**The Great Commission—Matthew 28: 16-20**

**(Don McNeill)**

16 But the **eleven disciples** proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated.

17 When they saw Him, they worshiped *Him*; but some were doubtful.

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying,

 "All authority has been given to Me

 in heaven and on earth.

 19 "Go therefore

 and **make disciples**

 of all the nations,

 **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe**

 all that I commanded you;

 and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

**Introduction**

There are many questions about this passage that I do not have enough time to cover. Who was present when Jesus gave this Great Commission? Were other people present besides the eleven disciples? The text specifically mentions only the eleven remaining disciples. “But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee” (v. 16). No one else is mentioned in the passage. Yet, the term “brothers” is used in Matthew at other times to refer to anyone related to Jesus by faith (e.g. Matt. 25: 40; 12: 49-50; 18: 15). It is therefore possible that other believers were present besides the 11 disciples when the Great Commission was given. Another question is: If only the 11 disciples were present on this occasion, why were some still doubtful when all of them, including Thomas, had already seen the risen Lord by this time—a fact made clear in other gospel accounts? It seems strange that any of the eleven disciples would be doubtful at this point in time. One explanation is that the disciples might have been doubtful that this man was the same Jesus who had appeared to them earlier. Scholars disagree about these questions, and they do not need to be solved for our purposes today.

For our purposes this morning, I want to ask the **following questions** and then provide answers for these questions from this text of Scripture as well as other relevant texts.

I. To Whom Does Christ Give the Great Commission?

II. What is the Extent of Christ’s Authority in the Great Commission?

III. How will Jesus Exercise this Unlimited Power and Authority?

 A. Baptizing in the name of the Triune God

 B. Teaching to obey everything Christ taught His disciples

**I. To Whom Does Christ Give the Great Commission?**

As far as we can tell from the immediate context, only the eleven disciples were present when the Great Commission was given. Some scholars believe it is possible that even 500 people were present. I will not argue one way or another, because it does not matter. What if only the 11 disciples were present on this occasion? There were only eleven left since Judas was already dead. Does this mean that Jesus was giving this commission to only 11 people who would also soon be dead? Based upon the model of ministry that Jesus had given His disciples for three years, what should we assume? We should assume that Jesus was providing an example for His disciples to

follow. **Even as He had trained the twelve through personal example and through teaching**, they were to follow His example by doing the same with others. Just as He had trained disciples, they also should train other disciples. This becomes very clear when we examine the mission of the twelve disciples in Matthew 10. On that occasion, Jesus clearly sends them out on their own without Him to do the same kinds of things He had been doing.

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. (Matthew 10:1 NASB)

These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in *the* way of *the* Gentiles, and do not enter *any* city of the Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 "Heal *the* sick, raise *the* dead, cleanse *the* lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. (Matthew 10:5-8 NASB)

It is clear from this passage and many others that Jesus was preparing His disciples to carry on His earthly ministry of teaching and mercy **after He was gone**. But certainly Jesus had more in mind that just these eleven disciples in Matthew 28. The extent of the Great Commission would require the work of many people. They were not told to disciple a few hundred people, or even several thousand people, but the **nations**—something that would require far more human resources than eleven men. We learn this also from His instructions recorded in Acts 1: 8.

…but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the **remotest part of the earth**." (Acts 1:8 NASB)

We learn also in Ephesians that the church of Jesus Christ is **built upon the twelve apostles**—including Paul who became an apostle later, and excluding Judas. Christ left these twelve apostles in charge of His mission to the whole world—to the remotest parts of the earth. Jesus said to Peter,

"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock **I will build My church**; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. (Matthew 16:18 NASB)

In this statement, Christ was not making Peter the pope of the Roman Catholic Church. He was speaking to Peter as first among equals among the other twelve apostles. As Peter and the other apostles went out with the true teaching of the kingdom of God, Christ would build His church upon their witness and their teaching. In Ephesians 1, Paul mentions this very thing. Speaking to the Gentile church in Ephesus, he says,

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 **having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone***, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22 NASB)

In Ephesians 4, Paul makes it very clear that the apostles, among others, were **given to the church** for the equipping of **every believer** for his particular work of ministry.

And He *[Christ]* gave some *as* **apostles**, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, 12 **for the equipping of the saints for the work of service**, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, 16 **from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies,** **according to the proper working of each individual part,** causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16 NASB)

Notice the three phrases, “the whole body”, “every joint”, and “each individual part”. Paul is telling the Ephesian Christians that he and the other apostles, as well as pastors and teachers—for our purposes I will not discuss evangelists and prophets—have been given to the church to equip **every member** of the church for **his or her particular work of service** in the kingdom of God. You will notice that Paul does **not** say, **“for the work of service in the church.”** He only says, “for the work of service”. God’s kingdom is bigger than the walls of the church. The church represents the kingdom of God on earth, but the works we do are not limited to what we do in the church. This is a misunderstanding of many believers, and this is why we do not encourage believers to use their spiritual gifts to advance the kingdom of God. (But to explain this would take another conference.) In 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, Paul teaches that the church is one body consisting of different members.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not *a part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less *a part* of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not *a part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less *a part* of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. (1 Corinthians 12:13-18 NAU)

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:3-8 NAU)

The church consists of many members, like the members of the human body. There are eyes, ears, hands, feet, and so forth; and they are all designed to perform a certain function in the body of Christ just like the members of the physical body are designed to perform certain functions. Furthermore**, all the functions** of the human body are important, not just some of them. Paul says that the eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you”, and the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you.” All the members of the physical body need the other members of the physical body to function properly. Some of these bodily members **are** **seen**—eyes, ears, hands, feet, head.

