

Stand Firm in Advancing the Gospel

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Introduction:

A. We worked in Vienna Austria where advancing the Gospel is hard work.

B. How do we get involved in the Great Commission?

I. The Great Commission is Jesus' command to all disciples.

A. This was Jesus' last will and testament. (Matthew 18:16-20)

1. It's not about loud proclamation with a bullhorn.
2. It's about quietly proclaiming Christ.
3. A layman asked how many people in a crowd came to Christ through a message over the radio or evangelistic campaign.
 - a. Most people came to Christ through a close relationship with another.
 - b. Christian leaders are like secret agents moving in the world.
 - c. The message they carry is empowered by Christ's love.
4. The Great Commission is simple, to make disciples.
 - a. We are not called to make converts.
 - b. We are called to make disciples who follow Jesus Christ.
 - c. Discipleship is not a course to take but a life to live.
 - d. Discipleship is public identification with Christ.
5. The Great Commission involves teaching disciples to obey Christ.
 - a. We are not to be free thinkers but obedience.
 - b. We don't obey naturally.
 - c. We disobey naturally, like children.
 - d. Usually 10 percent of people get jobs done.
 - e. Gideon had 30,000 troops to defeat Midian but God whittled it down to a remnant. (Judges 7)

1. Those who feared and who lapped water like a dog were eliminated.
 2. The unafraid and watchful were chosen.
 3. One percent of the 30,000 led the charge.
- f. Nearly 50 percent of Americans call themselves born again yet only a remnant of people actually engage in evangelism.
- g. Jesus chooses his own disciples. (John 15:16)
1. He prunes branches to produce more fruit.
 2. He eliminates branches that bear no fruit.
 3. If we want to bear fruit we will be pruned.
 4. Those who remain in Christ will bear much fruit.
 5. Jesus is concerned with fruit bearing.
 6. Some fruit is internal, like love and joy. (Galatians 5)
 7. Some fruit is external involving others. (Matthew 9:37)
 8. Laborers are simple people that follow Christ.

B. Four things that help keep us bearing fruit for Christ.

1. Abiding in Christ. (John 15:5)
 - a. What does abiding mean to you?
 1. Remain.
 2. Obey.
 3. Confide in him.
 - b. It is a love relationship walking together in trust and confidence.
 1. Jesus called his disciples friends, though he remained Lord.
 2. If you were beginning a relationship with a potential spouse you wouldn't meet merely for a few moments each morning.
 3. At 25 I was in the military in Vietnam commanding a company of 200 men where I led many of these soldiers to Christ.

4. A Cambodian taught me about servanthood by giving me a servant.

- i. This servant knew fighting and hung out with me.
- ii. He went with me everywhere to protect me.
- iii. He saved me from stepping on a land mine.
- iv. He had a sixth sense moving about in the jungle.
- v. He would set up a hammock for me to sleep on.
- vi. He would prepare meals for me when I was too busy to eat.
- vii. One night a snake surprised me and he caught it and cooked it.
- viii. We developed a close friendship and he often saw me reading my Bible.
- ix. When our time together was over he cried.
- x. This kind of close relationship is abiding.

5. Jesus wants us to walk closely with him like this.

- i. If we walk closely like this Christ will empower us.
- ii. If we don't understand the Holy Spirit we will not abide. (1 Corinthians 3:16; John 16)
- iii. Only the Holy Spirit knows what to pray for. (Romans 8:26-27)
- iv. We think we know what school our kids should go to but the Spirit knows what is best.
- v. When we pray don't tell the Spirit information, we need to ask the Spirit what to pray for.

2. Obey Christ's word. (Mark 4:14-20)

a. There are four souls.

1. Hard.
2. Rocky.
3. Thorny.

4. Good soil.
 - b. What kind of harvest do you want?
 - c. Fruitfulness is directly related to obedience.
3. A heart for the lost.
 - a. Paul desired himself to be cut off if it would benefit his people. (Romans 9:2-3)
 - b. I had a pagan roommate I did not like, yet when something terrible happened to him he turned to me.
 - c. I shared Christ with him and he responded.
4. We have to fight for the souls of people.
 - a. Some we don't naturally like may become great saints.
4. We need a partner in ministry (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)
 - a. We can help each other in the battle.
 - b. Jonathan needed his armor bearer. (1 Samuel 14:6-7)
 - c. Two guys at a school began a great Bible study. (Matthew 18:19)

II. Conclusion.