

What is a Disciple? A Disciple is on Mission

1. If you have been here for the past few weeks, I hope that your appetite for being a disciple has been enlarged. We have brought out the truths that to be a disciple is to be more than a church-goer or attender. A disciple has made a decision to “follow Jesus” wherever He goes. He is committed to listening to the Father’s voice, to constantly be learning and growing and to discover and apply himself to God’s purposes in his life.
 - a. Today, we will be looking at a unique calling of a disciple... the call to be on mission.
2. This call comes from three places:
 - a. **The call comes from above.**
 - i. This call comes from heaven, from God.
 - ii. God has been on a mission from the beginning and Jesus came on the same mission.
 - iii. What is that mission?
 - iv. That mission is found in John 4:23-24 "*But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*
 - v. This passage tells us that God is seeking worshippers. That is the purpose of missions.
 1. **Missions exist because worship doesn't exist.** In fact, missions must exist wherever true worship doesn't exist.
 - a. Wherever worship of God is absent, missions must be birthed.
 - b. We must go and we must send.
 - c. It is the heartbeat of God and if the Holy Spirit lives in us, it must be our heartbeat as well
 2. What we are doing when we “do missions” is to make Christ known and reconciling all men to God so that they can be worshippers of God, worshipping Him in Spirit and in Truth.
 3. Finding worshippers is the goal of God the Father.
 - a. And missions is the means to that goal.
 4. Remember why Jesus came?
 - a. Luke 19:10 *For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."*
 - b. He did so that you and I would cease in useless worship of things and self and find lasting fulfillment and joy in worshipping God the Father.
 - c. God knows that worship, true worship will fill our cup, satisfy our soul, quench our thirst, feed our hunger and fulfill our lives.
 - d. Worship is why humanity was made.
 - e. We were made to worship and have a relationship with God.
 - f. God made us and loves us so much, that He wants the very best for us.
 - g. He knows that He is the best for mankind.
 - b. **The call comes from below.**
 - i. Remember the rich man who died and woke up in hell and begged for someone to go and tell his brothers?
 - ii. Luke 16:19-28 "*Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. "And he cried out and said,*

'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' "But Abraham said, *'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.'* "And he said, *'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house-- for I have five brothers--in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'*

- iii. He is crying out... "tell them not to come here!"
- iv. If you could see what a lost person sees one second after death, you would never hesitate again to share your testimony.
 1. I sometimes wonder why we don't ask God to give us a glimpse of Hell so that we might know what we have been saved FROM.
 2. The bible says:
 - a. **Hell is a place of unquenchable fire.**
 - i. Mark 9:43-44 *"If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. "*
 - ii. If you have ever suffered a third degree burn, you know how painful fire is. In Hell, it won't stop, it will burn and burn and burn.
 - b. **Hell is a place of eternal torment.**
 - i. Rev. 20:10 – *"And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."*
 - ii. Torment is both physical and mental. It will hurt.
 - c. **Hell is a place of punishment.**
 - i. Matthew 25: 46 - *"These will go away into eternal punishment.*
 - ii. Punishment is the wages you earn when you reject God's offer of forgiveness and the gift of His Son.
 - d. **Hell is a place where its inhabitants are separated from God for eternity.**
 - i. Luke 13:27 *"He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.' "In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out."*
 - ii. One who rejects God in this life will not desire to spend eternity with Him. If you cannot bear to worship Him here, what makes you think you would want to do that forever?
 - v. The rich man who Jesus tells us about wants to tell his family, his loved ones, *"Don't wait to make a choice. Don't make my mistake. Please. It is horrible and it is forever. There is no relief. Don't come here!!!"*
 1. That is the cry from below.
 2. If you and I could hear the cries of people in a lost eternity right now, we'd realize how urgent it is to get the Gospel out to people in our lost and dying world.
 3. Everyone in hell, if he could, would ask you to go to someone they love and tell them not to come there! There is not a person in hell who would want anyone else to join them there besides Satan himself.

c. **The call comes from without.**

- i. Acts 16:9 says, *“A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them”*
 1. People around us are saying, “Please come to help us.”
 2. People on the foreign mission field are saying to us...come and help us!
 3. People in the mission fields of America are saying to us...come and help us
 4. These are the cries of our Southern Baptist Missionaries and the lost people they are serving.
 - a. And when I am speaking of missions, I am not speaking of the missions work to our own community (which is the everyday task of each one of us) but rather about the “Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)
 5. In 2006 & 2007, HHBC will be Macedonia to many churches in America. Cleveland Hope, the SFC city of the N.A.M.B.
 - a. We are the beneficiaries of their call to missions over the next two years.
 - b. We are calling them from without.
 - c. We are saying, “come over into Cleveland and help us!”
 - d. And by 2008, we ourselves will respond to the cry of others to go onto foreign soil to bring the gospel.

