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# Sunday School Lesson



TOPIC:

## “Jesus Sends His Followers”

**Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8**

**VERSE DISCOVERY: Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8 (KJV, Public Domain)**

### Prepare

- The background of this story is Jesus rose. After completing everything the Father's will had for His life and death, Jesus got up out of the grave as He said He would. He was resurrected, and before He ascends to His Father in heaven, there are others that have a mission in the will of God also. There are those He called and redeemed that now have a course of their own in this world to complete. That course involves souls and evangelizing to those souls about the Kingdom of God, about the gospel of Jesus Christ, and about the turn they need to make in their own lives to be saved.

This mission is possible. But it can't happen unless those who have been saved already are willing to go out and reach for others who may be drowning in a world of sin. The command from Jesus instructs us to go. Thus, Jesus sends all His followers.

- To illustrate everyone taking their place in the grand scheme of Jesus' plan for us to reach others, use dominos as an object lesson. As each of the dominos fall into place, they urge the next one to move and to fall in its place, until the bigger picture is formed. This is similar to the impact we can have on others when we reach out to them with the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we witness, we are touching a life for Christ. It is our hope and prayer, that that life will turn to Him, and touch another, then another, and so on. Everyone's part in Christ's Great Commission is necessary that we might be able to reach as many people as we can.

### Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 5-12

A previously published devotional titled, *The Greater Outside Work*, which I wrote some time ago, really exemplifies what our lesson is trying to get across. It's not what we are building for ourselves that's going to make the ultimate difference. It's how we are building for Him and His kingdom that will do the most good.

Using Proverbs 24:27 as a base verse, I wrote:

*“Building lives. Building empires and organizations. Building legacies and building personal ministries have all seem to take precedence over the greater work; the outside*



*work. So much is the focus on building for self, that building for Him has begun to fade in the background.*

*The prophets and disciples/apostles of old were outside builders. Their homes were not their focus and their personal lives and desires were not what they strained for day in and day out. To reach peoples, to add multitudes to God's kingdom, to share God's message to the world was the greater outside work they allowed themselves to be spent for.*

*Even Jesus, at the young age of 12 declared to His earthly parents, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). He was found where the work of the heavenly Father was going on, and not where the earthly work was.*

*How much of our focus on the earthly has taken over the heavenly? Proverbs 24:27 says, "Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house."*

*We must put our work in proper order and the greater must demand more of our care. The farmer prepares the ground rightly and plans accordingly the fields before he focuses on his house. And, while he is building his own house he will gain the benefits of the harvest the fields are producing. Likewise, how much more will we be built on a firm foundation if we prioritize God's work over our own "building projects;" making productive the things for the kingdom of God and working His fields?*

*Jesus taught, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you," (Matthew 6:33). Be about the Father's business and your house will be built." (©WordForLifeSays.com/The Greater Outside Work).*

May we learn to fervently build for Him and focus more on His work than our own.

## Activities

- **Blank Journal Pages** are great for brining focus into what area of the lesson means the most to you and your class. There is one sheet for adults and one for kids.
- In the **Draw the Scene** section, students can write or draw three different ways they can reach others for Christ.
- Younger students can put together the **Earth Craft** for Matthew 28:19. Use this printable as a coloring sheet or print it on card stock and use with a craft stick as a fun activity. Another idea is to color it and cut into many pieces to use as a puzzle that can reassembled over and over again.



- Alternate activity sheets such as **Word Search, Crossword, and more** are available for those who just want to work with printed materials.

## Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matthew 28:19***
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 13)

## Life

How well are we, as individuals, witnessing the world for Christ? Using the blank journal pages provided on site, write a plan of action you would like to implement in order to reach more people for Christ. You can also use the blank journal pages to write a personal prayer for strength, wisdom, love, and courage to reach beyond any barriers and hindrances that may try to block you that you may touch the life of another for Jesus.



