

Does anyone know what this scripture is called? The Great Commission. Jesus commissioned the disciples into service. He gave them a charge, a job to do while he was gone. I'm going to read it again, but in my favorite translation, *The Message*: "Meanwhile, the eleven disciples were on their way to Galilee, headed for the mountain Jesus had set for their reunion. The moment they saw him they worshiped him. Some, though, held back, not sure about worship, about risking themselves totally." This was right after Jesus's resurrection, so they were afraid of risking their lives to be seen with him. I think we all can relate though, unsure about risking ourselves totally.

Verses 18-20: "Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge." Jesus didn't wait for them all to be ready at the same time. He didn't pause until they were 100% willing to take the risk. He knew he called them despite their response, and they would eventually be ready.

Jesus gave his charge: "God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life [being a disciple is a way of life], marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."

Jesus commissioned his disciples to go spread the good news, and once we have been baptized, we become a disciple and receive this commission too. It's a way of life and that is why the Membership Vows cover all the areas of our lives. When we take these vows, we promise to live a life as a disciple of Jesus Christ with our presence, with our prayers, with our gifts, with our service, and with our witness.

Our witness is telling others about Jesus and how our lives are different because of him. Our witness is also shown through our actions, how we show others the love of Christ. We all know people who talk the talk, but don't walk the walk. When people walk the walk, when they put their faith into practice, when they live it, day after day after day, we really see that there is something to this. We really see Christ in them.

I told you last week that I'm not the only minister here that is commissioned into ministry, and we see that in this scripture. We are all commissioned as disciples and to tell others about Christ upon our baptism. At my commissioning service, there was a wonderful preacher, a bishop who is serving in the Illinois area. I want to show you a clip of his sermon that talks about this very thing. Even though he preached at the commissioning and ordination service, he reminded us that all ministry starts in the waters of baptism. We often put special emphasis or expectations on the clergy, but we are all disciples and have been commissioned by Christ.

Video can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/channels/1383403>. The clip begins at 27:50 minutes in and ends at 35:26.

"There's more than enough ministry to be done. And it will take all of us together to do it." "We need all hands on deck, all of us fully engaged, full-time Christians." Day after day after day, we live this way of life. We don't get weekends off. We're not a Christian only on Sundays. We are tasked to be full-time Christians every day until we take our last breath. The world needs us to be full-time Christians, to walk the walk. The world needs us to show there is a better way to live.

United Methodists understand that we fulfill our commission by committing all areas of our lives that includes our presence, prayers, gifts, and service. All of this is our witness. Committing to this way of life and living it, day after day after day, is the best way we show others the love of Christ.

I hope this sermon series on the membership vows has helped you understand the importance of taking these vows. We are making one of the most important decisions in our lives by committing to be a follower of Christ. We promise to become part of the body of Christ, this community, and do our part in God's transformation of the world. We vow to make our faith a priority in our life by being fully present with God and each other, by praying for each other, by sharing our resources with each other, and by serving each other and serving the needy with each other. By doing these things, we are walking the walk and growing our faith. We enjoy living a better way of life, but we also spread the gospel message by the way we live our lives, by being full-time Christians.

If you feel the Holy Spirit moving you, and you would like to make this commitment to Christ and join this community, talk to me after the service. You may have attended here for a long time, but never officially taken the membership vows. Perhaps now is the time to do so. Perhaps you've never been baptized, but you feel that God is calling you to this way of life. We extend God's invitation to you and welcome you to come.