3. What drives missions?

- a. We cannot create a passion for missions, which is actually a passion for others to experience worship, if we do not have a passion for worship of God in ourselves.
 - i. Did you get that?
 - ii. This is important, so important.
 - iii. If you get this point you won't need me exhorting you to give or go to missions, because if you get this point, nothing in this world could stop you.
 - iv. If you and I aren't passionate for worshipping God, we are not going to be passionate for leading others to worship Him. They will see right through us.
 - v. Ultimately the reason we are lukewarm for missions is that we are lukewarm toward God.
 1. We aren't really passionately in love with Him.
 2. When the passion for God is weak, our zeal for missions will be weak.
 3. Worship is the reason for missions...so if our zeal for missions is weak, we need to ask why is our zeal for worship so weak.
 - vi. **The key to a passion for missions is being passionate ourselves for the worship of God.**
 1. You cannot work yourself up to be excited about missions for very long. It will fail you. You must be motivated by one thing and one thing alone.
 2. When Hudson Taylor was director of the China Inland Mission, he often interviewed candidates for the mission field. On one occasion, he met with a group of applicants to determine their motivations for service. And why do you wish to go as a foreign missionary? he asked one. I want to go because Christ has commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, was the reply. Another said, I want to go because millions are perishing without Christ. Others gave different answers. Then Hudson Taylor said, All of these motives, however good, will fail you in times of testings, trials, tribulations, and possible death. There is but one motive that will sustain you in trial and testing; namely, the love of Christ.
 3. Light the fire, fan the flame.
 4. Oh God, light the fire of for you. Teach us to be in awe of who you are!

- b. Where is our passion for worship?
 - i. **We have lost our passion because we have lost sight of God.**
 - ii. Other things take His place in our lives.
 - iii. Other priorities.
 - iv. We stop gazing on His loveliness, we have ceased to be in awe and wonder of who He is.
- c. When was the last time God moved so supernaturally in your life that you had to stop and say, “wow...that was You! You are awesome. You are all powerful! You really are! You really can do anything! You truly are God.”
- d. These experiences happened over and over in the bible.
 - i. Elijah calls down fire on the altar.
 - 1. Ooooh. Now we felt the Heat of God! He was passionate about worship.
 - 2. You would be too if that happened to you.
 - ii. Jesus calms a storm...oooh, God, The disciples in the boat were awestruck.
 - iii. Jesus heals, casts out demons...every person Jesus touched was moved to be in awe of the power of God.
 - iv. **Where is our awe? Where is our praise? Where is our worship?**
 - 1. When you come face to face with God and He intrudes and interrupts your life - you begin to worship again.
 - v. I believe that in America that we are so rarely looking at God and too often looking after ourselves that we miss His majesty. We aren't looking at Him for His own sake, but so only for what we want or need to make our lives easier.
 - vi. I don't believe God exists to make our lives easier, but rather to reflect His glory and make Him known. God is not our genie on a string for us to tug on to make our lives easier.
- e. Remember, our purpose in life is supposed to be to glorify God and to make Him known to others, but we live as if our purpose is to enjoy life and to make God serve our needs.
 - i. We know that people are going to hell every day without Jesus, without hope for this life or the next.
 - 1. But these facts don't change our lives.
 - 2. You have all heard hundreds of missions sermons and videos. You have heard of the need.
 - 3. But the need hasn't changed the way we live.
 - 4. Why not?
 - 5. Perhaps we don't see the crisis, the emergency, the immediacy of the problem, we are insulated from the problem.
 - ii. **You know what insulation on a wire does don't you?**
 - 1. The plastic keeps the wires from being touched by someone.
 - 2. And in so doing, keeps you from feeling the current and the pain.
 - 3. If there was no insulation, you would be feeling the current.
 - 4.
 - 5. Folks, there is a current of pain, a vast flow into a godless eternity of billions of people and we are so insulated we cannot feel it.
 - 6. We don't see it because we are living in comfortable homes, living comfortable lives.
 - 7. **You and I need to strip the insulation off by intentional acts so that we might see, experience, and taste the pain of the lost and see them the way that God does.**
 - iii. I honestly believe that a mission trip can change the way you see the lost. It will open your eyes, strip off your insulation and tear your heart out. In 2008, our church will be conducting a mission trip to another country. We will try to go where the need is so great, the pain so brutal and the darkness so dark that you will fall to your knees every

