

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.

Discipleship Series 3 & 4: Disciples are Imitators of Jesus

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1



*1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1
Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to*

the church of God; 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved. 1 Be imitators of me, just as I am also of Christ.

things we strengthen our relational intimacy with God and we start to experience God's presence in our thoughts and our actions.

2) A Disciple of Jesus Practice Outward Disciplines. There were also things that Jesus did as part of His walk that directly impacted the world and the people around Him. These things defined His outward disciplines. Jesus was seen as one who served, witnessed, and practiced fellowship in His life. All these things are what we are to practice in our lives. We show God's grace through our service, we make known God's love through our witness, and we experience God's blessing in our fellowship. By practicing these things as disciples of Jesus we make known to the world the glory of God by how we live our lives.

In Matthew 28, Jesus gives us the mission of our lives: to be disciples of Him. In Luke 6, Jesus gives us the goal of our lives: to become like Him. These things answer the "what" and the "why" of our lives as followers of Christ, but do not answer the question of "how": How do we become like Christ? How do we walk as His disciples? Paul gives us the answer to that question in 1 Corinthians 11: imitate Jesus. It is through a careful examination of Jesus's life that we can find the spiritual disciplines He modeled for us to know how we can be a follower and a learner of Him in life.

1) A Disciple of Jesus Practice Inward Disciplines. There were things that Jesus did as part of His regular walk that were just between Him and God the Father. These things defined His inward disciplines. Jesus was known for prayer, mastery of Scripture, meditation, and practicing silence and solitude before the Father. A disciple of Jesus then practices these same things. We pray regularly, we learn God's word, we meditate or reflect on how well we keep God's word, and we practice silence and solitude to hear a fresh word from God in our lives. By practicing these

Discipleship Series 5 through 9: A Church on a Mission

Acts 2:41-47



Acts 2:41-47 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. 42 And they

were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were dividing them up with all, as anyone might have need. 46 And daily devoting themselves with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number daily those who were being saved.

In Acts chapter two we can see as a good example for how the very first church in Jerusalem fulfilled Jesus's Great Commission and Great Commandment. It is through this mission focused mindset that the church today can best go about the work of making disciples and loving God and loving others.

1) A Mission Focused Church CONVERTS the Lost Through

EVANGELISM. The story of the first church starts and ends with the fruit of evangelism. This was a church that shared the good news of Jesus

with all they encountered. The first step in expanding God's kingdom in the world is by witnessing to the lost.

2) A Mission Focused Church CULTIVATES Growth Through DISCIPLESHIP.

When the people in Jerusalem believed in Jesus they immediately entered into the local body of Christ and started to learn God's word. It is through teaching and applying the word of God that a church grows disciples of Jesus so that they can better obey everything He commanded.

3) A Mission Focused Church CONNECTS With Others Through FELLOWSHIP. In the first church, the love of others started with relationships. Everyone who believed entered into a biblical community of fellowship with one another in the church. This relationship building extended beyond the church and included the mission field "having favor with all the people."

4) A Mission Focused Church CONTRIBUTES to Others Through SERVICE. Loving others through fellowship became the foundation for serving those in need. Every person in the church was contributing to the ministry. The hallmark of a mission focused church is a lifestyle of service among its members.

5) A Mission Focused Church CELEBRATES God Through WORSHIP. The first church expressed their love of God through worship. Worship is the one thing that God does not possess unless we give it to Him. God seeks our worship and the church in Jerusalem eagerly offered their praise and thanksgiving to God daily. Worship in the church is truly a celebration of who God is and what God has done in our lives.

Discipleship Series 10-13: How Jesus Did Discipleship

Matthew 4, 9, and 17



experience a genuine depth of friendship. Jesus developed a close bond with the 12 to teach and model Godly living. The church today uses Small Groups throughout the week to do discipleship in the personal context.

4) Jesus Discipled Intimately by Living In Openness (Matt 17:1-14).

Jesus dedicated an extra measure of His time and attention to disciple 3 men intimately. Peter, James, and John serve to illustrate the intimate context of relationships where 2 to 4 people come together to form the closest bonds. Jesus lived in openness with these 3 men which produced the greatest intimacy and impact in their lives. Today, the church ministers within marriage, mentorship, and the deepest friendships to do discipleship in the intimate context.

1) Jesus Discipled Publicly by Engaging with the Crowds (Matt 4:23).

The first place Jesus is found teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom is among the crowds. These crowds represent the public context of relationships where people gather together in large numbers to engage with outside resources. Jesus engaged with the crowds to preach the gospel of the kingdom. Today, the Sunday morning worship service is a way the church does discipleship in the public context.

2) Jesus Discipled Socially by Sharing in a Community (Matt 9:9). Jesus is found on several occasions doing discipleship in what can best be described as a party. The dinner party at Matthew's house is an example of the social context of relationships where people come together in a group and start to form a sense of community. Jesus shared in this community to call the sinner to faith and challenge the people to change their practices. Today, the church uses things like a Fall Fest as a way to disciple in the social context.

3) Jesus Discipled Personally by Developing Close Bonds (Matt 4:19).

Jesus is recorded as spending most of His time doing discipleship among the 12. The cohort of the 12 disciples is an example of the personal context of relationships where a small group of people come together to