

2022 Theme - Extraordinary God + Ordinary People = Transformed Lives

Sermon Series - Extraordinary Discipleship

Sermon Title - Discipled to Disciple

Sermon Text - Matthew 28:16-20

Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry

"In the darkness we were waiting, without hope, without light.
Till from heaven You came running. There was mercy in Your eyes!"

It still amazes me that God would look down upon us and care so much that He would send His One and Only Son to this wicked world and that He would have mercy in His eyes! Folks, that's the Good News, and that's why we gather on Sundays to celebrate, and that's why we do all that we can to spread the Good News to people who are still lost in the darkness. We care about them and want them to find the same hope and peace we've found! That's why we desire to raise up disciples of Jesus who will do the same. We don't want to be selfish with what we have found and with what we have. Let's pray and ask God to help us understand that Jesus discipled people so they could disciple others and that He would help us do the same. Let's Pray!

When Jesus was beginning His public ministry this took place...

Matthew 4:18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

Matthew 4:19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."

Matthew 4:20 At once they left their nets and followed him.

While the disciples were slow to understand, and the world totally misunderstood Jesus' purpose in coming to this old world, we now know that Jesus was not putting together a political cabinet, or a political party to set up an earthly kingdom to rule the world. He was instead calling a group of men to follow Him, to learn from Him and to watch Him care for the sick, feed the hungry, free the demon possessed, and to listen to Him teach God's truth in ways they had never heard before! And Jesus was doing these things in front of them so they could learn His ways and continue His ministry long after He was gone! A.B. Bruce put it this way in his classic work, *The Training of The Twelve*...

"Follow Me," said Jesus to the fishermen of Bethsaida, "and I will make you fishers of men." These words (whose originality stamps them as a genuine saying of Jesus) show that the great Founder of the faith desired not only to have disciples, but to have about Him men whom He might train to make disciples of others: to cast the net of divine truth into the sea of the world, and to land on the shores of the divine kingdom a great multitude of believing souls. Both from His words and from His actions we can see that He attached supreme importance to that part of His work which consisted in training the twelve. In the intercessory prayer, [18] e.g., He speaks of the training He had given these men as if it had been the principal part of His own earthly

ministry. And such, in one sense, it really was. The careful, painstaking education of the disciples secured that the Teacher's influence on the world should be permanent; that His kingdom should be founded on the rock of deep and indestructible convictions in the minds of the few, not on the shifting sands of superficial evanescent impressions on the minds of the many.

Bruce, A.B.. Training of the Twelve "Principles for Christian Leadership" (Brighton Christian Classic Series Book 6) . Brighton Publishing LLC. Kindle Edition.

In other words, Jesus selected a few men to intentionally train, so they could then train others, who could train others to train others, to train others, and if that chain would remain unbroken, the world would come to know the Good News we just sang about! Jesus knew the importance of not doing ministry alone. He was, once again, not building a political team to force His will upon the world. Remember what Jesus told Pilate when He was on trial?

John 18:36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

Jesus was building a team of fully devoted disciples who would carry His good news message of hope, mercy, and offer of forgiveness to all who would receive the message into their hearts and lives! In other words, He was building a Kingdom in the hearts and minds of those who would follow so they would ultimately reign with Him in His heavenly kingdom!

Just the other day I got a letter in the mail from my friend Phil Murphy who heads up a missionary training organization in Florida, called Heart! One of the young ladies who had been disciplined there and now runs a Human trafficking rescue operation in East Asia, wrote "When it comes to changing the world there's an old saying, 'If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together!'" So when it comes to ministry you might be able to do things faster if you work by yourself, but if you want your work to outlast you, and to go farther than you could ever take it yourself, then you must embrace the principles of discipleship Jesus taught! In fact, if we don't embrace the concept of discipleship then we fall prey to one of Satan's evil schemes to keep the Good News of Jesus from spreading. And what scheme would that be? Satan has many. One of the most influential Christian scholars in my life was a man by the name of Avery T. Willis. He wrote a book called The Biblical Basis of Missions! In this book he tells a story of a conversation between Satan and some of his top leaders that could have happened. I want to read that story to you this morning. It's epic and very telling!

