

## Fulfilling the Great Commission

### Laying it all Down

1. **Reflection:** As I look over these past few years and see what I have invested my life in, I have to admit that I have put my life into things that won't last.
  - a. Oh sure, I have provided leadership (some good and some bad), I have preached and taught, counseled, performed marriages, performed funerals, visited some of you in the hospital, prayed over many of you. But these actions, in as much as they were good, were often part of the job and not a part of a surrendered lifestyle.
  - b. Now, as we turn the page in vision and seek to understand and fulfill the Great Commission, I have realized just how shallow my life has really been. I have developed some treasured friendships, and Jennifer and I have spent time with many of you. But the lasting treasures of changed lives has been elusive for me. And until these past few weeks I didn't know why.
  - c. Over the past few weeks, I have begun to meet regularly with 3 different men from the church and am actively engaged in discipling them. It is those times that have begun to see more clearly what it means to "make a difference" in someone's life for eternity. It is this change I want for all of us...because it leads to making a difference.
  
2. **This week, I got some feedback from some of you about the discipling vision.**
  - a. Many of you had questions about what "it looks like" to meet with a person and what kind of outline, program, study or tools do you use? Some of you have asked, "how can I impart my wisdom and experience in life to another person?"
  - b. Others asked, "where do you meet?" and what kind of training can I get to help me?
  - c. I want to answer those questions today as a prelude to my sermon:
    - i. We will provide you with a 5 meeting study guide along with a set of instructions to assist you in your time with your disciple. These will be given out tonight at our Discippler's Summit at 6:00 pm.
    - ii. These guides are designed to help you get to know one another and to build a relationship that focuses upon your walk with God and making that transparently available for each other to see.
    - iii. Additional guides will be available but be customizable, so that you can tailor your time together with your disciple according to their needs.
  
3. **How/Who do I find someone to disciple?**
  - a. My answer is, the same way Jesus did. **Jesus called his disciples..**
    - i. Matthew 4:18-22 *"Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. 21 Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him."*
    - ii. Now I want you to notice that Jesus called them. I don't mean on the phone. I called them away from what they were doing to follow and learn from him.
    - iii. Jesus prayed before selecting his apostles, and so should we. Allow God to lay a burden on our heart for someone.
    - iv. Jesus saw people with potential and released them into it.
    - v. God sees people with potential that needs to be released, and unless we call them out, they will remain the way they are.

1. But should we call them, invest in them, impart to them what you have learned and experienced, we will be unleashing in them the hidden potential of God's power in their lives!
  2. Here is the exciting part. You get to be a part of that unleashing process.
  3. I have something even more exciting to share with you all. We had 5 youth attend our first Discippler's forum last Sunday evening. They are hungry to be discipled, and to learn how to disciple others.
    - a. Do you realize that our teens are the same age as the disciples when Jesus called them? Yes, 14- 18 years old. They (like many people here) are hungry to make a difference in this world.
    - b. But they can't unless someone helps them. They need someone older and wiser to see the God given dreams that is locked up in side of them and to hold up a mirror and help them release it into reality!
    - c. I believe that is what Jesus did with the disciples. Peter – what did Jesus see in him? Or James and John, the sons of thunder, who just so happened to be packing heat (concealed weapons) at the last supper! What did Jesus see in them? He saw what His Father had put into them, He saw a future of multiplication, of passion for the Kingdom of God and a desire to make a difference in the world for eternity and not to just fritter their lives away on a fishing boat ekeing out a living.
  - vi. 2 Timothy 2:2 *“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others”*
    1. Simply meaning, “instruct others so that they will be able to teach others. “
    2. It is one thing to make “brothers and sisters” in Christ – and to make friends and social contacts with them. We can do that without changing lives or our world. It is too low a stanaard.
    3. But to build relationships that help one another grow in Christ...that takes it to another level that many of us are reluctant to go to.
4. Let me share a short passage from Matthew 14:26-27
- a. Mt. 14:26-27 *“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27 “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”*
  - b. Now doesn't it sound strange to be commanded to honor your parents and to love your family, and then told that unless you hate them, you cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ?
    - i. If you have had a bit of bible teaching, you have learned that “hate” means to “love less.”
    - ii. At least that this the contemporary interpretation for this very difficult statement.
    - iii. But in the context of the Jewish faith (or Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist) it means to value Jesus Christ above even the demands and loyalties of family.
      1. Very few of us would be ostracized from our family, shunned, kicked out on the street for placing our faith in Christ. None of us would have our lives threatened. But in other parts of the world, it is a serious thing that family loyalties would be tested over...and in those parts of the world, family is very sacred.
      2. Would you be willing to sacrifice everything to follow Jesus Christ?
  - c. The last part of verse 26 says something that would be easy to miss/
    - i. *“hate...and even his own life...”*
    - ii. I expected to look up the Greek and find the typical word for life, “Zoe” there. But I didn't' find that. I found the word “psyche” the Greek word for soul.
    - iii. Your soul is your mind, will and emotions. It comprises your carnal life. When the bible says “flesh” it isn't speaking to our bodies but rather to our carnal life.

