

Di121 Effective Communication

Lesson Di121-6 Why Communicate? Jesus Commanded It

In most cultures, when someone knows they will die soon, they share special, final words with their family. In ancient times Jacob, who was near death, spoke about the future of his 12 sons (Gen 49). His words were prophetic. Similarly, just before he ascended into heaven, Jesus gave final words for all those who believed in him. These words of Jesus gave a mandate for them to complete before he returned to this world. Try to understand and feel the Lord's passion about this directive as you hear this lesson.

The command of Jesus was for believers to tell his story to others. We should not keep God's great plan to ourselves, because so many still have not heard it. The gospel or "good news" should be told to everyone, everywhere. While on earth Jesus concentrated on winning Jews, but now he focuses on the entire world. He instructed the disciples to begin where they were in Jerusalem and then go on to Judea, Samaria, and the farthest parts of the earth to reach all nations (Acts 1:8). God directed their steps and he will direct ours too.

Matthew records the great mandate of Jesus at the end of his Gospel. First of all Jesus told them that because of his death and resurrection, he now has "all authority in heaven and on earth." No area, people, or culture lies outside the domain of his power and authority. Christ's mandate to us flows from his position as a member of the godhead. "Therefore," he said, or "on the basis of this authority," he was making a command. "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:19-20). Believers are to go on his authority, not their own.

His mandate to us is, "Go." The word "go" means "to depart, to leave, to cross boundaries"—social, racial, and cultural, as well as geographic boundaries. Jesus himself had demonstrated such a ministry. This assignment includes witnessing in your area and also in faraway places. Going is necessary to make disciples. Boundaries must be crossed. Notice that everyone hearing these words was included in this command. **All** believers are told to go!

While going, what are we to do? "Make disciples of all nations." The command has a sense of urgency—do it now! Making a disciple involves going out first, but it means more than just bringing a person to Christ. It includes nurture throughout a person's life. Disciples are people who continue to learn from the Master teacher, Jesus. We are to challenge men and women to surrender to Jesus and to follow and serve him. Such a commitment will cost some their lives.

Our task of making a disciple has two parts: baptizing and teaching. The tense used in these words means that we are to 'keep on' baptizing and teaching. We continue to make disciples by continuing to baptize and to teach.

Jesus said, “Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Water baptism becomes a sign to all their family and friends, that now they follow Jesus. They have left their former life and now live directed by a new Leader, with a new purpose.

The second part of the task is teaching—sharing what you have learned with those you win. What were the disciples to teach? They were to teach converts to obey everything Jesus had commanded them. Teaching results in a spiritual renewal, so that new believers can obey Christ’s instructions. Converts needed more than just head knowledge—dos and don’ts. One evangelistic message is not enough. The actions of the teachers must agree with their words. The messenger is the message. It may take a lifetime of adding precept upon precept and living the message out to make mature disciples.

Christ finishes with a promise, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” To sum this lesson, we see that the commission was given because Jesus now has ALL power and authority. It meant they would go to ALL peoples; make disciples of ALL individuals; baptize ALL in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and teach them ALL to obey ALL that Jesus had commanded. The final good news is that Jesus promised to be with them ALL the time—to the very end of the age. They would not go on this assignment alone, but with the promise of Christ’s presence. The “end of the age” means until Jesus returns to this world. This command of Jesus is called the “Great Commission.”

How do these words affect our communications with others? When Jesus told us to go to the lost he suggested an important principle. We go to the lost because they often do not come to us. In most cases, the lost will not seek out believers, so we go seeking them. This is what Jesus modeled when he came to earth, he looked for the lost—all kinds of people. This commission involves all believers and cannot be changed. It does not depend on a person’s place in society or their natural abilities. Everyone hearing these words is expected to go!

To be effective communicators we need the boldness that comes only from God. We can have that kind of spirit because we don’t go in our own authority. We go with the authority of the Holy Spirit given to us by God.

This story is **important** because it reminds us of the very last words of Jesus to all his followers, both then and now. We all are commanded to share the good news with all nations, baptizing them and teaching them what Jesus said.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that Jesus commanded us to make disciples and gives us his authority and power for the task.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1. What is another name for the command Jesus gave to all believers to make disciples? [Pause.]
A. If you said that the command to make disciples is called the Great Commission, you are correct.
2. From where do we receive the authority to make disciples for Jesus? [Pause.]

A. If you said we receive from Jesus the authority to make disciples, you are correct.

3. What promise did Jesus give to those who obeyed his commission? [Pause.]

A. If you answered that Jesus said, “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age,” you are answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to memorize the story and tell it with passion to someone who has not heard it before. Perhaps you can find an opportunity to share Christ’s Commission in a church or small group. Then ask them this question, “What are you doing to make disciples?” Another similar question, “What is your church doing to obey the Great Commission of Jesus?” Agree together with your fellow Christians to renew your efforts to win people to Christ, baptizing them and teaching them to obey his words.