

“Disciples Making Disciples: Becoming Disciple-makers”

Matthew 4: 18-20 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 20 At once they left their nets and followed Him.

Matthew 28: 18-20 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Why does the Church in general think that it is optional to make disciples? Why do we call Matthew 28:18-20 the “Great Commission” and treat it, or act as though it were the “Great Suggestion”? I want to tell you about something God has made abundantly clear to me over the last 7 years of my life. I believe that the answer for Doster Church and the answer for the mainline church to a steady decline in membership, can be summed up in three words: “Disciples Making Disciples.” As long as I take in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide I will be encouraging people to read their Bible and make disciples. A disciple is a learner, someone who chooses to make living Jesus’ way a priority commitment. We have to follow Jesus. Reading the Bible has to be where we start. Find a program, a book, a list, something that helps guide you or encourages you to get into your Bible every day. Becoming disciple-makers in the power of the Holy Spirit by standing on the Word, Walking in Love, and resting in the arms of Jesus is our mission. For our mission to come to fruition we have to start with reading our Bibles. How do you know if you are standing on the Word or not, if you don’t know what it says?

Every day after you read your Bible you need to follow up by asking yourself, what stands out to you? Is God highlighting some part of the Scripture to you, does something grab your attention? Highlight it. Then ask yourself two questions: What does this say about God? And what does this say about people? Then figure out what it has to do with you. How does that passage of Scripture apply to you? And there is nothing wrong with answering with very little, or I don’t know. Then finally ask yourself, what am I going to do about it? And write an “I will ... statement” in response. If we start reading our Bibles and applying what God is saying to us to in our lives, we will start to grow. If we start to live out our Mission we will start to grow. To illustrate I want you to look at this table which comes from Greg Ogden’s book “Discipleship Essentials.” It is in the bulletin with the Sermon Notes and also up on the screen. Most of us have shared the gospel with a few people. Some of us have witnessed to a person or two and lead them to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This table shows what would happen if you had the gift of evangelism and shared with many people

every day hoping that one person a day would become a follower of Jesus. This table assumes one person a day becomes a new follower of Jesus as Lord and Savior. After two years the evangelist will have seen approximately 730 people decide to become Jesus-followers. Meanwhile the person who spends a full year discipling two people who then go out and disciple two people will have reached 4; quite a disparity. But by year 15 the evangelist will have reached 5475 people and the “discipler” will have reached 32,768; almost 6 times as many people. If the Doster Church family were to start really becoming and being disciples who made disciples and we had 3-5 people in each discipleship group and the purpose of that D-group was to break up and each person disciple 3 more people the next year, after 10 years we will have reached 59,049 people. The super evangelist that has one person make a decision to follow Christ every day will have only reached 3,650 people. That is the power of multiplication. This table is in Robby Gallaty’s book “Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples.” Incidentally Robby Gallaty was discipled by the person who wrote the book called “Follow Me,” David Platt.

I want you to be thoroughly convinced that this is not my idea, it is not Robby Gallaty’s idea, it is not David Platt’s idea, but rather it is God’s idea! Let’s look at Matthew 4. Jesus calls to Peter and Andrew and tells them “Follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people.” He is telling them that they would no longer be drawing fish up from the Sea in nets, but drawing people up out of the abyss of sin and death and catching them in the net of God’s love.

In the way that Jesus called the first two disciples He was saying that He called them to be followers who would encourage others to become followers: disciples that would make disciples. Please turn with me in your Bible to Acts chapter 4 and verse 13. It reads, “When they (the religious leaders) saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were **astonished** and **they took note that these men had been with Jesus.**” We are not called to do this on our own power. But we have to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit which come upon us when we have been WITH Jesus, spent time with Him, accepted Him into our hearts, and sought to live, think, and act like Him.

You see, it doesn’t matter if you have the gift of evangelism, it doesn’t matter if you have the gift of gab or not, it doesn’t matter if you have patience or perseverance or not. It doesn’t matter if you have courage or not. What matters the most is the answer to this question: “HAVE YOU BEEN WITH JESUS?!” I pray your answer is “YES!”