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*When Jesus called some of His disciples, He told them they would be “fishers of men,” (Matthew 4:19; see also Mark 1:17 and Luke 5:10). In this lesson, He is instructing them to launch out into the deep of not the waters, but of the world, and catch people for the Kingdom of God.*

*Romans 10:13-15 tells us, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord **shall be saved**. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not **believed**? and how shall they **believe** in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they **hear without a preacher**? And how shall they preach, except they be **sent**? as it is written, How **beautiful** are the **feet** of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (emphasis mine).*

*Salvation is the goal. In order for that to happen, an unbeliever must be converted into a believer. For that to happen, the unbeliever must hear a word that pushes their heart toward repentance and the offer of a new life in Christ. But, if there is never a “preacher”; if there is never one “sent”; if there are never “beautiful... feet” preaching the “gospel of peace” and “glad tidings of good things”, then how can the original goal of salvation, of a sinner experiencing a new birth, become a reality? How can that one become a saint?*

*Like dominos in a row, ready to fall into place and urge the other on to form the big picture, so too does Jesus command all His followers to take their places, to go out into the world, to fulfill the Great Commission.*

*All the commands in today’s text are red-lettered words in the Bible. What that means is they are all words that came out of the mouth of Christ. These were His marching orders when He sent His original disciples out to witness the world for the Kingdom of God, and they are still His marching orders for all His followers today.*

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## THE MATTHEW 28:16-20 COMMAND

**“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”**

Other red-lettered words that are companion verses found in Luke show that in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts that the mission for Jesus’ followers is the same: go, be a witness, and evangelize the world. Luke records these words of Christ: “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins *should be preached* in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:46-48; emphasis mine).

Christ suffered. Christ died. And here, as well as the verses in Matthew (our covered text), and beyond, we see that Christ rose. Everything that the enemy tried to throw at Him, He overcame and was victorious. As the prelude to today’s lesson shows, death could not hold Him down.

When “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” (Matthew 28:1) went to visit the tomb of Jesus, they found He wasn’t even there! Being greeted by an “angel” they were told, “He is not here: for he is risen,” (Matthew 28:5-6). Standing, in what must’ve been awe and wonder over everything they were witnessing, they were instructed by the same angel to “go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the death; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you,” (Matthew 28:7).

With many things occurring between that point and the point of where our lesson picks up, as we arrive at our text, the remaining “**eleven disciples**” are gathered in “**Galilee**,” into a mountain where “**Jesus had appointed them.**”

Their calling to that particular “**mountain**” had been by divine appointment. The mission they were soon to be sent on was also a divine appointment. When one is commissioned by Christ,

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their life is no longer their own (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). They follow the marching orders of their Savior and go where and when He says go. What He ordained and set must be followed through by His disciples.

When they gathered themselves where He **“appointed them,”** it was then **“they saw him.”** And, when they saw Him, **“they worshipped him.”** They bowed prostrate before their risen Lord. They bowed in awe and wonder of His majesty who spoke of His life, saying, “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:18).

It is supposed by many that the group gathered there that day consisted not only of the eleven disciples/apostles but many others as well. When the Apostle Paul stated and testified that many had seen the risen Lord, including “five hundred brethren at once,” (1 Corinthians 15:6), it is believed that it was on the occasion of this lesson when this account occurred, and why some gathered there may have **“doubt.”**

Jesus, not only bringing light to their confusion of who He is and on what has occurred, also is bringing light to their hearts regarding His own authority when He speaks these words unto them: **“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”** Wherever a king reigns, that’s where he has power. Jesus reigns over all! As a matter of fact, it was also the Apostle Paul who stated that God is the one who “hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name,” (Philippians 2:9).

And speaking of that power given to Him by God, he goes on to state, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,” (Philippians 2:10-11).

What all that means is the same thing Jesus is asserting here in this text: He has been given, by God, **“all power!”**

All power means it, or He, cannot be contended with. Jesus Christ has already gained the victory over everything (see John 16:33). He has “everlasting dominion” over all (see Daniel 7:13-14). Peter says that He has “gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him,” (1 Peter 3:22). There’s no way around it – **JESUS HAS BEEN GIVEN ALL POWER!**

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As the risen Lord is getting ready to commission His disciples into their next level of work for the Kingdom of God, He shows them that the mission is His to give. The authority to command the work that is to be done is His.

