

Rev. Mike Cole
Providence Presbyterian Church
Trinity Sunday
May 31, 2026
Psalm 8:1-9; Matthew 28:16-20

"Re-sign Your Commission"

Kasia told me the following story, so if you don't like it blame her! One Sunday a Pastor told his congregation that the church needed some extra money, so he asked the people prayerfully to consider giving a little extra in the offering. Further, he told them that whoever gave the most extra would be able to pick out three hymns.

As the offering plates were brought forward, the Pastor glanced down and noticed that someone had placed a \$1,000 bill in the offering. He was so excited that he immediately shared his joy with the congregation and said that he'd like to personally thank the person responsible for this generous donation. A very quiet lady (one of the more "experienced" members) sitting all the way at the back shyly raised her hand.

The Pastor asked her to come forward. Slowly she made her way to the front. He told her how wonderful it was that she had given so much and in gratefulness, he asked her to pick out three hymns. Her eyes brightened as she looked over the congregation, pointed to the three handsomest men in the sanctuary and said, "I'll take him and him and him!" Different people understand the same words in different ways.

So, when it comes to the words of Jesus Christ, it's important that we all have the same understanding. The words Jesus spoke in Matthew 28:19 are the focus of this sermon: "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 lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." The church has long referred to this verse as the Great Commission.

The dictionary defines commission as - 1) the act of committing oneself; 2) an authoritative charge, order or direction. Jesus tells us that by his authority we are charged to commit ourselves to something. But to what? Although some people see it as multi-faceted, the Great Commission really has only one point - to make disciples. Everything else in the commission modifies or qualifies that essential activity.

The first word in the Great Commission, "go," is not the imperative, but is a participle, which should be translated, "While you are going." So, the Great Commission begins with:

“While you are going, therefore, make disciples.” Another way to say it would be: “In the course of living your life, therefore, make disciples.”

The Great Commission applies to us not just when we are set apart to do unique work as Elders, Deacons, teachers, missionaries or Pastors; the Great Commission applies to us all the time, wherever we are, whatever we are doing. “While we are going, therefore,” we are to make disciples. While we’re at the grocery store, we are to make disciples. While we’re shopping, we are to make disciples. While we’re at work, we are to make disciples. While we’re at school, we are to make disciples. While we’re doing whatever we do that we call living, we are to make disciples. The Great Commission is singular in its approach to our commitment: we are to make disciples.

That’s why it’s called the Great Commission instead of the Great Commissions. While we are going about the business of living, we are to make disciples. Between these two statements Jesus sticks an adverb - therefore, which means “as a result of.” Thus, we make disciples as a result of living our lives. How do we do that?

Just think about the people who have most influenced your life. What was it about them that affected you? The people who most influenced my life are ordinary people - teachers, pastors, family, parents, and friends. They’re not heroes or superstars. You won’t read about them in the news or see a reel about them on Facebook. But they made me a disciple, a follower of Jesus Christ, by their living example. But does living an ordinary life of faithfulness really make a difference? You bet it does. Sometimes more than we will ever know.

A professor of Greek history once asked his class at the end of an extensive lecture on Greek culture, “Are there any questions?” One student asked, “What is the meaning of life?” The usual laughter ensued and people stirred to go, but the professor held up his hand, stilled the room and looked at the student, asking with his eyes if he was serious. Seeing from the student’s eyes that he was, the professor said, “I will answer your question.”

Taking his wallet out of his hip pocket, he fished into his leather billfold and brought out a very small round mirror, about the size of a quarter. Then he said, “When I was a small child, during the war, we were very poor and we lived in a remote village in Greece. One day, on the road, I found the broken pieces of a mirror. A German motorcycle had been wrecked in that place. I tried to find all the pieces and put them together, but it was not possible, so I kept only the largest piece. This one. And by scratching it on a stone, I made it round.

I began to play with it as a toy and became fascinated by the fact that I could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine - in deep holes and crevices and dark closets. It became a game for me to get light into the most inaccessible places I could find. I kept the little mirror, and as I went about my growing up, I would take it out in idle moments and continue the challenge of the game.

As I became a man, I grew to understand that this was not just a child's game, but a metaphor for what I might do with my life. I came to understand that I am not the light or the source of the light. But light - truth, understanding, knowledge - will shine in many dark places if I reflect it. I am a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what I have, I can reflect light into the dark places of this world - into the black places in the hearts of men - and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. This is what I am about. This is the meaning of my life." And then he took his small mirror and, holding it carefully, caught the bright rays of daylight streaming through the window and reflected them onto the student's face.

In the Great Commission, Jesus tells us that each of us carries in the wallet of our heart, a small round mirror which we can use to reflect the light of His love into the lives of others. Which others? All the nations. We can't be selective about where we reflect the light of Jesus Christ. Everyone needs the darkness of their lives illuminated by the light of his love. We can't restrict ourselves to reflecting His light just into the lives of those who are like us; we must let His light shine into everyone's life – EVERY ONE. Jesus died for everyone, not just some; not just those who look like us, worship like us, live like us and talk like us. Our commission is to make disciples of all the nations, by reflecting the light of Christ's love with the mirror of our lives.

John Robertson of Glasgow, Scotland had been a Pastor for forty years, but lost his glow, felt himself a failure and felt inclined to resign the ministry. After a long time of indecision, he prayed, "O God, forty years ago Thou didst commission me, but I have blundered and failed and I want to resign this morning." He broke down in tears and as he humbled himself it seemed that God said, "John Robertson, it's true I commissioned you and it's true you've blundered and failed, but you are not to resign your commission, but to re-sign your commission."

There's no denying that we have not fulfilled Christ's commission as well as we could have. God isn't ready for us to resign our commission. But the Lord is ready for us to re-sign our commission.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Charge: Wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you are, God will equip you. God will accomplish a purpose in your being there. Christ who dwells within you has something He wants to do through you where you are. Believe this and go in God's grace, love and power. Amen