

We must plead for forgiveness and cleansing and a new heart. Look at verses 1-2, 7-9, and 10. Recognize that Jesus has enabled your forgiveness through His shed blood. Pray that God would give you a new heart. Only God can do what needs to be done. He alone brings life, light, and love. He alone can provide the spiritual heart transplant that we so desperately need. We must confess that our Maginot Line is as ineffective as it was for France. The enemy has flanked us, has bypassed our defenses, and has struck at the heart of who we are. Let us confess, let us plead, let us beg God for a new heart.

Yes, there are things which can be lost, but praise God, He is ready to restore. The irrecoverable moment is before us. God stands ready to give another opportunity. He requires a response from us. He wants us to have revival, but will not force it upon us.

VICTORY IS ASSURED. The only hope for our Convention is a Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit revival. We have lost the closeness of the Lord. We have lost the joy of our salvation. We have lost our unity. We have lost too much! What victory does God wish to bring? Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "and My people who are called by My name humble themselves, pray and seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land."

The specific victory is stated in Psalm 51:13, which says, "Then I will teach the rebellious Your ways, and sinners will return to You."

The victory that God wishes to bring is a Holy Spirit revival which results in the winning of the lost to Jesus Christ. There is a tremendous missions opportunity before us. God's heart yearns for a restored relationship, which empowers a real relevancy which reaches our culture.

Will the Southern Baptist Convention one day be remembered as a denominational Maginot Line? Will it be recalled as a symbol of strategic stupidity where the opportunity was lost so often that it became an irretrievable loss? When we are right with God, we have impact on a lost world. When we have lost the sharp edge of being right with the Lord, we lose our ability to be salt and light. We justify our ungodly behavior by stating, "we are only human." While our world goes to hell, we are too busy excusing our behavior rather than sharing God's message. We have lost our influence, our relevancy at school, at work, and in our neighborhoods.

Our Convention is accused by many as being an uncaring, bloated bureaucracy which has lost its ability to impact our world today. We are accused of being a denominational Maginot Line. We all agree that our churches have lost influence. One writer said that the early church had little influence but great power. Churches today have much influence but little power. I believe that it is true.

Many of us have thanked God for the victorious battle regarding the inerrancy of Scripture. However, if we do not apply the same fervency to the issue of relevancy and revival that we have regarding the issue of inerrancy, then it will all be a moot point. Our churches will be right, but empty. Our entities and ministries will be fighting for scraps from a declining and dying constituency. We can lose our influence if we do not realize that the issue of spiritual warfare is intense and ongoing. There are many fronts to the battle. May God bring the victory of influence and soul winning and relevancy to our lives, our churches, and our Convention!

Rob Zinn's Convention Message

2007 Southern Baptist Convention
June 13, 2007, San Antonio, Texas

The Task of the Church

Matt. 28:19-20

Acts 1:8-14

Now as we come to our text, we need to hear what our Lord has to say, because here in our passage – **He not only commissions the disciples, He also tells us the mission of the church:**

- **Why are we here?**
- **What is the purpose of a local New Testament church?**
- **Why does the church exist?**

Many would say –

- It's a place to have Bible study (teach doctrine).
- It's a place to have fellowship.
- It's a place to make friends.
- It's a place to have good family activities.
- It's a place to enjoy music.
- It's a place to hang out until the rapture!
- It's a place to praise and worship God!

Now the fact is — all of these are good, meaningful, and important in the life of a Christian — but none of these **satisfy** the mission of the **church**, or the **purpose of the church**.

So what is the "mission" of the church?

Before we can answer that, we must first ask –
"What should be the 'motive' of the church?"

Our motive ought to be – to glorify God!

Eph. 1:6 – to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Eph. 1:12 – to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Eph. 1:14 – who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Eph. 3:21 – to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

The primary motive of the church is to glorify God. Isn't that one reason why Jesus came?

John 1:14 – And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Hebrews 1:3 – And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The motive has been passed on . . .

So then – what is the mission?

To make disciples:

- Mark them!
- Mature them!

It glorifies God when sinners are saved. – 2 Cor. 5:19

So the motive of the church: To glorify God!