So to be disciple-makers we have to first become disciples. At the Classis Meeting a few years ago, Pastor’s and Elders were asked what our definition of disciple is. One of the definitions I really liked was A follower of Jesus (head), who is being changed by Jesus (heart) and is committed to doing what Jesus did (hands). It is important to know that a disciple is not someone who is a big fan of Jesus. A disciple doesn’t just root for His cause, love the way He plays the game, knows His stats, etc. but a disciple is a fully devoted follower of Jesus who really knows Jesus personally and wants to grow their relationship deeper. We don’t want to just be people who adhere

like pieces of tape to the outside of the church. We want to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. If you are a disciple then you will want to become a disciple-maker in the power of the Holy Spirit who stands on the Word, walks in love, and rests in the arms of Jesus. Are you willing to answer Jesus' call to you? Hear Jesus calling to you, Susan, Sarah, Jamie, Ken, Brian, Pat, (put your name here) "Come follow me and I will send you out to fish for people" who will fish for people. Come, follow me and I will teach you how to be disciples that make disciples!

This doesn't rely on you, it doesn't depend on you!! Jesus' words change people. The Word of God per-forms, trans-forms, re-forms, and con-forms whatever comes in contact with it. Isaiah 55: 10-11 reads, "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the Earth and making it bud and flourish so that it yields seed to the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Let me summarize: God is calling you to "Follow Him" and become fishers of people. You don't have to figure out how to do that on your own. You need to follow Jesus and become a fully-devoted follower of Jesus! You do that by devoting yourself to regular prayer and regular planned times of Bible reading: spending time with Jesus. Then you follow His example and invite two to 5 people to come along with you on your journey toward becoming more like Jesus. Jesus doesn't call people to believe in Him and be comfortable sitting in a church on Sunday. Discipleship is much more about Monday through Saturday than it is about Sunday. Jesus called ALL the disciples to "Go and make disciples" in Matthew 28. Jesus didn't say, "for those of you with the gift of prophecy, leadership, and evangelism ... Go and make disciples." Jesus did NOT say, "those of you with the gifts of hospitality and craftsmanship and helps, stay behind, comfortable in your rocking chair, and invite people into your home to watch a video." Jesus said to each and every one of the disciples ... Jesus calls to each and every one of us who would seek to follow Him, to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." In Paul's letter to the Ephesians and chapter 4, we read: "And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry."

In Chapter 1 of *Growing Up: How to be a Disciple who Makes Disciples*, Robby Gallaty talks about how Jesus modeled a four-step process that we can "apply to disciple-making today." First, Jesus ministered while the disciples watched. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught God's truths and the disciples observed, listened and learned. We find that in the gospel of Matthew chapters 5 thru 7. Second, Jesus progressed to allowing the disciples to assist Him in ministry. When Jesus fed the multitude, He broke bread and gave thanks. Then the disciples distributed the supernatural meal to the hungry crowd as it tells us in the gospel of John chapter 6. Third, the disciples ministered, and Jesus assisted them. After His glorious transfiguration up on the mountain, Jesus came down from the mountain with Peter,

James, and John and the disciples were attempting to cast out a demon from a possessed boy, and they were failing. Jesus stepped in, cast out the demon, and make the boy whole. Later, Jesus rebuked the powerless disciples, instructing them that “this kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer” as we find in the gospel of Mark chapter 9. The final step of the discipleship training is found in the gospel of Luke chapter 10. Here we see Jesus observing as the disciples ministered to others. Jesus sent them out with the instruction to go into the world, cast out demons, and preach the gospel. They came back saying, “Jesus, it was just like you said. We cast out demons and we preached the good news. God miraculously worked through us.”

