

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 8/27/2023

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Matthew 28:18-20 “Our Joyful Commitment to Our Disciple-making Mission, Locally and Worldwide”<sup>\*\*1</sup>

Summer Series: *The Joy of Being a God-Centered Church: The DNA of WBC*

Main Idea: Jesus gives us two insights into our mission in Matthew 28:18-20.

- I. Our mission involves great potential (18, 20).
  - A. We can fulfill our mission because we have Jesus' authority (18).
  - B. We can fulfill our mission because we have Jesus' presence (20b).
    - 1. Without it we could do nothing.
    - 2. With it we can proceed with confidence.
- II. Our mission involves a clear plan (19-20a).
  - A. Jesus told us what to do.
    - 1. He didn't tell us to change the world.
    - 2. He didn't tell us to get decisions.
    - 3. He told us to make disciples.
    - 4. He told us to do what He did, and what we see His church doing in the rest of the New Testament.
  - B. Jesus told us how to do it.
    - 1. Making disciples involves going.
    - 2. Making disciples involves baptizing.
    - 3. Making disciples involves teaching.

Implications for WBC: Because we take our mission seriously...

- 1. Missions is important to us, locally and worldwide.
- 2. Ministering to our community is important to us.
- 3. Our biblical counseling ministry is important to us.
- 4. Our body life is important to us.
- 5. Our attention to sound doctrine is important to us.
- 6. Our willingness to launch new ministries is important to us.

This morning we're finishing a wonderful journey we began in June, a summer series entitled, *The Joy of Being a God-Centered Church*. We've been looking at twelve God-exalting commitments that God has wired into our DNA as a church. They are what produces joy for us, and glory to God. It's fitting that on this Sunday, as we're preparing to witness a baptismal service and welcome into our family several new members, we conclude our series with this twelfth commitment, “*Our Joyful Commitment to Our Disciple-making Mission, Locally and Worldwide.*”

In Matthew 16 Jesus said, “I will build my church.” And that's what He's been doing ever since. In today's text, He gives the blueprint for this task, which includes us.

God unveiled His plan two thousand years ago when He sent His Son, the King, to planet earth on a rescue mission. We meet this King in the first chapters of Matthew's gospel, a descendant of David, virgin born, worshipped by wise men, and hated by King Herod. Then we hear The King's manifesto in chapters 5-7, and see His kingly authority in action through His miracles in chapters 8 and following. Eventually, we see the King offer Himself to His people, the Jews, in chapter 21, but they rejected Him, as He knew they would. And through their rejection, He died on a cross in chapter 27, providing a ransom for sinners, and then conquered death in chapter 28.

But before He returned to heaven, King Jesus, who had announced He's coming back, met with His disciples at the end of chapter 28, and gave them a mission. It's our mission, and today we want to read it and ponder it carefully.

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<sup>\*\*</sup>Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For a previous look at this passage, see the message preached at WBC in 2014 in our series on the Great Commission.

*Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:16-20*

The Lord brought Wheelersburg Baptist Church into existence in April 1878. That's 145 years ago. Sherry and I have had the God-given joy of belonging to this church nearly 36 years. For some of you, it's longer. For others, it's shorter. For all of us, there's a question.

Why are we here? It's vital that we know our mission. I think about *The Union Mission* in Charleston, WV. I love their website, *wefeedpeople.com*. There's no question about why they exist.

Coca-Cola has an intriguing mission statement: "To refresh the world, to inspire moments of optimism and happiness, to create value and make a difference." Interesting. It doesn't even say anything about selling sugar water for a profit. That's not inspiring. But this is. *To refresh the world!*

What is our mission as a church? Why are we here? The truth is, there are many differing opinions regarding that question. Is the church a social organization? Does it exist to make our community a better place to live? Are we here to meet the needs of hurting people? Are we a political action group?

Thankfully, Jesus Himself addressed the question for us, quite clearly. Before He returned to heaven, He told His followers precisely what He wanted them to do before He returned for them. In several texts.

He told the disciples in *John 20:21*, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." In *Mark 16:15-16*, He said, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." In Luke's account we hear these words (*Luke 24:47-48*), "Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." And we hear this in *Acts 1:8*, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

We could summarize these four versions of the Great Commission this way. Jesus said, "Go and preach the gospel all over the world to every person. Go in the power of the Holy Spirit. Go tell people what you have witnessed. Start at home, and keep going until the whole world has heard the good news about Jesus."

