

PANDEMIC

"GOING VIRAL"

MATTHEW 28:16-20

This Week's Core Competency

Giving Away My Faith – I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes. Ephesians 6:19, 20 *Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*

As long as there are unsaved people at home in our own country, why should we exhaust our resources on going and sending missionaries *to* and supporting nationals *in* other countries around the world? According to one author it's because "Jesus did not send his apostles out with a general mission merely to win as many individuals as they could, but rather to reach all the peoples of the world and thus to gather the 'sons of God' which are scattered (John 11:52), and to call all the 'ransomed from every tongue and tribe and people and nation' (Rev 5:9), until redeemed persons from 'all the peoples praise him' (Rom 15:11)" (John Piper, "Discipling All The Peoples," in *Perspectives*, 3rd ed., 116).

His argument is worth examining. By way of introduction, when Jesus says, "make disciples of all nations" he uses the words *panta ta ethne* (*panta* = all, *ta* = the, *enthe* = nations). And while the NIV's translation of his words suggests he has

The missionary task of the church is to press on to all the unreached peoples until the Lord comes.

– John Piper

political or geographic groups in mind, that's probably not the case. Our word "ethnic" is derived from the Greek word *ethnos*, which leads to the observation that we sometimes use "nation" to refer to a group of people with a unifying ethnic rather than political identity, e.g., the Cherokee Nation or the Sioux Nation. That said, perhaps it would be better to translate *panta ta ethne* as "all the ethnic groups" (113).

And now his argument, first, he reasons from the *singular* use of *ethnos* in Matthew 24:7, Acts 2:5, and Revelation 5:9, and then from its *plural* use in Acts 13:19, 48, 1 Corinthians 12:2, and Revelation 11:9, concluding that: "The singular use of *ethnos* in the New Testament always refers to a people group. The plural use of *ethnos* sometimes must be to a people group and sometimes must refer to Gentile individuals, but usually can go either way" (114).

Then he examines the eighteen uses of *panta ta ethne* in the New Testament and concludes: one demands the meaning "Gentile individuals" (Mt 25:32); three demand the meaning "people group" on the basis of the context (Ac 2:5; 10:35; 17:26); six demand the same meaning on the basis of the Old Testament connection (Mk 11:17; Lk 21:24; Ac 15:17; Gal 3:8; Rev 12:5; 15:4); and the remaining eight could go either way (Mt 24:9; 24:14; 28:19; Lk 12:30; 24:47; Ac 14:16; Rom 1:5; 2Ti 4:17). His analysis overall leads him to conclude that since the phrase *panta ta ethne* refers to Gentile individuals only once, but must refer to people groups nine times, leaving eight to go either way, "the meaning leans heavily in the direction of 'all the nations (people groups)'" (114).

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What seals the deal and settles the matter in the author's mind is the testimony of the Old Testament where the phrase "always carries the sense of people groups outside of Israel" (115). When the meaning of *panta ta ethne* is considered in light of passages like Genesis 12:1-3, to the effect that "all the peoples [LXX *phulai*, 'tribes'] on earth" will be blessed through Abraham, and Isaiah 56:7, which Jesus quotes in Mark 11:7, "Is it not written: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it 'a den of robbers,'" the meaning "all ethnic groups" or "all people groups" is implied. This conclusion fits nicely with what Jesus told his disciples after reviewing what the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms said about him. According to Luke, he explained, "The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name *to all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk 24:46; cf., Ac 1:8). Thus the author writes: "We have strong evidence that the *panta ta ethne* in Luke 24:47 was understood by Jesus not merely in terms of Gentile individuals, but as an array of world peoples who must hear the message of repentance for the forgiveness of sin" (116).

And so he concludes his article with these words: "The missionary task of the church is to press on to all the unreached peoples until the Lord comes . . . he himself is building his Church from all peoples. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him for this very thing (Matt. 28:19)" (117).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Matthew 28:16-20

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Cf., another translation

16 The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshipped him, even though some of them doubted. 18 Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, 20 and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." (TEV)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "then" indicating *temporal sequence* in v. 16.
- * In the margin next to v. 16 write, "Cf., vv. 7, 10."
- * Circle "worshipped" in v. 17.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 17.
- * Circle "some" in v. 17.
- * Bracket "has been given" in v. 18.
- * Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 19.