Other members of the physical body **are not seen**—e.g. the kidneys and liver. But just because they are not seen does not mean they are not important. If your kidneys and liver don’t function properly, you would soon die because your body would not be able to rid itself of waste products and toxins in the blood. Just because you can’t see them, they are no less important to your health, maybe even more important. You can live with only one arm, but you cannot live without kidneys or liver. Likewise, all the members of the spiritual body of Christ, the church, need other members of the body in order to function properly. The spiritual gifts you **see** in the church are people who do **evangelism, preaching, and teaching**. Everyone sees them. But the members of the body of Christ who are not noticed by everyone else are **no less valuable** as members of the body of Christ. What about the little old lady who is praying for everyone else in the church? You don’t see her praying, but she **is** praying; and God is hearing her prayers. She may also be praying for you, and you need her prayers.

**But, you are all asking, what do spiritual gifts have to do with the Great Commission?**

(1)The Great Commission was given to the eleven apostles upon whom Christ built His church. Christ Himself is the chief cornerstone.

(2) Christ gave the church apostles, **pastors and teachers** to **equip each member of the church** for his or her unique work of ministry.

(3) To be able to obey the great commission, the entire church must be strengthened by every member of the church.

(4) **Therefore**, **every Christian** is responsible for the work of the Great Commission.

**But what is the great commission?** I haven’t yet told you what the Great Commission is, and most of you think you know what the Great Commission is. You think that the Great Commission is telling people about Jesus Christ, but that is **not what Jesus says**. Jesus does not say, “Go therefore and tell everyone about me.” That is only **part** of our task as members of the body of Christ; it is only **part** of the task of the great commission. He says, “Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to **obey** *[or observe]* everything I commanded you.”

That is what He said, and that is not the same thing as simply telling people about Jesus. **Evangelizing** is not the same thing as **making disciples**. Evangelizing is one of the **means** of fulfilling the great commission, but it is not the whole task of the great commission. The task of the great commission is to **make disciples of all the nations**. The Christian church in Uganda has done a good job of telling people **about** Jesus Christ. The church in Uganda has also baptized many millions of people. But has the church in Uganda done a good job of **making disciples who obey everything Christ has commanded us to do?**

Thus far, I have answered only one question: **To Whom Does Christ Give the Great Commission?** And I have said that Christ gives the great commission to the original eleven apostles—and years later to the Apostle Paul—and **to the church** which is built upon the apostles, Christ being the chief corner stone. Therefore, Jesus gives the great commission to every believer—to you and to me as members of the church.

**But there are other questions which must be answered:**

(1) What is the extent of Christ’s authority in the great commission? That is, how far does His authority reach?

(2) What does Jesus mean by making disciples?

**II. What is the Extent of Christ’s Authority in the Great Commission?**

Notice that I am not asking by **whose** authority we make disciples. Christ says very clearly, “All authority has been given to **Me**…” It is by **Christ’s** authority that we are given permission and commanded to make disciples. We are permitted to enter any cultural or religious situation—**all the nations**—with the teaching of Jesus Christ because He stands behind His commission. But in order for us to do this, Christ must have **unlimited authority over the whole world.**

But didn’t Christ have authority over the world **before** His crucifixion? The answer, of course, is yes. Everything He did, He did with the authority of His heavenly Father given to Him before the world began. In His earthly ministry, He had authority to heal the sick, cast out demons, to feed 5000 people with a two fish and a five loaves of bread, even to raise the dead. But now things are **different**. He no longer has some of the limitations He had while He ministered on earth.

The emphasis in verse 18 is on the word, **“all”** and the words, **“in heaven and on earth”**. Jesus has **all authority in every place.** He is no longer passing through His earthly experience of **humiliation** in which He is the humble savior, subject to fatigue, sickness, poverty, and death. He is no longer a man of sorrows despised by His own countrymen, slandered by religious leaders, and crucified as a blasphemer. For a brief period of time, thirty-three years, it was necessary for Him to **lay aside His privileges as God** and humble Himself, even to the point of death on the cross, in order to save His people. But the **humiliation of Christ is now past**. He is free to exercise the fullness of His power and authority in reclaiming the heavens and the earth spoiled by Adam’s fall and mankind’s continuing rebellion against God.

But not only was Jesus’ authority restrained in some way by his **humiliation** on earth, but his authority was also restrained by **geographical** limitations. He was a real man who could only be at **one place** on earth at a time. His ministry was limited to certain cities and certain people. He didn’t heal sick people in **Rome**; He didn’t preach the good news in **Africa or China**. It is not as though Jesus now has **more** authority than He had before His resurrection. He was no less God the Son before the resurrection than after the resurrection. The difference is that the authority of Jesus has been **enlarged to encompass the whole universe—in heaven and on earth.** The risen Savior now has no restraints upon His authority and power. He is now pleased to make His authority and power known and recognized throughout the whole world. **Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the whole world must take note and repent.**

"Therefore **having overlooked the times of ignorance**, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, **having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."** (Acts 17:30-31 NASB)

Standing now on this mountain in Galilee before the 11 disciples Jesus is the **risen Savior**, **exalted in His glorified body** no longer subject to human limitations, and victorious over sin and death. And on the basis of His humiliation and His willingness to lay aside His privileges as God, He is now highly exalted at the right hand of God, ruling and reigning over heaven and earth.

8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in **heaven and on earth and under the earth**, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:8-11 NASB)

Jesus reigns over heaven and earth with unlimited power. But this brings up another question:

**III.** **How** **will Jesus Exercise this Unlimited Power and Authority?**

One would think that after Jesus’ resurrection, He would immediately come with visible power and glory, bringing in the kingdom of God on earth, putting an end to Satan, and destroying every enemy of His church. One would think that He would now come in awesome wrath and judgment, and that He would **restore** this fallen world to the way it was before sin ruined it. Even **John the Baptist** believed that this was what Jesus was going to do.

