

Go Make Disciples

Matthew 28:16-20

Kingdom Come! (Gospel of Matthew Series)

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livinghopechurch.net

“Could a mariner sit idle if he heard the drowning cry? Could a doctor sit in comfort and just let his patients die? Could a fireman sit idle, let men burn and give no hand? Can you sit at ease in Zion with the world around you damned?”

~ **Leonard Ravenhill**

Proposition: Go and make disciples!

Open your Bible to **Matthew 28** if you would. We are in the last message of our series in the book of Matthew entitled “Kingdom Come.” This morning we are looking at a message entitled: “Go Make Disciples.”

The Mission of My Grandfather

Charles Cunningham Black was born in 1899. He left home in 1913 to join the First World War. His sister lied for him so he could join the army.

He was dedicated and on mission – so much so that when he was shot he wanted to recover quickly and rejoin the war effort. And that he did. Even after the war, my dad was telling me they sent him back to Germany to help bring peace. After that he moved to the USA in March of 1923 at Ellis Island, and he later met a German girl – Charlotte Becker, and married her (my Grandma).

We are also called to be on mission! Jesus gives us his marching orders.

My Aim and Desire

My desire this morning is that you will have a radical, burning, powerful movement by the Spirit in your heart to make disciples for Jesus. That includes giving the Gospel of God’s grace to people. But it mainly includes taking those born again new believers and training them in righteousness. It means investing your heart and soul and life into the people that surround you.

The Mission of Jesus: to inhabit the church – making his disciples like Him

My dear brothers and sisters, Jesus rose from the dead not simply so we could go to heaven. That’s selfishness. No! He is in us, and as he indwells us, his church is Jesus on earth. Jesus has given us his mission statement, his marching orders in Matthew 28.

This mission statement serves to essentially explain in concise terms the purpose for the existence of this particular business or company. It is carefully thought through and crafted by the creators and designers of that company. You have to wrestle with the question: For what purpose

do we want to start this organization? In Matthew 28, we find this is the almighty will of Jesus: to make disciples.

Moving to the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus Christ has now accomplished His redemptive purpose for coming to earth, and he gives us his mission statement.

Read with me in **Matthew 28:18-20**, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Now after 3½ years of public ministry and intense training, Jesus meets with these men after His resurrection for some final words of instruction. This scene is recorded in **five different places** in the New Testament.

- **The Place** - Mark 16:15 – “All the world”
- **The Preaching** - Luke 24:45-47 – Preach “Repentance”
- **The Personal Commission** - John 20:21 – “As the Father has sent me, so send I you”
- **The Power** - Acts 1:8 – “You shall receive power”
- And here in Matthew we find **the Command** - Matthew 28:19, 20 – “make disciples”

Outline

Go make disciples...

- with **all authority**, Mt 28:18.
- of **all nations**, Mt 28:19.
- teaching **all Jesus commanded**, Mt 28:20a
- knowing Jesus is with you **always**, Mt 28:20b

You Need to be Where Jesus is

Mt 28:16, “Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the **mountain** to which Jesus had directed them.” This theme of the **mountain** links Jesus back to the theophany of Sinai in the Book of Exodus. Just as God revealed himself to Moses, now God in human flesh reveals himself to his disciples and to us.

The disciples follow Jesus’ orders to return to Galilee after the **seven days** of the Passover celebration (see Jn 20:26).

The disciples had seen Jesus multiple times in Jerusalem, but our Lord wanted them to go to Galilee. You understand don’t you, that where ever Jesus is, that’s where you want to be!

A Proper Place to Launch His Universal Mission

Jesus wanted to reconstitute his disciples as the apostolic band especially in the place where they had been trained and spent the major part of their ministry. It is in “Galilee of the Gentiles” (4:15–16) Jesus will launch the universal mission.¹

Greatest Ability is Dependability

As someone astutely observed many years ago, as far as a believer’s service to God is concerned, the greatest ability is availability. The most talented and gifted Christian is useless to God if he is not available to be used.²

¹ Osborne, G. R. (2010). *Matthew* (Vol. 1, p. 1077). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

² MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (Mt 28:16). Chicago: Moody Press.

They Worshipped Jesus!

Jesus has been the object of worship throughout this Gospel: by the wise men (2:2, 11) during his ministry, and now he is being worshipped by his disciples.

Some Doubted / Hesitated

Yes, they worshipped Christ. Jesus Christ is worthy of your worship today. **Mt 28:17**, “And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.” The word “doubt” is not one for unbelief, but has the idea of **hesitating**. They were Jews who worshipped YHWH. The Trinity is familiar to us, but it was brand new to them. They were hesitating because this was a new concept to them.

