

Matthew 28 Extra Lesson Making Disciples

Intro: Bible never commands us to plant churches and frankly, it doesn't really say all that much about evangelism. What Jesus **did** command us to do is to make disciples. Making disciples necessarily requires evangelism and church planting.

Matt asked me to talk to you about disciple making.

The setting: Matthew 27 records Jesus' crucifixion, death and burial. In Matthew 28, the resurrected Jesus appeared to the women at the tomb. Jesus asked the women to tell his disciples to meet him in up in Galilee. **Read 28:10.**

******How did the eleven disciples respond when they saw the resurrected Jesus in Galilee (28:16-17)?** They worshiped Him (though some doubted), 28:17.

How does their worship reveal that they understood Jesus to be God (28:17)? Had Jesus not been God, their worship would have been blasphemous. Several times in the Scriptures an angel would appear to someone who then started to worship the angel and every time the angel put a quick stop to it.

ESV **Exodus 34:14** . . . you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God . . .

ESV **Matthew 4:10** . . . Jesus said . . . "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."

ESV **John 20:27-28** Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

1a. Orthodoxy & Worship: One of the requirements in disciple making is a correct understanding of who Jesus is (God in human form) and a proper response: *genuine worship*. It is possible to be just as straight as a gun barrel theologically and just as empty. We don't want an untheological devotion but neither should we have an undevotional theology.

Application: Our worship of Christ as Lord should move us to desire to make disciples of all nations. It is because we worship Jesus that we want to obey His commands. This worship will give you the fuel, the passion, to serve Jesus.

Some doubted. What was there to doubt (28:17)? “Doubting” Thomas is an example of one who doubted early on. By now they all would have believed in the resurrection. Perhaps they initially suspected that this particular man was an impersonator. This doubt shows that these men were not gullible; they were rightly skeptical. Note that the text states that after they saw Jesus, He then “came” (closer). That they were all finally convinced shows the reality of the resurrection.

1b. Faith: As a corollary to the foundation of orthodoxy and worship (above), another requirement for discipleship is strong faith in the resurrection. If you doubt the resurrection, then you are not in much of a position for Jesus to use you.

Application: If you have a rock solid faith in the resurrected Lord Jesus, this will put a fire in your bones to make disciples.

- Your theology has to be sound.
- Your worship has to be genuine.
- Your faith has to be certain.

If you are rock solid in your faith, then you will want to worship him by obeying his commands.

NAS **John 14:21** "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me . . .

Now, where did all this take place (28:16-20)? See 28:10, 16a. Jesus told the disciples to meet him in Galilee. The disciples obeyed Jesus and went there.

Application: In order to make disciples, you have to be where the Lord wants you to be. You have to be available. Your greatest ability is availability. It starts with simply being available to God.

******After they saw the resurrected Lord with their own eyes and after they worshipped, what great commission did Jesus give them (28:18-20)?** Jesus commissioned them to make disciples. *There is only one command here.* The command is not **1.)** to go, it is not **2.)** to baptize and it is not even **3.)** to teach. The one command given is to make disciples (an aorist imperative verb). The other verbs (go, baptizing, teaching, 28:19-20) are participles* and are subservient to the main verb (make disciples). These participles tell us how to make disciples.

*A participle is like a verb but it functions as an adjective.

Before the command to make disciples (28:19), what truth did Jesus bring out in 28:18? Jesus stated that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to him.

Why did Jesus begin by stating that all authority had been given to Him (28:18)? First, no less an authority that God Himself is giving a commandment: *make disciples*. This is a command that we need to obey. **Second**, all the power of heaven is behind us as we go to make disciples. We have the authority to make disciples because Jesus gave us that authority. **“Therefore”** (a verbal hinge, 28:19), go and make disciples!

2. Authority & Submission: We have authority from God to make disciples. We are authorized and empowered to do it. Reading between the lines, this is not only an important commission, but it is going to be a tough job. You will get opposition and be discouraged so Jesus offers this encouragement to us: we are authorized by Jesus to be doing this. Further, in order to make disciples, we ourselves need to submit to Jesus’ authority as Lord.

