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**The Mission**

**Big Idea of the Series:** This 3-week serieswill cover the command of Jesus to *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you: and I am with you always even to the end of the age".* It is not about just becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. It is about becoming a disciple and then going out and making even more disciples.

**Week 1**

**Text:** Matthew 28:18-20

**Topic:** Discipleship

**Big Idea of the Message:** Who is a disciple of Jesus Christ? What do they do? How do they act? How do you become one?

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. **What is a Disciple:** Is it not strange how we call Jesus our Lord and Savior, but will not introduce Him to our family and friends? Strange how we are so quick to get directions from a stranger when we are lost but are reluctant to take our Creator God’s direction for our lives. Strange how we sing about the things of heaven but live for the things of this world. Strange how people think they are going to Heaven but don’t believe there is a Hell. Very strange how people like the idea of being a Christian but refuse to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

What is a disciple? The word means: “a follower or student of a teacher, leader, or philosopher.” The 12 Apostles and many others were Jesus’ disciples while He performed His ministry here on earth. So, what does being a Christian disciple involve and what does that life in Christ mean?

In Matthew 28:18-20, it is called the “Great Commission” of Christ. If you look closely you will see the command (not a suggestion) here is on making disciples (hang on that church – that is what we do!). Not just converting people to Christianity. **This means that you first must become a disciple yourself before you can ever make a disciple.** This is a multiple step process and many fail to get past the first step. Paul had to be knocked off his high horse on the road to Damascus and be temporarily blinded; Peter had to stop running and stop fishing; Thomas had to put his finger in the Lord’s side and wrists to stop doubting.

Belief is only the first step. Becoming a disciple means you keep walking. Being a disciple does not mean you stop at the cross, it means you pick it up and carry it to where the Holy Spirit leads.

1. **We Must be Devoted**: Great object lesson can be found here on following Jesus (being a disciple): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6sacadz2XI>

To become devoted to Christ, we must give ourselves over to Him. *“Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:33).* “Renouncing” may mean we give up something, but in this context the Lord says you must be willing to give up everything. Everything in your life so that what we control no longer controls us. When we become one of His, we cannot continue to belong to this world. We cannot continue to be controlled by our feelings. We cannot assume what God is doing, because many times He may be doing the exact opposite. We must make a choice, for we cannot serve both God and money or serve both God and our flesh or serve both God and our feelings or God and our family. The rich young ruler, Demas, Judas and many who followed Jesus at first in Scripture, when confronted with that choice, turned their backs on the Lord.

Many people approach Christianity the same way. They love the idea of eternal life, escaping hell, being free from burdens and sin, but they are not willing to leave the life they now live. Their desires, lifestyle, pet sins, and their religious or worldly comforts are too precious to them. They want Jesus to be their Plan “B” if their Plan “A” falls apart. They want to retain ownership of everything and be in control of everything but add Jesus as the extended warranty. Or Jesus as a condiment or a side dish.

If we are going to be disciples of Christ, we must first count the cost of following Him. And then do it. Just because you are a believer, it doesn’t automatically make you a disciple of Jesus. Disciple also means instructed. So, to receive and heed instruction you must what? Pay attention and learn from the Teacher and then apply it to your life! You must live what you believe. So instead of scratching our heads wondering what God is doing, let’s get up and praise God for what He has already done!

1. **Jesus Equips Us:** He equips us to be disciples and to make disciples via the Power of the Holy Spirit who resides in us. “People love to say ‘Give a man a fish, and he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he'll eat for a lifetime.’ What they don't say is ‘And it would be nice if you gave him a fishing rod.’ That's the part of the analogy that's missing.” - Trevor Noah

Jesus gives us the fishing rod, the nets, the tools, the boat, the processing equipment, etc. ...everything we need to become *“fishers of men”.*

In Matthew 10:24-25 Jesus describes what a disciple should look like: *“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.”* The word “disciple” suggests what? Discipline. A true disciple is one who is a student and follows or obeys someone’s teachings. That is why in the early church the disciples were called Christians; or “imitators of Christ”. To be a disciple is to strive to be like Christ. In Romans 8:29 Paul said God’s goal for redeeming or saving mankind was that they were to be conformed into the image of His Son. Are you determined to be a student of Christ? Are you trying to be like Him; if not, then you are not a disciple of Jesus Christ.