They were looking at the risen Christ. Jesus is clarifying who he is. All authority in heaven and in earth. He is YHWH. He is God. I think many of us would have hesitated as well.

Pentecost is right around the corner. Jesus is on the earth for 40 days appearing to more than 500 witnesses who will be filled with the Spirit at Pentecost, and there will be **no more hesitation**.

I. Make disciples with **all authority**, Mt 28:18.

Mt 28:18, “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.””

The Realm of Jesus Authority

The realm Jesus’ authority is “heaven and on earth.” Now when He says, “... in Heaven...” that literally means in the heavenly realm. That is, it not only includes the physical universe, but the realm of the spiritual things and that includes, where the angels are. That includes the realm of the demons. It includes all principalities and powers that govern light and darkness. He is Lord over them all. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess, “in heaven and on earth and under the earth...that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil 2:10). Angels must serve him and demons must bow before him and cringe at his authority. I’m telling you, “if God be for us, who can be against us?”

Jesus Still Has Original Authority

This is no mere human authority. This is original authority, because the one speaking is the originator of heaven and earth. He is the risen Lord. He who gave us life has now conquered death, and reminds us that he still has “all authority in heaven and on earth.” He shared that authority and glory with the Father before the world was. Jesus had prayed, “Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed” (Jn 17:5), and so his prayer is answered.

He Emptied Himself, but Now is Given All Authority & Glory Again

For a while he “emptied himself” and set aside the active use of his attributes. He took on human form and was subject to the limitations of humanity.

No longer. He now has accomplished redemption and has no need to set aside his divine attributes. He is still man, but he now is given all the authority and glory he had with his Father before the world existed.

Jesus is Highly Exalted!

Jesus has triumphed so gloriously over guilt and condemnation and suffering and death and Satan, therefore (as St. Paul said): “God has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9-11). Which is just another way of saying: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to [him].”

All Authority!

Jesus has all authority. What does that mean? I like how John Piper explained it: “He has authority...

- over **Satan** and all demons,
- over all **angels** – good and evil –
- over the **natural universe**, natural objects and laws and forces: stars, galaxies, planets, meteorites;
- authority over **all weather systems**: winds, rains, lightning, thunder, hurricanes, tornadoes, monsoons, typhoons, cyclones;
- authority over **all their effects**: tidal waves, floods, fires;
- authority over **all molecular and atomic reality**: atoms, electrons, protons, neutrons, undiscovered subatomic particles, quantum physics, genetic structures, DNA, chromosomes;
- authority over **all plants and animals great and small**: whales and redwoods, giant squid and giant oaks, all fish, all wild beasts, all invisible animals and plants: bacteria, viruses, parasites, germs;
- authority over **all the parts and functions of the human body**: every beat of the heart, every breath of the diaphragm, every electrical jump across a million synapses in our brains;
- authority over **all nations and governments**: congresses and legislatures and presidents and kings and premiers and courts;
- authority over **all armies and weapons** and bombs and terrorists;
- authority over **all industry and business** and finance and currency;
- authority over **all entertainment** and amusement and leisure and media;
- over **all education** and research and science and discovery;
- authority over **all crime** and violence;
- over **all families** and neighborhoods;
- over **the church**,
- and over **every soul and every moment of every life** that has been or ever will be lived.

There is nothing in heaven or on earth over which Jesus does not have authority, that is, does not have the right and the power do with as he pleases. Both the right and the power. The scope and the magnitude of the authority of Jesus is infinite, because Jesus is one with God the Father. The Father has given him all authority not because the Father can give up being God, but because Jesus is God. And when deity shares infinite authority with deity, he neither loses nor gains anything, but remains infinitely full and triumphant and all-sufficient. This is the lofty claim. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, has all authority in heaven and on earth, because our Lord Jesus is God.”³

³ John Piper. “The Lofty Claim, the Last Command, the Loving Comfort.” Sermon preached November 1, 1998 at Bethlehem

What This Means for Christians

What does this authority mean for us? It means, we are under orders. This is a command from the One and Only Messiah, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Obey him. His authority is infinite. The span of his power is infinite. Every knee will bow and give an account to him.

Your Calling

Whatever your calling in life – if you’re a mom or dad, a mechanical engineer, an accountant, a meteorologist. If you’re school teacher or a student, if you’re a musician or a truck driver, your calling as a Christian to make disciples is infinitely higher.

Do you think of yourself as a disciple-maker? Why or why not? Who are the disciples you are making for Christ?