"As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and **fire**. 12 "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and **He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."** (Matthew 3:11-12 NAU)

**But Jesus didn’t do that—**He didn’t gather the wheat and burn the chaff at His first coming. That will take place at His second coming. Instead, He gives **the great commission**, and this commission gives the answer to our question: **How** will Jesus exercise His unlimited power and glory in heaven and on earth **now** at the present time? He will do so **through His church obeying the great commission.**

Now who would have thought that Jesus would do **something so foolish?** Why would He deliver his kingdom over to **eleven frightened, cowardly disciples** who didn’t understand very much of what He taught them, who competed with one another for second and third place in the kingdom, who ran when He was betrayed, the chief of whom denied three times that he even knew Jesus? And why would Jesus deliver His kingdom over to a **murdering Pharisee like the Saul of Tarsus?** Why would Jesus do something so foolish? But then, why would He then deliver His kingdom over **to us**? **But that is precisely what He does.** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.”

**But what does it mean to “go” and what does it mean to “make disciples”?**

**A. What Does it Mean to “Go”?**

The command to go does not mean that you have to leave your country, sometimes your own continent, and live with another people who have very **strange languages and strange cultural practices.** That is not what Jesus means for everyone. It may require this for **some** people; it did for my wife and me. But if it meant **only** this, then the great commission would apply only to missionaries who live in foreign countries. The command is much broader than this because it includes the **whole church**.

**You can’t avoid the great commission** by staying in your own country and culture. You can’t run away from the great commission if you are a believer. So what does it mean to **go**?

**Going** is the opposite of **coming**. Mostly what we hear from preachers is “Come.” “Come to church.” **That is all many preachers want you to do.** Come. Come hear my sermons—and while you are here, put money in the offering. Well, I do not deny that **coming** to church is important and that **giving** is important. People must first **come** to church for worship and training before they **go** and make disciples somewhere else. Jesus is assuming that we understand the necessity not only of coming—coming to hear the Bible being taught—but also the necessity of **going**. And surely we cannot avoid the obvious command to “make disciples of **all the nations**.” The missionary call for some people to take the message of salvation to far-off places is certainly included in the command to **go.** God may call some of you to go to a country in North Africa to win Muslims to Christ. Do not think that is impossible. It is. I never in my whole life—until I was 48, thought that I would come to Africa to teach.

But **all of us** are commanded in Matthew 28 to **go.** So then, where do we go? **Where do we make our disciples?** The answer is: **Everywhere**. Don’t forget Acts 1: 8,

…but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both **in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria**, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8 NASB)

Jesus assumes that some of His disciples would be **going to their own cities and countries**—in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. They would **stay** where they were already, and while they **stayed**, they would also **go** to others in the same location. For a long time most of the 11 disciples remained in Jerusalem, and some of them **never left Jerusalem.**

**So then, where will you go to make disciples?** All of you are constantly going. You will go from this church back to your **home** and **families.** You can make disciples of your children, your wives and husbands, aunts, uncles, mothers and fathers. You will go **back to your businesses** and your places of work and make disciples of your **employees** and even your **employers** and your **fellow workers.**

Obeying Jesus’ command **to go** means that we **make a conscious effort** of making disciples **wherever** we are—at home or at work or chatting with friends on the street.

But some of you saying to yourselves. **“How can I make disciples?** I don’t know the Bible very well, and I don’t know how to share my faith. So how can I be responsible for making disciples? That is something for preachers and missionaries to do, **not ordinary church members**. We **pay** our preacher to do this kind of work. But me? I am a simple farmer, a carpenter, a shop-keeper. But remember that Jesus is giving this command to the 11 apostles and **to the church** which is founded upon the apostles. Jesus gave the great commission **to the whole church**, and to each member of the church—hands, feet, livers, kidneys, and finger nails—not just pastors, teachers, and evangelists. The church is given a variety of gifts, and **all of these gifts** are designed to make disciples.

The responsibility to make disciples belongs to all of us, but there is something you should understand: **all of us do not make disciples in the same way.**

**B. What Does it Really Mean to “Make Disciples”?**

There is a lot of confusion about what it means to make disciples. The usual way we think of making disciples is by **evangelizing** and then teaching our converts **how to evangelize other people—**how to witness.Witnessing is certainly **one** **of the means to the end** of making disciples. But evangelizing is only one means, not the only means, of making disciples. True, people must be exposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They must repent of their sins and believe in Christ as their Savior. It is also good for people **to understand their faith** well enough to be able to share their faith with unbelievers so that they can have a saving encounter with Jesus Christ. All of this is important, but it doesn’t go far enough in understanding **the real meaning of making disciples**.

**How does Jesus describe making disciples?** What does **He** command us to do? Just look at v. 19. “Go therefore and make **converts** who can witness. Go and get people to **make decisions** to follow me. Get them to **raise their hands** and **come forward** in a church service to receive Me as their Savior.” Is that what Jesus said? You would think so, because that is what many preachers are getting people to do, and they are doing this by the thousands in Uganda. I once had 40 people come up to get saved in a small church in Ibanda. Did all these people get saved and become disciples of Jesus Christ? I doubt it very seriously. The church in Uganda is growing by leaps and bounds, but **very few people** are coming into the church as true believers who are **committed to obeying everything Jesus taught**. But what did Jesus really say?

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the **nations**, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching** them to observe *[obey]* **all** that I commanded you

**Four phrases** stand out in this verse about making disciples: **baptizing them, teaching them, to obey all that I commanded you,** and **make disciples of all the nations.**

**1. “Baptizing them”**

I will wait until tomorrow to talk more about baptism, but I will say this for now. For **adults**, baptism is the introduction into the Christian community following a credible profession of faith. According to **Romans 6**, baptism symbolizes **identification with Christ** in His death, burial, and resurrection. As Christ died to sin on our behalf through His atoning sacrifice, we also died to sin as a way of life, as the controlling power in our lives. When Christ was buried, believers were buried with Him. The old man or woman we once were is now dead and buried, never to live again. Moreover, as Christ was raised from the dead, we were raised from the dead with Him to begin a **new resurrected life with Him**, a life in which we are no longer controlled by sin, but controlled by the Holy Spirit. We are a new man or a new woman in Christ Jesus. This is what baptism means.