night for the rest of your life and pray like you never prayed for the lost and for our missionaries.

iv. Would you consider going in 2008?

4. I believe that **What you believe affects the way you live.**

a. If it doesn't we need to ask if we really believe it.

b. If we really believed our call to missions, would we live the way we do?

i. If every Evangelical, Born Again Christian in America tithed (they are supposedly 60 million of us), there would be 120 billion more available for funding of ministry and missions. But Evangelicals give less than 3% of their income to charity, and less than that to their church or to missions. Why is that?.

b. It is because **our faith has been corrupted by our convenience mentality.**

i. **We somehow believe that God is more interested in our comfort and prosperity than His purposes in human history.**

ii. We are wrong. We could never be more wrong.

iii. We are in a war. A world war that has been raging for 2000 years.

1. But too many of us are living and acting as if we are at peace.

2. We are insulated from the battlefield, we are all staying in the backlines, the safe places while millions die and go to a godless hell, while thousands of missionaries lay their lives down on the front line, and we enjoy our pizza and diet coke.

c. I wonder how many of us in this room remember the rationing that occurred during WWII?

i. Do you recall aluminum drives? Rubber collection? Ration books and stamps?

ii. The most prosperous nation on earth called its citizens to live sacrificially so that the war could be won. Every industry was producing war goods to win the war.

iii. A basketball game was stopped in Northwestern Univ. so the ref and the players could look for a lost bobby pin. Every sacrifice counted.

1. Victory gardens in every yard, people drove at gas saving speeds of 35,

2. "Use it up, wear it out, make do, or do without" was the slogan.

3. Everyone sacrificed for the war effort.

4. Every cent mattered, every sacrifice counted.

5. How many of you believe we are at war today?

a. We are still at war, but not with fascism.

b. We are in a spiritual battle with the forces of unbelief and the powers of darkness that blind men's eyes and shut their ears to the truth.

iv. **And God is calling s us to a war-time lifestyle.**

1. Not just a simplified lifestyle, that sounds romantic but not very urgent.

2. The urgency of this generation cannot be over stated.

a. When will we strip away the excess so that we can give more, do more and be more.

3. I asked myself this week this question...

a. What would my life be like if I had no television and no computer to waste my time?

b. What would I spend my time doing and what kind of difference would I make in eternity with my time.

4. I then asked myself another question.

a. What would my life be like if I sacrificed some of the things I like to buy and lived so wholeheartedly for the advancement of the Kingdom of God like our nation lived during WWII, reusing, saving, not wasting...and then spent what I saved on the Kingdom of God?