With that, He lays out the grand work for what we have come to know as the Great Commission. And the first words that Jesus speaks to them regarding this mission is, **“Go!”**

**“Go”** is a verb which means it requires action. There is no such thing as a stagnant saint. Our faith is not stale or at a standstill and neither should the declaring of our faith be. We, who have an active relationship with the Lord, should be pursuing actively His purposes and mission. And, the number one mission overall is the winning of souls for the Kingdom of God. That *is* the top priority. Days are short and eternity is long – we must **“go!”**

When Jesus says, “Go,” He wants you to get involved in His plan for reaching out to others. He doesn’t save individuals for them to loiter around the church. He wants us to stretch beyond the comfort of our own salvation; stretch beyond the comfort of the pews, to help save others.

**“And teach all nations.”** Probably the most beloved and the most memorized verse in the Bible is John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” God’s mission and reasoning behind the crucifixion of Christ is for the whole “world” to have a chance to be saved. There are no **“nations”** that are off limits for receiving the teaching of the gospel and what Jesus has done for them. There are no restrictions to be placed on whom we deem worthy to be **baptized** in His name. The command is not ours to give of who and who cannot be reached, but the command and mission is ours to follow – and He says for us to reach **“all nations”** with it.

**“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”** When a baby is born, one doesn’t give them a bottle, wish them luck, and send them off on their own to figure this new life out. No! They are trained about the rights and wrongs of life. They are raised with guidance, love, care, and instruction on all things necessary, and the Lord says that others whom we reach out to need the same care and attention. They need to be taught in **“all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”**

**“And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”** They were not in this mission alone. We are not on this mission alone. Those whom Jesus was instructing, and those of the

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early church suffered much in order to spread the gospel throughout all regions of the world. Many were dispersed from their homes, fled for their lives, suffered persecution, and even martyrdom. Many today, in varied areas of the world, suffer tremendously for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To spread His cause throughout the world, many feel physical pain, emotional distress, and more. No, Jesus didn't say it was going to be a bed of roses. He didn't say it would be easy, but His promise is that no matter what obstacles, hurts, and pressures one may face, He is there with you in the middle of it all. We are not walking this world and fighting this fight on our own. Our Savior has risen in victory, and although He has ascended to be with His Father, His presence, care, and love for us is still promised us. **"I am with you always,"** Jesus promised, **"even unto the end of the world."** Even until He comes back again, we are never alone.

### THE MARK 16:15-16 COMMAND

**"And he said unto them, 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."**

Since verse 15 is very similar to what we covered in the previous section regarding the description of the Great Commission, I won't elaborate on it further, but I did want to include it here that we might see those "command" words are still present and relevant in this section.

**"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."** Here we see that the original goal of the calling and sending of disciples, that souls would be **"saved."** People are not called and sent for themselves. Nor is it for popularity and the like. The followers of Christ are sent that someone else might hear the Good News, believe in the Good News, and be **"saved!"**

To be saved means to be "delivered." While there are a variety of things for people to be delivered from, the main thing they need to be delivered from is sin. That deliverance will not come to pass because of you or me, but we are messengers that are sent to tell them about He who can save.

Do you remember when you were first born again, or got **"saved"**? Do you remember the feeling? Sometimes there's a wholeness that is felt. Sometimes there's peace. In some areas

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one may feel light and on top of the world (not in a self-centered, braggadocious way). People, when they have accepted Jesus Christ and experience the new birth, tend to feel positively different. A freedom that can't be explained as the feeling of those shackles that kept one bound begins to fall away.

How many others are there out there who would like to know what that feels like? How many would like to experience what you have experienced? How many would like to be saved? That can't happen unless those that are sent, go.

**Personal Testimony:** I remember not too long before I was saved, there was a time when I was sitting on the front steps of my house. There was a church the next block up from our house that caught my attention. It wasn't the people, for I had never met them. It wasn't the program, for I had never been in their building. I just remember that I wanted what they had.

People may not always be able to articulate what they are feeling, but there are still many who have not been introduced to Jesus; there are still many who want what you have.

Here in Mark, Jesus shows His desire for people to be **“saved.”** And, until the end of the world, that harvest is not done being reaped (Matthew 9:37; Luke 10:2; John 4:35). There is still room in heaven for more, so to speak. The time for the work of the Great Commission has not yet come to an end. He wants, and we should want, more people that believe!