Baptism also means the same thing for **infant children born into Christian homes**. These children cannot make professions of faith, but their parents can. In obedience to the covenant promise to Abraham, **Christian parents** introduce their children into the new covenant community of the church to be nurtured in the Christian faith not only by them but also by other people in the church. Their children should grow up in an **environment of faith** until they understand what Christ has done for them and consciously profess Him as their Savior. Hopefully they will grow up in Christ not even remembering a single day in their lives when they did not know Christ as their Savior. This is the way it’s supposed to work in the Christian home.

**But although baptism is important, it does not make disciples of Jesus Christ. Baptism is** **only the introduction into discipleship**—for the infant child or the adult. Baptism does not save anyone, and we should never believe that somehow our children are secure in Christ because they have been baptized; and the adult church member should not believe he or she is secure in Christ because he or she has been baptized. The **OT Israelites** made that fatal mistake with **circumcision**. They failed to teach their children to fear the Lord and keep His commandments; and their circumcision became uncircumcision. God judged them. He left them in the wilderness an extra 40 years because of unbelief, and later took them into exile to die in foreign countries—again, for unbelief and idolatry. **Most of the circumcised Israelites in the OT died and went to hell,** and there are many baptized people in Uganda who are going to hell.

Today in Uganda, probably most of your children have been baptized, but many of them will grow up to be ungodly sinners who go to hell. Hell is filled with **circumcised Jews** and **baptized Catholics**, **Pentecostals, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Protestants of all denominations** who never believed the truth or obeyed the truth. Baptism does not make disciples. **Without faith**, baptism does not do anything. It becomes a blessing only to those who repent and believe; it becomes a curse to those who disbelieve.

If baptizing was the most important activity of making disciples, the Apostle Paul would never have made the following statement,

For Christ did not send me to baptize, **but to preach the gospel**, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void. (1 Corinthians 1:17 NASB)

Paul makes a distinction in this verse between baptizing and preaching the gospel. They are two different things. Now listen, every believer **should be baptized** in obedience to the Lord’s command right here in the great commission. But baptism alone does not make disciples. It is the **introduction** to discipleship, **a reminder** of our **union with Christ.**

Baptism, like the Lord’s Supper, is a **visible** sacrament. Visible sacraments **remind** us of something. The Lord’s Supper reminds us that Christ died for our sins, and whenever we eat the bread and drink the wine of the Lord’s Supper, we are reminded to taste and see that the Lord is good. It is a visible symbol of **communion** with Christ. We are reminded to take Jesus into our hearts daily to be fed by Him and to have our thirst satisfied by Him. Likewise in baptism we are reminded that Jesus has cleansed us from the filth of our sins, and that we have died with Him, we have been buried with Him, and have risen with Him to newness of life. But the sacrament does not **produce** the substance of the sacrament. Faith alone in Christ alone will bring about **union** and **communion** with Christ.

**So if baptism is not the means of making disciples, what is?** We now come to the second word I want to emphasize.

**2. “Teaching them”**

According to the clear witness of Scripture throughout the NT, teaching is the primary means of making disciples. **What do we find Jesus doing in the Sermon on the Mount?** Well, it was a sermon, so He must have been **preaching**, right? No. That isn’t what we read in the text.

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 He opened His mouth and *began* to **teach** them…, (Matthew 5:1-2 NASB)

The word used in Matthew’s gospel is “teach”, not “preach”. The Greek word used in Matthew is ***didasko***, to teach. The word for preach is ***kerusso***. The word “preach” does not even occur in the Sermon on the Mount. You will not find it in the three chapters from Matthew 5 through 7. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew says,

When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching *[didache]*,

 29 for He was teaching *[didasko]* them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes. (Matthew 7:28-29 NASB)

**What do we find Jesus doing in the** **synagogues?** Teaching.

Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, **teaching** *[didasko]* **in their synagogues** and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. (Matthew 4:23 NASB)

**What do we find the Apostle Paul doing on his missionary journeys?** Teaching. What does he tell the Ephesian elders when he meets them for the last time in Miletus?

And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and **teaching** *[didasko]***you publicly and from house to house,**21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:18-21 NASB)

**What does Paul tell Timothy about the sacred Scriptures?**

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for **teaching** *[didaskalia]*, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NASB)

**In the great commission, what does Jesus tell us to do to make disciples?** Teach.

Now, I have nothing against ***kerusso*,** **preaching**. I think preaching is a good thing. I hope I am doing a little preaching right now, even though most of you don’t think that I am preaching. **But preaching that does not teach God’s people, preaching that does not make disciples is not worthy of the name “preaching”!**

**It is a lie out of hell** for men to claim they are preaching when they have **nothing to say** about the Holy Scriptures! It is a lie out of hell for men to claim they are preaching **when they are not teaching people** **to obey everything Jesus command them to do**! It’s a lie.

**Call it whatever you want.** Call it shouting and screaming. Call it dancing and hopping. Call it entertainment and amusement. But do not insult our worthy Savior Jesus Christ or the Apostle Paul by calling it “preaching.” **To preach, you must also teach.** And this is the only way you will make disciples.

**But what does it mean to teach?** Is it enough that we just fill people’s heads with knowledge? Make them memorize a hundred verses of Scripture or memorize the books of the Bible backwards? Head knowledge can be a good thing, but it does not go far enough. The answer is found in the text, the **third phrase** I want you to notice: **Obey.**  “Teaching them to **obey** **all that I commanded you.”**

**3. “to obey all that I commanded you”**

Teaching must include the absolute necessity of **obeying** **all the commands of Jesus**. If you haven’t learned to obey, **you haven’t learned anything** about the Christian faith.

