

Discipleship Series 1 & 2: Discipleship as a Biblical Mandate

Matthew 28:19-20



Matthew 28:16-20 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. 17 And when they saw Him, they

worshiped Him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

At the end of Jesus's ministry on earth He issued a mandate to the church: to make disciples. It is within this mandate that the Christian can understand two truths: our personal identity in the faith is to be a disciple of Christ, and the core purpose of the church is to make and grow disciples of Christ. Discipleship is the foundation of what it means to be a Christian and what it means to be a church of Christ.

1) The Mission for Our Life is to Be a Disciple of Christ. In the New Testament, a disciple was not a uniquely Christian idea, rather it represented someone who followed and learned from a master craftsman. Jesus in our master craftsman for life. When the Christian is called by God to believe in Jesus for eternal life, they are also called by God to enter into a personal devotion of following and learning from Jesus. This is an ongoing and continuous relationship with Christ meant to bring about the highest level of relational intimacy with Him. Just as

the goal of the apprentice was to become like the master craftsman, so to is the goal of our discipleship to become like the Lord in our life. No matter how mature a Christian becomes in the faith, they never outgrow their mission to follow and learn from Jesus, and there is no distinction in the Bible between a Christian and a disciple; they are one and the same thing.

2) The Mission for The Church is to Make and Grow Disciples of Christ.

In Jesus's final words to His disciples at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, He defines how the church ought to go about the work of making disciples: "baptizing" and "teaching." In baptizing this represents bringing forth converts to the faith, and in teaching this represents growing those converts in the faith. In short, the mission of the church then is to make and grow followers and learners of Jesus. That is it. This is why the church exists and this what the church works towards in the world. This reality means that every church member should ask themselves, "how if what we are doing right now supporting our mission to make and grow disciples of Christ?" This questioning will help keep the local church on course with its mission in the world.