TITLE: A Great Commission

TEXT: Mk. 16:15-16; Ro. 13:15; Acts 1:8;

 2 Co. 9:10-15; Mt. 6:19-21

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about the commission that each of us has been given as a Christian.

 But first let me define the word.

**Commission-,**

**2 : an authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or to perform prescribed acts : CHARGE**

**3 a : authority to act for, in behalf of, or in place of another b : a task or matter entrusted to one as an agent for another**

**4 a : a group of persons directed to perform some duty**

Jesus commissioned us, His Church, just before He ascended to Heaven.

**Mark 16:15-16(NIV)
15He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.**  **16Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

This is not just a calling for the professional missionary or even the Church pastor but it is a calling placed upon the lives of all Christians.

To--**Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.**

To understand this calling we might need to first define the word “preach” as it is used here.

 In our world, and often in our individual thought process, we almost always associate preaching with a pastor, missionary ect.

But the word does not limit its scope to just, quote unquote, full time ministry positions.

The word used for preach here comes from the Greek word:

**kay-roos'-so**

**To herald (as a public crier), especially divine truth (the gospel):—preach (-er), proclaim, publish.**

Jesus told His Church to: **Go into all the world and preach, (**be a herald, proclaim), **the good news to all creation.**

 We have a very famous Iowan that you may have heard of but possibly didn’t realize he was from Iowa. The great evangelist—missionary, Billy Sunday.

 Billy Sunday was born near Ames, Iowa on November 19th 1862. He loved baseball and became a professional Baseball player signing with the Chicago White Stockings (later to become the Chicago White Sox) in 1883.

 In 1887 he underwent a conversion experience and he began sharing his faith. He became a flamboyant preacher of fundamentalist theology whose sermons reflected the social upheaval caused by the transition from a rural to an urban society; he advocated a strict morality and campaigned effectively for [Prohibition](http://www.answers.com/topic/prohibition). In his life he conducted hundreds of revival meetings and reached an estimated 100 million people for Christ.

There is an interesting story about Billy Sunday going before an ordination committee in the Presbyterian Church seeking to become an ordained minister.

An examining committee of ministers once met to determine the qualifications of Billy Sunday for ordination as a gospel minister. Among other questions fired at the world-famous baseball player turned evangelist was a request that he identify a well-known church father and name some of his writings.

Billy was stumped. After fumbling around for a moment, he looked up with a twinkle in his eye and said, “I never heard of him. He was never on my team.” The learned theologians deliberated together, but found it hard to make a decision. Finally, one of them moved that Billy Sunday be recommended for ordination, adding, “He has already won more souls for Christ than the whole shebang of us put together.”

Billy Sunday understood the commission he had received the day he accepted Jesus as His Lord and Savior—A commission to go into his part of the world with the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Do you know the definition of a missionary?

 Someone once defined a missionary as:  a person who teaches cannibals to say grace before they eat him.

 Seriously though, a missionary is someone who understands Gods call upon their life to go into all the world with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Too often we think of this going to all the world with the good news of the Gospel just involves going to far away places and thus reserved for the missionary going to a foreign field.

 Ada Lum gives a helpful look at what or who a missionary is or should be, in her book “*A Hitchhiker’s Guide to Missions”.*

Lum gives some helpful definitions and analysis of just what the missionary enterprise is all about. “A missionary is a prepared disciple whom God sent into the world with His resources to make disciples for His kingdom.”

 She suggests six biblical images for a missionary:

1. A Witness

2. An Evangelist

3. A Pioneer

 4. A Herald

5. An Ambassador;

6. A Servant

 Isn’t this the same image that we should reflect as a Christian?

1. A Witness—one who shares their testimony

2. An Evangelist—One who desires to see others saved

3. A Pioneer—One willing to go where God leads

4. A Herald—To proclaim the good news of the Gospel with others.

5. An Ambassador --One who represents Jesus in their world.

6. A Servant—One who serves in the name of Christ….

**Romans 10:13-15(NIV)**  **13for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

What a wonderful promise of Scripture!

**Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

 God is not a respecter of persons**!** His salvation is designed for anyone who will embrace it by calling on the name of Christ!

**Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!**

Just what is this telling us here?

 The sexually immoral and sexually depraved of this world can be saved!

Both the drug dealer and the drug abuser can be saved!

 The thief and the murderer and the rapist can all be saved!

 Regardless of what you have done in your past you can be saved! Regardless of what I have done in my past I can be saved! Our best friend and our worst enemy can be saved!

 **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!**

 Something we need to understand is what it means to call upon the name of the Lord.

Call Upon=

***ep-ee-kal-eh'-om-ahee***

**implication to *invoke* (for aid, worship, testimony, decision, etc.):—appeal (unto), call (on, upon), surname---to permit one’s self to be surnamed.**

 To call on the name of the Lord for our salvation is to come to Him repentant, sorry for our sinning against Him, appealing to Him for forgiveness for our sin, making a conscious decision to surrender our life to Him so that we can take on and bear His name—Christian.

 **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!**

And then Paul continues with an important truth…

**14How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?**  **15And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”**

 Some important truths here:

**14How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?**

 Before anyone will ever call upon the name of the Lord for their salvation they must first come to believe in Him. Believe that He is who He says that He is! Believe that He came to pay the price for their sin!

 Believe that they are among the “everyone” that Jesus came to save.

**And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?**

Kind of hard to believe in something until you know that it even exists isn’t it?

**And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?**

 Again, the word for preach simply means to proclaim.

 This speaks of our witness, our simply sharing what Christ has done for us with others. Sharing with them what we have discovered about Him! That everyone who calls upon Him for their salvation will be saved!

You know there is nothing more powerful in our witness for Christ, our proclaiming Him to others than our own personal testimony. What God has done and is doing in our own life.

 Many years ago I called upon the name of the Lord Jesus for my salvation and He heard and answered me!

 Many, many times since I have called upon the name of the Lord Jesus and He answers me still.

 I, as many of you, have faced difficulties at times in my life. There have been times when I have cried out to the Lord and He has instantly and miraculously delivered me from my trial. There have been times that I have cried out to Him and have had to go through a trial but He always has given me the strength I needed to get through it.

 Either way He was always there! His grace always sufficient!

 Here is an interesting thought..

 The Gospel is still being written today in the lives that we live.

 Whenever we call out to the Lord and He answers our cry and we share what He has done for us with others we have proclaimed His Gospel!

The Greek word for Gospel is:

***yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on*;**

**a *good* *message*, to *announce* *good* news, declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings the *gospel:*—gospel.**

When we talk about the Gospel of Jesus Christ we are simply talking about, declaring the good news about Jesus!

 Is Jesus still doing good things in our lives today?

 Certainly He is!

 The Gospel, the good news about Jesus is an ever expanding story.

 We can share the gospel without using one word of Scripture! Whenever we share the good things that Jesus has done and is doing in our life we have shared His Gospel.

A missionary is really just a witness of Jesus Christ in the part of the world that God has placed them.

 In that since we are all called to be missionaries for Jesus Christ.

 And as Christians God has equipped each and every one of us for that task!

Just before ascending to Heaven Jesus gave His Church a promise and a commission.

**Acts 1:8(NIV)
8But 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.”**

The promise--**8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you..**

The commission- **and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

The only thing worse than not having a power, a capability, is to have it but not realize that you do.

And I think that this is true for many of us as Christians.

 God has given us the power, God has given us the gifts, all the capabilities that we need---we often just don’t realize it!

Gods promise is: **8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you..**

The Greek word used for power here is:

**Dunamis**

**1) strength, power, ability; inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth**

**1b) power for performing miracles**

**1c) moral power and excellence of soul**

Power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature!

When we received the Holy Spirit into our heart He came in with power!

 It is His nature, the nature of Christ Jesus Himself that we now have within us.

 And we have each been given this power of His presence in our life for one primary purpose:

**Be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

Jesus here even tells us where our ministry of missions is to start..