You are not mainly at your job to get a paycheck. You are in this world wherever you are to make disciples. That doesn’t mean you get to sluff off at work so you can evangelize. It means you work hard and be the best worker you can be so when you get off work, you can give all glory to Jesus for your diligent and careful work ethic.

Your are where you are so that people will see Jesus in you. Jesus’ authority is far above any other authority.

The Blazing Center of Your Purpose

Why does Jesus say we are left on earth? I.e. Why are you on earth? What is the main reason you exist? Why should God let you keep on breathing? It should be that you want to glorify God by making disciples.

Jesus said so. He has all authority. You obey him.

II. **Make disciples of all nations**, Mt 28:19.

Mt 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”

Matthew 28:19a – literally “*as you are going, make disciples...baptizing... teaching.*” The command is not to go or to baptize or to teach – all of those are assumed as things you will be doing in order to make disciples.

The Command: Make Disciples

The command is simply: make disciples. The power of the Gospel produces true disciples – those who are born again.

To be a “disciple” is to be a learner. The idea of discipleship comes from the practice of Jewish apprenticeship. A disciple is attached to his teacher and to become his follower in doctrine and conduct of life. Our teacher is the Holy Spirit.

WHY MAKE DISCIPLES?

Why do we need to go to all nations and make disciples? John Piper put it this way: “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate.”⁴

HOW DO WE MAKE DISCIPLES?

The church is to make disciples. She is not merely to evangelize and make **converts**, but to teach and make **disciples**. That is regeneration and sanctification go hand in hand. If you say you are born again but you have no desire to grow, and this is a pattern in your life, then you are not born again. To be a convert is to be a disciple.

1.) **First you have to be a disciple.** You come to know Christ personally. We put our faith in Christ. We repent of the vain and sinful life we lived. We surrender to Jesus in every area of life. He is my Lord and Master. His Spirit convicts me. He takes out the heart of stone. I'm controlled and filled by the Spirit. We are disciples of Jesus as “keep in step with the Spirit.” We “walk in the Spirit.”

2.) **To make disciples, you have to be following those who follow Christ.** Paul said, “Follow me as I follow Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). The ESV says, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” Wow. That's discipleship. Can you say that about yourself – that you want people to imitate you? Are you imitating Christ to that degree? Someone put it this way – you ought to have a Paul pulling you up, a Barnabas walking along side you and encouraging you, and a Timothy that you are pulling up to higher ground.

Do you have those relationships in your life? Who is your Paul? Who is your Barnabas? Who is your Timothy? Paul said in 2 Tim 2:2, “what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” There's several levels here. Paul tells Timothy. Timothy tells faithful men. Faithful men teach others. That's four generations of Gospel disciple-making.

- Paul
- Timothy
- Faithful men
- Others also

God uses his church. We are Jesus' Body, his heart, his hands, his arms, his feet.

My Mother-in-law

I was just thinking of those who have shown Christ to me and been my Pauls and Barnabases. I think of my mother in law when I was 16 years old, she cared for me because I didn't have a mom. She always treated me as a son.

I can think of a number of people in my life that have cared for my soul over a long period of time. Who are the people you are caring for? Who are you discipling over a long period of time?

3.) **We make disciples by carefully presenting the Gospel.** When the Gospel saves, it also changes. When the Gospel redeems, it also transforms. The Gospel must be preached and presented **carefully** – **not carelessly**. People will not, and cannot be converted to Christ without hearing an accurate message.

⁴ John Piper. *Let the Nations be Glad*.

4.) **We make disciples by encouraging those who have become born again to be baptized.** Many missionary programs omit baptism. Why? Because many missionaries are not united with a local church. And that's a tragedy. All missionary programs should somehow support the church that Jesus Christ is building.

Baptism is an outward sign and confession of an inward reality. It is a sacrament whereby a believer comes into the church.

Some might say, where is "church membership" in the Bible. It's right there. In order to partake of communion in the early church, you had to have already confessed your faith in Christ through baptism. They would actually dismiss anyone who was unbaptized before they celebrated the Lord's table.

Are you a member of a healthy church? If not, you should join a healthy church. Have you confessed Christ in baptism?

Baptism is 'into the name of God'. Explicitly, it is into one name ('the name of'), but that one name is three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Aspects of the Trinity have already been introduced through this Gospel: the child Jesus is God with us (1:23); the baptism of Jesus is clearly a Trinitarian event

One of my favorite times at Living Hope is to hear the testimonies of new believers and to see them take the courageous step to be baptized.

5.) **We make disciples by helping the new believers to be bold in their faith** and evangelize others.

