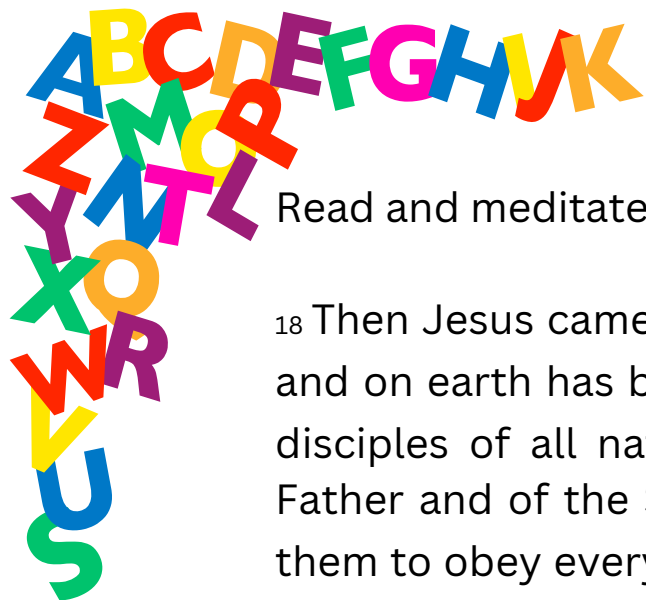




For Further Study

Read and meditate on the passage below:

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

This passage comes from Matthew’s gospel account, and it is typically called the “Great Commission.” Jesus speaks of his own “authority,” which is not a reference to power but to influence. Jesus is commissioning his apostles, and Matthew is applying it to his readership. Because Jesus is our rabbi and teacher, we are to take his teaching, apply it to how we live, and share it with others. This is what discipleship is all about.

Most of the verbs in this passage are participles that refer to ongoing action. Thus, “as we go” we are to make disciples. This is not by having some kind of discipleship training class at church; rather, it is by taking the life-changing experience of Jesus with us into our homes, schools, work places, and communities. Discipleship is not about getting people to Jesus but about getting Jesus to people.

Baptism then, is not so much about becoming a member of a church but about affirming a desire to walk in the ways of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Salvation is not a momentary experience but an ongoing, continuous education. As we go, we learn. As we learn, we grow. As we grow, we change. As we change, we mature. As we know better, we do better!

Jesus concludes that he is with us. He is our Emmanuel, the God who is with us. This is what life is about--living in relationship with God, ourselves, others and creation.

PRACTICE:
Consider ways that
you can share the
“good news!”