- * Highlight "make disciples" in v. 19.
- * Circle "name" in v. 19.
- * Underline "go," "baptizing," and "teaching" in vv. 19, 20.
- * Circle "commanded" in v. 20.
- * In the margin next to v. 20 write, "Cf., 1:23."

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. How does reading that "the *eleven* disciples" went to Galilee strike you?
2. Verse 17 says, "*they* worshiped him." Who are *they*?
3. By way of *contrast* verse 17 also says, "some doubted." Who are some?
4. Verse 19 begins with "therefore." Explain the relationship of verse 19 to verse 18.
5. "Go" translates a *participle* (cf., "wherever you go" [GW, NOG], "as you go" [ISV]), so why do most English versions translate it as a command? (See notes.)
6. What do "baptizing" and "teaching" have to do with Jesus' command?
7. How can you *possibly* be obedient and make disciples?
8. "Name" is *singular* but "of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" is *plural*. So what?
9. What would you say is the mark of a *true* disciple?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about whether all *true* Christians are *true* disciples.

day 3 **EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Pastor David Daniels expressed the point of his sermon, "Going Viral," in these words: "In recent years, attention has shifted from 'going' to 'sending' to simply 'supporting.' While missions is a many-varied task, Jesus' mandate to 'go!' must not be ignored. As American Christians, we must understand the value of going to every nation, tribe and tongue. We must not fall prey to the enemy who would have us believe that there's just so much to do 'in our own backyard'" (synopsis of "Going Viral" contained in an unpublished description of the sermon series Pandemic).

Last words are *lasting* words, especially when they contain a *command* accompanied by a *promise*. While Jesus' words to his disciples recorded in Matthew 28:16-20 may not have been his *very* last words to them, they have unquestionably had a lasting impact on the church. On their importance one author writes, "As Johnson puts it, 'No part of the Bible, with the possible exception of the letter to the Romans, has done more to give Christians the vision of a world-wide church. It has sent them to all nations, bearing the message of salvation through Christ, with which are linked the responsibility and privilege of obeying his words.' We must bear in mind that the picture of Jesus as a Jewish rabbi, with a little group of disciples around him, traveling in leisurely fashion in rural Galilee contrasts sharply with the missionary-minded church that we find in the early chapters of Acts. From the beginning the church exercised a missionary function and sought to make disciples out of those who listened to its proclamation. Why this sudden and dramatic change? Surely it is the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, *coupled with the charge the risen Lord gave to his followers to make disciples of all nations*" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 744, italics added).

Jesus' command was grounded in his God-given authority to utter it and to see it carried out. The Father bestowed unsurpassed authority on Jesus. At the cross, his son triumphed over Satan, sin, and death, and because of his victory God honored and "exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the

glory of God the Father" (Php 2:10-11). Moreover, by him God will judge the world (Mt 25:31-32; Ac 17:31).

Regarding the command, "make disciples," Jesus commissioned his disciples to disciple all nations in Matthew 28:19. That's our mission, too, "make disciples," and by implication grow as disciples ourselves. One commentator explains: "The term 'disciples' was the most popular name for the early believers. Being a disciple meant more than being a convert or a church member. Apprentice might be an equivalent term. A disciple attached himself to a teacher, identified with him, learned from him, and lived with him. He learned, not simply by listening, but also by doing. Our Lord called twelve disciples and taught them so that they might be able to teach others (Mark 3:13ff.). A disciple, then, is one who has believed on Jesus Christ and expressed this faith by being baptized. He remains in the fellowship of the believers that he might be taught the truths of the faith (Acts 2:41-47). He is then able to go out and win others and teach them. This was the pattern of the New Testament church (2 Tim. 2:1-2)" (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:107). We are to make disciples of our Lord, not of ourselves.

