

GO OR GIVE
Matthew 28:18-20
By Andy Manning

William Borden could have had it all.

He was born in 1887 to a wealthy family – the Borden family (not to be confused with the Borden Milk Company). William’s father had made his fortune in the silver mines in Colorado, and then moved the family to Chicago. William heir to the financial empire, and everyone assumed that he would continue in his father’s footsteps. After high school his parents gave him an around-the-world trip as a graduation gift, and this trip changed his perspective when he was exposed to the great needs around the world. Gradually he developed a heart for overseas missions – for reaching the unreached people groups around the world. His best friend told him he was an absolute fool to pursue missions when he had such a rich future in America. After high school, Borden went to college at Yale and excelled in academics, and he became known for his evangelism to other students. He spent time working with the poor in New Haven, Connecticut. After college he went on to Princeton Seminary, and while there God spoke to him specifically about going to reach a Muslim people group in Northwestern China. When he told his dad, his dad told him he would be disinherited and never have a place in the family business. William went anyway. After seminary he boarded a ship first to Egypt where he focused on learning Arabic. After a couple of months in Egypt he contracted cerebral meningitis and died in an Egyptian hospital at the age of 25. Newspapers all over America had as their headline, “The Death of the Heir to the Borden Fortune.”

He could have had it all, but he chose to give it all up to be a missionary in a foreign land, and he died before he could even get started.

Here’s the question that I want to explore.

Why did he do it? Why did William Borden give up a fortune to go to be a missionary? Why did he make such a sacrifice?

The answer is that William knew something about Jesus. He knew something about the Bible.

And if you knew what William knew, you would understand why he did what he did. If you knew what William knew, you would say, “Ah. I get it.”

If you knew what William knew, then you might even feel compelled to do what William did.

So what did William Borden know?

William Borden knew the Great Commission.

Turn with me in your Bible to **Matthew 28:18-20 (CSB).**

This passage is famously known as the Great Commission.

Jesus had already died and rose from the grave. He spent forty days encouraging and training His disciples. And now it was time for Jesus to depart; to ascend back to heaven and sit on His throne. But before He leaves, He gives His followers the Great Commission. He gives them their marching orders. This all happened on a mountainside in Galilee, or Northern Israel, where Jesus was raised, and where much of His ministry took place.

18 Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

What is the Great Commission that Jesus gave His followers?

“Go, therefore, and make disciples.”

A **disciple** is a learner, or a follower of Jesus.

So Jesus commanded His followers, about 500 of them, to go and make more followers of Jesus.

This involves **evangelism** – sharing the good news people in a way that they can get in on it if they want to;

and **discipleship** – teaching people to observe or obey all of Christ’s teachings.

This commission, to make disciples, is the mission of every church and every Christian.

Our church words it like this: **We exist to help people far from God (evangelism) become fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ (discipleship).**

If a church does not have this as its central, core mission and purpose and focus, then it is not a New Testament, Biblical church.

And most of us have embraced the Great Commission. Most churches know that the Great Commission is our mission. Most Christians know that they are called to reach their friends for Christ.

But the Great Commission does not stop with making disciples. There’s more. Much more.

Jesus said, “Go and make disciples **of all nations.**”

Jesus hasn’t just called every Christian and every church to make disciples; to reach their friends and neighbors for Christ; Jesus has called us to reach all nations – all the peoples on the earth.

You might call this **the Great Omission**, because many Christians and churches have seemed to overlook this.

Jesus calls all Christians to reach all nations.

This is what William Borden knew.

Why did He give up his family fortune to become a missionary?

Because He knew the Great Commission.

The whole thing.

Borden knew that Jesus calls all Christians to reach all nations. And so he responded to the call. He did his part. He did what he could do.

Let me make this as clear as possible.

Jesus has called you and me, and our church, and the church down the road, to the task of missions – of reaching the unreached people groups around the world. That’s our task.

There are billions of unreached people in Asia, Africa, China, and Europe. Billions who have never even heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Who is supposed to reach them? We are. Jesus has called us to reach them. Jesus calls all Christians to reach all nations.

You might call this **the Missionary Mandate.**

Jesus has not called us to merely reach our neighbors, but to reach the unreached all over the world.

Every Christian, and every Christian church is called to missions.

How passionate is God about reaching the unreached around the world?

About missions? In the book of Acts, the early church did not follow the Missionary Mandate. They focused only on making disciples in Israel, and

primarily in Jerusalem. They weren't going to all nations. So watch what God did. One of the most powerful Christian preachers was Stephen. God allowed Stephen, one of His best servants, to be arrested and stoned to death. He was the first Christian martyr. When Stephen was martyred, a great wave of persecution broke out in Jerusalem against all the Christians. This caused the Christians to flee Jerusalem. And as they did, they spread the gospel. And this is how Christians missions began. At the point the gospel began to spread around the world rapidly, and within just a few decades the gospel has spread throughout the entire Roman world. Think about this.

God was willing to allow persecution against His people in order to shake them out of their comfort zone and push them to take the gospel to the nations.

God is passionate about missions.

He will go to extreme measures to mobilize His people for His mission.

3 Reasons We Should Get Serious About Missions

1. There is something greater than death.

Many Christians find it very easy to get passionate about solving problems like world hunger, and fighting diseases like AIDS and Ebola in Africa.

They find it easy to send money to people who have just been by a natural disaster like a flood, hurricane, or Tsunami.

But they aren't so interested in sending money to support overseas missionaries.

But here's what you need to know. **There is something worse than death.**

There is something worse than people dying of starvation, or dying from Ebola. And it's called hell.

