

**The Great Commission**  
Matthew 28:18-20, Trinity Sunday  
May 26, 2013

Beloved of the Lord.....Today is Trinity Sunday. While there are many teachings of Christ we could cover on such a day, today let us remember that by the Great Commission of Jesus, we were baptized INTO the blessed name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That one little word INTO.....we are baptized INTO God's holy name, should mean a lot to us. Though we are unholy sinners, by our baptism God adopted us, received us into the Kingdom of His holy name, which is a gracious name, through the blood bought merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. In our Baptism our Triune God poured out upon us His Triune name, so that Baptism works IN US forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal life to all who believe, "for God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

There is then before us waiting everlasting life in a place the fades not away, reserved in heaven for you. All those believers who died before us.....while we remember them on Memorial day, we do not weep for them. Jesus said "Because I live, ye shall live also." In our Baptism the Holy Spirit pours out upon us the highest blessings of God, forgiveness of all sins, peace, and a faith which drives away all fear. Being born again of water and the Spirit, we know Christ our King reigns over this entire earth in heaven above, and we need not fear the evil men of this world who persecute us, for it is written "Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD." Why should we be afraid of a man who's going to die, when Christ for our sake died that we might be justified? We are more than conquerors through Him! Knowing Him who loved us, our entire purpose in life is very simply, that God in all things might be glorified. "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, for lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

I. All power is given unto Me....what does this mean? At the top of the Mount of Olives, Christ is about to withdraw His visible presence from the disciples. Knowing they would need His strength to overcome evil Jesus said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." What does this mean? Our blue catechism answer this question by saying "Christ was anointed to be my Prophet, Priest, and King.". "As my King, Christ with His almighty power rules over all creatures, governs and protects His Church, and finally leads it to glory." Christ then as an all-powerful King, rules what is called His Kingdom of Power, even according to His human nature. Though He came at first in apparent weakness on earth so men could crucify Him, Jesus rose from the dead in great power on the third day. Therefore "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 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." Those who deny Jesus in this world will tremble before Him as a Judge in the next.

This is why we Christians, His servants, should not stand and tremble before any man on earth, even if they persecute us. Jesus said "Fear not, only believe". Christ is our Savior and King, and if they don't repent, their judgment will be most severe on the Last Day. In spite of what our earthly eyes might see or fear here Christ still has ALL POWER in heaven above. He is over all creatures on this earth, also the weather, and even the evil angels are subject to Him. This is why the devil could not touch Job with boils, except he first have God's permission. This is also why the legion of demons asked of Christ, if He would cast them out into the swine. Being afraid of Christ's power they said, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Jesus had power to cast them into hell. How much more should the wicked sinners of this world tremble before Him?

But how then do we answer the question: If Christ rules over all this earth and even the devils, why does God allow all this evil to happen?" What about the gruesome murder of the British soldier? But our **first answer** regarding the wickedness of man is HE DOESN'T allow this evil instead He forbids it, for "Thou shalt not kill". "We should fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body but help and befriend him in every bodily need." Rest assured God will punish the wickedness of man, sometimes in this world but always in the next. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay saith the Lord."

As for our **second answer**, when God allows tornadoes like the one in Oklahoma this week, or earthquakes, fire, etc., these are messengers of God's wrath. They are God's warning Judgment Day will soon come. Jesus Himself taught us there will be signs "in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." When we see nature in upheaval, we remember Jesus will soon deliver us from all evil. "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

That brings us to the **third answer** as to why Christ our King allows this evil world to stand. God's answer is this: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Simply put, God is so merciful He gives even the worst offenders a certain Time of Grace, time to repent lest they burn forever in the torments of hell. Jesus doesn't want to cast them into hell for He died for all. When we see such wickedness let us not be "holier than

thou", for we have committed the same sins as they, at least with our heart and we live BY GOD'S GRACE ALONE. As long then as this world stands dear believer, your job is to help your enemies see God's grace, for tomorrow may never come. Psalm two says, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him."

II. The Great Commission to use the Means of Grace till the end of time. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." These words, "ye" and "therefore" are both important. Because Jesus is Almighty God with ALL POWER ruling in heaven and earth, THEREFORE you disciples are to fearlessly teach or make disciples of all nations. Be not then "overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." This Great Commission then applies to the Holy Christian Church on earth, not just called pastors. You are the original possessors of the Means of Grace. Since "all things are yours" dear Christian, ALL BELIEVERS HAVE THIS SAME DUTY AND PRIVILEGE, to baptize and preach the Gospel to the world, for "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mk 16

As for this first word "teach", this means: to make a disciple, to teach or instruct ALL NATIONS by "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things." Baptizing and teaching the Gospel are the two Means of Grace whereby God converts or makes disciples. Until the end of time, these are the only means given us through which the Holy Ghost converts and regenerates men. We then have no right to invent our own ways of converting souls, or use powerful arguments of reason, dreams, visions, etc. Rather the will of Christ your Redeemer is simply this: you make disciples of all nations by baptizing them and teaching them all Christ has taught you. Franz Pieper thus says it this way, "God's usual order is that He works faith.....ONLY THOROUGH THE MEANS OF GRACE which He has appointed and to which He has bound us." (Christian Dogmatics, Vol. I, pg 455).

The Means of Grace then is how heaven is populated. Baptism then is what we call a divine ordinance, ordained by Christ for ALL NATIONS and that certainly includes children. If the parents of those children who died in the tornado baptized their children, they have all the comfort in the world. If they did not however, they have no comfort. And let it be said, while Christ commands us to baptize all nations, we dare not secretly baptize children without the approval of parents or those in authority. Christ has not called us to secretly baptize all nations, for baptism is a very public and open confession of God's Church. Also let no man despise baptism. Those who refuse to be baptized are refusing the grace of Christ Himself. They cannot be true believers. At the same time there are some people who come to faith by the hearing of the Word, yet they die before they can be baptized. Only he that believes not is damned.

Besides baptizing, we are to be "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"..... This includes the whole and entire counsel of God, both Law and Gospel. If we don't preach the law in all its sternness, sinners will find no need for Christ. If we don't preach the Gospel in all its sweetness, the sorrowful will despair. Yet we also say the Gospel must predominate in our teaching. God's best counsel as we witness to the world is simply, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE!" And so while the law was indeed our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, and we don't cast our pearls before the swine, the Gospel alone converts, and the Gospel alone populates heaven, "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

III. Jesus is with us always in body, spirit and the Word. Finally beloved, as we are now living in the End Times, which are indeed fearful days according to our flesh, therefore remember the promise Christ gives you, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Visibly He left His disciples, but not invisibly. He was and still is with all His disciples in both body and spirit, and His Word and Spirit lives in our hearts even now, for we were baptized INTO HIS NAME MOST HOLY.

For our comfort, and also for a fearless faith, Christ has left us that same promise throughout the Bible, that we may stand and testify before kings and devils, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God." Do not live in fear, but comfort yourself with that Spirit of Comfort, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you!" He comes to you today through your Baptism, the Gospel Word you hear, and also Holy Communion. As Luther said "He's by our side upon the plain." And as God said to the Hebrews, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Face your enemies then without fear. "Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The Lord your God which goeth before you, He shall fight for you." Your God is an Almighty and All-powerful Man of War, who made peace between God and man with His own blood. Not only is He with you always, but He's promised to deliver you from all evil and lift you up to heaven. As your King ascended, entering into His glory, so you too shall ascend and be glorified. "As my King, Christ with His almighty power rules over all creatures, governs and protects His Church, and finally leads it to glory." "Lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world." Amen.