While the work to evangelize the world with the Good News must go on, there will be those who reject the invitation of Christ. Jesus said, **“He that believeth not shall be damned.”** Unfortunately, some will not believe.

Despite the love, despite the cross, despite the resurrection, despite the Good News – sadly, some will still refuse the new life offered through Jesus Christ. Some will turn away their hearts and their lives from this great spiritual rescue.

Everything He did, everything He experienced and went through from birth to the grave and beyond, was to rescue mankind from being lost forever. For those who turn away that great salvation, they will remain in that lost state and be **“damned”** because they don't believe.

Just as eternity is set and settled for the believer, so too is eternity set and settled for the unbeliever. Romans 8:1 tells us, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The believer, in Christ, has been

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released from condemnation. For the unbeliever outside of Christ, their condemnation or “**damned**” state remains.

Knowing this, and teaching this to His disciples that they and we might understand the importance of the mission – He sends His followers out to reach as many people as possible in hopes that they who have yet to believe will hear the Good News, and believe, that they might dwell in life eternal with Him.

That’s the mission. That’s the goal. That’s the reason for the sending. It doesn’t matter if one is receptive to the gospel or if they reject it, the disciples, and we, are commanded to still go and tell it.

Not matter where people are from or what their background is, God wants to see people saved. But they must make the decision to want to be saved; to want to truly repent and be reconciled back to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Please Note:** During His earthly ministry, when Jesus delivered a message, often He would say, “He that has ears to hear, let him hear,” (Matthew 11:15; see also Matthew 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 8:8 and 14:35). There must be a personal willingness to open oneself up to take in the message of salvation for themselves.

Nonetheless, we are still commanded to go and tell it.

## THE ACTS 1:8 COMMAND

**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”**

This was the last time Jesus would speak to His disciples face to face before He ascended, and the mission and the message were still the same: **“ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”** You shall evangelize about Me to the whole world!

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This will be done and able to be accomplished because of the “**power**” of the “**Holy Ghost**” each believer will be equipped with. In earlier times, the Holy Spirit would come upon people temporarily, and for an appointed time and/or task. When Pentecost would arrive, those gathered would be fully and completely engulfed and equipped in His power through the outpouring of His Holy Spirit (see Acts 2).

The fact is, this mission is His mission and He is the one that empowers each of us to fulfill the call He has summoned us to; He is the one that strengthens us and gives us all the tools we need through the power of His Spirit working in us to witness the world for Him (compare Luke 24:49).

To reach others on the level that He calls means we need to depend on sources outside of our own selves in order to literally get the job done, and the only source we need for a job/commission such as this is the source of the “**Holy Ghost.**” We cannot perform this duty or do what He has called us to without the power of His Spirit (compare Zechariah 4:6). We need to rely on He that works on the inside of us in order that we may be able to do the greater outside work (refer to the **Explore** section of this lesson packet).

Each Christian believer now has the role and responsibility to, “Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled,” (Luke 14:23). The Master is looking for each of us to go, but when we do, we go in the “**power**” of the “**Holy Ghost.**” We go in His power!

Once, the Apostle Paul testified of his own mission, saying, “I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ... But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God,” (Acts 20:20-21, 24). May we all be as tenacious in our faith and devotion to witness the world for Christ.

The call belongs to all believers, and to all His followers, Jesus says, “Go!”

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## “Jesus Sends His Followers”

**Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8**

**Please Answer the Review Questions Below**

1. **T or F.** Witness for Christ is optional. It’s not a command for all Christians.
2. **Fill in the Blank.** Jesus has been given \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore, we should follow His commands. (Matthew 28:18)
3. In Matthew 28:19-20, what are some of the things we are commanded to do?

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4. In Mark 16:16, who will be saved and who will not be saved?

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5. When our lesson talks about “**Power**” in Acts 1:8, what kind of power is it referring to and why is it important?

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6. **T or F.** Every day witnessing can be done in our own strength and wisdom. (Acts 1:8)

7. What are some ways you are currently fulfilling the Great Commission? What are some other things you can do to reach more people?

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