Jesus is not interested in producing **intellectual Christians**. He is not interested in producing converts who boast about their knowledge or their credentials, but **fail to live godly lives**. He is not concerned to produce **bible college or seminary graduates** from Bishop Barham in Kabale, Uganda Christian University in Mukono, Westminster Theological College in Kampala (where I once taught) or Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, MS (USA)—where I graduated. **God is not impressed with my seminary degree.** God is not concerned for my intellectual and educational excellence. He is concerned for me to set a good moral example for my wife and students. He wants me to **obey** Him. He is not impressed with pastors and bishops who are interested in their own reputation, credentials, and promotion, but who are not interested people’s souls or whether they are going to heaven or hell. Christ is **only** concerned to make **disciples** who **obey what He has taught them—**people who have surrendered themselves to His Lordship.

**Knowing about** the truth is one thing, but **believing and** **obeying** the truth is another. Knowledge without obedience is false Christianity. Believing and obeying is the **only real Christianity** there is. If you do not **obey** the truth, you do not really **know** the truth.

“If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and **the truth will make you free**.” (John 8:31-32 NASB)

But if you are not free from the **controlling power of sin** in your life, then you are a **slave** to sin—a slave to sexual immorality, or a slave to alcohol, a slave to money, a slave to lying and slander, a slave to theft, a slave to hatred and anger. If you are controlled by sin, then you are **not free**, and you **do not know the truth**. This is not my opinion. You can read it in the Bible. The Apostle Paul says,

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NASB)

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 **idolatry,** sorcery, enmities, strife, **jealousy**, outbursts of **anger**, disputes, **dissensions, factions**, 21 **envying,** drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Did you hear the part about **idolatry, anger, jealousy, dissensions, factions, and envying**? You don’t have to be a drunkard or an adulterer to go to hell. You may just be contentious, argumentative, and continually angry with people.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. (Galatians 5:19-25 NASB)

**So which one are you?** Does the Holy Spirit have control of your life, or does the sinful flesh and the devil have control of your life? I am not asking you if you are perfect and sinless. I’m certainly not perfect. No one is. But how would **other people** describe you? What kind of person are you? If you are **led by the Spirit**, then your life is characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,gentleness, and self-control. You are a **disciple** of Jesus Christ. But if you are controlled by your sinful passions, you are a **disciple of the devil** and you need to repent. Jesus said,

“Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does the will of My Father who is in heaven** *will enter*.” (Matthew 7:21 NASB)

Jesus is not telling His audience that salvation is by works. He is telling them the same thing His brother James tells them, **“Faith without works is dead”** and the **kind of faith** which fails to produce godly living and the fruit of the Spirit will not save you. If your church is not teaching you to obey the commands of Jesus, it is not **making disciples**; it is only making false converts. I believe the church in Africa is very much like the church in the US. It is filled with false Christians who are going to hell, but not disciples who are going to heaven.

**Are you beginning to get the picture** **of what it means to make disciples and how you personally can make disciples?**

You do not have to be trained in a bible college to make disciples. Fathers, just **take your Bible off the shelf,** blow the dust off, open it, and begin to read it. **Then read it to your children**. If you don’t understand what you are reading, pick something else in the Bible that you do understand. May I suggest that you begin in the books of Genesis and John. Take the passage you don’t understand **to your pastor** and ask him to explain it. If he doesn’t understand it, ask him to **find someone else** to explain it to him so he can explain it to you. Then go back home and explain it to your wife and children. **Go to your business** or job and explain it to your employees or your fellow workers.

**But above all, obey what you do understand.** We make disciples by obeying all that Jesus commanded us, and Jesus commanded us to keep every moral command in the Bible. In the Sermon on the Mount, He explained the real meaning of the **Law of Moses,** but He left His apostles to explain other truths which He had taught them. The **whole Bible** is **“all that Jesus commanded us.”**

**Fathers, how do you make disciples of your children?** Do you beat them every day even if they don’t need it? Do you continually threaten them? Do you love them in ways they can see and understand? Or, do you actually push them away from Christ by failing to love them?

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4 NASB)

How do you provoke your children to anger and unbelief? You tell them to do the right thing, but you don’t do the right thing yourself. You live like a **hypocrite**, and they know it.

**How do husbands make disciples of their wives?** By reading the Bible and going to church? Well, it’s good to read the Bible and go to church, but the best way for husbands to make disciples of your wives is by the example—sacrificing your own selfish interests for their benefit.

Husbands, **love your wives**, just as Christ also loved the church and **gave Himself up for her**, 26 so that He might **sanctify** her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 **So husbands** **ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself**; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, (Ephesians 5:25-29 NASB)

Paul says here that wives become disciples **through the self-sacrificial love of their husbands**—husbands who are willing to work hard in providing their wives and children food, clothing and shelter, husbands who are willing to work in the fields while their wives take care of the children rather than playing cards or chatting with the men uptown, husbands who save their money for their children’s school fees rather than alcohol, husbands who are willing to spend time with their children, husbands who are gentle and not abusive.

**How do wives make disciples of their husbands?** By leaving Bible verses all over the house for them to read? By nagging them about going to church? No. The Apostle Peter provides the answer.

