

GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT THE GREAT COMMISSION

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Great Charge

The enormous magnitude of the charge of the resurrected Lord to preach the gospel to the whole world must be realized by every member of the church if serious strides are to be made toward its accomplishment. The world population is above six and a half billion people. Consider how large a task world evangelism is by thinking about the size of the number of people who need to hear the gospel. If one preacher could preach to 1,000 people a day and each new day preach to a different 1,000 people, it would take him 2,739 years to preach to one billion people. Obviously, the size of the task is too great for one man. The opportunities afforded through radio, television, and the printed page make possible blanketing the world with the gospel of Christ.

Grave Consequences

The weighty responsibility is heightened by the consequences imposed upon the church and those outside of Christ should the great commission be relegated to the realm of the impossible. Those who “know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” not may or might but “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (II Thess. 1:8-9). The great commission is not optional.

Great Challenge

The great challenge of evangelism is equaled by the great consolation of God’s word that he will supply every need (Phil. 4:19). Members of the church must be reminded that “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain” (II Cor. 6:1). And, “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31).

Grave Choices

In order to accomplish God’s purposes, grave choices face the people of God when it comes to the expenditure of funds from the church treasury. It seems that some church members are content to give of their means provided the lion’s share of those funds are spent on the personal interests of the members. When millions of

dollars have been spent on recreational facilities and salaries for activities directors, then the salvation of the lost has been neglected and the means to reach them has been squandered.

Great Calling

Perhaps the greatest privilege bestowed on mankind is stated in I John 3:1, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” “All spiritual blessings” attend those who are “in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). And, just as God has “called you out of darkness into his marvelous light,” God’s children must cherish every opportunity to advance the gospel of Christ. On one occasion Paul said, “Ye see your calling, brethren...” (I Cor. 1:26). Do we see our responsibility to the lost?

Grave Commitment

The apostle Paul in Philippians 3:7-8 detailed the appropriate commitment necessary to the task of proclaiming the gospel to the whole world, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” Surely, this weighty commitment on his part suggests the reason for his seeming tireless labors and supreme sacrifice (II Tim. 4:6-8). When his level of commitment is regained by those in Christ today, a greater commitment of time, resources, and energy for the great commission will be realized.

Great Conviction

The large scale involvement of every member of the body of Christ is essential to the spreading of the gospel, and the teaching in the classroom, from the pulpit, and from house to house must express this great conviction. The ASV says faith is “a conviction” of unseen things (Heb. 11:1). James said, “Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone” (Jas. 2:17). The strengthening of the faith of the members of the body of Christ by the preaching and teaching of the Bible is basic to building a great conviction concerning duty to the lost among the congregation and throughout the entire brotherhood.

Grave Candor

As Paul was discussing the glorious privilege of being one of the “able ministers of the New Testament,” he called attention to the grave candor which attends the responsibility. He said, “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (II Cor. 3:12). Today, so much effort is expended on packaging the product (the gospel) that the proclamation suffers. No need exists to reinvent the wheel; it simply must be used. Yet, great amounts of time and talent are wasted when the Master has already mandated the message; all man must do is muster the courage to preach it and teach it to others.

Great Cause

The salvation of the lost is a matter of such importance that the Son of God left heaven to live as a human being for the purpose of fulfilling all the Old Testament taught concerning him so that he could be the perfect sin offering on Calvary’s cross to redeem sinful mankind (cf. Phil. 2:5-11). The great cause that motivated him is conveyed to his disciples through the great commission. He said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

Grave Climate

A grave climate exists which must be overcome if the great commission is to be carried out. Contemporary citizens of the kingdom have been schooled to insist on their “felt needs” being met before they will even consider the Master’s charge to preach the gospel. An unconverted membership must be re-introduced to the mission of the church from the Bible. For, only then does the promise of Jesus ring true when he said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”