Satan calls a summit meeting of the rulers of darkness, the rulers of wickedness, the principalities, the powers, and the demons sometime in the second half of the first century A.D. "I have called this extraordinary plenary session of representatives from every sector of the Evil Kingdom because we need a new strategy. Since the Pentecost sensation, we have had a standoff or worse with the followers of the Nazarene. Our strategy of intimidation, persecution, temptation, and murder has not stopped the church." "We have Paul, that over-zealous missionary, in jail," said the Spirit Prince of Rome, "so we have their leadership under wraps."

"Remember Philippi!" warned the Spirit Prince of Macedonia. "Neither Paul nor the other leaders are our main problem," said Satan. "We have killed several of the apostles, but we can't stop the ordinary people." "That's right," added the potentate of Palestine. "They talk about Jesus spontaneously, whether they have a leader or not. When we scatter them by persecution, it is like trying to stamp out a grass fire. In no time new leaders spring up." "They don't need a place to meet either," added a demon from Asia Minor. "When we have them kicked out of synagogues or public meeting places, they just worship in their homes. When we have services banned, they go to the catacombs." "Why should they be such a problem?" asked an evil spirit. "They are unlearned and ignorant." "They may not be educated," said Legion, "but they are not unlearned in spiritual things. They can cast you out of someone in a moment. Their leaders equip and train them to face anything."

"Then how do we stop them?" asked Satan. "If we can't stop them by force, we must be shrewder." All the evil spirit beings sat in silent despair. Suddenly Satan stood to his feet. "I have it!" he exclaimed. "We will make Christians think that only leaders can witness!" "Hey, that's a great idea!" shouted the Spirit Prince of Greece. "We can tell them that leaders are different and no one else is equipped or ordained to do their jobs." "And we can tell the leaders that they can have the authority in the church," said the Spirit Prince of Persia, "and they'll gladly fall for that!" "Right!" said a spiritual potentate. "We can even tell them that the offices of the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, and the teacher are all combined in the office of pastor. Then the pastor will have so much work to do that the church will hardly grow." "That way," added the Spirit Prince of Persia, warming to the discussion, "he won't have time to pray or to study the Word." "More important than that," Satan said, "he won't have time to equip the saints. Especially if we can keep him busy trying to do all the church's ministries." "Then we can get the ordinary Christians to gripe at him because things aren't going well," added a demon, gleefully. "We could even get them to say that the pastor gets paid to do the spiritual work," said the Spirit Prince of Egypt, "and the Christians will forget that they are priests, too. We can tell them they have nothing more to do than to support the pastor." "Right," interjected a potentate, "and we could give the pastor designations to make him different. For instance, we could say he is 'full-time' so the members will think their ministry is 'part-time.'" "We could say he is the servant of God so members would think they aren't. We could even say he has surrendered for special service so that they think their service isn't important." "Then, if we could make him think he has special status through special spiritual gifts, ordination, or education," chipped in a lesser power, "we could wipe out the service of the people of God. They will think they are amateurs." "We could even make them think that missionaries who go to other races are holier than anyone else. Then no ordinary Christian would ever dream he is to be a missionary," said another Spirit Prince. Satan said: "Most honored potentates, principalities, powers, and demons, we have devised a most propitious strategy. It will take time to accomplish it, but it will work. We will revise our strategy and make Christianity respectable. That will dull the cutting edge and blur its distinctiveness to the world. We will convince men again, as we have in the past, that worship is to be done in a certain place and at a specific time. We will make them passive spectators of their hardworking leaders. Our kingdom will not be in danger if we can keep the church members passive and have to fight only overburdened leaders."

Avery T. Willis, Jr. Former Vice President of Overseas Operations International Mission Board.
Pages 41-43.

When I read that years ago I was simply blown away and convicted to the core that I was to live my life to not only share the love of Jesus with people, but to also make disciples who could share the love of Jesus and make disciples! You see, Jesus knew Satan's strategies and that's why he instructed the remaining 11 disciples to fulfill what has become known as the Great Commission!

Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

Matthew 28:17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Why is this called the Great Commission? Well, it has to do with the meaning of the word and it has so many meanings. Here are a few found in the Webster's Dictionary...