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word **by the behavior of their wives**, 2 as they observe your **chaste and respectful behavior**. 3 Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with **the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit**, which is precious in the sight of God. (1 Peter 3:1-4 NASB)

**Employers,** **how do you make disciples of your employees**? By having prayer with them before the work day? That would be a good idea. But better, by treating them with dignity and fairness in your business, and paying them their wages on time, and then making sure they know you are doing this because you yourself are a slave to Christ Jesus. Paul writes slaves and masters in Ephesus and Colossae, but the verses can just as easily be applied to **employers and employees.**

And masters, do the same things to them, and **give up threatening**, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. (Ephesians 6:9 NASB)

Masters, grant to your slaves *[employees]* justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven. (Colossians 4:1 NASB)

The Apostle James warns stingy employers with these words,

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! 4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, *and* **which has been withheld by you**, cries out *against you*; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. (James 5:1-5 NASB)

You Christian employers **could do more than any preacher** by treating your workers with justice, fairness, dignity, generosity, concern for their families, and by showing them appreciation for their labor by paying them on time. You can also turn your employees **against the Christian faith** by treating them like dirt under your feet, the same way many non-Christian employers treat their employees.

But the same goes for you employees. **How can you employees make disciples of your employers**? By working hard **when the boss is not looking**, by giving the boss a hard day’s work for what he pays you and by not stealing from him, by coming to work on time and staying until the work is done, by doing what he tells you to do as long as it does not violate Scripture.

Slaves, *[employees]* be obedient to those who are your masters *[employers]* according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7 With good will render service, **as to the Lord**, and not to men, (Ephesians 6:5-7 NASB)

Slaves, *[employees]* in all things obey those who are your masters *[employers]* on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 **Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,** 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. (Colossians 3:22-24 NASB)

**Children,** **even you can make disciples of your parents.**

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. (Ephesians 6:1-3 NASB)

How would happen if your non-Christian mother and father found out that you were being obedient **because Christ commanded you to obey your parents in the Lord?** Your non-Christian parents might just become Christian parents. But don’t tell them this right away. Let them try to figure out what has happened to you.

**So how do we make disciples of Jesus Christ?**

**This is not what you had in mind about making disciples, is it?** You had visions of preaching to hundreds of people. You had pictures in your mind of teaching someone the Scriptures one on one. And **these things are also included** in making disciples. I hope that my teaching this morning is somehow helping to make disciples in Kanungu, but I can’t do it without you. Notice that Jesus **did not** say, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, teaching them to teach others how to teach.” You don’t have to know how to teach in some **formal way** in order to make disciples. **You make disciples by teaching others by your example to obey Christ**. But how do you do this if you are not obeying Christ yourself? You must set an example of submitting to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in everything you do.

 **I believe this is the reason we don’t have disciples in the church.** This is the reason that most of the people attending church in Uganda—as well as in the US—are only Christians **in name only.** We have not taught people to obey Jesus Christ **in the most basic human relationships in life**—husband and wife, parents and children, and employer and employee—the places where we live our whole lives. The church also has **pastors who have not set an example** **of godly living.** They have not obeyed Christ in all things; consequently, they have **little credibility** in telling others about Jesus Christ. **How can our evangelism be effective** in our communities if Christians and Christian pastors live like everyone else around them? The result of all of this is that you have a **church in crisis** in this country. (We also have a church in crisis in the US.) You think that Uganda would be saved by a better government, but a better government will not solve the problems of Uganda. The Bible says, “Put not your trust in princes.” Only Christ can save Uganda. But the church must obey Christ by making disciples, not false converts.

And this brings me, finally, to the **fourth phrase** I want you to see in the great commission.

**4. “make disciples of all the nations”**

What does Jesus mean by making disciples of **all the** **nations**? We would expect Him to say, “make disciples of every **person**.”

The word for “nation” in v. 19 is the word, ***ethnos*** from which we get the English word, “ethnic”. The word could be translated “people group”. Jesus does not have in mind a political country like Uganda or the US or the DRC. Yet, He does have in mind **large numbers of people from different ethnic groups**, not just individuals. If He wanted to say “person”, he could have used that word. We are commanded here to make disciples of **large numbers of people** **living in** **different cultures throughout the world**. Jesus expected His church to teach large numbers of people within every culture or people group everything He commanded.

How do we make disciples of **large ethnic groups**? One person at a time until there are enough believers in a given location to **make a noticeable difference in the whole society**. God intended the Christian faith to **transform** the lives of individuals, but by transforming individuals, He intended the Christian faith to transform **whole cultures**. In the Lord’s prayer, Jesus said,

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 **'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth** **as it is in heaven**. (Matthew 6:9-10 NASB)

The words, “Your kingdom come” are synonymous to “**Your will be done”. “**Your will be done” does not refer to the **secret** will of God. Everything that happens is the secret will of God until it happens. Traffic accidents will occur today which are God’s will. They are unknown to anyone but God until they happen, and then we say, **“It was God’s will.”** Babies will be born. People will die. Battles will be fought. Everything **good or bad** occurs by the will of God. This does not mean that God **approves** of everything that happens, but that in the secret counsel of His will, He **planned** for it to happen. If He didn’t plan for something to happen; but it happens anyway, then God is not God. He is not sovereign, and He **does not have control** of this universe. If something happens in this world that God did not plan, then He is just like us, **waiting** for something to happen which is outside of His plan or outside of His control. But the Bible teaches that God is not like us. Through the prophet Isaiah, God says,

"Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me, 10 **Declaring the end from the beginning**, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure' (Isaiah 46:9-10 NASB)

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus is not telling us to pray for the **secret** will of God. We don’t have to pray for that. Everything planned by God is going to happen anyway whether we pray for it or not. Babies will get sick with malaria and die, but we should not **pray** for babies to die. For some reason, God allows such things to happen for reasons which we don’t understand.

But Jesus is telling us to pray for God’s **revealed** will found in the Bible—His moral will—to be **obeyed** on earth as it is obeyed in heaven. To pray for God’s **will to be done** is the same thing as praying for His **kingdom to come**. In other words, to pray this way, we are praying for the **completion of God’s rule** and reign on the earth just as He rules **in heaven**. In heaven, all the angels and all believers who have died and gone to heaven are perfectly obedient to His **will.** There is no rebellion in heaven as there is on earth. But one day **on earth**, there will be no rebellion. Only true believers will inherit the earth, and when they do, God’s **revealed** will, His law, **will be obeyed on earth** as it is now obeyed in heaven. But where do we find this revealed, moral will of God to be obeyed? God has already revealed His moral will in His word. In Malachi we read,

He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to **do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?** (Micah 6:8 NASB)

We find this will in the OT, in the Ten Commandments, in the Prophets, in the history books of the OT, in Proverbs and Psalms, in the NT gospels and the epistles, even in the book of Revelation.