Here is the point –

The church who really:

- Wants to glorify God
- Desires to please God
- Wants to honor God's will and God's purpose...

Then – must love the lost world the way God loves the lost world – and gave His life for the sake of winning the lost world

John 17:3-4 – And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.

I have glorified Thee.... How?

- By being obedient.
- By seeking and saving that which was lost.

And what is the church?

An extension of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the head of the church!

And what is the church made up of?

Disciples who are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ!

We are to do what He did.

We are to be about what He was about.

And what is that? – vv. 19–20

- Our **motive**: To bring glory to God!
- Our **purpose**: Reaching people for Christ!
- Our **mission**: The Same as Christ's!

The church's mission is:

- To go into the world
- To witness
- To warn men about the judgement that is to come

Teaching is good –

But that's not the main purpose.

Fellowship is good –

But that's not the main purpose.

Praise is good –

But that's not the main purpose.

Folks, if that's all we're supposed to do, we should go on to heaven and do it right!

Our task is to keep the main thing the main thing!

And if you want to evaluate your Christian life, simply ask these questions:

Am I involved in winning people to Christ?

Is that where my time, talents, energy, and money are going?"

That's the only reason we're here...

Otherwise, we ought to just go on and be with God!

For two years I listened, watched, was involved with our President Bobby Welch as he encouraged this Convention to **"Win and Baptize One Million People in 2006."**

There were those who thought the goal was unrealistic:

40,000 x 25 = 1,000,000.

There were those who just scoffed and never took it to heart. And those who just blew it off.

At the end of 2006 – we baptized less than 2005!

My question is **"WHY?"**

The truth is – we know what we're supposed to do!

We have the command ... right here in our text!

God says He will give us the power!

... So what seems to be the problem?

The answer -> **Attitude = Disobedience**

Gene Mims ... Conservative Consumer Christianity

Our commission as a church:

Introduce.....Make Disciples

Induct.....Baptize

Instruct.....Teach

In most of our churches it becomes:

- Save Them
- Sink Them
- Sock It to Them

As we look at these passages ... I want us to look at—

4 Attitudes – basic for evangelism.

Our attitudes will make or break us!

We will succeed or fail because of our attitude. — Shoe Salesman

There is a difference between a man who sees a cup **half empty** and one who see it **half full**; between a man who looks at a **30% chance of rain** and one who looks for a **70% chance of sunshine**.

In the same way, **our attitudes will determine what we will do in our ministry.**

The growth that will take place

— In the churches where God has placed us.

— In the souls that will be won to the Lord.

Andrew Murray said, **"Two kinds of Christians – Soul winners and Backsliders."**

If we are going to see people won to the Lord Jesus Christ, **four basic attitudes MUST be in our churches.**

I. We Must Take The Great Commission Seriously – Matt. 28:19–20**A. God takes the souls of men seriously.**

1. He sent His Son to a lost world ... who didn't care. – **Luke 19:10**
2. He died a brutal death on the cross, and He was the innocent substitute.
3. He has commissioned us, too, because He cares about the souls of men.
4. God is serious about the Great Commission.
5. There is no one who talks more about hell in the Bible than Jesus did.

B. Satan is serious about the great commission.

1. He is doing everything he can to keep men out of the kingdom.
2. We are in a constant battle with the enemy, who hopes that he can keep us from telling the good news.

C. The problem is — we do not take the Great Commission seriously.

According to the statistics from the records department of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville –

Number of Baptisms by Reporting Churches, 2006

From church letters for the year 2006

Total 44,223 SBC churches:

<u>Baptisms</u>	<u>Churches</u>	
0	7,169	
1	3,312	
2 - 5	10,448	
6 - 10	6,774	
100 or more	274	.007 %

Total Baptisms: 364,826 — Average 9

40,943 reporting churches:

7,169 churches baptized.....0
27,703.....1-10
274.....100 or more

Which means — **68% baptized 10 or less; .007% baptized 100 or more; 93% Baptized 25 or less (2005), which is worse than last year!**

The problem, my brother, baptism is not the issue, it's only the result of the problem.

The problem is our attitudes toward the Word of God!