But there's a problem, as author Bill Hull points out in his book *The Disciple Making Pastor*. That would be like getting a bunch of novice contractors together and telling them: "Go build houses. Make them special, award-winning houses. Here is the money. Build them all over the world."

What's the problem? Something is missing. The contractors don't know enough about the houses. What kind of houses are they to build? They need direction. They need a punchlist for building their houses. They need a *blueprint*.

That's what we need, too. And that's what Jesus gave us in today's text. The blueprint, the methodology. He told the first disciples precisely what to do.

Many view Matthew 28:18-20 as a *missions* text, but in reality it's a *mission* text. In these three verses Jesus gives us two insights into our mission.

#### I. Our mission involves great potential (18, 20).

In verse 19 Jesus identifies the target. The *nations*, says the ESV. It's the Greek term *ethney* (plural) or *ethnos* (singular), which means, "a body of persons united by kinship,

culture, and common traditions.”<sup>2</sup> An ethnos is a people group. According to the Joshua Project, there are 17,445 people groups in the world, and presently 7,391 are unreached people groups.<sup>3</sup> By their definition, “unreached groups lack enough followers of Christ and resources to evangelize their own people.”

To put it another way, there are nearly eight billion people on our planet, and over three billion of those people live in areas that have little or no access to the gospel.

Certainly, the potential is great. Jesus said He wants not just our neighbors, but the nations on our hearts. Yet in this mission text, He talks about potential from a different perspective. What is it that makes the fulfillment of our mission possible? According to Jesus, it’s possible for two reasons.

**A. We can fulfill our mission because we have Jesus’ authority (18).** Notice the context. Verse 18 begins, “And Jesus came and said to them.” Who is *them*? According to verse 16, Jesus is meeting with His eleven disciples. He’s with Peter, James, John, and the others (Judas is gone). These are the men who deserted Him when He was arrested, but they’re now restored. Jesus is about to return to heaven, but before He does He schedules a meeting with these eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee.

Don’t miss that detail. We’re listening in on a conversation between Jesus and the apostles. He is telling *them* what to do. We’ll come back to it in a moment.

How did they respond when they saw Him? They worshiped Him, writes Matthew, who was one of them. But some doubted, he adds (17). Worship. And doubt. Jesus saw these two reactions.

So what did He do? In verse 18 Matthew says, “And Jesus came and said to them.” After seeing both the worship and the doubt, Jesus *came* (He’s the One worthy of worship), and Jesus *said* (His word is what they needed, as do we).

And what did He say? These important words. “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

Authority. If you’re going to accomplish a mission, especially if you’re struggling with doubt, you need this knowledge, that the Person giving you the mission has *authority*. It’s a significant word and means several things.

Authority means, “the power or ability to do something.” It also refers to “the state of control over something (as in John 10:18),” and “the right to control and command” (as in Mark 11:28). I have this, says Jesus, all authority. And they knew He did. They’d seen His authority when He cast out demons, restored blind eyes and lifeless limbs, and most recently, when He defeated death itself and walked out of His tomb alive.

Where did Jesus get this authority?

1. *Jesus received authority from the Father.* He says it was “given” to Him. From whom? From His heavenly Father. Earlier in John 3:35 Jesus said, “The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.” So Jesus derived authority from His Father. For what purpose? To fulfill the plan His Father gave Him, namely to redeem a people who would worship and enjoy Him forever.

What did Jesus do with that authority?

2. *Jesus delivered (transferred) authority to His disciples.* That’s what He is about to do in verse 19. He is giving them a command. He’s telling them there’s

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<sup>2</sup> Minard, M. (2014). [Gentiles](#). In D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, & R. Hurst (Eds.), *Lexham Theological Wordbook*. Lexham Press.

<sup>3</sup> <https://joshuaproject.net/>

something He wants them to do. He's about to tell eleven men who have likely never traveled beyond a little piece of land known as Israel, to launch a mission to reach the nations, *all* of them.

How would they ever accomplish this impossible task? These are weak, frightened men, who have been in hiding. By what authority will this mission go forward? Not theirs, for sure. His.

Having said to them, "All authority is mine," He then says to them, "So you go. You go with my authority behind you. You can do what I'm telling you to do, for I will make it happen."

Brothers and sisters, we have inherited a mission that is possible, not because of our ability, but His. We have King Jesus' authority. Yet there's a second reason.

