

FBC POWELL, 2-18-18 AM NOTES
"ALL IN: Making Disciples, Illustrated by the Apostle Paul"
Various Scriptures
2 in Series, "ALL IN"

Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB) ¹⁹ "Go therefore [literally, as you are going] and make disciples of all the nations [literally people groups], baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

"Let angels sing for sinners repenting, prodigals restored, backsliders reclaimed, Satan's captives released, blind eyes opened, broken hearts bound up, the despondent cheered, the self-righteous stripped, the formalist [people going through religious rituals with no heart reality] driven from a refuge of lies, the ignorant enlightened, and saints built up in their holy faith. I ask great things of a great God."
—*The Valley of Vision—A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions*

I. ALL IN Making Disciples —What Does It Look Like?

"God is glorified when a church follows this procedure: 1). We seek God for His will, direction, and vision. 2). He gives us something way bigger than we are. 3). We believe Him to do it through us as we commit to complete obedience. 4). The vision is accomplished by the power of God and God gets all the glory."
—1994 Message, First Baptist Powell

A. Making Disciples Is Not Complicated

"Disciple making is helping people follow Jesus."
—Mark Dever

"The most numerous and successful missionaries of the Christian religion were not the regular teachers, but Christians themselves, in virtue of their loyalty and courage...It was characteristic of this religion that everyone who seriously confessed the faith proved of service to its [message]...We cannot hesitate to believe that the great mission of Christianity was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries."
—Adolph Harnack

B. Making Disciples —A Pattern

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II. ALL IN to Making Disciples —Illustrated by Paul

A. A Life Poured Out

2 Timothy 4:6-8 (NASB) ⁶For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

Romans 9:1-3 (NASB) ¹“I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, ² that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”

2 Corinthians 6:4-5 (NASB) ⁴“but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, ⁵ in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger.’

Philippians 4:11-12 (NASB) ¹¹ “Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹²I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.”

1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 (NASB) ⁷“But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing *mother* tenderly cares for her own children. ⁸ Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. ⁹ For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, *how* working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and *so is* God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; ¹¹ just as you know how we *were* exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father *would* his own children, ¹² so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

B. A Life ALL IN

1 Corinthians 9:22 (NASB) “To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.”

2 Corinthians 12:15 (NIV) “So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less?”

2 Timothy 2:2 (NASB) “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

Sermon 2: Making Disciples, Illustrated by the Apostle Paul

Various Scriptures

The phrase *ALL IN* means nothing held back, without restrictions, totally committed to. But when we speak in this series of being *ALL IN*, we are speaking of those who have come before the Lord in surrender and brokenness, available to do what He says to do, willing to go where He says to go, and willing to give what He says to give. The format of this series is to focus on an area where believers are called from the Scriptures to be *ALL IN*. After examining what the Bible says about that area, we will look at a biblical character or group of people who exemplifies being *ALL IN*. In the first message in this series, we looked at the Old Testament character Jacob who was *ALL IN* with being broken or surrendered before the Lord. In this message we will look at the Apostle Paul and from his example we will be challenged to be *ALL IN* when it comes to a lifestyle of making disciples.

Let's read what Jesus says about being *ALL IN* with making disciples. Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore [literally, as you are going] and make disciples of all the nations [literally people groups], baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

We are at a very critical point in the life of our church. In some ways Charles Dickens' famous words in the opening line of *A Tale of Two Cities* describe where we are as a church – "It was the best of times and the worst of times." I am seeing some amazing things happen, but at the same time some challenges that we have never faced in my years here.

We have some of the most amazing committed loving and generous people in this church who are truly *ALL IN*. However, I cannot ever remember such a large percentage of our members who are involved in no ministry of any kind. Without giving me names, our elder over finances tells me that about forty percent of our members gave zero for kingdom work in 2017. I love you members that I just described, and I hope you will keep coming, but I don't understand you (I don't know who you are – I do not have, nor do I desire to have, access to giving records). To not have a heart of generosity evidenced in generous giving to your church is not a financial issue; it's a spiritual issue. I plead with you that *for your own joy* you would refuse to be a spectator in the church – even a spectator who is a big fan of Jesus. Jesus calls us to be His followers, not His fans.

I plead with you to be *ALL IN*. Especially, I plead with you to be *ALL IN* with involvement in making disciples and *ALL IN* with giving to enable us to make more disciples through our ministries here and missions literally around the world.

