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Arbor Christian Fellowship
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30 Day Challenge, Week 3

TEXT:
Matthew 28:18-20

TITLE:
Sowing Kingdom Seeds:
Utilizing Kingdom Power

MOS:
To help us realize all things are under God's power and authority. What God has called us to do, He will accomplish by His own power.

Matthew 28:18-20

Sermon: So far, in our 30 Day Challenge to Sow Kingdom Seeds we have talked about **Our Divine Partnership** with God in working toward a spiritual harvest. This we called the **What** of sowing kingdom seeds. Our job is simply to spread the seed of the gospel. Last week we talked about how **Our Motivation** for sowing kingdom seeds is to be **Love**. Jesus modeled this in the love which He had for the Father and then also for us as lost and helpless humans. This we referred to as the **Why** of sowing kingdom seeds. And now today, I want us to turn our attention to the **How** of sowing Kingdom seeds, and that is reliance upon God's power.

The passage we are looking at for today is so familiar we may think we know everything it has to say. And in fact, that may very well be true. There may be nothing new we will glean in a message from the Great Commission; but then again, we may.

When we think about the Great Commission, it not just about knowing what to do, it is also about doing. I mean, all the knowledge in the world does not automatically lead a person to obedience. After all, we can understand what to do and still not do it. Our text for today is a reminder of why we are here as Christians, and collectively; what the church is supposed to focus on. Think about this for a moment. The church has held up the Great Commission as the marching orders for the church as a whole. Jesus, as He was about to return to heaven, offered these final words of instruction to His disciples; the very men who were to carry on His work here on earth. Now, I want you to look with me at what Jesus said and what He did not say in these words. His final instruction was not for the church to fellowship. Now fellowship is important to the life of the church, but it is not how the church is to be defined. The Lord's final instructions said nothing about the church serving one another. Once again, I am not saying our

service to one another is unimportant. But the church's purpose on earth was not defined by our Lord as service to one another. However, when we look at these words what we come to discover is that the primary work of the church is defined by the instruction for us to make disciples. This instruction about making disciples was essentially two-fold: 1) seeing people come to Christ, and 2) seeing people grow in their faith. These two important and inseparable pieces make up Jesus' purposeful command for why we are to **go into all the world; that is, to make disciples.**

But with all that said, there is still a piece missing in these instructions to **“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”** For if we stopped simply with the command to “Go,” we might be tempted to make disciples in our own power. This leads to manipulation, to compromise, and to self-exaltation. In fact, what we learned from the sower is we cannot make seeds grow, that's God's job. And this is exactly what we are looking at today; the essential element of God's power for carrying out the Great Commission.

Now, I don't know how this makes you feel as you hear it, but for me there is great relief. You see, we live in a world which demands results. Most of our jobs are evaluated by what we produce and how well we produce it. Most people in the work place live with the constant pressure to perform; to produce more, to produce faster. And it doesn't really matter how hard or how well you have worked in the past; if you are not producing now, you may find yourself looking for other employment. But it is not that way with the work of the Great Commission. If there is one thing we have learned about Sowing Kingdom Seeds I hope it is this; our job is to be faithful, God's job is to produce. We should find liberation in the understanding that faithfulness is about spreading the gospel, whether that be handing a tract or verbally sharing the plan of

salvation; it is not about producing converts. The person who never sees another pray a prayer of salvation is not a failure if he or she has spread the seed.

But there is still another aspect of God's power which we see at play here in our text, and that is the power of God at work in the believer's life. Folks, all of us have confessed that evangelism is an intimidating thing. But God wants us to trust in Him when we are afraid. In fact, fear is not something we should shrink back from, for the person who is scared is the person who is praying. However, most of our fears are unfounded, because we do not see them as God does.

