

Living the Great Commission

1. Review
2. Let me give you an overview of where we are going.
 - a. **Discipling is the job description of every Christian.**
 - b. Matthew 28:18-20 makes that clear when Jesus says, “go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey (be and do) everything I have commanded you, and I will *be with* you always.”
 - c. We are to BE DISCIPLES and to MAKE DISCIPLES.
3. What else is in this command? Look carefully at the text.
 - a. **As you are going** – is a lifestyle command. We are to be in the process of making disciples wherever we go. This includes “pre-believers.” Yes. That is what happens when you have a friend who isn’t a Christian. You are actually discipling a “pre-believer” so that they can come to the place of faith in Christ.
 - i. Because we compartmentalize our lives, we cannot see the truth that we are actually are discipling others with our every word and action. The question really is, who are we making them disciples of?
 - ii. While I worked at Nabisco in the 1980’s, I sought out another Christian to pray with during our lunch break. We would go to the non-smoking section of the lunch room and pray for the plant, the co-workers and for people we knew. This went on for a few weeks, when a woman from my department heard about it and asked if she could join us. We said yes. The next week, she brought another co-worker. Over the next few weeks, more joined us until we felt we needed a better time and place to pray. So, I got elected to ask the Plant Manager if we could use the plant’s conference room on Tuesday mornings at 6:15 am (45 min before our shift started) to pray. Guess what? He said yes! Before long, people were inviting other people and we had between 20 to 40 people stuffed in the conference room praying for one another, the prosperity of the company and for co-workers to know Christ. After about 6 months, I got bumped to 2nd shift, so I asked the Plant manager if we could use the conference room 45 minutes before that shift started...and he said yes again! So we had 2 prayer meetings going on each week, involving up to 50 people. I was told that the prayer meetings were going on long after I left the company.
 - iii. Would you say that was discipling? Yes it was. My “obedience” to God was an example to other co-workers to imitate me, which led to changed lives, changed actions, even a changed workplace.
 - iv. **Can you do this? When you obey God’s leading, He will permit your life to influence others.** But most of the time it requires moving out of your comfort zone, out of the safe place, out of the place where there is no risk – into a place of vulnerability and exposure.
 1. Students and adults who work? Seniors who visit the senior center? You all have opportunities to disciple others! It all starts with hearing God and obeying his leading to let Him use you to influence someone else.
4. So what do you need to do in order to experience the life of God in yourself on a regular basis to such a degree that He flows OUT of you?
 - a. It starts with a relationship with Jesus.
 - b. Its all about a relationship with Jesus.
 - c. **If you have a relationship with someone, you have to develop it, guard it, nurture it, grow in it, invest in it...by getting to know that person, spending time with that person, and learning their heart, learning about what they love and value most.**

- i. Can you imagine dating someone for one date, marrying them and then moving in together and ignoring them for the next 20 years? Would you call that a relationship? No!
 - ii. Last Sunday evening, I shared with the group gathered here about developing the disciplines (habits, practices, routines) of the Christian life. Just like a human relationship takes work, so does a relationship with God.
 - iii. We described it as developing in your “inward, upward and outward life.”
 - d. **Inward Life** – Personal devotional life and disciplines. (roots of the plant – ie parable of the sower)
 - i. You will probably hear me use these words more often to describe the How of living your relationship with God. What we try to get a new Christian to learn very quickly is to develop their inward life. A plant without roots will quickly die.
 - 1. *My tomato plants were in tiny pots...and they weren't doing too good when I finally put them in the garden. I brought one to show you what not having good roots looks like.*
 - 2. Folks, there are some of you here today who do not have good roots, because you lack the personal discipline of a daily walk, daily bible study, daily listening and journaling. You might not look like the plant on the outside, but I can guarantee that you look like this on the inside. You aren't getting the nutrients you need for growth or for bearing fruit! **THAT'S HAS TO CHANGE!**
 - a. If I keep this tomato plant in this tiny pot and expect to get tomatoes, I will be sorely disappointed. Wouldn't you agree? I want you to look at this plant and consider your life and journey with God.
 - b. Do you really want to be like this? Shriveled up spiritually, without fruit and spiritually ineffective?
 - e. **Upward Life** – Expression of your heart toward God. (living water, sustenance, Life)
 - i. Much of this overlaps the inward life because it is when our roots dig into the living water that we find life. If you don't have a inward life, your upward life will be pretty bad. No roots, no nourishment.
 - ii. Your worship, your joy, your prayer life, your hearing the voice of God...they are dependent upon your inward life. You can improve your upward life by improving your inward life.
 - f. **Outward Life** – Outward expression of the inner life (fruitbearing)
 - i. Again, everything is connected. Just as a plant needs water and nutrition and good roots, its designed to produce fruit. That is what you and I were made for. To bear fruit in other people. To allow God to reproduce His life in others through us.
5. So here is the question...are you willing to make your life a life that is focused on making Christ known? If you make a choice to stay root bound, you are also making a choice to NOT bear fruit.
- a. I want to share with you what Jesus says about our bearing fruit:
 - i. *John 15:1-8 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it*

will be given you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

- ii. "proving yourselves to be my disciples"
- iii. The proof is in the fruit.
 1. Are you a Christian in name only? You went through the motions of "asking Jesus to come into your heart" but you never became His disciple? You see, unless you are a disciple, you aren't a child of God. The two go hand in hand. You cannot be saved without being a disciple.
 2. So if you have made the choice to remain luke warm, to remain root bound, to remain fruit barren...to shut God out of your life except when you are in crisis...you are proving to not be His disciple.
 3. Jesus paid an enormous price to ensure that you could become His disciple. Not so you can get a "get out of hell free:" card, but so that you could become His disciple. It all starts with the surrender.
 4. Are you willing to surrender?
- iv. I'm not going to try to give you a guilt trip about not bearing fruit. You cannot manufacture fruit. **Your ability to bear fruit rests upon the nature and nurture of your relationship with God** – the inward and upward parts of your life. The outward is simply obedience to the inward nudges God gives you.
 1. Choose to let God plant you deep in the good soil, to place you in the place where you can grow good roots, and take the time to give Him your very best, time, love and energy!
 2. Love God with all your HEART, mind and soul. Turn your affection to Him from this world. Humble yourself and allow Him to be Lord. Resign from being the pretender king!

Let's pray.

6. There are some things that flow out of this life-change that we must discuss.
 - a. **Develop Community** - Koinonea – God with skin on
 - b. **Demonstrate Freedom and Grace**– God’s creativity unleashed
 - c. **Discharge Dominion** – God with shoes on (outreach)
- 7.
8. 1) Discipleship. Are people continually helping you grow? Your church body needs to be composed of a series of interconnected relationships where those with greater experience are continually helping those who are young in the faith. Think of these as friendship-based apprenticing relationships. They help you to press into God.
- 9.
10. 2) Community. Are you independent contractors or are you doing life together? In our overly busy world, we have to create space to intersect and add value to one another. We need daily encouragement and support from each other. If you really think about it, this is what Paul means when he says “YOU (plural) are the temple of the Holy Spirit.”
- 11.
12. 3) Grace and Freedom. Does church make you feel inadequate or encouraged? Most people I know who are running from religion are not rejecting Jesus, they are just tired of the condemnation and control that his followers demonstrate. Legalism is a huge problem in the church. Unless we lead with love, we forfeit the right to share truth.
- 13.
14. 4) Outreach. Is your faith spilling out into your community and the world? We've been given spiritual power and authority for a reason. God wants his family back and he's chosen you and me as his tools to go get them.