**B. We can fulfill our mission because because we have Jesus' presence (20b).**

Notice Jesus' final words in verse 20, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." He'd been with these disciples for three years, but now He is leaving. Yet just prior to leaving He says to them, "I am with you always."

Wait. How can that be? How can Jesus both leave and remain? He has already given them the answer. He told them in Luke 24:49, "And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

He's talking about God the Holy Spirit, who would come to live in them in Acts 2. Indeed, God's Son has returned to heaven, but God the Holy Spirit has come to live in those who believe in Jesus. It's the Spirit who give us the power and divine presence we need for fulfilling the assignment we've received.

Fellow disciples, R. T. France is right, "The promise of God's presence...is not so much a cozy reassurance as a necessary equipment for mission."<sup>4</sup> In other words, it's not just *nice* to know we have Jesus' presence. It's *essential* to know. Why? Because...

1. *Without it we could do nothing.* Absolutely nothing. We could not fulfill our mission, let alone do anything of eternal significance apart from Jesus' presence. But...

2. *With it we can proceed with confidence.* We are never alone. We may be the only Christian in that lunchroom, or in our neighborhood, or in our family, but we are never alone. Jesus says to these men, and to us, "I am with you always."

This is what we can face whatever He calls us to face. This is how we can reach our neighbors, and the nations. This is what makes our mission possible. He is with us.

If you're thinking, "I'm too shy. I can't talk to people about Jesus. I don't have what it takes. I'm just an ordinary person."

My friend, Jesus gave this mission to a bunch of ordinary men who turned the world upside down. They didn't succeed at their mission because they were exceptional, connected, wealthy, influential people, nor will we. What makes our mission possible is Him. We have the King's authority and the King's presence. Our mission involves great potential.

II. Our mission involves a clear plan (19-20a).

What's the plan? Here it is, "Go therefore [in light of the potential] and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of

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<sup>4</sup> R. T. France, p. 416.

the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you [NIV ‘to obey everything I have commanded you’].”

There's the plan. There's the blueprint Jesus expected those men (and us) to follow in fulfilling the great commission. It's very practical. Notice two things about this plan.

**A. Jesus told us what to do.** In fact, the grammatical structure of Jesus' instruction in verse 19 is very precise. There is one main verb, and there are three supporting participles. The participles will answer the question *how*, but the main verb addresses the issue of *what*. The main verb is the bull's eye of our mission.

So what's the main verb? In the Greek text it's *matheteusate*. In the KJV it appears as “teach.” In the ESV and NIV it's translated “make disciples.”

That's it. That's our mission. We who are disciples of Jesus Christ are to make disciples. Jesus gave us one, fundamental, basic, absolutely vital responsibility.

Now, before we delve into what our mission *is*, we need to clarify what it is *not*. Here is what Jesus did *not* tell us to do.

1. *He didn't tell us to change the world.* That's not our mission. Should we care about our world? Should we care about the turmoil in Ukraine, and at the southern border, and the drug crisis? Certainly. I am my brother's keeper. But our mission isn't to turn the world into a better place to live. Our mission is much more specific than that, and when heeded, will make this world a better place to live.

2. *He didn't tell us to get decisions.* As in getting people to make the decision to become a Christian. Now granted, becoming a disciple involves an initial decision, and others that follow. But Jesus didn't say, “Go make converts,” or even “Go, make Christians.” What did He say? Something very specific.

3. *He told us to make disciples.* A disciple, by definition, is a “taught or trained one,” a “pupil or follower.” The noun appears 269 times in the New Testament (mostly in the gospels and Acts). A disciple is a person who hears, understands, and obeys the Master.

This is the mission. Go make disciples. Devote the rest of your life to the task of disciple-making.

Perhaps you're thinking, “Okay, what does that mean? What exactly does disciple-making look like? Can you give me a picture of a disciple-maker in action?”

The answer is *yes*. We have a book that contains a portrait of the greatest disciple-maker the world has ever seen. It's called the Bible, and that disciple-maker, of course, was Jesus Himself.

The eleven men who first received this mission knew what a disciple was. It's what they were. And they knew what a disciple-maker was, for they had been disciplined by Jesus. So when they heard Jesus say, “Make disciples,” they knew what He meant. He had already *shown* them what He meant. He wanted them to do with others what He had done with them.

So let's personalize this. What is our mission plan?

