

Title: You've got one job
Text: Matthew 28.16-20
Theme: The great commission
Series: Matthew #131
Prop Stmtnt The mission of every believer is congregational in its application and goal.

Read Text:

Not far from here there is a building on a neighborhood street that has a sign out front identifying the building as a church. On Sunday's a handful of people gather, and while the sanctuary can hold a 150 or so, the 6 people who are there sit all spread out. I am not kidding. One sits in the front. A couple in the middle, another on the back right and another on the back left and one is on the platform. Why do they sit so far apart from each other? That is where they have always sat. Church for them is doing what they have always been doing. But, are they actually doing what the mission of the church is? Is the mission of the church to sit in the same building once a week for about 45 minutes and then go back to your life with no discernible change? Is that church? What is church? Shouldn't we define church based on what the Lord of the church said that church is supposed to be? Did Christ come to the earth, live, die, rise again and ascend so that people will attend a dull, dry event once a week, with no discernible change? No.

In an adjoining state, one of our nation's mega-churches came out with a startling discovery. In spite of all of their sophistication, technology, appeal, numerical growth, financial success and notoriety, they admitted that the people who attended there experienced very little, if any spiritual growth. Oh sure, they enjoyed the gathering and the many services provided by the church. They thought that things were well done, even witty at times, and felt good about the environment for their kids but honestly, they really did not look more like, nor really think more like Jesus now than when they first started attending. Did Christ come to the earth, live, die, rise again and ascend so that people will attend an impressive, sophisticated, witty and provocative spiritually sounding event once a week with no discernible change? No.

So, what is the difference between the two? Nothing, really. They both call themselves churches, but the mission from Christ is to Make Disciples. It does not matter how impressive our facilities are, how many people attend our services, nor how long we have kept the doors open. If we are not making disciples of Jesus Christ, we cannot legitimately call ourselves a church. We are always tempted to become organized and institutionalized. When we do that, we are tempted to determine the success and failure of our church based on a rubric such as: did we start on time, did we end on time, did we stay in budget, were there more people attending this year than last year, did people feel good about it, and the seemingly all important question that parents ask their kids; did you have fun?

However when Christ looks at the church he wants to know one thing. Are you making disciples? Beloved, we have one job. Make disciples!

I. Make disciples (19)

In verse 19, there is a command to make disciples. There are 3 participles that describe what is involved in making disciples. Those participles are going, baptizing and teaching, but there is one command. Make disciples! You've got one job, make disciples. If you are a follower of Christ, you are a disciple of Christ. As a disciple, you've got one job. Make disciples of Christ. You make disciples as you go and you go to make disciples. As you go, you make disciples by baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Everyone who becomes a disciple is to be publicly named as such. Everyone who becomes a follower of Christ becomes a disciples who willingly identifies himself or herself as a follower of Christ. Baptism is publicly identifying yourself as a citizen of the kingdom. And every disciple grows by being taught what it means and what it looks like to follow Jesus. They are taught because there are truths that they need to learn but being a disciple is so much more than simply knowing things about Jesus, they are taught to observe these things. Let's connect this to verse 18.

Jesus came to this earth. In that sense he was the tabernacle. In the opening of his gospel, John wrote that Jesus tabernacle amongst us. And just as God, in the OT, lived in the middle of his people by means of his presence in the tabernacle, Christ chose the tabernacle of a human body and lived among us. He was heaven on earth. He came and took back what rightly belonged to him. The earth was his. The Father designed it as a kingdom for his Son. But the earth had been carjacked and Christ came and took back the keys. Following his death, burial, resurrection and ascension, Christ was given glory and authority that he shares with his disciples. The disciples take what is given to them and they shared it with the church. Jesus prepared them for this back in chapter 18. Christ shares his authority with all his disciples, not just the eleven (v.16). He shares it with all his disciples. That is why he says that he will be with his disciples "to the end of the age." (v.20) How did these disciples carry out this mission from Jesus? How did they make disciples? They planted churches because as Christ anticipated in Matthew 16 and 18 and as we see in the book of Acts, the mission of the disciples to make disciples is to be done by planting churches, where disciples are formed, built up and sent out.

Think of it like this. Jesus has been given authority as the Lord of heaven and earth. While he has that authority, he does not yet receive the acknowledgement of that authority and glory. One day he will. One day, the authority that he has received will be an authority that will be realized. Revelation 4-5 speaks of that day when we gather around the throne and give glory to the Lamb who was slain and worship him with thunderous and overwhelming devotion. That day, perfect, uninhibited, unbridled, full-throttled worship will be expressed by all of the redeemed of the earth to Jesus. The congregation that gathers in the name of (in the authority of) Jesus is a present taste of the future reality of the gathering around the throne. That gathering informs our gathering and that day drives our mission. We are to make disciples. We are to gather others and prepare them for that day. On that day, people will gather from every tribe, language and nation. They will stand together as one people. They will worship in perfect unity and harmony. That day informs us of what our mission is intended to accomplish this day.