- iv. I don't know about you, but I have a pretty strong soul-life...meaning, I can do a lot on my own intellect and ability. I can rely upon my emotions and my willpower to do quite a bit. But it falls far short of God's standard, even for a redeemed child of God!
- v. Here is why, and why I believe Jesus told us we must hate even our own "soulish life."
- vi. **You cannot "fix" or "Improve" your soulish life.**
  - 1. You cannot make it better. It is irreparably corrupt. (Read Romans 6 & 7 for a better insight on this)
  - 2. That is why Jesus took our flesh, our carnal man to the cross to die with Him.
  - 3. While your mind must be renewed, it isn't involve just making it better, but rather it is the concept of REPLACEMENT.
  - 4. It has to be "reckoned dead" at the cross every day, every moment of the day and we must dig a well deep into our spirits where the Holy Spirit dwells and allow the life of the Spirit to REPLACE the life of the soulish man.
  - 5. Jesus didn't die on the cross to "improve you." He died so you would die with Him, and thereby find life.
  - 6. Am I making sense to everyone here?

- vii. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ, we cannot rely upon our own abilities, strengths, willpower. In fact, we must despise those parts of ourselves because they are faulty, sin-corrupted and worldly. They are not only "bad" but they are incapable of producing life.
- viii. Gal. 2:20 *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the (flesh) body, I live by faith of/in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

- 1. One of the first steps in being a disciple is to understand the need to live the co-crucified life with Christ. Our old nature is unredeemable. Our eternal spirits were redeemed made perfect, and is where the Holy Spirit dwells. In our spirit, we are complete, 100% whole and perfect.
- 2. We are "in Christ" in our spirit. The problem lies in our soul and body. **We live out of our SOUL INSTEAD of our SPIRIT.** And there in lies our problem. It is a problem because we don't think there is anything wrong with my soul that a bit of good bible reading and preaching can't fix.
- 3. If it were that easy, Jesus would not have told us to "hate our psyche."

- d. In fact, the bible is clear that all who walk according to the Spirit will live, but those who walk according to their sinful nature (soul power) are living death.
  - i. Romans 8:4-9 *"For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set (have your mind focused) on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."*

5. We really don't understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

- a. When Jesus told us that we must "deny ourselves" he is saying exactly that.
  - i. It is more than just living a life of self-denial and asceticism, it is living out the life in the Spirit..
  - ii. It is living for Him, by His power and Life. But to do so, means to deny our self-led life. It means to hate, deny, crucify to the point of death our old life, our soulish ways, so that everything in us is in alignment with the word and will of God.
  - iii. You have been given the mind of Christ, but it doesn't dwell in our soul (mind) but in our spirit. By agreeing with the word of God, we bring death to the old man and life to the

new man. Faith is generated and life is released from within. Won't you commit to this process? Become a disciple today, a learner!

Let's pray.