- i. I started by bringing my lunch to work with me during the week and using the money for missions. Sure, it is only \$10 a week, but that equals \$500 a year. It's a start.
 - ii. Have you ever given that much yourself to missions before? It really isn't that hard.
 - iii. Surely I can sacrifice the luxury of 2 Burger King Value Meals a week. I think of the 1500 calories less I will be eating a week and it gets easier!
 - iv. \$500 is more than a family in Benin Africa earns in an entire year.
 - v. And I will pray about what else I can cut out of my life that I don't need and give that to Jesus to advance his kingdom!
 - vi. Look around at your life and ask what you can sacrifice?
- 5. I ask myself what would happen if a church did the same?
- 6. If the people's of a church refused to waste their time on things that don't last and refused to spend their money on anything that wasn't essential?
 - a. Our community would be changed by that kind of sacrificial, war-time living.
 - b. Our world could be changed by the gospel if we lived with the sense of urgency that wartime requires.
- 7. In 1941-45, our nation had a common purpose. It was to win the war.
- 8. Do we have a common purpose? Yes. There is a war raging around us,
 - a. A spiritual battle for the hearts and minds of billions of people.
 - b. When will we awaken to living for it?
- 9. I read this week that the reason our prayers are so feeble is that we are praying like we are living in peacetime, as if prayer is a tool of peace rather than a weapon of war.
 - a. Imagine using a 2 way radio for an intercom to have pizza delivered instead of to call in air support to help out our trapped soldiers. That would be a travesty! Yet that is the way we pray.
 - b. We pray, "God make my life easier" when we should be praying, "God make my life count!"
- 5. Soldiers make the biggest sacrifices.
 - b. Inscribed outside a cemetery on Iwo Jima, where 26,000 Americans made the final sacrifice was, "***when you go home, tell them for us and say. For your tomorrow, we gave our today.***"
 - c. What will you give? Will you make sacrifices to give or will you simply give of your excess? The need is urgent and the need is great.
 - d. Missions needs us to give and to go.
 - e. The cause of American Democracy is great, but greater still is living for Jesus and bringing people to know Him. If people can lay down their lives for our country, surely we can live for our Lord!
 - i. If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, you are on mission in a wartime setting.
- 6. I read this week that God prepares Goers and Senders.
 - a. **God may be calling you to go.** He may have arranged your life to make this possible. You may even be catching the fire of the Father's heart for lost souls today.
 - i. You may be feeling the urge to go. It may be on a short term mission trip. It may be a burning desire raging inside your soul to serve a life on the mission field.
 - ii. During our time of invitation in a few minutes, if you sense God is speaking or whispering or shouting at you to be a "goer" I am inviting you to slide out of your comfortable seat, step into the aisle and walk down front. Meet with me or one of our deacons and let us pray with you.

- b. **God may be calling you to send.** Everyone here who doesn't go to missions is a sender. Every one of us who remains in our locality is a sender. God gives to us so that we can give to others.
 - ii. Let me tell you a story what happens every April in Africa. If you walk through the countryside, you will hear the babies crying in the twilight. Most of the days are passed with only an evening cup of gruel.
 - iii. Then, inevitably, it happens. A six- or seven-year-old boy comes running to his father one day with sudden excitement. Daddy! Daddy! We've got grain! he shouts.
 - iv. Son, you know we haven't had grain for weeks.
 - v. Yes, we have! the boy insists. Out in the hut where we keep the goats there's a leather sack hanging up on the wall. I reached up and put my hand down in there. Daddy, there's grain in there! Give it to Mommy so she can make flour, and tonight our tummies can sleep!
 - vi. The father stands motionless.
 - 1. Son, we can't do that, he softly explains. That's next year's seed grain. It's the only thing between us and starvation. We're waiting for the rains, and then we must use it.
 - vii. The rains finally arrive in May, and when they do the young boy watches as his father takes the sack from the wall and does the most unreasonable thing imaginable. Instead of feeding his desperately weakened family, he goes to the field and with tears streaming down his face, he takes the precious seed and throws it away. He scatters it in the dirt! Why? **Because he believes in the harvest.**
 - viii. The seed is his; he owns it. He can do anything with it he wants. The act of sowing it hurts so much that he cries.
 - 1. But this is God's law of the harvest. Don't expect to rejoice later on unless you have been willing to sow in tears.
 - c. And I want to ask you: How much would it cost you to sow in tears. I don't mean just giving God something from your abundance, but finding a way to say, I believe in the harvest, and therefore I will give what makes no sense. The world would call me unreasonable to do this but I must sow regardless, in order that I may someday celebrate with songs of joy
- 7. Will you change your lifestyle?
 - 8. Will you adopt a wartime lifestyle?
 - 9. Will you pray for missions?
 - 10. Will you ask God to use you to make a difference?
 - 11. Will you go? Will you give?
 - 12. I have a short video I prepared that I would like you to watch. The invitation is open. You can come up during the video or during the song of invitation that will follow.
 - a. Please respond. Take off the insulation and feel the heartbeat of God. Feel the pain of the lost and the love of the Father.
 - b. Won't you respond by giving or going, by sacrificial giving and living?