

## Key Roles in the Gospel Mission

Seen primarily in Acts

I am extremely excited about this series in the light of where our church is going.

Having a missions mindset is the quickest and longest-lasting way to get a church off of itself and excited about serving God.

### Lesson 1: The Commissioner and the Commissioned – Matthew 28:18-20

<sup>18</sup>And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The fact that Jesus sends us out to the ends of the earth should not make us fear since He has authority everywhere (18) and for all time (20).

Jesus' commission has no time limit and no boundaries.

Look more closely at 19:

<28:18> καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων, Ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς. <28:19> πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, <28:20> διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.

<sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came up and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore, as you go, disciple all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you each and every day until the end of the age." (ISB)

πορευθέντες – VRAONMYP = Participle (imp) Aorist Deponent Nominative Masculine 2<sup>nd</sup> Plural = "As you go" or as a coordinate command, "Go!"

μαθητεύσατε – VMAA--YP = Imperative Aorist Active 2<sup>nd</sup> Plural = "make disciples!"

βαπτίζοντες – VRPANMYP = Participle Present Active Nominative Masculine 2<sup>nd</sup> Plural = "baptizing" (modal)

διδάσκοντες – VRPANMYP = Participle Present Active Nominative Masculine 2<sup>nd</sup> Plural = "teaching"

From Bible.org:

The difficult part of the structure is deciding how to take the first participle, "going." There are two views prevalent today. One is to give this participle the character of an imperative or command in which it would mean "go." The other is to give it an adverbial character like "having gone" or "in your going" or "as you go make disciples." Apart from a specific context, both ideas are grammatically legitimate. Greek participles can be used like an imperative, but only the context and usage can determine if a particular instance has the meaning of an imperative.

The usage of this construction and context does indicate this should be understood as a command, "go," but while this is true, we must never lose sight of the fact that the main command and mission is that of making disciples.

The following are illustrations to show this means "go," as an imperative, from usage:

Genesis 27:13 in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, we have *por euthentes enegke* which means, "go, bring." The Hebrew has two imperatives. There are plenty of other examples of this in the LXX (Gen. 37:14; Ex. 5:18).

Matthew 9:13, "go and learn what this saying means." The Lord was not saying here, "In your going, learn what this meant." The same concept is true in the following verses.

Matthew 11:4, "Go tell John what you hear and see:" Matt. 28:7, "Then go quickly and tell his disciples," Mark 16:15, "Go into all the world and preach ..." and Matthew 2:13 and 20, "Get up, take the child." Certainly the angel was not saying something like, "when you go, take the child," or "in your going, take the child." This was an urgent command.

Then, why this construction? Why not use two regular imperatives? Is it just an idiom without significance? First, the participle with the main verb is used in order to stress that there is one primary objective—making disciples. Making disciples is the core or heart of the commission. Second, the use of the participle shows the action of the participle is closely connected or vitally related to the main verb. It proposes the necessary way to fulfill the main verb.

Without going, the command to make disciples is impossible, especially when it involves all nations. Going is not a secondary option. You don't catch fish in a barrel. We must do something that puts us in contact with people so we can win them to Christ and begin the process of making disciples. The going involves anything we do from hosting outreach Bible studies, getting acquainted with neighbors, or by crossing oceans to take the Gospel to lost tribes.

Both words, "go" and "make disciples" are in aorist tense which, in Greek, makes the action definite and urgent. The idea is "go and perform your calling."

So the great commission goes way beyond simply a calling to be a missionary. It is a calling to be a discipler.

It's not about evangelism. It's about discipleship. And it is something that can be done right where you are.

I believe that most Christians have in practice ignored the great commission, believing that the only way to fulfill it is to go to Africa or become an evangelist and since they haven't done either (and don't feel

equipped or even called to that) they are out of the game before they even start.

But Jesus' commission is to make disciples as we go.

What is a disciple? Farrar, as "one who believes His doctrines, rests upon His sacrifice, imbibes His spirit, and imitates His example"

How are you doing at discipleship?

What could this mean to you in your life as a parent?

## Lesson 2: The Witness – Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8

<sup>44</sup>Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup>Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; <sup>47</sup>and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>**You are witnesses** of these things. <sup>49</sup>"And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

"...<sup>8</sup>but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; **and you shall be My witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

What had to happen before they became His witnesses?

What did the Holy Spirit do for them that was so critical? Why couldn't they have been His witnesses without the Holy Spirit? Had they been His witnesses yet?