**Message LifePoint**: In John 21:5-6: “*Jesus called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered. 6 He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.”*

* How many fish did they catch before Jesus guided them? ZERO. How many after? 153! A disciple follows the guide of their Master Jesus.

**The Mission**

**Week 2**

**Text:** Matthew 28:18-20

**Topic:** Discipleship

**Big Idea of the Message:** What are the characteristics of a disciple of Jesus according to the Bible?

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. **A Disciple Abides in Jesus’ Words:** Abide means – *“to stay, to continue, to dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand”.* This means someone who not only studies the Bible, but also applies and lives by it. Someone who stays very close to Jesus and who shares the words of Jesus with others. There was a story of a young man who had been raised as an atheist and was training to be an Olympic diver. The only religious influence in his life came from his outspoken Christian friend. The young diver never really paid much attention to his friend's messages, but he heard them often. One night the diver went to the indoor pool at the college he attended. The lights were all off, but as the pool had big skylights and the moon was bright, there was plenty of light to practice by. The young man climbed up to the highest diving board and as he turned his back to the pool on the edge of the board and extended his arms out, he saw his shadow on the wall. The shadow of his body in the shape of a cross. Instead of diving, he knelt and asked God to come into his life. As the young man stood, a maintenance man walked in and turned the lights on. The pool had been drained for repairs.

The Great Commission held true. In **John 8:31 Jesus says: “…If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.”** How often do read or listen or study God’s Word. Not someone telling you what it says, but doing it yourself? Are you dedicating time to God daily? A true disciple will make time for God.

1. **A Disciple Loves Others**: With the type of love Jesus showed us - John 13:34-35: *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are* ***My disciples****, if you have love for one another.”* A disciple is one who wants and yearns to become like their teacher. Jesus was willing to leave heaven, live a human life, sacrifice time, effort and His own life for everyone in this world. So should we if we are His true disciples. We should make every effort to save the lost, serve the church, use our gifts, give our all, get to know our brothers and sisters in Christ, and encourage and build them up as often as we can. We also must hash out differences and extend grace and forgiveness any chance we can. Does this sound like you so far? If not, what do you need to be doing to get there? Don’t know? Seek God’s Word and the Holy Spirit’s guidance.
2. **A True Disciple Bears Much Fruit**: *John 15:8: “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”* The Lord is not talking about a good deed here and there, but a fruit-filled lifestyle which causes people to glorify God because of how you live. Are you living your life for God? Are you living your life in a way that brings attention and glory to God? Or are you living life according to your own desires? Do people see you or do they see God working in, with and through you for His honor and glory? A disciple is not magnified – the Teacher is. *Matthew 5:16: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven".*

Are you bearing "much fruit” for God or are you bearing the wrong kind of fruit? Sadly, many people are producing that plastic fake fruit that you see sitting on someone’s dining room table. Why? Because they do not really want to follow the Savior as His disciple. They want to be a disciple by acquaintance. What that means is that they want all things in Christ fulfilled in them without counting any cost just because they know Jesus.

1. **There is a Cost to Being a Disciple:** In*Luke 9:59-60:* Jesus says to a man *"Follow me”, the man replied, Lord let me first go and bury my father. Jesus answered, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God".*This issue wasn't that his father was dead and needed to be buried; he wanted to wait until his father died, then he would follow Jesus. How many people live this way? You know, the “I will get right with God later” types. Jesus lets him know that following Him is something you do right now, forsaking everything else. This man didn’t want to cause conflict, and this shows us an example of how human relationships can at times interfere with our love for God*.* You take risks following Jesus Christ. Are you willing to risk struggles in your life to be a disciple of Christ? Many times, we do not understand God’s plan, but we seek His will and follow it regardless. That is what disciples do.

We almost have to be like the game “Simon Says” to do things correctly. God says take one step; you take one step then stop. But we tend to take another step or steps or turn another direction, what have you. But what does that do? It takes us out of God's perfect will because He only told us to take one step. A great lesson we can learn following God is that you never, ever, ever, assume anything with God’s plan for your life. So that means at many times it will make absolutely no sense at all! God does not allow these things to toy with our emotions. These things are used to grow us, to refine us and to fix our attitudes. And it will be very humbling. We must be the ones who eat the crumbs that fall off the Master’s table.