We make disciples by going and telling others about the authority of Christ even as we go in and with the authority of Christ. We go in order to call them and compel them in his name. “Go THEREFORE.”

A. Your mission is to make disciples.

Cathi and I were talking with a girl who said that she professed faith in Christ and wanted to get baptized and join the church. She was living with her boyfriend. I told her that she was not ready to get baptized and join the church until she repented of that and moved out. Why would I say such a thing? Because it is true. You see, I’ve got one job and that is to make disciples. My job is not to get decisions, but to make disciples. My job is not to see how many people I can get to sign up and volunteer for a service project or a ministry? When I stand before God and give an account of my life I will not be judged on the percentage of growth in the attendance or budget of the church. I have one mission that influences everything I do. Make disciples. What is a disciple? A disciple is one who thinks like, reacts like, lives like his/her teacher and calls to others to do the same. God’s Word informs us what a disciple of Christ is supposed to believe and how they are supposed to live.

I am to make disciples of Christ with the authority of Christ. I have authority to only say what he says, right? And not only that, but I have to say what he says. Do I have the authority to tell someone that they can be a disciple of Jesus and live in rebellion to Jesus? If you want to be a disciple, you have to place yourself under the authority of Christ. To make a disciple means to form another into the person that you already are. That is what Jesus did. Then he commissioned his disciples to do the same. Follow Christ with your entire life and form the lives of others around you to do the same. The truth is, you are influencing others around you to be like you, but are you influencing them to be like Jesus? If you claim to be a follower of Christ, your mission is to make other disciples of Jesus.

Do realize that? God woke you up this morning and put air into your lungs, blood into your veins, thoughts into your mind, strength into your muscles, so that you will make disciples. He loaned you a job, friends, money, resources, a family, and abilities in order to make disciples. And yet, you cannot do that on your own. In fact, making disciples is an individual responsibility that can only be carried out properly in a congregational setting. The mission to make disciples is the mission of the church.

B. Our mission is to make disciples.

You cannot carry out this ministry apart from the church and the church will fail if she does not carry out this mission. Therefore, the command to make disciples is congregational. Do you see this now? The disciples obeyed this command and everywhere they went, what happened? Churches were started that raised up more disciples who went out and started more churches, etc. The evidence of the word being planted and taking root is that a church sprouts up. Anywhere the gospel makes an impact

a church is going to show up. Therefore, the fulfillment of this command has a congregational focus, which means that we make disciples through relationships.

Now, we have ministries in our church, but our ministries are not stages in an assembly line nor pieces of a machine. Our ministries are opportunities to facilitate all of us helping all of us make disciples. In order for you to help others grow as a disciple, you have to actually talk to other people. The example of your life is a good and necessary part, but Jesus did more than just live out a good example, right? He taught. In fact, as long as he just lived a nice life, he was fine. It was when he talked that things started to get stirred up, right? But, that is our mission. We are to speak to one another. I will unpack this a bit more in a minute, but even now, re-evaluate your purpose in gathering this morning. Why are you here? You may say that it is to glorify God. Excellent! How do you do that? You do that by carrying out his mission for your life in the life of the congregation by growing as a disciple and helping others do the same. How have you done that?

Some of you have done that and will do that. Do you see now, why I encourage you to talk with one another about the Lord. Talk with one another about what you have learned, or are learning. Pray with one another. Encourage one another. Introduce yourself to others so that you can encourage them to follow Jesus more faithfully. Our mission is to make disciples and we are not doing that as we should until we are all involved.

Making disciples happens by design. We make disciples because we are intentional about it. That is why Jesus says that going is involved in making disciples.

II. **Making disciples involves going.** (19a)

A. **As you go, make disciples.**

Whatever you do is to be done with a view of making disciples by leveraging the compelling power of the gospel in the context of the church. The word “go” is a participle imperative. In other words, it is describing action with the force of a command.

For example, let’s say that you ask your parents if you can go to the track meet after school on Tuesday because you want to support and encourage a friend who is on the team. Your mom says, “that is fine, but when you come home, pick up a gallon of milk.” “When you come home” is different than saying “if you come home.” Right? Mom is not saying, “If you happen to come home, pick up some milk.” She is saying that you are to come home. “When you come home” describes your action with the force of a command. Your coming home is not complete with the picking up of the milk. So, as you, make disciples. As you are on your way, as you live your life, as you go about your daily responsibilities, make disciples! In fact, the living of your life is not complete without you making disciples. If you are not making disciples, you are wasting your life.

Let me give you an example. I go to a gym in order to exercise, but I am to go to the gym, ultimately, not to exercise but in order to make disciples, right? As you go to the gym, make disciples. Therefore, I look for opportunities to talk to people about Christ. It

is not difficult. Think about it, what is the most prominent feature in a gym? It's mirrors, right? Everyone is looking at themselves. It is so easy to strike up conversations because I ask people about themselves and since so many people are already looking at themselves, they are usually very willing to talk about themselves. It doesn't take long before they share a challenge, a need, or a struggle. I pray for them and I tell them that. I invite them to church. But there is another aspect to this phrase.

