like this week?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjQco4EpVLI&t=3692s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.