4. *He told us to do what He did, and what we see His church doing in the rest of the New Testament.* To understand what Jesus meant by this charge to *make disciples*, we must **look back**, but also **look ahead**. We must look back to the four gospels and see what Jesus did with these eleven men. But we must also look ahead to the book of Acts and the epistles to see what these men actually did. Thankfully, they tell us, in their letters.

If you've never read Robert Coleman's book, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, I urge you to do so. In it Coleman shares how that early in his Christian life he wrestled with the proper strategy to use in evangelism. There certainly are plenty from which to choose. Mass crusades, bus ministries, door to door canvassing, and on and on. To find the method of evangelism approved by God, Coleman decided to look back at the four gospels, and study the Master Himself. What strategy did Jesus use in evangelism?

And here is what Coleman discovered:

It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow Him. This revealed immediately the direction His evangelistic strategy would take. His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow. Remarkable as it may seem, Jesus started to gather these men before He ever organized an evangelistic campaign or even preached a sermon in public. Men were to be His method of winning the world to God.

So there's the plan. Jesus told these eleven men to do what He had done with them. To make disciples. But He took it to another level. With whom were they to make disciples? He said, "Make disciples of *all nations* [all the *ethney*]." So it's not just Israel any longer as it had been during Jesus' ministry. The scope of their mission would be the whole world. *Every nation*. *Every people group*.

How would that happen? Were these eleven men going to reach all the nations themselves? No. They would all be in their graves by the end of the first century. But they would be the instruments through which the Lord Himself would bring into existence the living organism through which He would reach the nations.

*The church*. Friends, if we want to know what Jesus meant in our mission text, we must look back, yes, but also look ahead and read the rest of the New Testament. What did Peter, and John, and Matthew, and the others do? Yes, they evangelized, and disciplined those they led to Christ. But then, as quickly as possible, they organized them into local churches.

This is critical to see. We don't do disciple-making in a post Matthew 28 world the way Jesus did it, for we're not Jesus. We do it in the context of the local church.

In the four gospels, it took only one person to make a disciple. That's Jesus Himself. Now He does it through His body. It takes a church (and I would make the case, all the people in a local church) to make a disciple.<sup>5</sup>

This is precisely what we see happening in the rest of the New Testament. Churches make disciples, like the churches in Antioch, and Ephesus, and Philippi. Not para-church organizations, and certainly not individuals by themselves. Can para-church organizations help churches make disciples? Certainly, as long as they truly help the church and not seek to become a replacement for it.

Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hades will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18)." And right after He returned to heaven, that's what He began to do, build His church.

Paul describes the church this way in Ephesians 2:19–22, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,<sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together,

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<sup>5</sup> I'm grateful for Bill Hull's development of this in *The Disciple Making Pastor*.

grows into a holy temple in the Lord.<sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

Who is the cornerstone? Jesus is. Who is the foundation? The apostles are. Jesus used the apostles to whom He is speaking in Matthew 28 to put down the foundation. And now, these men are in heaven, but what the Lord used them to establish continues. Jesus is now working through His body, the church, to make disciples.

And here’s where we enter the picture. We have a vital role in this assignment. All of us. Every gift, every member of the body, is vital. Disciple-making is what we’re all to do.

But how? Thankfully, Jesus told the eleven not only what, but also how.

**B. Jesus told us how to do it.** Remember the three participles? They modify the main verb. They give us the divine plan for how to make disciples. Making disciples involves three activities.

1. *Making disciples involves going.* There is no impact without contact. In order to make a disciple, we must first *go*. Go to our neighbors, and to the nations.

2. *Making disciples involves baptizing.* When we baptize someone, we are helping that person identify with Christ and His body *publicly*. What began in the heart is now made known through baptism.

3. *Making disciples involves teaching.* Making disciples involves leading people to Christ and then teaching people to obey Christ. And of course, a person can’t obey what they don’t know. Hence, the teaching. Which again is why the church is vital. We teach in the church. But we also model, and provide accountability, and discipline when necessary, to insure that all who claim to know Christ as observing what He commanded.

Going. Baptizing. Teaching. That’s what it takes. And since we’ll be seeing five people baptized (three today, and two next week), let’s develop the baptizing further.

What’s the first step of obedience for a disciple? Jesus said, “Go and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing* them.”

The Bible often refers to the Christian life as a *walk*. 1 John 1:7 says we are to “*walk in the light*.” 2 John 6 tells us to “*walk in love*.” In John 8:12 Jesus said, “Whoever follows me will never *walk* in darkness.”