B. Go, in order to make disciples.

Making disciples is the command. "Of all nations" is the target. Ethnos is the word translated "nations." It refers not only to nations in terms of borders, but to ethnicities. God is reaching a people for the glory of his name from every tribe, language and nation. Therefore, we are to have the entire world on the dashboard of our lives. A disciple thinks globally about God's mission in this world. A church is a launching station for people to go and make disciples, by planting churches. You can do that in Scotland, South Africa, Macomb Township and Roseville. All of us are involved in sending. All of us are involved in supporting. All of us are involved in praying. And all of us are involved in going. Some of us go within our cultures, some of us go elsewhere, but all of us are to be going.

Back to the kid at the track meet. You have to come home in order to bring the milk home, right? As you go, make disciples, but go, in order to make disciples. For example, let's say that you want to go into education, so you go to college in order to pursue a degree and get certified in order to teach. Where are you going to teach? You could look for a place where you could help a local church with its mission to make disciples in that local community. Are there needy schools in Detroit? Yes! Would it be overwhelming to go and be a teacher in a school with 40 kids and limited resources and other issues? Absolutely! But, what if you joined a church plant in Detroit and with the members of that church you partnered with them and got some members to volunteer to help you in the classroom, and you got some resources to help your kids learn better and you built relationships with the parents and facilitated the building of relationships between them and the members of your church. Be a teacher who makes disciples. Some of you need to be more intentional about making disciples in what you are already doing, while others of you need to be more intentional about going somewhere specifically in order to make disciples in that setting.

The second participle is baptizing. I am going to address this specifically in two weeks, but will simply say this now. Disciples of Jesus are not in a secret society. If you truly follow Christ, you will identify yourself as a follower of Christ. We do not emphasize baptism as a means of publicly identifying yourself as a follower of Christ because it is in our church name or is part of our tradition. We do it because it is part of Christ's command. More on that in two weeks.

III. Making disciples involves teaching. (20a)

A. Teaching involves intentional instruction. (why)

“all that I have commanded you”

We have to teach what Christ taught. There is a content to the teaching. Jesus told them to teach what he commanded them. Do you know why I preached through the entire book of Matthew? Because I wanted to obey this command. Part of what Jesus commanded is difficult and I would be tempted to skip over it because it might cause you to be squirmy and uncomfortable. But, I am a disciple. I must teach all that Jesus commanded. But, teaching involves more than just communicating information.

The church is not the local spiritual concierge desk. What does a concierge do? He or she gives you information that is helpful and even makes arrangements for you. But, you do not get married to the concierge and form a relationship with him or her. You are only passing through. You are only getting what you need for the moment.

Some people treat the church like a spiritual concierge desk. Do you need some instructions for parenting, here you go? Do you need some tips for getting along at work? Here you go. Do you need some help planning a wedding, or dealing with stress (they go together), here you go. That is not what the church is. We are a family where we live our lives together for the benefit of helping each other learn how to live out the teachings of the Bible on discipleship.

Seriously, why don't we save the trouble of purchasing and maintaining a building, of organizing and staffing the children's ministry with so many people, of constantly cleaning all of the toys in the nurseries from drool? Why don't I just set up a little studio in my home, video a new sermon every week, post it on the internet, let you watch it when convenient and then donate on line? We do not make disciples simply by sharing information.

B. Teaching involves observation. (how)

“teaching them to observe”

We have to observe (not only to see but to mimic what we see). The truth is, just because I know certain truths does not mean that I actually embrace them. Observing one another's lives by getting involved reveals the gaps between what I say and profess and how I actually live. We need each other to help us remember God's truths and we need each other to help us live it out.

Conclusion:

Making disciples is a personal.

- Therefore I am responsible to make disciples.

Making disciples is congregational.

- Therefore I am responsible to make disciples with my local church.

Making disciples is global.

- Therefore I am responsible to think globally and strategically about making disciples.

Making disciples is intentional.

- Therefore, I need to look to leverage opportunities to make disciples.

Making disciples is daily.

- Therefore, I need to try to use daily opportunities to make disciples.

Making disciples is thoughtful.

- Therefore, I need to be growing in my knowledge of God's Word that I might help others think more like Christ by grasping more truths about him. I.e. I can only help others grow to the point where I am.

Making disciples is caught, not just taught.

- Therefore I need to be around people that I can observe who are following Christ as well as provide others with the opportunity to learn from me.

You need to be learning from others even as others are learning from you.

Making disciples is your entire life.

Let's test drive this now.

What are you doing this afternoon? Eating, relaxing, running errands, family event? How can you leverage that for making disciples? Is there something that you can do with others instead of just doing by yourself or just with your family? Who can you talk with about the sermon, about your ABF lesson? Who can you spend time with so that you can point them to Christ or encourage them in Christ or learn from?