Let me share some exciting things that are happening. Over ten years ago, we adopted a large city in South Asia with a one million plus population that from the info we had available had almost no Christians. Because it is in a very secure area of the world, we just call it "Our lost city." We sent team after team from this church to our lost city, and we saw virtually no visible fruit. We didn't give up, but we just pulled back and as those Christians of years gone by used to say, "We set ourselves to praying." After years of praying – several ladies meeting each month to fervently pray – we heard of some things happening there (I am being vague because this is on the internet and our Lost City is in a very "anti-Christian" area of the world). After not having any of our people there for years – only faithful people praying here in our church, we recently had two teams go back to the lost city. One team was there this past summer and another team just returned a few weeks ago. We found some churches and believers that we didn't know existed. Our people who just got back a few weeks ago helped train fifty-five local believers to share the Gospel. We will be sending more teams, but we fully expect amazing fruit in our lost

city in a short period of time if God chooses to continue to bless our efforts. That is a huge WOW!

In just a few months, the Maples family (James is one of our elders) will be leaving for East Africa to plant their lives to help with church plants and ministry to people in one of the largest slums in the world. I've been in this slum and it is beyond my ability to describe the human suffering and spiritual needs there. The Maples are raising support from individual believers, but a sizable portion of their funding is from our missions' budget – from your regular giving.

We are seeing God at work not only in missions, but also in our own community (though we have a long way to go). Next week we are having a ministry fair on Sunday morning when most all of our ministries will have booths and displays that shows what they are doing and how you can get involved. All these ministries are tied in some way to making disciples. This message is an unashamed plea to you to be *ALL IN* with making disciples.

I. ALL IN Making Disciples – What Does It Look Like?

In my preparation for this message, I was looking back at some old messages I preached. I ran across a message from 1994 as we were just beginning to raise the money for this building. What I said then is still true twenty-four years later.

God is glorified when a church follows this procedure:

1. We seek God for His will, direction, and vision.
2. He gives us something way bigger than we are.
3. We believe Him to do it through us as we commit to complete obedience.
4. The vision is accomplished by the power of God and God gets all the glory.

That is still true! It is true of giving to build buildings, but it is also true of bringing people to Christ and discipling them to the point that they can spiritually feed themselves, grow in their knowledge of the word, and begin making disciples themselves.

I need to share some hard things with you. We currently are not doing a great job in our own neighborhoods of obeying Jesus' command that we read at the beginning of this message. We are not seeing large numbers of people come to Christ and become His disciple. Certainly we are seeing some, but think what would happen if just 500 of our members would follow that procedure, that pattern that I shared twenty-four years ago? What if each of us sought God for His will, direction, and vision of how He wanted to use us to make disciples? What if we listened to Him when He gives us a vision about making disciples – a vision much bigger than we are capable of accomplishing ourselves? What if we then looked to Him in faith to enable us, empower us to set about the task of discipling others? Here is what would happen: "The vision would be accomplished by the power of God and God would get all the glory." Allow me to share two things that making disciples will look like and then we will close with a glimpse of how this worked itself out in the Apostle Paul's life.

A. Making Disciples Is Not Complicated

Here is a simple definition of making disciples. *Disciple making is helping people follow Jesus* [Mark Dever]. It is really that simple. It may be that the person God leads you to has not yet repented of sin and savingly believed on Jesus and His payment for their sin as their only hope for salvation. If that is true, discipleship would begin by sharing with them how to be saved.

Others will have already repented of sin and savingly believed on Jesus Christ. Their problem may be that they don't know how to grow by spending time in the Word and prayer. They don't understand what it means that the Holy Spirit lives in them to empower them to forsake sin and follow Jesus.

In my own journey, it was about fifteen years between the time I became a Christian as a child and when someone showed me how to live the Christian life. My breakthrough didn't happen in a one on one relationship but by sitting in a class where the pastor taught us what it meant that the Holy Spirit lives in us and desires to fill, control, and empower us to obey God and mature in our walk with him. I had never heard that. I wonder how my life would have been different if as a teenager someone who was just a little farther down the road from me would have discipled me on just the basics.

Discipleship doesn't have to be a program, a ten-week class that involves going through some teaching material. That is not all bad, and *some* initial discipleship should take place that way. However, the New Testament pattern is that discipling others is a way of life; it is a culture in a church where bringing people to Christ and then helping them follow Jesus is the main focus of the members. How sad it is that we have turned discipleship into something the "professionals" do.

