

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD: THE GREAT COMMISSION: Matthew 28:18-20:

Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power 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, until the end of the age.”

Do you feel like you are on a Mission? In this Gospel today the message is very clear. Jesus is leaving and he has a mission for his disciples. A message for you and me. He says, I am leaving, so go and do ABCD....

I am leaving you to carry this mission on. We call this gospel we hear today: “The Great Commission”. This is not just for the 12 apostles but for you and me. This is our mission. A mandate to carry on every day of our lives. There is a famous line attributed to St. Francis of Assis which goes thus: “Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words.”

Sometime people use this line to hide behind it. Should we live lives that “speak”? Absolutely.... Should we live lives of Integrity, Generosity and Compassion, Patience, and Courage, in a way that “speaks” to the people around us and inspire them; to embrace the gospel in a new and dynamic ways and follow the Gospel...absolutely! But we also need to use words!

We need to use words to encourage those around us. To use the words of the Gospel to bring truth into people’s lives. The truth that is becoming rarely and rarely these days in our society! We talk of meeting people where they are and calling them where God is calling them to be! This essentially was Jesus’ model of evangelization. He never preached to the people before he fed them, healed them; Comforted them. This was his approach. He went out to meet the people where they were; Spiritually, Physically, intellectually, emotionally. He met them where they were! He ministered to them usually first in the human need, and then he ministered to them spiritually. He met them where they were, and then led them to where God was calling them to be.

We all have people or know someone our lives that we know would benefit from a deeper experience of God. A deeper experience of the gospel. We know someone who would use a richer spirituality in his or her life. We really need to search our hearts and ask ourselves are we really meeting this person or these people where they are at? Or are we standing across the street and calling them ...Hey guys, ...Come down, come down here here..... it’s better over here. Life would be better for you if you came down here! Because that’s not what God calls us to do! God calls us to walk across the street and meet them where they are at! To search and see what is troubling their hearts!

And they may say: “I have a whole bunch of credit card debts”, or he may say; “I have huge school loan”, or “I just lost my Job”! “I am worried about my daughter’s education”! “I have a sick spouse at home and things are not going well.” “My kids seem to be going in a wrong direction”. “I am worried about my son’s health” or “I really do not like my Job I do not get along with my colleagues at work”. “My Mom or my Dad is very sick, and I have to take care of my little siblings.”

We need to hear the things that are heavy on peoples’ hearts! What is troubling your heart? When we meet people where they are at: Our concern first and foremost is to know what is troubling their hearts!

There are so many ways on how we can help people carry their burden. But the first one way is to recognize that a person is carrying a burden and listen to that burden he or she is carrying. Then of course we do an inventory on ourselves on how can, I help this person.

Do I know anyone who can assist her or him? What talents or resources do I have, or do we have anyone else we know who can assist this person? May-be you can connect that person to someone who can help that him or her. That is the beginning of the “GREAT COMISSION”. We are here on earth to help each other and that is the beginning of the great commission.

- The Great Commission is not to people a bible in everyone’s Hands!
- The great Commission is not about Baptizing every Person!
- The great commission is to bring God’s Grace to each other’s lives!
- It’s about being people for people!
- If we ignore the Humanity that people are wrestling with at that moment, then the message will fall on deaf ears!
- We cannot preach to a starving person! A starving person cannot hear the message. We have to feed the starving person and then their ears become open.
- The great commission is to find how people are starving and how can we feed them; knowing that all people are starving in some way in their lives.
- How can we feed them that they can hear and feel the life giving and life changing message of the Gospel? That is the GREAT COMMISSION.
- “Go, preach the Gospel to all nations.” This was the farewell command of Christ.
- He has no body now on earth but ours.
- He has no hands but ours to raise up the fallen.
- No feet but ours to seek out the lost.
- No eyes but ours to see the silent tears of the suffering.
- No ears but ours to listen to the lonely.
- No tongue but ours to speak a word of comfort to the sad.
- No heart but ours to love the unloved.

Lord, take pity on us, your timid and fearful disciples; give us the courage to witness to you in the world, and so the Gospel will be preached, and people will find their way into your kingdom. Amen