



Day One: Restoring the Connection

In the light of our understanding that Jesus' desire and purpose for coming has always been to restore our oneness with Him, we can see the Great Commission in a whole new light.

Just before Jesus left the earth to return to His Father in heaven (and Holy Spirit was released on the earth), He commissioned His disciples to go into all the world, preach the Gospel, baptize people and make disciples of all nations.

➤ **See:** Matthew 28:18 – 20 and Mark 16:15 – 18.

Yet somehow we've watered this down to think that we're fulfilling the Great Commission if we are telling people about Jesus and seeing individuals convert to the Christian faith. But that is so far short of what Jesus actually commissioned us to do!

Jesus is not interested in making converts! He doesn't want to bring people to the point of conversion where they intellectually believe in Jesus and raise their hand at an altar call or tick a box on a decision card and think 'Yep, I've got my ticket to heaven now.' We've just looked at the whole journey He went through – the pain and the passion – to make it possible for Him to once again connect spirit-to-spirit, heart-to-heart with mankind. He did all He could up until the point that we get to choose. If we don't choose heart connection with Him (not just conversion), everything He's done for us is in vain and His longing goes unfulfilled. We may get to heaven, but we'll fall well short of what He intended. What He wants is to bring people into true connection with Him... into oneness. These are His disciples and the ones who will change the world.

Consider baptism. Jesus said as part of the Great Commission, that the people who choose to believe in Him should be baptized. Baptism is not just an outward statement to say that we believe in Jesus. The symbolism of going into the water and then coming back up again, is to demonstrate our sense of oneness with Him. Going into the waters is representative of our being crucified with Christ (in other words, we let our old identity die) and coming



out of the water is representative of our being resurrected with Christ (in other words, we receive our new identity of who we are IN HIM).

Romans 6:3 – 4 (NLT) *Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.*

Galatians 3:27 *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

It was out of this heart that Jesus gave us the Great Commission. He longs to be connected to EVERY heart! He wants the whole world to know the depth of His love for us, the immensity of our worth, and how to live in intimacy and oneness with Him. There are two categories of people He is longing for:

- Many of us who know Him and have committed our lives to Him, are one with Him in spirit yet don't live as though that's true. We are missing out on the most beautiful romance and the resurrected life!
- Many others do not know Him at all. To these people, He is completely cut off, yet He desires connection with them more than life itself!

With such a powerful love fuelling it, how is it that the Great Commission - to go and make disciples of all NATIONS has not yet been completely fulfilled?

Soak Time

Is Holy Spirit giving you an answer to this question?



Day Two: The Missing Pieces

We absolutely cannot fulfil Christ's commission to disciple nations without living life as one with Him. We need to hear His whispers to our hearts in the secret place to direct our steps. We need His strength flowing through us to energise our minds and bodies. We need His love with which to wrap arms around the world. Oneness with Jesus is essential in order to get the job done.

Yet there still is another gaping hole in the strategy He gave us and that is our lack of oneness with each other.

All along, we've thought the Great Commission is about loving the unsaved. And we've become reasonably good at doing that and ministering the love of Jesus to the world.

But we're not so good at having Jesus' heart level love with each other in the body. And that's why people don't want to come to church! There's very little heart-level love in the church. It's splintered and divided and not much of a drawcard to anyone. To most unbelievers it seems very hypocritical for us to talk about loving the world, when we aren't loving one another! And it is!

If we are truly one with Him, how can we walk independently of one another when it's His same heart living in each one of us? We are called an Army but we march to different drumbeats. If we marched to the one drumbeat – the beating of His heart – we would be marching in the same direction. Yet we're not. How can any general – even Jesus - direct an army who are fighting different battles under different strategies and are not defending one another? Will an army like that ever win a war or enforce a victory?

It was Jesus who said:

Mark 3:24 – 25 (NASB) *If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.*



We live in the Kingdom of God, and Jesus calls us His house built of living stones, of which He is the cornerstone. Divided, we cannot stand.

➤ Luke 17:20 – 21, Hebrews 3:6, Ephesians 2:19 – 22.

There is power and strength in oneness. The Bible says that one person can chase a thousand but two people can put ten thousand to flight (Deuteronomy 32:30). Even in the time of the tower of Babel, before man had the Spirit of God living in their hearts, God said that if they were one people trying to accomplish the one purpose, then nothing would be impossible for them.

Genesis 11:6 (NIV) *The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them."*

He had to stop them from being one people (through changing their languages and scattering them), in order to stop them accomplishing what they were planning to. What does this say about the power of one people with one purpose? What would happen if we truly became the one body He calls us?

The revelation of oneness is the revelation He's bringing to the earth to see the Great Commission completed, because until the body is one, we cannot win the world. And until everybody is in place, the body does not have its full strength. But when we come together, nothing will be impossible for us...



What is Holy Spirit speaking to you about this?



Day Three: That the World Will Believe

If we would know Him intimately, we will know that oneness with us and each other is the biggest thing on His agenda. It always has been and it still is. Jesus is continuing to put this plan into place:

Ephesians 1:9 – 10 (NLT) *God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfil his own good pleasure. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ – everything in heaven and on earth.*

Even as Jesus was about to go to the cross, this plan was on His mind.

Q: Do you think the last prayer Jesus prayed over His disciples and us would be significant?

Jesus prayed a prayer for you and I! We are not yet fully seeing the culmination of that prayer, but...

Q: Did Jesus ever pray a prayer which was not answered?