Let's focus on this church. I certainly believe that from the pulpit and from the Lifegroups (even very large Lifegroups) discipling is happening, but where are the people who "one on one" or "one with three or four" disciple others as a way of life? Because of our failure to disciple one on one or one on a few, I fear we are becoming a church filled with people who have the intellectual things down, but it is not being passed on through informal relationships to those outside the church who have never heard the Gospel or those like me who knew Christ but didn't know how to follow Him. One of the causes of our failure to make disciples is a lack of genuine love for others. One of the consequences of that lack of love is a lack of genuine, Holy Spirit given joy! It grieves me to say this, but I fear that we are by and large intellectually full of truth, but not relationally passing it on to those who really need it. What is missing in our church is the multiplication through one on one or small group discipling. Discipleship is so much more than listening to sermons and going to classes. Yes, it is that, but it is so much more.

I do not believe that we need a new program to institute what I am talking about. What I want to share in a moment is a super simple way to develop a lifestyle of discipling others – finding out where they are in their journey and then helping them follow hard after Jesus. Disciples making disciples who make disciples is how Christianity spread so rapidly in the early years after Christ gave the great commission. The historian Edward Gibbon (who was no friend of Christianity) tells us that Christianity had reached the shores of India by 49 A.D. and the borders of China by 61 A.D. [James Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, page 651]

How did that happen? Let's go back to the historian, Edward Gibbon. "[In the early church] it became the most sacred duty of a new convert to diffuse among his friends and relations the inestimable blessing which he had received." [Boice, page 651] That's discipleship!

A well-known church historian, Adolph Harnack, said referring to the early church, "The most numerous and successful missionaries of the Christian religion were not the regular teachers but Christians themselves, in virtue of their loyalty and courage. ...It was characteristic of this religion that everyone who seriously confessed the faith proved of service to its [message]...We cannot hesitate to believe that the great mission of Christianity was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries." [Boice, page 651] By "informal missionaries" he was speaking of people like you! It was not primarily the vocational missionaries or preachers, but church members who made a living by their vocation but as they were going shared the Gospel and made disciples. I hereby commission each of you *informal missionaries!*

B. Making Disciples – A Pattern

In our recent vision retreat, we came up with a really simple approach to disciple making. We are calling it OP2BLESS (opportunities to bless). The great thing about this approach is that it is so simple. You don't have to go through a class, attend a seminar, or earn your PhD.

Begin with prayer – Who do you know who needs to know Christ or deepen in their walk with Christ? Begin praying for them. I have an OP2BLESS page in my prayer journal where I am praying for specific individuals that God would open a door to allow me to bless them by helping them become a follower of Christ.

Listen – Listen to their story. Listen to what is going on in their life. That's what love looks like. Listening says "I care about you."

Eat – It is amazing how often we find Jesus eating with people, eating with people like Zacchaeus, eating with His disciples. Invite several neighbors over to eat. Invite a new person from work out to eat lunch. The possibilities are endless.

Serve – One of the best ways to demonstrate love is to serve someone. Not only should we be about serving neighbors, co-workers, and those in need, we as a church must serve our community. That could include trash pickup on the side of road, continuing with parades and refreshments, and clean up after community events

Share – Eventually we must share the Gospel with people. Many Christians are *ALL IN* when it comes to praying, listening, eating, and serving, but when it comes to actually sharing the Gospel, the "BLESS" crowd gets noticeably smaller. This tendency to be ashamed of the Gospel is dealt with by the apostle Paul in Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." We have offered so many classes on sharing the Gospel, but it is not complicated! Simply take a tract and go through it with them. If they ask a question that you don't know the answer to, you do this amazing thing in response: "I don't know the answer to that, but I will do some research and get back to you. But I know that what I am sharing with you is true, so let me continue with this booklet." I am not belittling apologetics, and we must study to show ourselves approved, but we make it too complicated. Bill Bright used to say, "Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread."

II. ALL IN Making Disciples – Illustrated by Paul

There is no greater example than the Apostle Paul when it comes to making disciples. The material we could use here is massive. Here was a man *ALL IN* with bringing people to Christ and discipling them. I could do a twenty-part series on the Apostle Paul and discipleship, but instead, I simply want to read several verses and let the Scripture speak for itself. My comments will be held to a minimum. Let's just let the word of God speak.

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2 Timothy 4:6-8; “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

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2 Timothy 2:2: “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

Conclusion

We could look to programs, consultants, gimmicks, and motivational experts to grow this church, but we have the Scriptures and that is enough. When are we going to start taking seriously the many commands to make disciples. This would be a good day to get serious.