When God saved me, I said, "if this is true, why hasn't someone told me this before?" I wanted to knock on every door on the planet and tell each person about Jesus. That's how Jesus says it in Mark 16:15, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to every creature" (NKJV). I love how it says that "every creature" – the idea is "every sentient being" – every rational being!

DISCIPLES NOT JUST FROM ISRAEL, BUT THE NATIONS

At the beginning of the Gospel, the nations came to Jesus in the persons of the **wise men from the east**; now, he **sends his church into the nations**. He has already predicted that many will come from all directions to recline at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (8:11), which is another way of saying that the covenant blessing will be universalized. By Jesus' interaction with a soldier of the Empire and a woman of Canaan, we have been prepared for this indication of a mission that will extend beyond the borders of ancient Israel.

Chicago is a Place to Make Disciples of All Nations

We are to make disciples of all nations. **Chicago is one of the most diverse places** on the planet. The nations of the world come to us. God has called upon us to expand the borders Israel. It was never God's plan that only Israel should be the people of God. God has always loved the nations.

Preach Where Christ Not Named

I was once a **church planter in Spain**. I had the mindset preaching Christ where he was not named. Do you realize there are places in your neighborhood where Christ is not been named? It is your responsibility to be bold and to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and repentance that all might come to know Jesus Christ.

The Promise Comes from the Old Testament

Remembering **Malachi 1:14** –“For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.” Israel was treating God likely. But God had a much greater plan. Now you are part of that plan.

III. Make disciples teaching **all Jesus commanded**, Mt 28:20a. Mt 28:20a, “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

In making disciples, we need to be:

- **Evangelizing** – make disciples who repent and believe in Christ as King/Savior
- **Assimilating** – baptizing them
- **Educating** – teaching them all things Jesus commanded

Evangelizing

You cannot teach anyone to grow and change in Christ unless they are a true born again disciple. Discipleship entails a radical transformation of character.

A person is not teachable until they are born again. If you have no hunger for the Word, no desire for fellowship, no desire to obey God and serve God and no success in any of these things, you have to ask, am I truly a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Assimilating

This morning was such a joy to see our new members class packed full. Baptism is the first step in church membership. Baptism is a direct command (**Acts 2:38**, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ”). This is an aorist imperative passive verb. No true believer is exempt from this requirement.

But if you are baptized, the purpose is that you would join a local assembly and be accountable. If you are not a member of a healthy church for whatever reason, it could be for a couple reasons:

- You are immature
- You are in a crisis
- You have no desire because Christ is not living in you

I can’t think of a whole lot more reasons why you would not be a member of a church. Baptism and church membership are commands. You are to be baptized and you are to be accountable to a local congregation, you are to put yourself under a group of elders who are going to give an account for your soul.

Equipping

We are to be educating through the Word of God. This often takes place in a local church setting. Of course, it takes place in all places everywhere, but believers are to gather together for the regular teaching of God’s Word. It is a means of receiving God’s grace.

One of the first signs that a person has passed from darkness to light is that he or she is hungry for God’s word. **1 Pet 2:2**, “Like newborn infants, [you] long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.”

CHRIST GIVES PASTORS AND TEACHERS

Christ's leaders **EQUIP** His Church for the Work of ministry.

Eph 4:11, "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers".

Aren't you glad for that? He brings us together as a *congregation*, He brings us together for the purpose of *exaltation* and for *equipping*. Christ does all this as our Head.

PASTORS, ELDERS AND TEACHERS TRAINING THE FLOCK

Christ's leaders **EQUIP** His Church for the Work of ministry.

Ephesians 4:11–12 (ESV), "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

Pastors are to feed, equip and protect the flock – Eph. 4:12,14; 1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28; Acts 6:1-4. Pastor, must recognize this incredible privilege and responsibility, and carry it out with discipline, passion, faithfulness, and integrity. Your flock is counting on you.

What does it mean to “equip the saints”?

The word “equip” is a word used to describe fisherman getting their nets ready, cleansed, and repaired.⁵ God's Word restores you; it cleanses you. When it is applied, it revitalizes you. The word “equip” was used of armies, of education, and of child rearing.⁶ It is to prepare them, to get them ready for service. My goal each time the Word is opened is to prepare you for service to God—in your home, in your work place, and to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

What does that equipping entail?

How do pastors equip the saints? In two ways: by **teaching** and by **living** out the Word.

Pastors equip the church by **Teaching** how to Apply the Word.

Teaching can take place through counseling, preaching, teaching, etc. This is both one on one and through expository preaching of the Word.