A successful Christian life is a *walk*. It’s a life of obedience lived one step at a time. And here is the first step of obedience that a disciple must take in obedience to the Master.

*Baptize them*, said Jesus. But why? Baptism signifies *commitment*. The eleven disciples who heard Jesus say these words knew what their Master meant. A little over three years before this, John the Baptist had baptized people in the Jordan River, to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah. In fact, the disciples themselves had already baptized people with Jesus.

Listen to John 4:1-2, “The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.” Notice that when a person was baptized, it signified that the person had become what? The answer is, a *disciple*. A follower. Entering the waters of baptism indicates a change of allegiance. The person is saying, “From this point forward, I will no longer live for myself, but for the One in whose name I am baptized.”

Baptism is a significant matter. It indicates commitment. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and

follow me." When a person is baptized, he or she is saying, "I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord," recognizing that the path Jesus walked took Him to the cross.

Notice the next word. Jesus said, "Baptizing *them*." So baptism is for disciples only. Don't miss this. Who is *them*? It refers to the disciples we've made.

The evangelist Billy Sunday once said, "Going to church don't make a man a Christian any more than going to a stable makes a man a horse."

Friends, baptism doesn't make a person a disciple. Rather, it's *the evidence that a person is a disciple*. I've heard people say to me, "I want to be baptized so I can become a Christian." But according to the Bible, baptism is the evidence of a relationship with Christ, not the basis of it.

Notice what Jesus said next. "Baptizing them *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*." Jesus says "name," not *names*.<sup>6</sup> This is significant.

God reveals Himself in His Word as one God, yet He exists eternally as three persons. He is the *Triune* God (from the Latin *tri*, meaning three, and *unus*, meaning one, or "three in one").

It's not coincidental that all three persons of the Trinity were involved at Jesus' baptism. The Son was immersed in the water, the Spirit descended like a dove upon Him, and the Father spoke, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased (Matt 3:16-17)."

Now, in Matthew 28:19, Jesus says a disciple of His is to be baptized "in the name" (literally, "*into* the name") of the Triune God.<sup>7</sup> Other religions use baptism, but this is *Christian* baptism.

When a disciple of Jesus is baptized, he affirms his belief in and allegiance to the triune God. It's something we all do, no matter what tribe we're from, or language we speak. When we're baptized we are saying by our action, "We believe there is one God who exists as three persons. We believe that the Father sent His Son into this world. We believe that the Son died and rose again to redeem a people for His honor. We believe that the Holy Spirit has come to indwell His people until the Son returns."

You may not be able to *explain* the Trinity, but when baptized you are *affirming* the truthfulness of it.

I played sports in school. At the start of every season an event took place before the first game. If you were on the team, you participated in this event. The coach gave you your uniform. And everybody on the team wore the same uniform. Were we the same? No. Would we all play the same positions? No. But the uniform united us. Could someone up in the stands get a uniform and imitate us? Sure. The ultimate identification happened once the game began, but it started with the uniform.

Baptism is sort of like putting on the uniform. When we put it on, it identifies us with the Triune God, and each other. In baptism we identify with the Father who designed our

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<sup>6</sup> Commentator R. T. France observes that the singular use of "name" underscores the unity of the three Persons (R. T. France, p. 415).

<sup>7</sup> France suggests this preposition implies an entrance into an allegiance (414). D. A. Carson says, "The preposition 'into' strongly suggests a coming-into-relationship with or a coming-under-the-Lordship-of (597)."



salvation, with the Son who accomplished our salvation, and with the Holy Spirit who applied it to our lives.<sup>8</sup>

Baptism is like an initiation. As John Stott explains in his book *Baptism and Fullness*, “The very concept of baptism is initiatory. Water baptism is the public rite of initiation into Christ.”

Romans 6:3 speaks of this reality. “Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” Galatians 3:26-27 puts it this way, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

Baptism identifies a disciple with the Living God. But that's not all it does. It identifies a disciple *with other disciples too*. The Lord intends for His people to function, not as islands, but as members of a Body (says Paul in Romans 12:4), as living stones in a Building (says Peter in 1 Peter 2:5), and as branches in a Vine (says Jesus in John 15:5).

I think that's Paul's point in Ephesians 4:5 when he talks about “one baptism.” In verse 3 he urges us to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit. Here's why our unity is so important: there is “one body and one Spirit” (verse 4), and there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

This is what unites us. We have the same Lord. We've been saved the same way, through faith. And we've made the same public confession of the Lord by being baptized. Believer's baptism identifies us with the Lord and each other. We have all put on the same uniform.