Let’s start praying right now! Pray for God to show you two to four people that He wants you to get together with in a “discipleship group” or “D-Group.” I am asking you to write down the names of three people that you will pray for every day for the next four weeks. Who are you going to pray for? Please! start today. Write down the names of three people that you want to come to a saving knowledge of and relationship with Jesus Christ and start praying. Write down the names of 2-4 people that you would like to be in a “D-group” with and start praying today. If we do this, God will answer. I am praying for at least “D-groups” to start in the next week. I don’t care if you go on a vacation for a week or two. Meet before and after. Come up with a way to practice discipleship during your vacation. Find ways to be a fully devoted Christ follower on vacation, while you are walking, talking, partying, fishing, golfing, playing, singing, working, and even watching TV. Maybe decide to change the channel or turn it off the next time something comes on that isn’t edifying or good according to the Bible.

Doster Community Church, this isn’t me talking. God calls us through Matthew chapter 4 and chapter 28 to “follow Him, and then in Chapter 28 Jesus tells His followers to “go make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” This is not the great suggestion! It is a “great commission” it is your job description as a Christ-follower.

Now please be careful to notice that the gospel of Matthew does not end with a call, but rather a promise. What is that promise? “surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” He will be with you! The God who created this earth, all the life, all the rocks, trees, grasses, mountains, flowers, insects, birds, animals, etc. loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. The God who created the universe, the God who raised His Son from the dead and who will bring Him back again, has promised you POWER to be His witnesses in the book of Acts chapter 1 and verse 8. This awesome God that loves us enough to send His one and only Son to die for us has promised to be with us ALWAYS! Claim that promise, pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and pray. Follow Jesus and become fishers of people catching them in the net of His infinite love. Let’s start some “D-Groups” and let’s be disciples that make disciples!!! Let’s pray ...
AMEN

**Sermon Notes for “Disciples Making Disciples: Becoming Disciple-Makers” on
Matthew 4: 18-20 and Matthew 28: 18-20
given on March 3, 2019 and then November 6, 2022**

- I. Is Matthew 28: 18-20 the “Great Commission” or the “Great Suggestion” according to the way you live it out?
- II. After you read a passage of Scripture ask yourself and answer these questions:
 - a. What stands out to me?
 - b. What does it say about God? What does it say about people?
 - c. How does this apply to me?
 - d. What am I going to do about it? Write an “I will ... statement” in response.
- III. See Table from Greg Ogden’s “Discipleship Essentials” (below).
- IV. Multiplication is not man’s idea but God’s idea. Look closer at Matthew 4: 18-20. Jesus called the disciples to follow Him and become “fishers of men”: people sent out to fish for others.
- V. What really matters, is the answer to the question, “Have you been with Jesus?” The Jews noticed that these men had been with Jesus.
- VI. Become a fully-devoted follower of Christ and follow His example by making disciples, devote yourself to 3-4 people and work with them to grow in your faith. Then send them out.
- VII. Making disciples is a four step process after one has accepted Jesus Christ into his/her heart as Lord and Savior and decides to dedicate him/herself to becoming more like Jesus.
 - a. Jesus ministered while the disciples watched (Matt. 5-7).
 - b. Jesus allowed the disciples to assist Him in His ministry (Jn 6).
 - c. The disciples ministered and Jesus assisted them (Mark 9).
 - d. Jesus observed as the disciples ministered to others (Luke 10).
- VIII. Let’s start praying right now. Write down the names of three people to pray for every day for the next five weeks. Pray for God to reveal to you who should pray for.
- IX. The gospel of Matthew ends with a promise. “Surely I am with you always, even to the very end of the age.” The Creator of the universe will give you resurrection power. “Go, and make disciples! ...”

EVANGELISTIC ADDITION VS DISCIPLEMAKING MULTIPLICATION

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>EVANGELIST</u>	<u>DISCIPLER</u>	<u>D-GROUP OF 4</u>
1	365	2	3
2	730	4	9
3	1095	8	27
4	1460	16	81
5	1825	32	243
6	2190	64	729
7	2555	128	2187
8	2920	256	6561
9	3285	512	19,683
10	3650	1024	59,049
15	5475	32,768	14,348,907