If someone else prayed it, we might wonder if fulfilment was possible. But Jesus never prayed a prayer which was not answered because He only said what His Father said... it's going to manifest! And this is what He prayed:

John 17:20 (NLT) *I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.*

He's praying here for ALL who will ever believe. Not all from one denomination, or all from one nation. All believers, everywhere. All who will ever believe in Him through their (the disciples') message.

Q: Does that include you and I?

Of course it does! So these scriptures are Jesus' prayer for all of us. And they were His last thought before He went to the cross (outside of the prayer for His own strength in the Garden of Gethsemane). This is what He prayed:



John 17:21 (NLT) *I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one – as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.*

This is ALL of us again – no believer is left out of this prayer. It was not prayed over a specific denomination, nation or group of people, but all – every believer everywhere, both then and in the future.

Then the most amazing statement- Jesus prayed that we would be one, JUST AS the Father and He were one. Stop and meditate on that for a moment! Jesus was actually comparing the oneness of the body of Christ to Trinity oneness between Himself, God, and Holy Spirit. Trinity oneness in which they are absolutely one and work together without disharmony in every way at every moment of time!

And here's the kicker – He prayed that we would be one as they are one, **SO THAT THE WORLD WILL BELIEVE!**

Does this not verify the missing piece in our fulfilment of the Great Commission? This is why the world does not believe – we are not one! This is what the world is waiting for! And this is what Jesus is believing for! It is when the world sees our oneness – and only then - that they will believe in Jesus.

If they're not believing, it's because we're not one.



Has my mindset towards the body of Christ worked for or against oneness?



Day Four: One Heart and Mind

If we continue reading John 17, we discover more treasure contained in the verses:

John 17:22 (NLT) *I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one.*

His glory is His fullness in us. It is Jesus replicated in each human being, through the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling in us. It is His heart in us, as we looked at previously in Ezekiel 11:19.

We have it! His heart in each of us was not only so we could be connected in oneness with Him. The inevitable result of that is that we would also be connected in oneness with each other. For how can we be disconnected when His heart is in me and His heart is in you? It's the same heart! The only thing that can cover or divide us... is our flesh!

It is only as we walk in the glory He has given – the glory of His heart replicated in each of our hearts – instead of our flesh, that we will be one as Jesus, Father and Holy Spirit are one.

This is the how it is made possible - His glory SO THAT we will be one! We must choose to be so connected to Him, His heart, His way of thinking, speaking and doing, His Word, following His leading, and believing the truth of His Heart and His Spirit inside of us, that we are not being led by our flesh. When we do this, and when other believers do this, oneness is the inevitable result.

We have to let nothing get between us and Jesus. We follow Jesus, not religion or our feelings. We follow His leading, not our opinions. We choose to believe what His Word says, not the experiences and theologies of man. And when we let Him live through us, we'll find we desire oneness more than anything!

Let's also look at the **Message Translation of John 17:21 - 22**

V21 The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind – just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so they might be one heart and mind with us...



V22 The same glory you gave me, I gave them, so they'll be as unified and together as we are – I in them and you in me. Then they'll be mature in this oneness.

This reaffirms everything in the NLT translation and also specifies the dimension of this being the goal that is set before us, as well as the distinction that this process of oneness involves both our hearts and our minds.

Our minds have to continually choose to line up with what is in our hearts (His heart), rather than lining up with our opinions, emotions and feelings. We have to choose to believe what we can't yet see because Jesus said it and trust Him to bring it to pass through us. Only a mature believer and a mature body can do that...

Soak Time

Consider **John 17:21 – 22 (NLT)**. Read it over as you spend time with Him. Don't rush, just meditate on and ponder on these scriptures. Even read them in multiple translations. What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you about this?

Are you aware of any other scriptures in the Bible (there are many) which demonstrate God's heart for oneness among His people? If not, ask Him.



Day Five: Stories From Your Sisters

The receiving of messages for the One Heart retreat was another area in which Jesus demonstrated what oneness looks like... the fitting together perfectly of the puzzle pieces!

We knew that Mandy Ballin and Ainsley Shepherd were called to bring the messages. After God spoke that the retreat was to go ahead, they sat down together and felt God had showed them that there were four main points that He wanted to bring across at the retreat (in addition to introducing His heart for oneness). These became the messages for the weekend, but they didn't know who was to speak each one of them:

1. The love of God (Loved, Chosen and Wanted)
2. Our identity in Him (Treasures in Jars of Clay)
3. The secret place (She Wears White)
4. How to live it (Life From the Secret Place)

From that point, Holy Spirit started to download to each of the girls what would be in the messages He wanted them to preach. For Ainsley, it was predominantly during prayer and praise times. For Mandy, Jesus even revealed the heart and context of the messages through dreams! Neither of them had spoken together about what they had been receiving since the first time they'd realised what the overriding messages themes would be.

When we all came together in a team meeting to receive a detailed vision for the retreat and to begin planning, we talked about the messages. Mandy shared what God had shown her about how the context of the messages would fit together (as a bridal message related to the Jewish wedding ceremony).

Then she said, "Oh, He's giving me lots about messages 2 and 3, but I don't know... I'm getting nothing for messages 1 and 4!"



Ainsley immediately laughed and pulled out her notes! “I KNEW you would be doing 2 and 3! God has been giving me messages 1 and 4, but nothing for 2 and 3!”

We were amazed and it left us in no doubt as to whom God intended to bring each message. It was a small but significant moment, as we saw how even without our help to organise and facilitate it, Holy Spirit was well capable of fitting us together in oneness with each other. Mandy’s piece of the puzzle and Ainsley’s piece of the puzzle both fit exactly together, side by side, even though each piece and each woman was different.

Your piece of the puzzle fits exactly together beside someone else’s pieces, too! Do you know who they are?