**In Jerusalem** (where they were)**, and in all Judea** ( the area around Jerusalem), **and Samaria** ( the area around Judea), **and to the ends of the earth.”**

Elie Wiesel in “*Souls on Fire” said this:.*

But where was I to start? The world is so vast, I shall start with the country I know best, my own. But my country is so very large. I had better start with my town. But my town, too, is large. I had best start with my street. No: my home. No: my family. Never mind, I shall start with myself.

Our mission field needs to first start with ourselves.

 We need saved, we need Jesus in our life, and then we expand outwards our personal mission field from that point.

 To our family, our friends, our street, our town, our state, our nation, to the ends of the earth.

Husband and wife Ray and Jean Sisk started a personal mission field they call “Highways for Christ”.

Their “handle” is “Interstate Missionary” and their message for truckers on the 1,500 miles of I-20 between Florence, South Carolina, and Kent, Texas is: “Each time you see a mile marker, remember that Ray and Jean Sisk are praying for you.”

It’s a message, thanks to the Sisk’s, that has inspired Christians from Maine to Oregon to claim a stretch of interstate as their mission field.

The Georgia couple became involved with big rig drivers after Ray retired from the military in 1972.

“I used to think military people were the loneliest people in the world,” Ray explains. But loneliness also afflicts the 6 million truck drivers in the U.S. and Canada.

The Sisk’s make 90-minute cassette tapes, “playing Southern gospel music and talking a little bit,” which they give to interested truckers.

 Bibles and *I-20 for Jesus* newsletters accompany the tapes. The newsletters include information on “Christian refreshing stations“—i.e. individual Christians, churches, or businesses who can be contacted by truckers for any needs.

The tapes help “jump-start” many drivers, Ray says. “It makes them more open about their faith. They’ll display a Scripture verse or a cross on their truck, which becomes a conversation starter that may lead a non-Christian trucker to Christ.”

If a trucker owns his own rig, the Sisk’s suggest turning it into a prayer chapel or a place for Bible studies in truck stop parking lots. As Ray says, those enormous cabs are plenty big for God to work.

“Anyone can do what we do,” the Sisk’s insist. “Just sit down at a truck stop, watch and pray.”

Oswald Chambers once said:

 *The special person called to do missionary work is every person who is a member of the church of Christ. The call does not come to a chosen few; it is to every one of us.*

Henry Martyn once said:

*The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions, and the nearer we get to him, the more intensely missionary we must become.*

 Missions comes down to simply this--burden for the lost---not just the lost over there in some faraway place, but the lost right here living amongst us where we are right now.

 But for the Church it is not to be an either/or situation. It is to be both! A concern for the lost living all around us and an equal concern for the lost in those far away places that we may never be able to go personally.

 In our calling to go into all the world proclaiming the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ needs to be understood first and foremost as a personal calling for us individually. We need to be proclaiming that gospel message in our Jerusalem, where we are right now.

 But we also need to proclaim it in Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth!

 That is where we can share in the ministry of others whom God has specifically called to go to those places with the Gospel of Christ where we cannot personally go ourselves.

This is the opportunity we share in this Church every missions Sunday. To give so that others can go to places we cannot with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ!

**2 Corinthians 9:10-15(NIV)**  **10Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.**  **11You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.**  **12This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.
13Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.
14And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.
15Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!**

**10Now he** (God) **who supplies seed to the sower** (us) **and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.
11You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.**

Jesus said:

**Matthew 6:19-21(NIV)**  **19“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**  **20But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.**  **21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

 Are you fulfilling the commission that God has given you as a Christian? To proclaim His gospel message to those in your part of the world.

 This morning do you see lost souls won to Christ as a Heavenly treasure?

 Are you storing up for yourself this Heavens treasure, lost souls won to Christ? Being stored up in your heavenly account through your personal testimony and witness and through your giving so that others can go to places with the Gospel that we can’t .

 Will we be obedient to the calling Jesus has placed upon our lives to proclaim Him into all of our world starting with where we are right now?