To whom did Jesus give this commission (28:16, 18)? It was given specifically to the eleven, Jesus’ original apostles. Though some argue that this applies to every Christian (and it may), it is nevertheless a fact that some Christians are especially gifted and called by the Holy Spirit as evangelists and missionaries (apostles). Those not so gifted are obligated to give to support those who are. *How are you going to disciple all nations if you go to work every day at the same place and never leave the country?* Somebody has to strategize about such things and actually go to new places (like the apostles did).

ESV **Ephesians 4:11** . . . he (Christ) gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry . . .

We can all be part of the disciple making process. Those especially gifted by the Holy Spirit may be called by Jesus to make disciples full time. The rest of us will do it as we work our secular vocations.

— Go —

The first participle, the first aspect of the disciple making process, is to “go” (28:19). Literally, the idea of a participle is “as you are going”. This tells me that we are to make disciples all along the way, as we are going through life. Sometimes it may be more formal, like in a Bible study or accountability group, but more often it will be at the water fountain or over a cup of coffee or during a conversation at work or at home with your family or in the back yard while you are grilling out with your neighbor. Yes there is intentionality to it, but often it is unexpected and you make the most of every opportunity.

This lifestyle discipleship is to occur between husband and wife, parents to children, older women to younger women and man to man. It is as much caught as it is taught.

Others will be called to actually “go”. We typically call these people missionaries. Jesus said those who preach the Gospel should get their living from the Gospel. We are all to make disciples and part of the way we can do this is to financially support evangelists and missionaries.

— **Make Disciples** —

Here is the actual command: *Make disciples*.

What does disciple mean (28:19)? The Greek word in our text is actually a verb *mathéteuo* (“make disciples”). *Mathéteuo* is the basis for our word mathematics; the noun form means knowledge, study and learning. In English, learning mathematics takes discipline. Similarly, our word disciple and the word discipline are related. The noun form, mathétés (“disciple”) means learner or pupil or apprentice or adherent (BAGD, p. 485).

Based on 28:19-20, what exactly is a disciple? A disciple is someone who is a baptized follower of Jesus who has **learned** all that Jesus commanded and who **obeys** all that Jesus commanded.

Each of us is at various stages of maturity in his discipleship. We need to be taught Jesus’ ways for us in prayer, in evangelism, in our understanding of who God is, in our daily walk with God, as husbands, fathers, wives, mothers, children, as employees or employers, in our finances, how to handle stress, giving, etc. We are all works in progress.

What is the end goal in discipleship? It is to be like Jesus.

ESV **Matthew 10:24-25** A disciple is not above his teacher . . . It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher . . .

According to 28:19, upon whom were the eleven to focus their disciple making efforts (28:19)? They were to focus on all nations, all ethnic groups, not just the Jews. This suggests there is to be intentionality in our going. We are to actually target all nations. Somebody is supposed to strategize about how to reach all nations. (**Whose job is that?**).

This may be where a division of labor comes in. Not all believers have the time nor inclination nor gifting to study out how to reach all nations or to go there themselves to make disciples. Yet some people (missionaries/apostles) are called to do this. The rest of us need to support them in what they are doing (finances, prayer, encouragement, go with them, Skype them, etc.).

— **Baptizing Them** —

What is baptism? It is an initiation right into the church. It is a public identification with Christ that gives glory to God and shames the devil. It the outward sign of an inward act of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. It is sign of the righteousness we have by faith. It is symbolic that we have turned from sin and by faith accepted righteousness in Christ.

Water baptism is one of the first acts of obedience by a new disciple. Jesus hung naked on a cross to pay for our sins; any so-called disciple who is not willing to follow Him in baptism probably does not have a faith strong enough to be saved.

Baptism is a line of demarcation that separates the men from the boys, the serious buyer from the tire-kicker and the wheat from the tare. Baptism is not a matter of indifference to our Lord. It is an integral part of the great commission.