- The shepherds are to be teaching to **Remind**. **2 Peter 1:12 (ESV)**, “I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have”.
- The shepherds are to be teaching **Regularly**—in season and out of season. **2 Timothy 4:2**, “Preach the word; be ready in season, and out of season”.

⁵ Sinclair B. Ferguson. *Let's Study Ephesians* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2005), 110.

⁶ *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* by Walter Bauer and Frederick William Danker, (Third Edition; based on a previous English edition by W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker; University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1979, 2000), 526.

- The shepherds are to be teaching to **Reprove, Rebuke, and Exhort. 2 Timothy 4:2 (ESV)**, “reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” The saints need both **correction** and **encouragement**.
 - We all stray and we need to be brought back to the path of God’s will.
 - We all need positive, helpful encouragement as to how to apply God’s Word to our lives.

Pastors equip the church by **Living** out the Application of the Word.

"Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Timothy 4:16). A pastor is to live out the Word of God in his life.

THE SAINTS BUILD UP THE CHURCH

Thirdly, the Saints **BUILD UP** the Church.

All Christians are the **Ministers** of the church. Everyone is expected and encouraged to be involved in active ministry. If you want to be comfortable as a mere spectator, Tabernacle Baptist Church is not the church for you. We are a church where every member has a ministry of some kind.

Consider who is called to minister – Saints!

Every one of us. All the saints are to be equipped for works of ministry. By the way, I shouldn’t take this for granted, but a saint is not some Roman Catholic bishop who has been canonized. A saint in the Bible is a simple believer. Paul writes to the saints at Ephesus, and his goal is that the saints should be trained for ministry. Every one of you who is a believer in Christ is a saint.

We are a church not of spectators with one minister. We are a church of a hundred ministers! None of us can be spectators. We are all called to build each other up in the faith. We are all clergy here! We believe in the priesthood of the believer. That means that there is no separation between clergy and laity. We are all to be priests one to another.

How Can I Serve – do the Work of Ministry?

Application: How can I serve? Be present, be pliable (teachable), be proactive

1. **Be present** – be present when the church is present. Be here for Sunday school, Sunday worship, small group, prayer meeting. Get involved in the men’s group and the women’s groups if you can. Be present when the Word is preached and taught. Be accountable to read the Word daily.
2. **Be pliable** – it doesn’t matter how much you know unless you are willing to be teachable and pliable.
3. **Be proactive** – don’t just do what’s easy. Do the hard thing. Obedience costs you something. Serve out of the overflow of your life. Don’t be lazy. Be active. Be accountable. Be intentional. You need to grow and change, and you have a responsibility to help others grow and change.

A Healthy Church – 50% Established, 50% Messy Babies

What does a healthy church look like? A healthy church is a church that makes disciples. I think a healthy church is one where 50% of the church is grounded and rooted in Christ. You have a multi-generational godliness being established where I'm serving Christ, my kids are serving Christ, and one day my grandkids will be serving Christ. It's not always possible, but hopefully in close proximity to one another. It's hard for Grandma and Grandpa to lend a hand when you live 500 miles away, unless your children work for an airline!

But then the other 50% of the church should be new converts. We should be seeing people coming to Christ on a regular basis. And that kind of discipleship is like having babies.

Babies are messy! You have to change a lot of spiritual diapers.

IV. Make disciples knowing Jesus is with you always, Mt 28:20b.

Mt 28:20b, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

"You go and do that," and he says, "and behold [that is, pay attention], I am with you always, even to the end of the age..." Now don't you tell me, "Oh, we're living in the last days so, therefore, we don't have any more power. Christians have lost their place in society. No. We are to make disciples, and Jesus is with us. We have the promise of his presence.

God is not dead. God is not old. God is not sick. God is not infirmed. His power is not diminished.

When you proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom and call people to repent and put their trust in Jesus, there is the power of Jesus' presence with you. There is an anointing. He's there. He's working where you cannot work. What a powerful anointing there is because Christ is with you. He moves alongside of those who will follow him and obey him.

Conclusion – DNA Test

Last Christmas I got DNA test for a gift. I found out I'm 33% Scandinavian. The Vikings helped settle Scotland. I had no idea!

When I came to know Jesus, I got a whole new DNA. I was born again! I was also placed into a Body where someone connected me and taught me. We can't do this alone! Our DNA is connected! We are all part of the same Body.

You can't be a lone ranger Christian. The world is not going to evangelize and assimilate and train itself. You are called to go. Go now. Go with all authority. Go and make disciples. Go and raise up the next generation for Christ.

Go most importantly because Christ is with you! Even to the end of this present world. So let's go with the power and presence of Jesus and make disciples!