

Our Identity — A People Under Orders
Matthew 28:18-20

Introduction

- A. The Church is composed of people — regenerated, baptized by the Holy Spirit, and gifted to do the will of God.
- B. As every believer is a member of the Church so the Church has been designed by God to have a major role in the life of every Christian. No believer can profess to be in the will of God when not actively involved in the Church.
- C. As every believer is needed by the Church and can make a valuable contribution to its growth and well-being, so the Church is needed by every believer for his/her personal growth and well-being.
 - 1. The importance of worship.
 - 2. The importance of instruction.
 - 3. The importance of the ordinances.
 - 4. The importance of fellowship.
 - 5. The importance of evangelism.
 - 6. The importance of missions.

I. The Basis of the Great Commission: "All power (authority) is given unto me."

- A. The explanation — the Lord Jesus is in sovereign control of everything.
 - 1. The word "power" (better translated "authority") means He has the complete right and ability to do whatsoever He chooses to do.
 - 2. All creation is subject to Him — all the holy angels — all the evil angels — all believers in Heaven and on earth — all non-believers on earth and in Hell — all the present and future acts of history — and all the physical and non-physical universe. Everything is under His control.
- B. The application — The Lord Jesus will make it possible for us to obey Him.
 - 1. If we could see and understand all that stands against us as believers and as a Church — we would be overwhelmed.
 - 2. The promise of the Lord Jesus is that not even Hell will prevail against the progress of the Church (Matt. 16:18) — if we will obey Him.

II. The Instruction of the Great Commission: "Go, disciple, baptize, teach."

- A. The entire Church is to be involved in discipleship.
 - 1. The word "go" indicates that we must be concerned for people beyond our family and community. Methods must be used to implement this command.
 - 2. The word "teach" in the KJV is the word for "disciple." It refers to the activity of explaining the gospel and bringing people to the Savior.
 - 3. The work of discipleship is to be carried out by every believer. We have been given gifts by the Holy Spirit so He can use us in this important work.

4. Every facet of the Christian life can involve us in discipleship. Some of the more important would be — prayer, personal evangelism, visitation, teaching, involvement in schools, writing, preaching, evangelistic services, hospitality, missions, living as a good example, and supporting the work of the Church.

B. The entire Church is to be involved in baptism.

1. To baptize in "the name" of the Trinity refers to the truths we have been given in reference to the Father, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

2. Emphasis is placed upon baptism in our Commission because it points to and explains the gospel. It is the gospel in action.

a. Baptism is a confession/explanation regarding identification with the Lord Jesus. It is a picture of a sinner coming to the Savior.

b. Baptism is a confession/explanation regarding redemption. It is a portrayal of the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

c. Baptism is a confession/explanation of the new birth. It stands for a separation from the world and union with the Savior.

d. Baptism is a confession/explanation of personal faith. It is a declaration of one's belief — a public testimony that the content of Holy Scripture is truth.

e. Baptism is particularly a confession to God in which His mercy and grace are gratefully acknowledged.

3. Every believer is to be involved in baptism — first of all by being baptized and then leading others to this public confession.

C. The entire Church is to be involved in teaching.

1. Since God has designed the Scripture to cleanse, strengthen, edify, and protect the believer — all Christians need the constant ministry of instruction.

2. The methods of teaching are many: preaching, Sunday School, youth work, Bible conferences, Summer Bible School, training session, schedules for reading, attendance at local schools, listening to tapes, correspondence courses — to list only a few.

III. The Promise of the Great Commission: "Lo, I am with you always."

A. The emphasis here is that Jesus Christ will be with us — as we obey Him — and will enable us to do the work He has committed to us.

B. Because of disobedience many Christians live without the great experience of being involved in the ongoing work of God. He has called us to be "workers together with Him" (II Cor. 6:1).

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