Application: If you truly believe in Jesus and yet have not been water baptized, you need to make that right. If you would be His disciple, you need to be baptized.

Why is it significant that baptism is in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (28:19)?
Ours is a Trinitarian God. He is triune, three in one; one name, three persons.

Baptizing someone in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a theological statement. Some Christians shy away from doctrine, but theology means words about God. A person is right to run from the wrong use of doctrine, or the abuse of doctrine, but a correct understanding of God is critical to acceptable worship. We are to worship in spirit and in truth.

Paul warned of false gospels and false christs. We are to worship the Christ of the Scriptures. The written Word tells us about the Living Word. Divorced from the Scriptures, the worship of a false christ, of a god of one's own imagination, can quickly follow. One brother who was involved with a small, community church said of the others in his church, "As to doctrine, I don't know what they each believe. And they don't ask me about mine!" An understanding of the true person and work of Christ is about as doctrinaire as one can get. *Yet that is not discussed? Is Jesus God in human form or a lesser being? Is his death of the cross propitiatory or merely the result of human sinfulness? Was his resurrection literal or spiritual?* These things matter!

ESV **Galatians 1:6-7** I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you . . . and are turning to a **different** gospel . . . there are some who trouble you and want to **distort** the gospel of Christ.

ESV **2 Corinthians 11:3-4** . . . I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims **another** Jesus than the one we proclaimed . . .you put up with it . . .

One time a lady called into a radio show and said, "I'll never go to a doctrine church" (!). Yet the correct teaching of right doctrine is quite biblical:

ESV **Titus 2:1** . . . as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

Note well that part of making disciples necessarily involves **doctrine**:

Hamartiology: This is the doctrine of sin. Sin is falling short of God's glory. Sin is breaking God's standards for right and wrong. Sin is missing the mark of perfection.

Anthropology: This is the doctrine of man. Man is sinful, dead in his trespasses and sins, and powerless to save himself. We are estranged from God. We are by nature children of wrath.

Theology Proper: This is all about God. God, our Triune creator, is holy and righteous and just and will not allow sin to go unpunished. We owe him our worship yet we have broken his standards and rebelled against Him, creating a condition of hostility between man and God.

Eschatology: This is future things; end time events. Because of your sin, you are going to die in the future. After that, in eternity, you will stand before a righteous God and face judgment for your sins. The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God (otherwise known as Hell).

Christology & Soteriology: Despite our sin, God loves us and became a man (Christ Jesus). He lived a sinless life and died on the cross in our place, a sacrifice for our sins, a substitutionary atonement. As infinite God, Jesus could suffer in a finite time on the cross what it would take us, who are finite, an infinity to suffer in hell. Then, after three days, He rose again, conquering death, and opened the way for us into heaven. Forgiveness and eternal life is given freely to those who believe that Jesus is who He claimed to be and who trust him as their Lord.

Pneumatology: The doctrine of the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit is the One who convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. It is God the Holy Spirit who causes us to be born again. It is God the Holy Spirit who indwells us as believers and who empowers us to obey all that Jesus commanded. The Holy Spirit perseveres within us to make us holy.

Ecclesiology: This is the doctrine of the church. Jesus said that He would build his church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. The moment you are born again you are a member of the church universal, the worldwide body of Christ. Jesus wants his people to covenant together in local fellowships to be equipped and to encourage one another in our walk with Him. It is through the church that we learn to obey all that Jesus commanded.

— Evangelism —

One thing Jesus did not specifically mention here is evangelism. Yet obviously, part of the process of making disciples is first to evangelize people.

ESV Romans 10:14 . . . how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

What you aim at matters. Don't aim merely at evangelism; that's not enough. Shoot past evangelism and aim at making disciples. That's the end game.

