



LET'S BEGIN HERE

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He didn't take the apostles and other believers along with Him. Why? Jesus had plans for them—plans that only they could fulfill, only by the power of the Holy Spirit. Shortly before His departure, Jesus gave His followers what we now call “The Great Commission,” outlined in Matthew 28:16–20.

These “marching orders” to make disciples throughout the world are vibrantly current—it's been the privilege of believers from the first century until today.



DIGGING DEEPER



Searching the Scriptures Tip: Structure Your Study

When searching the Scriptures, a helpful first step is to gather resources that will guide you in your study. Make certain you have handy a Bible dictionary and a concordance, as well as a reliable commentary on the book of the Bible you're studying. (If you don't yet have these materials, find a solid concordance and Bible dictionary online.) For this message, we recommend you get a copy of *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Acts*. You'll find a description of that and other resources on the last page of this study.

- Reading different Bible versions can help you to read the same passage with fresh perspective. If you don't have different versions handy, visit biblegateway.com or bible.org.
- Remember: *Observation* is a critical beginning technique you will want to use to put together the pieces of a passage of Scripture. Paying particular attention to Matthew 28:16–20 and Acts 1:9–11, make some

Quotable

*This is the highest
Christology to
be found in all
Holy Scripture:
“All authority.”
Such God-granted
authority requires
one response from
everyone: complete
submission,
absolute obedience.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



initial observations about what you see—for instance, *are there any repeated words? Did Matthew and Luke use any connecting words that offer clues into what they were emphasizing?* Write down your observations and discoveries.



Observation: The Mount of Olives in Acts 1

Often, in order to sufficiently study a passage, we need to investigate the text preceding or following it for proper context. In observing Acts 1:9–11, for example, we jump into the middle of the action. It's easy to overlook the setting where the action is taking place—where *are* these folks? When we read Acts 1:12, however, we discover that “the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a distance of half a mile.” Learning the setting of the passage in this case gives us a treasure trove of biblical import.

Read what Chuck Swindoll says about the significance of the Mount of Olives:

[Jesus] led His followers to a spot on the Mount of Olives, probably over the ridge from Jerusalem, somewhere down the eastern slope. It's a deeply meaningful place in the Old Testament. When the light of God's presence departed the forsaken temple, never to be seen there again, “the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city” (Ezekiel 11:23). According to the prophet Zechariah, the Lord will come to this mount before taking control of Jerusalem. Only the all-powerful King won't climb and then descend the mountain; the mountain will miraculously move out of His way, parting like a curtain before Him (Zechariah 14:4).¹

How elegant, how incredibly consistent is God's Word, that the risen Jesus would ascend from the very spot where Zechariah prophesied the Messiah would make a supernatural stand on the Mount of Olives to judge the nations. The ascension wasn't Jesus' only association with the Mount of Olives. Jesus ministered many times at the Mount; He taught about the end times there (Matthew 24:3–25), His triumphal entry took place there (Mark 11:1–10), and finally, He wept and prayed there shortly before the crucifixion (Luke 22:39–48).

And we glean all of this by taking note of location.





Feeding the Hungry: Grow Your Teaching from Good to Great

The Word of God is our spiritual bread, and people are starving. But even when they have access to the Bible in abundance, people don't always know how to dig in. Great teachers take their students down a path from their current circumstances to the context and principles of the Bible and back again. Great Bible teachers bridge the concepts of the Bible so that these concepts are clearly understood and applicable to life.

Read the following tips that Chuck typically follows when he's preparing to teach or preach:

Know whom you're talking to.

Is your audience comprised of believers or unbelievers? What's your motivation for speaking to this individual or group: to instruct, to condemn, to make an introduction or an appeal, to inspire?

Use what your audience knows to teach new concepts.

What are the everyday lived experiences of the people in your audience? Is your audience in a rural context or a college town? Do they live in the city or the country? What are their passions and pastimes?

How would you explain the concept of the Great Commission to a group of kindergarteners, using concepts already familiar to them?

Do your homework. Make things plain.

Consider yourself honored whenever a person or group offers you an audience. Honor that time by being prepared to speak. Even when you are spontaneously given an opportunity to speak to people, create a bull's-eye in your mind . . . a point where you plan to land. In this case, one "target" could be a question. For example:

Matthew 28:17 says, "When they saw [Jesus], they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!" Which kind of disciple are you?



What are some other bull's-eye points from Matthew 28:16–20 that you would share with an audience you were teaching?

Never underestimate the power of a good story or metaphor.

There's nothing quite like a tale, a metaphor, or a word picture to paint a portrait in the mind's eye. For example, when David was blinded to his own sin with Bathsheba, the Lord sent the prophet Nathan to tell David a *story* (2 Samuel 12:1–7). Nathan's narrative created enough emotional distance for David to unwittingly begin to recognize the depth of his sins.

What are some effective similes, metaphors, or stories that you know that would help people understand the Great Commission better?

Give them an application.

A good teacher will give his or her students a wonderful lesson, but a great teacher will utilize the opportunity to prompt listeners to be better disciples after the lesson ends. Give your listeners an action, a takeaway that moves them from passively listening to active worship. In his sermon notes in highlighted letters, Chuck Swindoll typed, "Those men turned the world upside down! The question is: will we?" The question stirs up another in the minds of the audience: "What will I do to turn the world upside down for Christ? How will I make the Great Commission a part of my goal for every day?"



A LIVING HOPE

Marching Orders from the Master

Matthew 28:16–20; Acts 1:9–11

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

What are some applications that you have found for Matthew 28:16–20?

Chuck says in his book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, “When Scripture is properly studied and taught, God’s Spirit will move and draw those whose hearts are hungry for the Bread of Life. Our goal is to prepare it well and serve it in the most appealing way possible. When we do, the hungry will be fed . . . and God will be glorified.”²

May we be teachers who, with conviction and excellence, prepare God’s Word and serve the hungry.



A FINAL PRAYER

Thank You, Lord, for the hope we gain through the authority You have given to Your Son. Give us the compassion and the power of Your Spirit to make disciples. Help us to faithfully teach and mentor the disciples with whom we are privileged to be in relationship.

Endnotes

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Acts* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale, 2016), 23.
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale, 2016), 245.



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A LIVING HOPE

Marching Orders from the Master

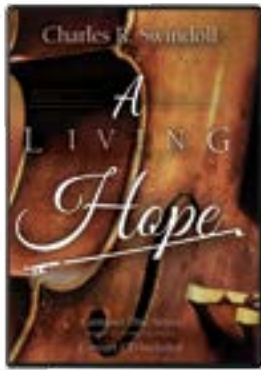
Matthew 28:16–20; Acts 1:9–11

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



Tools for Digging Deeper



A Living Hope
by Charles R. Swindoll
2 CD messages and Concert



Sunday to Sunday:
A Pictorial Journey Through
the Passion Week
by Charles R. Swindoll and
Insight for Living Ministries
Pictorial Devotional



Suddenly One Morning
(radio theater production)
by Charles R. Swindoll
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For the 2017 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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