

## *United In Mission*

### **Matthew 28:18-20**

#### **Intro**

There's division in our society almost everywhere you look.

- During the 2016 election, 16% of respondents stopped talking to a friend or family member because of politics
- Cultural issues are pushing people apart
- Online speech is becoming increasingly vitriolic
  - It seems like you find outrage everywhere you look
    - It just takes the click of one button to communicate to everyone you know how upset you are
  - Name-calling and insults are everywhere
- Not only are the sides becoming more polarized, they see each other as an existential threat to the country, democracy, and our way of life

The church should be different.

- It's God's chosen instrument to bring Him glory
- It's God's chosen instrument to further His kingdom
- It's God's chosen instrument to give people hope through changed lives and eternities

But often, it's not.

- Talking about disunity in churches, Russell Moore (the public theologian at *Christianity Today*) said, "***I don't know of a single church that's not affected by this.***"
- Many churches are hindered in their mission by disunity

How can the church hope to find unity?

- If we have different politics
- If we have different ideologies

Only through listening to a voice that transcends all of us. What does Jesus have to say about unity? What does Jesus have to say about two different groups coming together?

- That's ultimately what God does—reconciles
  - Sinners to Himself
  - Sinners to sinners
- We have to listen to that third voice—Jesus', not yours or mine—to be able to find unity.

This week, we'll see how the mission that Jesus gives to His church can also give unity to His church.

We'll see this in two passages. In these, Jesus describes His church and makes two incredible promises to His church.

## 1. I Will—Matthew 16:13-20

- Jesus promises to build His church
  - Whenever we think about the church, whether it's this church or the Church around the world, we have to remember that it's Jesus' church
    - He gets *super* possessive of the church
      - He doesn't say "the church"
      - He doesn't say "a church"
      - He doesn't say "your church"
      - He says "*my church*"
    - Which means we have to pay attention to
      - What He says we should be
      - What He says we should do
      - What He says we should hope for
      - What He says we should focus on
    - We can't think this is about us
      - What we like
      - What makes us feel comfortable
      - A place for us to hang out with people who think like us
    - Because it's Jesus' idea
      - He created it
      - He redeemed it
      - He empowers it
- Jesus describes how His church will be built
  - In the midst of confusion
    - The confusion in culture we see today is nothing new
    - People were confused about who Jesus was
      - The answers to the question "Who do people say I am" all underestimated Jesus
        - They give some respect and honor
        - They fall short of who He actually is
      - Some answers didn't even make sense
        - *You're John the Baptist*
          - Jesus and John were in the same room together...
    - Jesus and His disciples had traveled to Caesarea Philippi
      - They had been rejected by the Jewish religious and political leaders
      - Those leaders had wanted to kill Jesus for a while
        - *Seen in Matthew 12*
      - It looked like the mission was failing
        - How could Jesus be the Messiah if no one liked Him?
        - How could Jesus bring liberty if they had to hide?
- In the midst of confusion, Peter declares the truth
  - The church is built on the statement of who Jesus is
    - The Christ
      - The One Israel had been waiting for

- The Son of the Living God
    - The One who cares about His people
    - The One who is reconciling sinners to Himself and sinners to sinners
    - The One who sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world
- What about the gates?
  - They can't resist
  - The picture isn't the church huddling while Satan attacks it
    - The picture is the church moving forward, expanding the Kingdom

What does that look like? How does the church move forward?

In order to understand this, we're going to look at a few of Jesus' final words recorded in Matthew.

## Matthew 28:18-20

### 2. The Mission

- The mission of the church is to make disciples
  - It would be great if we could all grumble "Amen," close in prayer, and beat the Presbyterians to lunch
  - The problem is there a lot of misunderstanding about what Jesus meant by "make disciples"
    - Just like misunderstanding what Jesus meant when He said, "The gates of hell will not prevail against it"
    - Nothing good comes from these misunderstandings
      - Churches divide
      - Churches close
      - Churches lose their impact
- A disciple is a follower of Jesus
  - How does someone become a Jesus follower?
    - They come to Him—"Baptizing them"
    - They learn about Him—"Teaching them"
    - They look like Him—"To obey everything I've commanded you"
  - A disciple is someone who's committed their life to following Jesus
    - That's how **Acts 6:7** uses the word
    - That's what Jesus calls us to do
      - **Mark 8:34**
      - **John 12:26**
      - **Matthew 19:21**

### 3. You're a Part of this Mission

- Notice the "all" language—it's shows that this call is universal for believers
  - All authority
    - Just as He was sent by the Father on a mission, He's sending you
  - All nations

- Observe all
- With you always, to the end of the age
  - The age is still going on, but the 11 disciples aren't around anymore
  - The mission is given to you!
- This has to be your focus as a disciple yourself
  - There's an important commentary on the disciples when they came to see Jesus on the mountain
  - **Matthew 28:16-17**
    - They all worshipped; some doubted
    - These are the 11 disciples
      - Judas has betrayed Jesus and killed himself
      - Some people try to include others in this group so that none of the 11 doubted, but there's no indication there's anyone but Jesus' closest friends and followers here
    - How could they doubt?
      - They had seen the risen Jesus
        - In a closed room
        - Jesus had invited Thomas to touch His wounds
        - Jesus had cooked them breakfast!
      - They were looking at the risen Jesus right now!
    - The word used here doesn't imply unbelief, but hesitation
      - It literally means, "two stances"
      - They were caught between standing before the risen God of the universe and their own plans and ideas
        - Which would they choose?
        - Their own ideas would separate them
          - Jesus' mission and plans would unite them

## Conclusion

How can you be a part of the mission that brings unity? How can you be a part of making disciples?

- Go
  - This only command in the Great Commission is to make disciples
  - It isn't necessarily a command to leave where you are and go somewhere else
    - One commentator said, "Since you are going anyway..."
  - You are always going
    - Are you making disciples?
      - When's the last time you had a spiritual conversation?
        - Not about politics or ideology, but about Jesus
      - When's the last time you led someone to Jesus
        - When's the last time you even prayed for someone specifically to come to Him?
- Give
  - You can support missionaries around the world who are making disciples
  - But...don't outsource your mission!

- It's easy to think that if you give some cash, you're fulfilling the Great Commission
  - You need to be active
    - Remember all, all, all, always
- Get after it!
  - Don't wait
  - Don't sit still
  - Don't just pass time

There are some gates that need storming. As we do that together, differences become smaller.