Sometimes those who are really gifted in evangelism are not so good at making disciples. They are lacking in follow-up. Sometimes those who are really good at teaching are not so good at evangelism. They are not outreach oriented enough. Each person needs to recognize that both evangelism and disciple making are important. If we do have a division of labor there also needs to be cooperation. The evangelists need to be sure the people he sees come to Christ are discipled and the discipler needs to be sure that the importance of evangelism is stressed and that evangelists are supported financially.

So, how do you make disciples? *The initial process starts with evangelism.*

Application:

Are you a personal witness?

How are you witness?

Do you financially support a missionary?

Does your church have any strategy for reaching some of the people in your very own neighborhood with the Gospel?

— Teaching —

How does 28:20 show the importance of teaching? No less an authority than the Lord Jesus, to whom all authority has been given, commanded that we make disciples, and part of that process involves *teaching*.

What is it that we are to be teaching (28:20)? We are to teach people to observe all that Jesus commanded.

ESV **John 8:31** . . . If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples . . .

“Observe” (28:20): Notice that it is not enough to simply teach what Jesus commanded. We are also to teach people to *obey* what Jesus commanded. All of our teaching must be application oriented. If the “what” does not lead to the “so what”, then you have not taught the “what” correctly. You must teach for life change. Any teaching in church must not simply be a content dump. Christ centered teaching is about transformation, not information.

N.A.T.O. Men: Sri Lankan church worker Muralee Kangatheran warns of brothers in the church there who are N.A.T.O. men: No Action, Talk Only. Don’t be a N.A.T.O. man!

ESV **James 1:22** . . . be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Example: When I was in high school, the seniors all parked their cars in a row up in an upper parking lot overlooking the school. After school, it would not be unusual to see cars with the hoods up and bunch of guys hunched over an engine talking about racing cams and lifters (these were their parents old family cars!). Then, these guys would just sit there in the car are rev the engine, feel the power, and the roar and watch black smoke would billow out the tail pipe (before catalytic converters). If you saw me doing that today, outside in the parking lot, you’d think, “That’s really immature.” The purpose of a car is not to rev its engine. The purpose of a car is to get you from point A to point B. Far too many teachers in the church have forgotten the purpose of teaching. Too many teachers celebrate the content (that’s just revving your engine). The purpose of teaching is life change. The purpose of your content is a tool to cause application.¹

¹ Illustration taken from Bruce Wilkinson’s series on how to teach, *The Seven Laws of the Learner*.

When we teach, we must be application oriented. We get all excited about the content, but the content is not the end. The content is the vehicle by which we apply. We are to teach *in order* to apply.

The bible is not given for our information, but rather our transformation.

Whenever you sit down to prepare yourself to teach the Bible, you ought to work to say:

What is the application I'm driving at?

How will this content be used to get to the application?

What is the life change that I'm aiming for?

What is the content I need to know to drive that application home to my own heart and to the hearts of the people that are there?

Application is the goal of all teaching; it is the crown of instruction. If all you do is give content without the application, you create an abortion (on God's purpose).

- A teacher has not taught unless he has applied the content.
- Always use your content as a means to apply the truth.
- Ask God to make you a life change agent.

ESV 2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

ESV 2 Timothy 3:17 that the man of God may be knowledgeable about the Bible

It does not say that! But that's what I would expect by my church experience. Here is what it really says:

ESV 2 Timothy 3:17 that the man of God may be competent, unto all content.

Wait! It doesn't say that, either! What it says is:

ESV 2 Timothy 3:17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

What is the goal of making disciples? The ultimate goal of a disciple is to be like his master. To make disciples is to help others to be like Jesus.

ESV Matthew 10:24-25 A disciple is not above his teacher . . . It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher . . .

Some people are supernaturally gifted in teaching. You don't have to be gifted in teaching to teach others to obey all that Jesus commanded. All parents are given by God the right and responsibility of bringing their children up in the fear of the Lord. You can teach simply by talking to someone else informally. You can teach by example. It is not about oratorical eloquence.

Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him. When he said yes, Jesus said, "Feed my sheep" (Jn 21:17).