Regarding the commanded, "my brothers," it seems that more than the eleven were present on the occasion of this resurrection appearance. Jesus told the women that he appeared to on their way back from the empty tomb, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me" (v. 10). His unexpected use of "my brothers" instead of "my disciples" has led some to believe that Jesus appeared to more than the eleven in Galilee. If that was the case, it would explain Matthew's confusing statement in verse 17, "When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted." If only the eleven were present, it's difficult to understand the sense in which any or all of them "doubted." If more than the eleven were present, Matthew's words make better sense, "When they [the eleven] saw him, they [the eleven] worshiped him; but some [other 'brothers' who had not yet seen the risen Lord] doubted or hesitated." In any case, Jesus commissioned more than the eleven to "make disciples," so we can't shirk our responsibility,

claiming that Jesus' command was given to the apostles only. On the other hand, it would be wrong for us to think that Jesus' command was given to us alone, to accomplish all on our own, as individuals. Think of it this way: making disciples is the mission of the church. Every member of the body is to be vitally involved in mission accomplishment, but it's a mission we accomplish together as each one does his or her part.

Missional living is intentional living. It's about harnessing one's passion and unleashing one's giftedness in partnership with Christ to make a difference in the world. It's about "going beyond" into one's church, neighborhood, and world. Here are a few diagnostic questions to ask yourself to determine the extent to which you are living on mission. Do I use my spiritual gifts for the benefit of the body of Christ by serving in ministry? Am I personally committed to helping my church fulfill

God's mission in the world? Do I consider my home, my school, and my workplace as strategic mission fields for me to make God known to others? Have I shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with anyone recently? What global mission or missionaries do I support with my prayers and financial resources? Have I made Bible translation, leadership development, disciple-making among the reached, church multiplication, or global justice possible around the world?

Regarding the promise, "I am with you always," it's a good thing we don't have to do it alone. Not only is the mission our mission, the One who commissioned us is with us always to enable us to carry out his orders. What's more, we have received the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, who enables us to be Christ's witnesses "to the ends of the earth" (Ac 1:8).

The Message of the Passage

God has given Jesus full authority, so go make disciples in obedience to his command confident he is with you.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 16 *then* The Gk. word is translated "but," "now," "then;" often it's omitted in translation. Most English versions translate it "then," indicating a simple transition in verse 16. The NET Bible translates it "so" to indicate the implied result of Jesus' instructions in verse 10. "The disciples, minus Judas, are back in Galilee, at least a week after the resurrection (cf. John 20:26 with 21:1) and quite possibly closer to the end of the forty-day period of his appearances (cf. Acts 1:3-9)" (Craig L. Blomberg, *Acts*, NAC, 430); or "approximately ten days" (Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*, 947).

v. 16 *had told them* Cf., vv. 7, 10.

v. 17 *some doubted* Who are the doubters and how many are there? "(1) many scholars contend that Matthew means that some of the Eleven doubt (taking *hoi de* in a partitive sense) . . . (2) Other commentators take the *hoi de* as a pronoun meaning 'they,' which implies that all of the Eleven doubt. In this view, the verb *distazo* should not be rendered as 'doubted' in the sense of unbelief or disbelief for which other terms are used, but rather more like 'were uncertain.' *Distazo* can indicate uncertainty or hesitancy about a particular course of action . . . (3) But other scholars suggest that *hoi de* points to others not among the eleven disciples. They argue that if 'worship' (*proskyneō*) is intended in its most complete sense, then its separation from 'some' indicates two separate groups. Carson notes that 'doubt about who Jesus is or about the reality of his resurrection does not seem appropriate for true worship.' The most likely identity of these others is the unexpected use of 'brothers' in 28:10, distinct from disciples in 28:7. When Jesus instructed the women disciples to tell his 'brothers' to go to Galilee, where they will see him, this likely indicates the wider group of disciples beyond the Eleven . . . The eleven disciples, who have received at least two or three appearances from the risen Jesus in Jerusalem prior to this appearance (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-28), are prepared to worship him. However, those disciples in Judea and Galilee who have not yet seen the risen Jesus (i.e., 'brothers' in Matt. 28:10) doubt, much like Thomas (John 20:24-29), until Jesus appeared to them bodily" (Wilkins, 948-49). "It may well be that others than the eleven were present, perhaps even the group of more than 500 of whom Paul writes (1 Cor. 15:6)" (Morris, 745).