When it takes 45 Southern Baptists one whole year to reach one person for Jesus – I say, "We are NOT taking the Bible seriously."

The Bible says,

Prov. 13:13 – The one who despises the Word will be in debt to it.

Prov. 11:30 – And he who is wise wins souls.

Ezek. 3:17-19 – His blood I will require at your hand.

Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 1:8

The Bible isn't a book that you open to find a text for a sermon or teach a Sunday School lesson.

1. The Bible is God's Word.
2. The Bible is God's love letter to His children.
3. The Bible is God's revelation to the world.
4. The Bible is the standard for living.
5. The Bible is the message for life.

And it does matter – **WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE!**

What you believe will always determine **HOW YOU ACT!** – Prov. 23:7

We're supposed to be slaves of the Lord Jesus.

We're supposed to be ambassadors of the Lord Jesus

.....AND we tell the King what we want to do?

Luke 6:46 – And why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

John 14:15 – If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

1 Samuel 15:22 – And Samuel said, "Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

And if we are going to take it seriously, then we must take it...

II. Personally – Acts 1:8

1. But you!
2. Its not either, or it's both, and.
3. There's not a church that I know that will ever rise above its leadership!
4. Pastors, "We need to be soul-winners."
5. But not at the expense of our people –
 - a. Preaching evangelistically will never replace soul-winning.
 - b. Evangelism is not so much of a sermon as it is an atmosphere – a lifestyle.
6. It will require hard work.
 - a. There is no substitute for hard work
 - b. You can't win the world to Christ by sitting behind your desk and playing solitaire with the prospect cards.
 - c. Ninety percent of all insurance is sold by 30% of the salesmen...on their 3rd, 4th or 5th call.
 - d. **Principle:** God gives you some you didn't go "after," because you didn't get some you did.

Our problem – We're NOT going!

Chuck Kelley ~ "Southern Baptists are a 'harvest oriented' people, living in an unseeded generation."

In his book, *The Unchurched Next Door*, Thom Rainer said ~ "83% of unchurched people said they would come, if they were invited."

III. Enthusiastically

A. Evangelism is simply sharing the good news, and we ought to do it enthusiastically.

In **Matt. 28** – We have the promise of His **PRESENCE**.

In **Mark 16** – We have the promise of His **PROTECTION**.

In **Luke 24** – We have the promise of His **PROGRAM**.

In **John 20** – We have the promise of His **PEACE**.

In **Acts 1:8** – We have the promise of His **POWER**.

B. Our enthusiasm ought to be felt in 3 ways:**1. Vision**

- a. Prov. 29:18 – Where there is no vision, the people perish. (KJV)
- b. Most people aim at absolutely nothing and hit it every time.
- c. We must have goals.
- d. If you major on what you can't do, you will never do ANYTHING.

e. The pastor is the key.*2. Love**

- a. Love your people.
- b. That kind of love starts with God.
- c. If your people don't buy you, they won't buy what you say.
- d. Love starts in the pulpit – moves through the music, etc.

3. Faith

If you're not stretching higher than you can reach – then its not faith.

IV. Prayerfully – Acts 1:12-14

1. It was prayer – that turned fear into boldness.
2. It was prayer – that made them of one mind.
3. The only power that reaches the heart of men – is the power of God.
4. We would do well if we spent more time in prayer to God about people – than time spent with people talking about God. – Luke 10:38-42
5. The only way I know we can get power – IS THROUGH PRAYER!
6. I believe there is a direct relationship between prayer and the number of decisions made each Sunday.

The best way I know to win our world and our mission field to Christ – IS TO DO IT!

But we're going to have to take it ...

- Seriously
- Personally
- Enthusiastically
- Prayerfully

Three things we must NEVER change:

The Man

The Message

The Mission

Three things we MUST change:

The Mindset

The Methodology

The Ministries of the church

Youth Baptisms 2006 – 12-17 years of age

0	=	14,276 churches	35%
1	=	5,159 churches	27,105
2-5	=	7,670 churches	31%

66% baptized 5 or less

Proverbs 29:18 is from the King James Version.

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Ministry Reports to the Southern Baptist Convention