- a. formal written warrant granting the power to perform various acts or duties
- b. a certificate conferring military rank and authority
- c. an authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or to perform prescribed acts
- d. a formal request to produce something (especially an artistic work) in exchange for payment
- e. a group of persons directed to perform some duty

Jesus was certainly directing His disciples to perform a duty! He had the authority to confer authority on His disciples to act in a prescribed manner and to produce something! And what were they to produce? Disciples! Webster's dictionary states that the etymology of the word goes...

"back to the Latin, commencement of a game," from committere "to join together, engage, place in the keeping of, entrust, bring about."

So from all of that I would like to suggest that The Great Commission is a Co-Mission that we are to participate in as coworkers, joined together with Jesus to accomplish His mission of reaching a lost and dying world with the Good News Of God's Love! We will have a whole sermon on that coming up in January. I know I keep mentioning the upcoming theme for the year, "Focus On What Matters," but I'm so excited to see our church take the next steps into its glorious future of reaching The Northshore and ultimately the world with the life changing message of Jesus Christ! So the point of today's message is this...

Jesus disciplined the disciples so they could make disciples! That was His strategy. Jesus gave the great commission to the disciples as His final instructions to them, and as followers of Christ we are disciples, therefore, the Great Commission to make disciples applies to us! We've been commissioned to make disciples!

So let's examine these verses closely and discover some important facts about this thing called discipleship!

Fact #1: Jesus had authority to give the Great Commission!

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

A. Jesus had authority because of who sent Him!

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus was God on mission to our world! He was the Word made flesh! He had said over and over that He and The Father were one. People who heard Him speak were amazed that He spoke as one who had great authority! So Jesus now stands on that authority as He is about to transfer God's mission to His followers! And when Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection He told them this...

John 20:19 ... "Peace be with you!"

John 20:20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

John 20:22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

So Jesus, by the authority of His Father, came and disciplined the disciples and then gave them the authority and commanded them to do the same.

B. Jesus had the authority because of who He was!

You might remember that the Apostle John wrote this about Jesus in His Gospel...

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 He was with God in the beginning.

John 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

And a few verses later he states that...

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

C. Jesus had the authority to give the commission because of what He did!

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—
John 10:15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.

What a price He had paid and He wanted to get the message to the whole wide world that He had made a way for all who would receive to become children of God! At the end of our service today we are going to take the Lord's Supper to remember the price He paid to make a way for us to be saved! And parents, if you have a child who has accepted Christ and has been baptized, you are welcome to go get them from Shorekids when we begin the invitation song and bring them in here to participate. And now fact #2...

Fact #2: The Great Commission should be a way of life!

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The word "therefore," means "because." Because I have authority I give you this charge, this instruction, this responsibility, this privilege, this mission! He then says "go and make disciples of all nations!" In the Greek language, this is a participial phrase which literally means, "as you go," or "as you are going!"

Why does this matter? The mission of God is to be a part of our daily life. It is to be a lifestyle. It is not something we only do when we attend church or go on a church mission trip. It is something we live every day. We live on mission! The first verb in the Great Commission is not go, but make. As you are going, make disciples! That's the mission of God continued. Jesus had twelve original disciples, but other disciples soon followed, and those disciples made disciples and those disciples made other disciples and so on and so on all the way down to 1974 when I heard the good news, got saved and was then discipled! And all the way down to whatever year you believed and then were discipled. A disciple is not just a believer in Jesus, but is a person who is a fully committed follower of Christ and who realizes they have been called by God to continue His mission to seek and to save those who are lost!

And how do we accomplish this? Well, for starters, we take the Good News with us to work, to school, to the gym, to the supermarket and any other place we go. We are not to be obnoxious about it, or pushy or try to preach a whole sermon to someone while we are standing in the checkout line. Just let the good news naturally overflow in your life and attitude. I was at a restaurant in Nashville, TN with some good friends years ago and we were standing at the

counter waiting for our food and waiting and waiting and waiting. They were understaffed and slammed at the drive through. When they finally handed me my food the worker apologized for the wait and I said something like this... "No problem, I know y'all are really super busy and understaffed. Thanks for being so kind and I hope you'll get some well deserved rest when you get home tonight! God bless you!" About that time, another lady, who was behind us, said: "Hey young man!" I don't hear that anymore! She said, "Can I ask you a question?" I said sure. She said, "Are you religious or something, because normal people don't do things like that!" I said, "Well, Jesus saved my life many years ago and I owe Him everything, and I just want others to know He loves them too!" She said, "Yep, I just knew it, 'cause normal people just aren't that nice!" I told her Jesus loved her and had a wonderful plan for her life too.