But until the day that Christ returns to the earth and completes His rule and reign on earth, **what do we do in the meantime?** We are not supposed to hand the whole world over to the devil and his demons to let him do as he pleases, and we are not supposed to hand the world over to sinful men to do as they please. Instead, we are supposed to be **praying** for the kingdom of God to come to **fulfillment on earth** as it is in heaven. This means that we should pray that men on earth **surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord** over heaven and earth, which means that they must surrender to His revealed will, His law, His moral will for mankind.

But not only must we be **praying** for the kingdom of God on earth, we must also **actively work** toward the goal of the kingdom of God on earth. We must **work** for what we **pray**. The same is true of the phrase, “Give us this day our daily bread.” We pray that God would provide for us, but we also work in our fields planting our seed. In the same way, as we pray for His will to be obeyed on earth as it is obeyed in heaven, we **consciously and actively work on earth so that God’s word will be obeyed.**

We must work for fairness and justice in the market place, in our court system, in government, in our families, every place where we live in this fallen world. This is what it means to pray the Lord’s prayer. How do we do this? **We do this by making disciples**—teaching others **by word and deed** to obey everything Jesus commanded us to do. In other words, we fulfill the great commission. We **teach** the word, but we also **obey** the word. We live out the word of God in our lives. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said,

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16 NASB)

In these two verses, Jesus was teaching us the preserving, seasoning, and illuminating power of our faith. As salt preserves and seasons food, so Christians **preserve society** and **improve society**. Salt is sprinkled upon food to give it a good taste, to bring out the flavor. It is also rubbed into meat to preserve meat from spoiling. Today the gospel has gone out to almost all people groups. Christians are strategically placed in almost every nation **to preserve these nations from the rotting, decaying effects of sin.** The world as we know it is thoroughly rotten, and if it were not for the **presence of true Christians** throughout the world preserving the world from complete decay, Christ would come immediately for judgment.

**The one main quality of salt is that it is** **distinct** from everything else. When we taste food, we

immediately distinguish the taste of salt or the lack of salt. It is this difference that makes salt a good symbol (metaphor) for our Christian presence in society. True Christians are **different from other people**. They act differently in situations which require moral decisions. When they are tempted to lie, they tell the truth. When they are tempted to mistreat someone, they show mercy and grace. When they are tempted to hate, they love. When they are tempted to go their way and not get involved with the problems of others, they inconvenience themselves like the Good Samaritan in Jesus’ parable.

It is this difference that characterized many **Hutus** in Rwanda during the genocide of 1994. While their Hutu kinsmen were killing their Tutsi neighbors and stealing their property, some Hutus were hiding Tutsis in their homes and protecting them from being slaughtered. At the risk of their own lives, they were different. They would not listen to the lies of their Hutu tribesmen while Tutsis were being put to death. Tutsis were not cockroaches that needed to be exterminated. They were people made in the image of God. These courageous Hutus were salt, and they may have been the only people in Rwanda who preserved the nation from the complete judgment of God.

The saltiness of the Christian **comes out of his nature**. Jesus describes this nature in the beatitudes.

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn *[i.e. mourn because of their sinfulness]*, for they shall be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:3-9 NASB)

These are the kinds of people who are the salt of the earth. They are different from other people. **But if a professing Christian is not this kind of person**, if he is not different, and if he does not hunger and thirst for righteousness, if he is not merciful, if he is not a peacemaker, then he has **lost the function of being salt.** But salt that is not salty is worthless. The only function of salt is to provide taste and preservation, but when it doesn’t do that, it is good for nothing. **Many professing Christians are good for nothing within their culture because they are not different from unbelievers.** You cannot see any difference in the way this Christian lives and the way this non-Christian or Muslim lives.

Jesus is not saying that true Christians can **lose their salvation**. He is speaking of **nominal Christians—**Christians in name only**—**who are not reallyChristians. Maybe for a while they behaved differently from the rest of society, and they once resisted the temptation to think and act like the rest of the world, but **in time they proved who they really were**, unbelievers who are no different from everyone else.

But what about you? Do you live in such a way that people know that you are different from most people? Do you hate evil, and do you love good? And how do you define good and evil? **Do you define good and evil by what your culture says, or by what the Bible says?** If you had been a Hutu in Rwanda in 1994, what would **you** have done?

**Jesus says that Christians are the light of the world.** Light has the same characteristic as salt. It is distinctly different from anything else and can be easily detected. It is completely different from darkness, and when the lamp is lit, it **illumines the darkness**. The Bible says that **the world walks in darkness** and that men do their evil deeds in darkness. People murder others in darkness. Prostitutes make their living at night. Men and women commit adultery and fornication under the cover of darkness. Men and women get drunk mainly at night. Thieves break into homes at night. **But Christians are the light of the world** because their righteousness exposes the evil of this world. **Christians have nothing to hide**. They are not ashamed of what they do, because they are living in obedience to Christ Jesus. They illumine the world with the light of God’s word, and they draw the world’s attention to those things which are true and just and beautiful.

But the professing Christian who takes his light and **hides it** rather than illumining the darkness has **lost his function** as a Christian in society. Jesus uses a ridiculous example of someone lighting a lamp and putting it under a basket. Why would anyone do such a foolish thing? The purpose of the light is to illumine the darkness. Jesus is speaking of professing Christians who **will not speak out against evil** **and injustice.** He is also speaking about professing Christians who are walking in the darkness of sin just like the rest of the world. His light has become another shade of darkness. He does not care about the widow, the orphan, or the poor. He cares only about himself.

Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world. (James 1:27 NASB)

**Getting back to our original question: How do Christians make large numbers of disciples** in a given culture, or city, or country? How can you make a real difference here in Kanungu? There must be a **sufficient number of true believers in the church** to influence a real transformation here in Kanungu. A few isolated Christians are not enough to create a Christian culture.

Uganda claims to be 75-85% Christian. Based on what you see in your society, and based on what you see in Kanungu, is that true? Transparency International is an organization which has developed a **“Corruption Perceptions Index”** by a panel of political and economic “experts”. This index ranks 177 countries in the world from the **least** **corrupt** to the **most corrupt** in the public sector or the government. Countries which are more corrupt have a higher number than the least corrupt. Canada, for example, is ranked 9 out of 177 which means that only 8 other countries are perceived as **less** corrupt than Canada. **Somalia** has a rank of 175 and is tied with **Afghanistan** and **North Korea** as one of three most corrupt countries on earth. Denmark and New Zealand are tied for the number one position. If you are interested, the **US has a rank of 19** out of 177. Kenya is 136. Sudan is 174 and South Sudan is 173. DR Congo is 159. Uganda has a rank of 140, which means that **only 37 other countries** out of 177 are **perceived** as being more corrupt than Uganda, and 139 other countries are perceived as less corrupt than Uganda.

Now whether there are only 37 other countries more corrupt than Uganda is a matter of **perception by experts in the field of international politics.** There is no way to scientifically measure corruption in any country. **But does it trouble you** that your country is ranked as one of the 38 most corrupt countries in the world out of 177—especially when Uganda claims to be 85% Christian? **It troubles me that the US** is perceived by the rest of the world as consisting of greedy, sex-crazed people. And there is much truth to this perception. Many people in my country worship money and sex. And the reason so many people in my country worship money and sex is that **the church has failed to make disciples**. We do not have a sufficient number of true Christians in the US who are able to make an adequate difference in the way our culture thinks and acts. It appears that the Christian faith has not significantly changed the **world-view** of the **average** Christian in the US.

But what this say about Uganda? After all, **the US is 19 in the “Corruption Perception Index”** which means that only 18 countries are perceived as less corrupt than we are. **Uganda is 140**. We have some friends in Mbarara who have adopted two Ugandan orphans. When they went through the procedure for adopting these orphans, at every step of the way government officials wanted bribes. They called them “expediting fees”. And if they didn’t get those “expediting fees”, they would put other adopting couples ahead of our friends. Pay your bribe and you could go to the head of the line. Our friends conscientiously refused to pay the bribes. As a consequence, it has taken them many months longer than necessary to get all the paperwork needed to adopt their Ugandan children and get them to the United States. So this **perception index** I am talking about is **not just a perception**; it reflects **the reality of living in this country**. Everyone knows it, and expects it to be this way—but it shouldn’t be this way. When you expect your government officials and your police to demand and accept bribes, something is desperately wrong.

**Well, you say, that’s just the government.** The government is not Uganda. But where do these government workers come from? They come from the same villages you live in. You elected them.

**But forget the government for a few minutes.** What about average citizens? In 2003, researchers from a very prestigious hospital in the US (the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health) did a survey of 5,000 women and 4,000 men living in a certain district of Uganda which I will not identify. “The women and men were asked detailed questions about their experiences and attitudes concerning **domestic violence** and sexual relationships…. Overall, the study found that 30 percent of women had experienced physical threats or abuse from their current partner and 20 percent reported experiencing violence during the year before the survey. Three of five women who reported physical threats or abuse experienced three or more specific acts of violence during the previous year. Nearly 50 percent reported receiving injuries as a result…. The [researchers] note, at the same time, **widespread acceptance** of domestic violence in this setting. Fully **70 percent of men, and 90 percent of women,** viewed beating of the wife or female partner as justifiable [acceptable] in one or more circumstances. In [the view of Johns Hopkins researchers], ‘little progress in reducing levels of domestic violence in settings such as Uganda is likely to be achieved **without significant changes in prevailing individual and community attitudes** toward such violence.’”

What they are saying here is that **you cannot stop wife-beating** unless you change people’s **attitudes** about wife-beating. If 70-90 percent of the population accepts wife-beating under some circumstances, you will not be able to stop it.

**Where do the Christians in Kanungu fit into this report?** Do you believe that wife-beating is acceptable under certain circumstances? **If so, where do you find this in Scripture?** Does Jesus command wife-beating? Does He say that it is acceptable under some circumstances? Does Paul? Does Peter or John? **And if you cannot justify your practice from Scripture, why do you cling to this practice so stubbornly?**

**The same goes for lying**. Do you know what the **national sport** of Uganda is? It is not football. It is lying, especially lying to bazungus. Now listen, **I am not calling any of you liars.** I am simply saying, **your country** is known for lying. **The corruption that plagues your government also plagues your towns and villages.**

What if on my way back to my hotel two 50,000 Ush notes dropped out of my pocket. One of you here noticed it when they dropped out. Answer this question honestly: Would I get my money back? If I bought food in your markets, would I be charged African prices or bazungu prices? You see, **corruption is not just at the top**; it saturates the whole culture in Uganda.

Who’s going to stop it? The government? Do you really think the government is going to stop corruption and lying in Uganda? None of you believe that. No, **you are going to stop it.** The **church** must stop it, or it will not be stopped. It will only get worse. But to stop it, the church **must make many disciples**—people who **know** the truth of the Bible, people who **practice** the truth of the Bible, and people **who teach others** **by word and example** to know and practice the truth of the Bible. It is up to you, the church, to make disciples of large numbers of people in this culture, and if you fail, **no one will be able to succeed.**