

Responding to the Great Commission by Franklin Epeme Delivered 4/118/2021

May the Lord bless the reading, the hearing and the interpretation of His word this morning.

Good morning church, our sermon for today is entitled “Responding to the great Commission.

Commission could literally mean; the act of committing or entrusting a person or group with supervisory power or authority.

The Gospel of Matthew does not specifically use the phrase “great commission” anywhere. This phrase does not appear until late in Christian history. Some scholars argue it was first coined by Baron Justinian Von Welz, a 17th century Lutheran nobleman. According to him all Christians were required to spread the faith not just Jesus’ closest disciples.

According to studies, not many Christians are familiar with the phrase “great Commission” and about 25% of those who are familiar with it understand its meaning. Some Christians limit it to missionary works done by churches but the tenet in Christian theology emphasizes on ministry, missionary work, evangelism, and baptism. Thus, the great commission could be interpreted to mean spreading the Christian message (the Good News/ The Gospel) and converting others to Christianity.

Brethren, the historical background of our focal scripture this morning was not conducive to the disciples. Many were still to understand what was going on as evident in (Mtt 28:17) when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. Christ who died before them on Good Friday to the dismay of all had risen from the death. All of Jesus’ followers were being persecuted. The Holy Spirit had not descended upon them yet. Judas Iscariot had died by hanging. Too much to swallow one could say. Instead of instructing them to take a chill pill for a while by maybe going underground Jesus is commissioning them to an above the normal, above average, gigantic mission -therefore 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 the only guarantee is word of mouth,” and surely I will be with

you always, to the very end of age” and the promise of the sending of the Holy spirit (Jn 14:26 and Jn 15:26).

Many of us today would have asked for a written document and why not the services of an attorney, for this was a very dangerous mission. There is no record in the Bible that any of these disciples objected. These true men of God acted in faith and with the help of the Holy spirit, they are the reason we are Christians today. Churches sprung everywhere, souls were won for Christ until some schools of thoughts are of the opinion that the great commission was only meant for the eleven disciples especially as the number is recorded in (Mtt: 28:16) and that they already fulfilled it.

However, this reasoning might have been plausible if the Holy Bible was a history textbook and not the living word of Christ. Brethren at this point, if there is any work you were doing for God and you developed cold feet, kindly remember the guarantees Christ gave us and continue.

Dear Christians, Christianity is an ongoing concern, and the Bible is the living word of Christ. As today's Christians we must be concerned with the great commission. Christ is still calling on us to go out there and win souls for Him. In the same way, I tell you, **there is rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Lk 15:10).

It is true that the church is still very much persecuted. In some parts of the world Christians are killed because of their faith. The pandemic too is discouraging gathering/fellowship. There is freedom of worship, but one is not free to proclaim their faith in schools and workplaces as well as many others social settings. Missionaries are being killed in other areas. Some religious leaders are capitalizing on prosperity teachings instead of salvation which is in line with the great commission etc.

Fellow Christians we practice a religion that has not a water break because the devil too never stops. For our struggle is **not against flesh and blood**, but **against** the rulers, **against** the authorities, **against** the powers of this dark world **and against** the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12). Each soul we fail to win as Christians is won by the devil.

Dear Christians if we must continue to win like the 11 disciples did then we must listen to what apostle Paul is teaching in the 1st scripture.

- 1) Spirituality is key to Christianity. To most of us, Christianity is coming to church on Sunday. We have no relationship with Christ, no time to study the Bible or pray. We only come to church so the pastor will not have to call to say you have been missing. If you are this type of a Christian, then responding to the great commission will be difficult as you are like a salesperson trying to sell a product they do not know. The Good News here is Christianity is a religion of chances and you can still renew your relationship with God today and start responding to the great commission.

God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." (John 4:24). When you have the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, you literally stand out. You tend to attract people as they see Christ in you and when they come by you the first question they ask mostly is, what your secret? Brethren this is the best strategy to bring Christ in "restricted" areas.

- 2) Partner with other Christians to win souls for Christ instead of fighting against each other, there is power in unity. Today we see men and women of God fighting against each other on social media and even inside the church instead of coming together to organize crusades to respond to the great commission. 1 Corinthians 13 :1-13 emphasized the power of love.
- 3) Christianity should not be like a burden to a Christian. Serve God with Joy, keep a bright face and be like that city built on the hill that cannot be hidden. People tend to attend to joyful events than sorrowful events.
- 4) Master the Word of God and do not be judgmental for we were saved by grace not by our own might (Ephesians 2:5). You do not want to condemn a man before preaching to him. Instead preach

to him and when he believes the Grace of God will surely do the rest.

5) Always follow up with the new converts if possible.

Brethren, Jesus has sent us on a mission and the devil too has his agents on that same mission to work against us. There is no midway Christian so if you consider yourself a Christian-and I'm sure you're, it is not late to join the rest of the disciples and start responding to the commission.

Amen!