So that's more about sharing your faith, as you go, but when you have someone who is interested in learning about how to follow Jesus and how to grow in their faith, the same principle applies. As you are going about your life, find ways to include a newer believer in your life! Take the time to fellowship with them and to answer their questions as best you can. Read Scripture with them and pray with them and invite them to your small group so they can build relationships with others in the family of God! And of course, when a person makes a decision to believe, trust, and put their faith in Christ we help them to paint a picture of that new way of life through baptism. Baptism symbolizes the sacrifice Jesus made to bring to us God's forgiveness, cleansing, power, love, and eternal hope! And it also paints the picture of how we crucify the old ungodly ways of life and are raised to walk a new life in Christ. And this leads us to the next really important fact found in the Great Commission...

Fact #3: The Great Commission comes with a Lesson Plan

Matthew 28:20 ...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

I love it! Jesus didn't tell us to come up with a teaching plan! He handed us a teaching plan with the way He lived and the things He taught! And once again, get ready because we're going to do a detailed study of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew's Gospel in 2023! I've often said this: if we could just get people to just live by the red letters of the Bible the world would become a significantly better place! As you know, in many translations the words Jesus spoke are written in red. Okay, to live the red letters! That may sound like a noble mission, but is it really practical or possible? I mean can anyone really live a lifestyle on mission for God every day? Especially when so many reject Jesus as the Messiah and some are even hostile to the gospel. Of course some just think it's nonsense. How do we deal with that? And there are others who are respectful, but have decided they just can't believe Jesus is the way, the truth and the life! And by the way, not all non-Christians are mean, hate-filled people. I've even met some really nice unbelievers! But I'll tell them, in a Christ loving way, I believe their life could be so much more if they would just give Jesus a chance. And many would agree that the red letters are a pretty good blueprint to live life by. Let me just give you a few, because, after all, I have been commissioned to teach you what Jesus taught! So here's one example found in Luke's Gospel. Jesus said...

Luke 6:31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Luke 6:32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

Luke 6:33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.

Luke 6:34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.

Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Luke 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Luke 6:37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

I know that's a tall order, right? And if you're going to teach it, you've got to live it or no one will listen to a word you say! But let me leave you with some really good news for a disciple of Christ...

Fact #4: The Great Commission comes with a Promise

Matthew 28:20 "...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Folks, that's proof right there that our mission is a co-mission! Jesus promised to do missions with us! We are not alone! We have been given His precious Holy Spirit to teach us, gift us, empower us, lead us, and encourage us! Jesus had already given the disciples some important specifics of His promise...

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—

John 14:17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

John 14:19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

John 14:20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

Praise God, it's the Great Commission and it's a co-mission, us and the Lord, making disciples of all nations, one heart and soul at a time! There's three basic things Northshore Church is all about! Transforming Worship, People and the World! We will have a full sermon on that the second Sunday of January. Worship is loving God not only at worship gatherings on Sunday

mornings, but as we live our lives the other six days of the week. And then transforming people is all about reaching the lost, and then discipling them to become like Jesus in their lives. And when you live like Jesus, you feed the hungry, take care of the sick, clothe those who are without, and you might even go on a mission trip to build houses in Baja Mexico! You see, discipleship is really a part of everything we do at Northshore Church! Our children's ministry is about helping our little ones grow and learn how to be followers of Jesus. Our student ministry is about helping our youth learn to follow Jesus and not the destructive things the world has to offer. We want them to learn how to be leaders and to stand up for what is right, and good, and just, and Godly and Christlike! It's why we have small groups and mission trips. You see, a huge part of why we go on the mission trips to Baja, besides building houses for people in great need, is to give people a chance to see and experience what it's like to be on mission for Jesus. It's all about discipleship, because we have been discipled to disciple! As the praise band comes back up and we get ready to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross so we could be His disciples, let's pray. And those parents who need to get their children can do so now. Prayer.

1 Corinthians 11:23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,

1 Corinthians 11:24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

1 Corinthians 11:25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

1 Corinthians 11:26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.