A couple of weeks ago I heard this illustration of how God's perspective of things is much different than ours. God sees things as they are, and we often see things as the enemy wants us to see them. We see things as a finished movie. Have you ever watched a movie and seen a boat out on the ocean being thrown about by a storm? Then the camera pans in on the people on the boat and you see them being tossed around; completely at the mercy of the tempest which is assailing the vessel. Everything looks bleak, the ship about to go down, the passengers about to be thrown into the icy waters and you are drawn into the drama. But what are you really watching? If the camera were to pan back from the ocean scene and the ship being tossed by the waves, you would see a toy boat in a bathtub with a fan blowing across the water. If the camera were to pan back from the passengers about to meet their doom, you would see people on a moving set in a sound stage just minutes from downtown Los Angeles. **(Use the Jaws set at Universal Studios)**. This is how God sees those things which cause us fear, for God is greater than anything we may face. And this is what Jesus wanted His disciples to understand.

Let's look at how Jesus revealed the power of God for accomplishing the Great

Commission before He was taken up into heaven. *Jesus' Promise of Power*

1. **I have all authority, v. 18.** When Jesus told the eleven standing with Him on the mountain, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**” He was making one of the greatest Christological statements in the Bible. You see, Jesus was establishing that the New Covenant would operate with the same power and authority of the Old Covenant. God’s power is complete and unlimited. In fact, I want you to look with me at **Daniel 7:13-14...READ.**

It was in Daniel’s vision that the power of God was existent in this One he described as “**a Son of Man.**” A title which Jesus used to refer to Himself in the gospels. But the key here is understanding that the power of God resides in the Son of Man, and this power was complete and never ending.

Paul went on to describe this same power and authority given to Jesus because He willingly surrendered Himself to the Father’s purpose and plan. Look with me at **Philippians 2:9-11** and listen to the description of Christ’s authority over all things...**READ.**

Why is this important? Why is it necessary to establish this link between the authority and power of Jesus and the authority and power of God from the Old Testament? 1) So the link could once again be made to Jesus’ divine nature. Jesus was not becoming God, He already was God in the flesh. 2) Because those who were standing with Him knew there was nothing God could not do, as He proved over and over again in the Old Testament. The acute awareness of God’s miracles **at the flood**, in Egypt, during **the desert wandering**, at **the Red Sea**, at **the Jordan River**, in **the lion’s den**, with Elijah **at Mount Carmel**, etc...were all proof of God’s authority. These evidences of God’s power proved that God owned control over the elements,

over nature, and over each and every situation a human could imagine. This same power now rested in Jesus, the one who was giving this commission.

If a co-worker comes to you on the job and says to you, “Hey, you can go home and take the rest of the day off.” What would your response be? Your first thought would most likely be expressed in a statement like, “Do you have the authority to give me the rest of the day off?” It is an entirely different response than if your boss came to you and said, “Hey, you’ve done a great job, take the rest of the day off.” At that point there is no doubt in your mind as to whether or not this is real, and you run out of there without giving your boss a chance to change his or her mind. That is what authority does, it gives confidence for actions!

2. I am with you always, v. 20b. Not only did Jesus say He had all authority, but at the end of this passage He told us His authority was going with us; “**...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age**” v. 20b. This was to bring us boldness for the task. Not only did Jesus have the authority, but Jesus was going to be right by our side each and every step of the way. This tied into the truth which Paul confirmed about the way in which God equips and empowers us to accomplish His purposes. God never asks us to accomplish His purposes in our strength, but only by relying on Him. Turn with me to **Galatians 3:1-3...READ**. What God has called us to do in the Spirit, He will accomplish by the Spirit’s work through us.

Why did Jesus offer this bookend teaching on His authority and His presence with us always? So we would be bold to do what He was asking us to do; and that is to sow the seeds of the kingdom. The making of disciples is the what we are to do, the very same thing we have been talking about in terms of sowing kingdom seeds. But the power and authority of Christ for the growing of the seeds planted, and the deliverance of power to the believer, offers us the how

this is accomplished: God does sit through us.

Look with me at the promises of God's power in **Romans 8:31...READ**. What God calls us to do, is what God has equipped us to do in His power. Isn't it illogical to allow fear to stop us? Let us keep praying for God to reveal those around us who need to know Christ. Let us keep praying for the opportunity which God has provided for us to place our hands into the seed bag and spread the seed. And let us keep praying that God will give us the courage to see things as He sees them, so we will be strong and courageous for His glory. Once again we see that God has given us all we need to do His work, the only question is; "Will we?"

Bow Heads