So, “Go make disciples,” said Jesus to the eleven, “and baptize them.”

Going. Baptizing. Teaching. This is what Jesus did, what the apostles did, and what we are to do as we live out the great commission in this local church.

And to this assignment we are joyfully committed at WBC!

#### Implications for WBC: Because we take our mission seriously...

We have some ministry distinctives that are vital to us. Let's talk about six of them.

1. *Missions is important to us, locally and worldwide.* It starts *locally*. Everything we do as a church is with this in mind, making disciples of Jesus.

And this takes time. When we read the four gospels we discover that Jesus invested His life, not haphazardly into the masses, but strategically into twelve men.<sup>9</sup> And so must we, with our neighbors.

But not just our neighbors. *Locally and worldwide.* Jesus took trips with His men to Tyre and Sidon (Mark 7:24). They went to the borders of the Decapolis (Mark 7:31). Later He spent several months with His disciples in Perea, east of the Jordan (Luke 13:22-19:28).

At WBC, we give about a quarter of every dollar we take in to missions. Why? Because of our mission. *Of all nations*, He said. So since we ourselves can't make disciples in Zambia and Brazil and Italy, we give our money to others who can. And we also pray that the Lord of the harvest will send laborers from us to other places. Why? Because of our mission.

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<sup>8</sup> I don't believe that Jesus merely intended these words to be a formula to recite at a baptismal service. This helps explain why a text like Acts 8:16 speaks of being baptized “in Jesus' name” without mentioning the other two persons of the trinity.

<sup>9</sup> In His Passion week, He scarcely ever let His disciples out of His sight.

2. *Ministering to our community is important to us.* Why did we buy a building across the street a few years ago, and launch a community center ministry? Why do we support CRADLE with money and people, and Scioto Hills? Why do we have a senior ministry on Wednesday mornings, and have pancake breakfasts, and help people with gas and groceries from time to time. Because we want people in this community to know we care about them, so we can tell why, and introduce them to Him, and teach them how to know and follow Him too.

3. *Our biblical counseling ministry is important to us.* What is biblical counseling? It's helping hurting people discover biblical answers for their problems. It's targeted discipleship, and it flows right out of our mission.

4. *Our body life is important to us.* We have a high view of church membership at WBC. Church isn't a place at the corner of Gallia and South Streets, and it's certainly not a club. It's a family we're devoted to, a body we're connected to. It's where we grow as a disciple. It's where we disciple others. This is why we have community groups, deacon care groups, Sunday School classes, and much more. These aren't programs to us. These are strategic ministries to help us fulfill our mission.

5. *Our attention to sound doctrine is important to us.* "Teaching them to observe whatever I have commanded you." That's what Jesus said. If we lose what He said, we can't fulfill our mission. That's why we do so much teaching of God's Word at WBC, and why we urge you to be here. Our mission depends on it.

6. *Our willingness to launch new ministries is important to us.* Our mission does not change, but our methods do at times. We use Livestream, Facebook, Zoom, all unheard of just a few years ago. But now, wonderful tools in our mission toolbox. And we are open to others.

If you see a new way to help us fulfill our mission, and if it doesn't cost the church's money or won't take away from other ministries the Lord has already raised up, go for it! And if it might cost money, or involve people already doing things, let your deacons and pastors know about it, so we can pray with you about the possibility of a new ministry to help us make disciples locally and worldwide.

**Songs of Response** (led by Rex): #376 "*I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*" (all four verses), as well as #369 "*O Jesus I Have Promised*" (all three verses)

**Baptism** (three individuals this week, two next week)

**August Benediction:** Romans 11:36 (NIV84)

New member candidates to be presented to the church on August 27 and September 3, 2023

\*indicates those being baptized on August 27, which I will do, \*\*baptized on Sept 3, by Pastor Matt  
On August 27...

Norman McGinnis (was planning to join, but the Lord called him home to heaven Tuesday)

Tom and Kay Rawlins

Austin\* & Abby Hall

Chris\* and Lauren Dolan

Elizabeth Novak

Keith and Valerie Saltsman

Eliseo Chicunque\*

On September 3...

Aliya\*\* & Adree\*\* Bradley

Jeremy and Dee Dee Travis (already baptized but will receive right hand of fellowship on Sept 3)

Aaron Picklesimer (already baptized)