



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

This may be the MVP (*most valuable passage*) in the Bible for evangelists! It's clear, it's brief, it's challenging. It has a sharp, clean vision. And this *Great Commission* may have become a bit too familiar to us.

"Go into all the World!" "Make disciples of all nations!" That direction gives the Disciples free rein, and perhaps to *get out of Dodge* when the going gets rough! Methodists hear its echo in John Wesley's "*the world is my parish*." But are we really ready to share with neighbors as well as do foreign service? What of those who don't believe or act or live like we do? Katie Meek has been sharing some of this challenge with us in her blogs.

"Baptize!" (the part about "*in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost*" probably is a somewhat later addition.) But wait: there's no report of Jesus baptizing! That was John's gig! What did it mean to be baptized, to have a symbolic act with water? And didn't Jesus talk more about the Spirit, and following Him? Why is this part of the Disciples' game plan?

"Teach." Here, at last, is something we can grasp! If what Jesus has done is new, we need to find ways to help others understand and appreciate and follow it. Jesus spent a lot of time *teaching the multitudes* so the Disciples had a good model for this order. Still, what is it we are to be taught to obey?

As the church confronts its mission today, these same challenges arise. Are we ready to reach out to *strangers*? What does baptism signify – and where is its power? Are we teaching God's way as Jesus showed us, or just *our own way of doing the faith*? How well have we heard and responded to Jesus' Great Commission?

— Dr. John Clifford, Retired Clergy-in-Residence

A Family Affair

Have you ever received a birthday card in the mail? Or a card that said, "*I love you*" or "*I miss you*"? Would you consider that good news?

Read Matthew 28: 16-20 together. Jesus had been crucified and the disciples were very sad. After three days, he rose from the dead and that was good news! He appeared to his disciples and they worshipped him. Jesus had more exciting news for them: "*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*" Jesus trusted his disciples to continue teaching people about him and God's love. Since we know about Jesus today, thousands of years later, do you think the disciples did a good job? Do you think the job is complete?

Jesus' instruction still applies to us today. Where can you share the story of Jesus? If that sounds like a big job, remember in verse 20, Jesus assured the disciples that he would be with them always. He is still with us today! We don't have to travel to other nations because there are people right in our city, school and neighborhood that do not know about Jesus. Could you invite them to Sunday School, J-Team or Vacation Bible School? Could you send them a card in the mail to let them know that Jesus loves them? Share ideas with your family.

Dear God, thank you for the good news we can read in the Bible. Please help us to feel your presence and give us courage to share the good news with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

— Jennifer Hall, Director of Children's Ministry

Monday: Acts 10 (Peter and Cornelius)

"Go to all the world." We live among many modern sub-cultures as well as many nations, and we tend to associate mainly with "people like us."

- What are some of the "other nations and peoples" in our local communities?
- How do you interact with/avoid them?

Tuesday: Matthew 3:1-16

"Baptize!" The gospels tell of John baptizing in the Jordan, with a call to repent and begin living a new life – with the "washing" in the waters a sign of that commitment. Jesus comes, too, but we understand his purpose was different.

- What does baptism mean for you? Is it a sign of a life-change? Of belonging to a new community?

Wednesday: Matthew 3:13-16

When Jesus was baptized the gospels report that the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove, and with a voice from above) came upon Him. We still invite the Spirit's presence even when we baptize babies.

- How might "receiving the Holy Spirit" change our lives?
- For many today, it implies "speaking in tongues" yet Paul lists many other ways the Spirit acts. How does God lead you through the Holy Spirit to express "the greatest gift, of love?"

Thursday: Matthew 5:1

"Teach!" We often consider the years the Disciples spent with Jesus as a time of apprenticeship. By listening to His teaching and watching His actions, they came to understand God's love, and share it.

- Who are the "real life" models for Christlike living we look to in our own worlds?
- What is it in their lives we seek to imitate?

Friday: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Great teachers are also great learners. And we learn best when we try to teach what we are learning!

- How are you trying to learn more about God and Jesus? (Bible study? Disciple classes?...)
- How are you sharing what you are learning? Are you "going into your world" to share Christ?

Saturday:

A reminder is in order here! We are assured that Jesus is present with us whenever we are engaged in these activities! Thanks be to God!