**Message LifePoint:**Luke 9:23-27 says a disciple must be willing to suffer and even die for Christ. This is a tough one. That is what makes a disciple of Jesus a disciple. They give their all to Him.

“One Sunday morning during service, a 2,000-member congregation was surprised to see two men enter, both covered from head to toe in black and carrying sub-machine guns. One of the men proclaimed, ‘Anyone willing to take a bullet for Christ remain where you are.’ Immediately, the choir fled, the deacons fled, and most of the congregation fled. Out of the 2,000 there only remained around 20. The man who had spoken took off his hood, looked at the preacher and said, ‘Okay Pastor, I got rid of all the hypocrites. Now you may begin your service. Have a nice day!’ And the two men turned and walked out.” - Author Unknown

*We are* **"to be in the world, but not of the world".** **Luke 14:27 says:" Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple".**

**The Mission**

**Week 3 - Conclusion**

**Text:** Matthew 28:18-20

**Topic:** Discipleship

**Big Idea of the Message:** What comes to us and what do we gain for being a devoted disciple to the Lord Jesus Christ?

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. **There are Great Rewards in Being Disciples of Jesus:** There are rewards right now. We are freed and forgiven of our sins! Our past is erased, and we are made new creations in Christ! John 14:27 says that Jesus offers a peace the world cannot give and in 1 John 4:13-18 it says Jesus offers to those who will follow Him the abiding love of God, which can cast out all fear! Then there is the promise of future blessings. Romans 5:9 says we shall be saved from the wrath to come. We get to rule and reign with Jesus forever! In Revelation 21:1-8 it says we can look forward with joyful anticipation of eternity with God, free from sin, worry, doubt, anxiety, sorrow, pain, or death. We get to dwell as perfected, glorified saints with our God for eternity. Are you a disciple? If not, how can you become a disciple?
2. **You Must have a Relationship with Jesus Christ:** He is the Lord of our discipleship. I’m talking about a love relationship with Almighty God, the Creator of the universe. Has the Holy Spirit taken residence in your heart and life? Have you asked Him to not only be your Savior, but to be your Lord, to rule and reign over every area of your life? For only when you do this can He shape and mold you to be all that He wants you to be.

We can’t do it in our own strength, only He can do it and only if we allow Him. Obedience and sacrifice. Taking up your cross is making God’s will, your will.

1. **We Can’t Just Talk the Talk; We Need to Walk the Talk**: It’s been said "that obedience turns said faith into real faith". That is when you transition from believer to a disciple. Remember when you were growing up and you would mark your height on the wall or a doorway?

Some may do that with their kids or grandkids now. That way you could tell how much growth is happening. Physical growth takes time and so does spiritual growth, so it won’t happen overnight. You cannot microwave a disciple like a Hot Pocket. You may not be where you want to be in your spiritual growth, but you should be more mature spiritually than you were a year ago.

**Message LifePoint:** *There is a story of a man who got lost in the desert. After wandering around for a long time his throat became very dry from thirst, but his desperation found hope when he saw a little hut in the distance. He made his way over to the hut and found a water pump with a small jug of water and a note. The note read like this: "Pour all the water into the top of the pump to prime it; if you do this you will get all the water you need". Now the man had a choice to make, if he trusted the note and poured the water in and it worked, he would have all the water he needed. If it didn’t work, he would still be thirsty, and he might die. Or he could choose to drink the water in the jug and get immediate satisfaction, but it might not be enough, and he still might die. After thinking about it…the man decided to risk it. He poured the entire jug into the pump and began to work the handle, but at first nothing happened, and he got a little scared and frantic, but he kept going and finally water started coming out. So much water came out that he drank all he wanted, took a shower, and filled all the containers that he could find. Because he was willing to give up momentary satisfaction, he got all the water he needed. Now the note also said: ‘After you have finished, please refill the jug for the next traveler.’ The man refilled the jug and added to the note: ‘Please prime the pump, believe me it works!’”*

We have the same choice to make; do we hold on to what we have right now because we don’t believe there are better things in store for us, so we settle for immediate temporal gratification? Or do we trust God, take a leap of faith and give up all that we have to get what God has promised us? The choice is obvious to me – is it to you? We need to pour all the water into the pump (that is the leap of faith), work at our discipleship and trust God with everything. I say, “Go ahead pour all of yourself in and prime the pump, believe me it works!” Don’t just be a Christian. Keep walking. Be a Christian disciple.