v. 18 *all authority* Jesus has the "fullest possible authority." The expression "in heaven and on earth" is a *merism*, one example of the figure of speech *synecdoche* in which totality is expressed by contrasting parts (e.g., high and low, young and old, day and night, etc.). Jesus has the final say in all things in heaven and on earth. "He is making clear that the limitations that applied throughout the incarnation no longer apply to him. He has supreme authority throughout the universe" (Morris 745, 46).

v. 18 *has been given* The *passive* voice is used to indicate God's doing. God gave Jesus full authority.

v. 19 *go* "Go...baptize...teach' are participles modifying the imperative verb "make disciples." According to *ExSyn* 645 the first participle (*poreuqentes*, 'Go') fits the typical structural pattern for the attendant circumstance participle (aorist participle preceding aorist main verb, with the mood of the main verb usually imperative or indicative) and thus picks up the mood (imperative in this case) from the main verb (*maqhteusate*, 'make disciples'). This means that semantically the action of 'going' is commanded, just as 'making disciples' is. As for the two participles that follow the main verb (*baptizontes*, 'baptizing'; and *didaskontes*, 'teaching'), these do not fit the normal pattern for attendant circumstance participles, since they are present participles and follow the aorist main verb. However, some interpreters do see them as carrying additional imperative force in context. Others regard them as means, manner, or even result" (The NET Bible, 27^{tn} on Mt 28:19).

v. 19 *make disciples* "The main command of Christ's commission is 'make disciples' (*matheteusate*). Too much and too little have often been made of this observation. Too much is made of it when the disciples' 'going' is overly subordinated, so that Jesus' charge is to proselytize merely where one is . . . Too much is made of it when all attention is centered on the command to 'go,' as in countless appeals for missionary candidates" (Blomberg, 431).

v. 19 *baptizing* "It may be best to see baptizing as Jesus' way of summarizing the evangelistic half of the disciples' ministry. The third participle, teaching (Matt. 28:20), represents the other half of the disciples' ministry-the edification of those who are already believers" (Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, HNTC, 485).

v. 19 *name* "The singular 'name' followed by the threefold reference to 'Father, Son, and Holy Spirit' suggests both unity and plurality in the Godhead. Here is the clearest Trinitarian 'formula' anywhere in the Gospels" (Blomberg, 432).

v. 19 *teaching* ". . . indicates the process by which disciples of Jesus are continually transformed through discipleship and the discipling process. Discipleship is the process by which a disciple (Christian) is transformed, while discipling is the involvement of one disciple helping another to grow in his or her discipleship" (Wilkins, 956).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

A man named Harold Myers has developed an interesting hobby. In 1987, just 3 years before he retired, Harold and his wife, Lois, took a cruise that departed from Puerto Rico. Before the cruise, Harold wrote 3 letters that included his home address. He asked whoever found the letters to reply to him. He even included a dollar to cover the postage. He stuffed each bottle with a cork, sealed it with wax and tossed the bottles into the sea. Shortly after he returned home, he received a reply from France. A lady found the bottle while vacationing on a Caribbean beach. Shortly after, he received another reply from a man who was kayaking near Belize. The bottle had traveled 2,000 miles. Since then he has thrown 15 bottles into the sea and has received 5 replies, one from a fisherman in the Philippines. While this is an interesting way to connect with others and send a message, it's probably not the most efficient. What I love about Harold's story is his intentionality to do it. He prepares a message, carefully seals it in a bottle and packs it in hopes of making a connection with someone in the world. You and I have an even better message. There are people all over the world who need to hear of the hope and life they can have in Jesus. What part are we doing to make it happen? Let's not use the bottle method but be intentional in getting the message out.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Mt 28:16-20

1. What did the disciples do when they saw Jesus?
2. What did Jesus tell them to do?
3. What promise did He make to them?

What Do You Think

We can assume the disciples, who knew Jesus, worshipped Him but some other people doubted. Why do you think they doubted? Do you ever doubt God? What do you do when you do?

What R U Going To Do

Write a message to someone who needs to hear about Jesus. Be creative, like Harold Myers, on how you package it. Leave it secretly where they will find it and pray that they will feel God's love as they open it.

Core Comp

Giving Away My Faith - I tell others about Jesus to help with God's work.

Memory Verse

Matthew 28:19 - *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . ."*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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