Hell is real. It is a place of torment. It lasts for eternity. And hell is where people without Christ go when they die.

Jesus said in **Matthew 10:28**, “Don’t fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

It is very good to minister to the physical needs of people around the world.

But there is a greater need. A more urgent need. A greater problem. A greater danger. Hell.

If we don’t get the gospel to the unreached people’s around the world, they will die in their sins and spend eternity in hell.

2. The only way to heaven is through Christ, but people can only believe in Jesus if someone preaches to them.

Once again, there are billions of unreached people around the world.

And the only way that they can go to heaven is through Jesus Christ.

Buddhism will not save them. Hinduism will not save them. Islam will not save them. Judaism will not save them. Only Christ can save them.

Jesus said in **John 14:6**, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

For people to be saved they must believe the gospel of Jesus Christ – that Christ died for their sins, rose from the grave, and is coming back again.

But the only way that people can hear the gospel is if someone goes to them. Someone has to take the gospel to the unreached peoples, or they will perish.

Romans 10:13-15 says, “13 For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. 14 How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.”

3. The need is great.

Let’s talk numbers.

There are 7,372,270 people in the world.

4,306, 743,424 are in unreached areas – these are areas where less than 2% of the population are evangelical Christians.

There are 3,261 unengaged, unreached people groups. These are people groups where there is no church planting strategy in their area to reach them.

That means there are a lot of unreached peoples in the world.

But consider this.

Every year, 55.3 million people die.

How many die without Christ? How many die without ever hearing the gospel?
How many people are going to hell each year because they have never heard the gospel?

Jesus calls all Christians to reach all nations.

You are called to reach the nations.

I am called to reach the nations.

Unreached people are your problem. They are my problem. They are our mission.

Our assignment is to reach them.

HOW TO REACH THE NATIONS

You have two options. **Go, or give.**

Some Christians are called to go, to be missionaries.

I'm not referring to going only a two-week trip.

I'm talking about devoting your life to reaching an unreached people group by moving on-site, learning the language and culture, and starting an indigenous church-planting movement.

If you feel called to do that, then let me know. I would love to help you take that journey.

But most of us are not called to go. How do we reach the nations? **We give.** We give to those who go. Someone has to support the missionaries.

This is where the power of **denominations** come into play.

Some people have a negative view of denominations.

Do you know what a denomination is?

A denomination is **a group of churches choosing to work together for the spread of the gospel.**

A denomination is when two or more churches realize that they are better together.

So when a person says they don't like denominations, what they're really saying is that they don't like it when churches work together.

Denominations are not about disunity; they are actually about the opposite.

They are about thousands of churches with a similar doctrine and mission deciding that they can accomplish more for the God's kingdom if they work together.

So we're a part of the **Southern Baptist Convention**, the largest protestant denomination in the country.

Our membership is completely voluntary.

The denomination has absolutely no control over us. Our church is completely autonomous. There's no outside director or pope or bishop or board giving our church orders.

But our church can't do much to reach the nations on our own. We don't even have our own building yet! In fact, most churches in America are small like ours – 75 people or fewer. By themselves, they can't do much.

But if you take thousands of small churches and pool their resources, we can do something big. Huge.

Whiteboard

- SBC – 47,000 churches (15 million members; 5 million in weekly attendance)
- All give to the Cooperative Program (CP)
- The CP funds...
- 5 seminaries
- NAMB – 5,262

- IMB – 3,612

In the **SBC** today there are over **47,000 churches** in the United States. This includes over 15 million people with a weekly worship attendance of over 5 million.

All of these churches send money to the **Cooperative Program**. Right now our church sends \$200 a month. That's not much, but if 47,000 churches are all contributing, working together, that adds up to a lot. Here's what our contributions to the Cooperative Program accomplish: 5 seminaries around the country that train missionaries and church leaders. 5,262 domestic missionaries through NAMB (North American Mission Board). And 3,612 missionaries through IMB (International Mission Board).

So every month a part of your tithe funds the Missionary Mandate; it goes to support missionaries in the United States and overseas.

THE MISSIONARY STRATEGY

Let me tell you about what these overseas missionaries do – the strategy of the IMB.

They move to an unreached people group. They learn the language and the culture. They lead someone to Christ. And they help that person to start an indigenous church to reach that people group.

Many of these overseas missionaries are serving in places that are hostile to Christians; in places where Christian mission work is illegal; and so they aren't even able to tell you where they are serving for their own safety. But they are putting their lives in danger every day for the gospel. And someone has to fund them.

This is why as part of our annual Christmas Offering we are trying to raise \$1,000 for the **Lottie Moon Christmas Offering**.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is a special annual offering to raise money specifically for our foreign missionaries.

100% of the money goes to support missionaries. It helps to pay for their salary, and their mission work.

So this is how you can give to the Missionary Mandate.

First, you can tithe. A portion of your tithe goes to support the Missionary Mandate every month.

Second, you can donate to the Christmas Offering.

Or **third, you can donate directly to the International Mission Board (IMB.org).**

Conclusion

Jesus calls all Christians to reach all nations. Reaching the unreached is your job. It's my job.

Years later **William Borden's bible** was discovered and in the back were written three phrases, dated at three significant milestones in his life.

When his high school friend told him he was a fool for pursuing missions, he wrote the words "**No reserves.**"

When his father said he was going to disinherit him, William wrote, "**No retreat.**"

As he laid dying in the hospital, he wrote one final phrase, "**No regrets.**"

There's a lot of things that you can do with your money. But one investment you'll never regret is giving your money to missions – to reach unreached peoples for Christ.