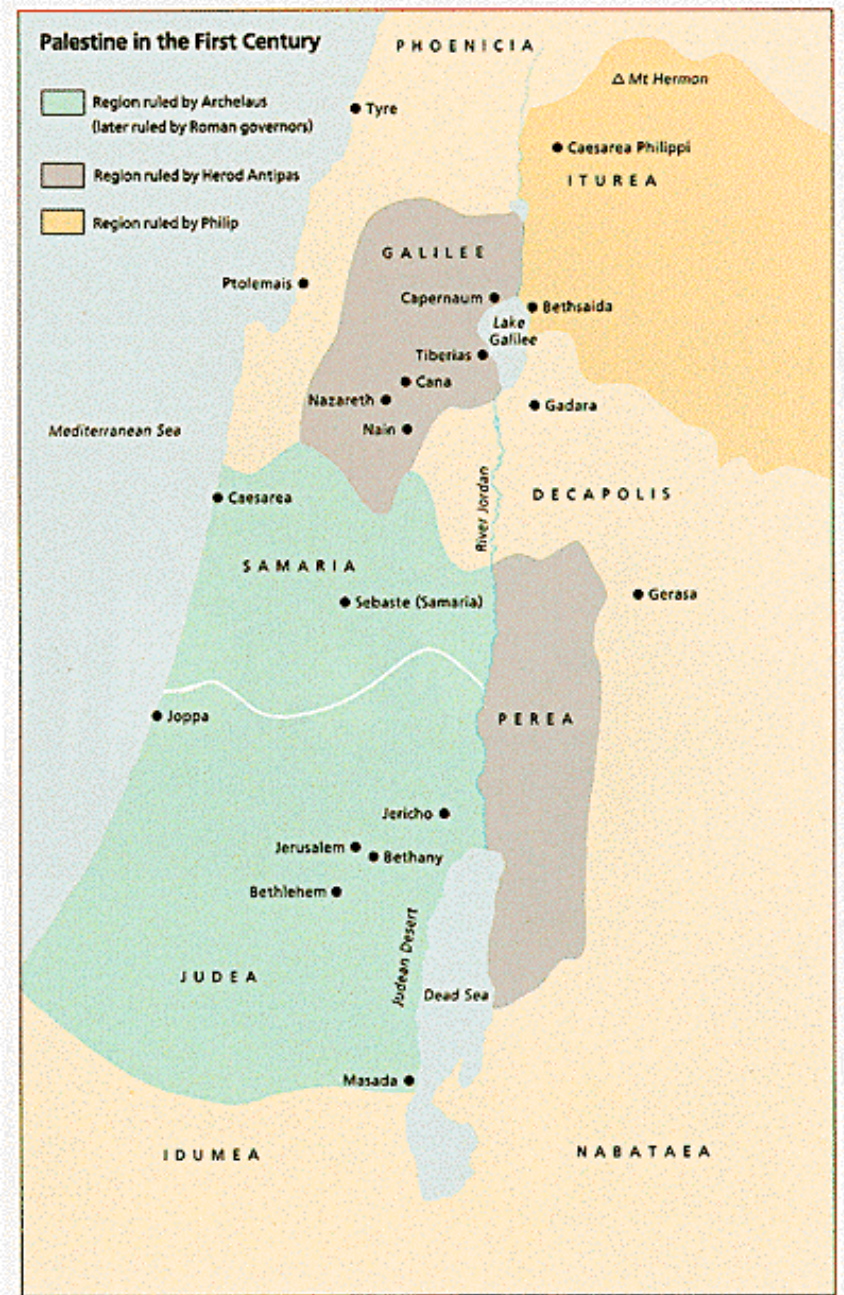
What is a witness? Dictionary:

- Someone who has knowledge of an event from personal observation or experience.
- Someone who gives or serves as evidence.
- Someone who openly professes their faith.

This passage is more a prophetic promise than a command. A future indicative verb as the main verb can be used as imperative, but it can be interpreted either way here.

The act of being a witness is a natural outflow of being filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit. If you are filled, you will witness. Look at

the immediate and permanent change that happened to the disciples when the Holy Spirit came on them.



What about the geographic references? What do they mean?

Jerusalem ⇒ Judea ⇒ Samaria ⇒ uttermost parts of the earth

Jerusalem = their home town

Judea = their home country or state

Samaria = their neighboring country (and cultural / religious enemy)

Uttermost parts of the earth = As far as they could go

Did they immediately go to Oklahoma? No. Acts 9:31:

<sup>9:31</sup>So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Where did they start? Home.

Once again we see that the call to the Gospel Mission did not require becoming a missionary to Africa (or Oklahoma). It began right where they were. In fact, they did not go until they had things well in hand close to home.

When they had their home mission field covered, then God began to call them (and in some cases miraculously move them) to other areas farther and farther away. They were witnessing wherever they were. If God kept them home, then they witnessed there. If God called them elsewhere, they witnessed there.

You don't have to "GO" to be a witness, to make disciples, but you must be filled.

