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# EVANGELISM

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*Matthew 28:18-20*

*One Main Thing*

Christians are people who have the good news of God!

*Introduction*

“Mom, I’ve got good news to tell you! We’re going to have a boy!” It is hard to explain what an exciting, exhilarating feeling it is that rushes through your body as these words are spoken. As a father of two children, it gave me unbelievable joy to call my mother and share the good news that we were going to have a child! Our son was born first, followed by our daughter, and in both cases, the excitement of telling friends and family was beyond words. I think of the tingling in my back, as the hairs stood up on my neck. I think of how I became weak in the knees with pleasure and anticipation. I think of the months of planning and joy that were experienced as we prepared to usher

in the coming of a new family member, full of life, excitement, and all of the other emotions associated with such an adventure in life. Such is the Good News of Christ! In Matt 28, when Jesus was standing there with the eleven remaining disciples, it was good news on their tongues that would fill their audiences with joy and excitement. When Paul said, in Rom 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel," it was because he realized that he had such good news that could not be contained, and would certainly bring days, months, and years of joy to those who heard it!



If you are turning in your Bibles to Matt 28 for the first time, I hate to tell you that these are the last three verses of the gospel. The word "gospel," meaning good news, has already been told and here you are catching the aftermath of the events as Jesus sends out His disciples to go on a bigger, greater, more extensive mission outside the borders of Palestine to the entire world. Nevertheless, so much is said in just these few words of Matt 28. Jesus has already died. He has already risen from the grave and walks again. Judas is gone, and Peter has returned. The disciples have failed Him, and have swallowed their pride (at least 11 of them did). They are broken, but not destroyed; "persecuted, but not forsaken; perplexed, but not driven to despair." Here in these final passages, Jesus is sending them out to tell the world that God had such a deep passion for us, that he was moved in His heart to come here in the

form of Jesus, as a human, and attempt to connect with us. God desired to be with us. He wants to dine with us, get to know us, and spend his time with us. Wow!

Matthew 28:18–20 reads as follows:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' Amen.

First, a statement of autonomy and authority is made: "Listen to me, because the buck stops here." In essence, Jesus has the authority of the creator of the cosmos, and this authority extends outside the borders of the heavens even throughout the domains and kingdoms of this earth. With this in mind, Jesus is sending out these disciples to do three basic things: "Make disciples" as you go! It is assumed that Christians will be coming and going throughout the world, and as they go they should wear their faith on their sleeves. It should be within us through and through, that God has offered a message of hope and love to humanity that will bless everyone who hears.

Second, Jesus tells them that as they move in and out throughout all of the nations of the world, there will be people who hear, understand, and excitedly respond to the good news of God! When this happens, assist them

in responding to God's great offer: immerse them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so that they will be bathed in God, through and through, for a life filled with God's love for God's love.

Last, but not least, Jesus realized that even after we have heard the message of trust, hope, and steadfast compassion, many times it is extremely difficult to figure out how this should be done day in and day out. Thus, the disciples were commended to be involved in "teaching them to observe everything" that the disciples had witnessed in the life of Jesus. They had been with the Lord. They knew the Lord. They could pass on the stories of the Lord for the benefit of others who wanted to model their lives after the example of the Messiah.

### *Application*

On various occasions, in over 30 different countries, and on five continents I have preached the good news of the coming of Jesus, the life of Jesus, the death of Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus. In many instances, I have seen the "light bulb" in people's mind. I have seen them bow their head in tears when they hear of the crucifixion. I have seen them weep with joy as the message of hope rung from the walls of the mud huts in Africa, "He has RISEN!" The message of Jesus is a message of overcoming. It is the story of overcoming impossible odds. It is a story that says, "Yes, the universe has design, it has a point, and it is God, and YES, He

knows you and cares for you!" It is a message that tells us to believe and trust in other people after we have been burned and hurt by them time and again. It is a message that tells us we can still love, when people seem unlovable. The message of Jesus is the impossible made possible. It is the miraculous, awe-inspiring story that encourages me to get up each and every day. I am encouraged to do the next right thing. I am transfixed on rising from my bed, even when everything in my life says, "Give up." I will rise, because He rose. I will come forth and face the day, because He came forth and faced the day. What a message!

### *Discussion*

1. Describe a time in your life when you had good news to share with someone you loved.
2. Why is the Good News of God good news?
3. Why was it important for Jesus to make sure the disciples understand that He had "all authority in heaven and earth"?
4. What were the three things that Jesus told His disciples in Matt 28:19–20?
5. Compare/contrast the three things Jesus told His disciples and explain how these things will help people who are coming to Christ for the first time.