Jesus did not here command us to evangelize, neither did He command us to plant churches. But, we do evangelize as a part of making disciples and we do plant churches as part of our goal to make disciples. One of the main functions of any church is to teach its members to obey all that Jesus commanded.

If Jesus graded your church on how well it teaches His commands, would you get a passing grade?

Is your church systemically teaching the commands of Christ or is it done haphazardly?

Would a new Christian in your church ever learn what the Bible is all about by attending your meetings?

Example: There once was a young man who had attended a small, neighborhood church his whole life. During his college years he met an attractive young lady and began attending her very large Baptist church. He was amazed at and blessed by the thoughtful, in-depth, scriptural messages the pastor brought each week. He posted on his Face Book page about the contrast between the good teaching of the large church and his past small church experience, “where a bunch of guys sit around, shooting from the hip, sharing what they *think* the Bible says about something.” Sadly, a person would never learn the Bible attending the typical small church.

Sometimes people spend years in large churches where they get great Bible teaching but very little fellowship. When they get involved with small community churches, they over-dose on the relationships and warm and genuine friendships that are built. However, after a few years, they realize, “Hey, we’re not getting any in-depth teaching here.” There should be a marrying of the two. Either one without the other is problematic.

Example: I have met kids who grew up in a small church with little or no teaching who doubt the Trinity, question the reality of hell, and are open to redefine the atonement (what happened on the cross).

If you are a leader in a small church, or if you are gifted at teaching, then one of your duties is to teach:

ESV **Romans 12:6-7** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who **teaches, in his teaching . . .**

ESV **2 Timothy 4:1-2** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **preach the word**; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and **teaching.**

— “All” —

According to 28:20, what percentage of Jesus’ commands are we to teach? Jesus said we are to them to obey “all” that He commanded.

Joke: A very popular 501c3 is the “Society for Convenient Christianity”. The Society’s purpose is to provide convincing and comforting reasons why the Bible could not possibly mean some of the things it says, thus providing excuses for members not to have to obey its more inconvenient teachings. Examples of fabricated arguments include cultural relativity, that times have changed, that errors have crept into the original manuscripts, that it is taken out of context, that it was just Paul’s opinion, etc. Their URL is www.SCC.lie

When it comes to obedience, selective service is not a good thing. A disciple seeks to obey “all” that Jesus commanded, not just the parts that he agrees with or doesn’t have any struggles with.

ESV **Luke 14:27** Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Red Letter Bibles: I personally have a real problem with red letter edition Bibles. The red letters give the false impression that the words in red are more important than the ones in black. The fact is they are all equally inspired. It could be argued from a literary perspective the words in black are more important because they are the author’s comments on and framing to the words in red. The author who wrote the black words decided which of the red words he would record for you to read. But beyond that:

ESV **2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is breathed out by God

The epistles are like commentaries on the Gospels. The Gospel records of what Jesus taught are very short and pithy. The epistles are much fuller explanations of what Jesus meant.

ESV **John 16:7-15** . . . I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you . . . I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Teaching all that Jesus commanded necessarily means teaching the whole of the New Testament (not just the Gospels).

Practical examples of topics:

- Prayer
- Bible reading/mediation/how to study
- Quiet time/walking with God
- Faith & Obedience
- Teaching bible (overview, how to handle properly, intensive studies of each book)
- Greek
- Marriage (husband/wife)
- Finances
- Holiness/sexual purity

Child training
The Spirit filled life
Evangelism

Why did Jesus add that He would be with them always, to the end of the age (28:20)? A crucial element of discipleship is the presence of the Master, who is “God with us” (Mt 1:23). For the disciples it had to have been a scary proposition to go off into far away and unknown places. This is a verse of reassurance and encouragement.

Conclusion

What have we learned about disciple making?

- Proper disciple making grows out of proper worship of who Jesus is: Almighty God
- Lasting disciple making grows out of a genuine faith in the resurrection Lord Jesus.
- We are authorized directly by Jesus to make disciples
- Making disciples involves baptizing people and teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded.
- Jesus has promised to be with us to the very end in the disciple making process.

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