If we are filled, we will be God's witnesses. If we are not His witnesses, then what might that mean?

How are you doing as a witness?

The truth is that you are being a witness. What is the result of your witness?

How can you model and drive this behavior with your family and children?

### Lesson 3: The Preacher – Acts 2:14; Rom. 10:13-15

<sup>14</sup>But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words.

Rom 10:13for "WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." <sup>14</sup>How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup>And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"

What characteristics need to be true about a preacher?

### Lesson 4: The Giver – Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; Phil. 4:10-19

Acts 2:44And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

Acts 4:32And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them. <sup>33</sup>And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, <sup>35</sup>and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need. <sup>36</sup>And Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means, Son of Encouragement), <sup>37</sup>and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Compare and contrast today's Christian with those in the early church. \_\_\_\_

Phil 4:10But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. <sup>11</sup>Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. <sup>12</sup>I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. <sup>15</sup>And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; <sup>16</sup>for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. <sup>17</sup>Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. <sup>18</sup>But I have received everything in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup>And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Paul is speaking here from the perspective of a missionary. What important thoughts does he share? **Receiving a gift made him rejoice. He trusts in God. His financial support has to come from somewhere. He has learned how to navigate the ups and downs of support from his supporters. Sometimes it is only one group who continues to support him. He followed up their gift with a letter.**

What do those thoughts make you feel as you consider the situation of a missionary?

How can we fill the role of giver?

How can we teach our children to support missionaries?

## Lesson 5: The Hospitalizer – Acts 2:46-47

Acts 2:46 And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, <sup>47</sup>praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

What a beautiful picture of community! And here are two more reminders about hospitality.

Heb. 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Mat. 25:40 “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.’

Looking back at the Acts passage, what characteristics do you see that were true about the early believers? **Together daily, of one mind, in each others’ houses, ate together, good reputations with others, result: lots of people were getting saved.**

How many of those items have to do with hospitality?

How often do we individually show hospitality to others by having them in our home? \_\_\_\_ Is that enough? \_\_\_\_ Why don’t we do it more? \_\_\_\_

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What lessons are we teaching our children by our hospitality (or lack of it)? How might it benefit our children if we were to have people in our homes?

Rom. 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; <sup>11</sup>not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; <sup>12</sup>rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, <sup>13</sup>contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

## Lesson 6: The Martyr – Acts 7:54-60

<sup>54</sup>Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they *began* gnashing their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup>But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; <sup>56</sup>and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” <sup>57</sup>But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears, and they rushed upon him with one impulse. <sup>58</sup>And when they had driven him out of the city, they *began* stoning *him*, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup>And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon *the Lord* and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” <sup>60</sup>And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” And having said this, he fell asleep.

What can we do to have a better chance of being a Martyr?

## Lesson 7: The Inviter – Acts 5:16

<sup>16</sup>And also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits; and they were all being healed.

What activity was being performed in this verse that was in support of the Gospel Mission?

How are we at being the “inviter”?

What are some reasons why we don’t bring others to church?

What needs to happen for us to begin being the inviter?

How can being the inviter become a family project?

## Lesson 8: The Servant – Acts 6:1-7

<sup>1</sup>Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. <sup>2</sup>And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. <sup>3</sup>“But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. <sup>4</sup>“But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” <sup>5</sup>And the statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. <sup>6</sup>And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. <sup>7</sup>And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase



greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

What drove the need for deacons?

What was their role?

What were their characteristics?

## Lesson 9: The Encourager – Acts 4:36,

<sup>Ac 4:36</sup> And Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means, Son of Encouragement),

<sup>Acts 9:26</sup> And when he had come to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup> But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

<sup>Ac 13:42</sup> And as Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. <sup>43</sup> Now when *the meeting of* the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.

<sup>Acts 15:36</sup> And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are.” <sup>37</sup> And Barnabas was desirous of taking John, called Mark, along with them also. <sup>38</sup> But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. <sup>39</sup> And there arose such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.

What characteristics were true about Barnabas?

How can you be a “Barnabas” for someone?

Who in your life today needs a “Barnabas”?

## Lesson 10: The Missionary – Acts 13:1-4a; 14:26-28

What do you think of when you think of being a missionary?

What do you think about when you think about the possibility of you being called by God to be a missionary?

Here we see the Church’s first missionaries.

<sup>13:1</sup> Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup> And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” <sup>3</sup> Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

<sup>4</sup> So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, ...

<sup>Acts 14:26</sup> and from there they sailed to Antioch, from which they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had accomplished. <sup>27</sup> And when they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. <sup>28</sup> And they spent a long time with the disciples.

What activities preceded Saul and Barnabas’ commissioning as missionary?

What types of things did Paul and Barnabas do during their mission? (Acts 14:8-10, 21-23)