

What Are We Supposed to Be Doing?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 January 2024

Preacher: Mike Salvati

[0 : 00] Okay, so on your bulletin, if you're going to keep notes tracked with me, there's going to be five questions I'm going to ask. The first two questions are going to be the most dense. So you want to kind of keep the first half of your notes for those first two questions and then the second half for the last three.

So we'll spend our most time on the first two and then kind of hop on it for the last three. Okay, have you ever experienced something like this before where you're going somewhere and you've got some time to kill before you come back?

So you go, you're sitting, kind of like, okay, what should I be doing with my time right now? And then you head back. Has anybody experienced that? I experienced that every time I go to pick up my daughter at school.

I go there, I'm waiting. I'm like, what am I going to do with my time? And then I come back. As Christians, we are in a very interesting moment because Jesus, he died, he was raised, he's ascended to heaven, and he's gone there now, but he's coming back.

And so we live in between the time of his going and his coming, and we got to be asking ourselves as a church, what are we supposed to be doing? What are we supposed to be doing in that in-between time of his going and his coming?

[1 : 20] And the good news is that he has told us what we are to be doing. So if you want to open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 28, it's the passage that Eric opened us up with, and he's going to close us with, but I'm going to read it once more because Jesus has given us a charge as a church of what we should be doing between his going, and he's at the right hand of God in heaven, and his coming back when he will judge all things, make things right.

So let me read this. May God bless the reading of his word. Matthew 28, 18 through 20. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

Just a quick thing to notice. When Jesus says, As all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, he's making a massive claim. He's saying he has all rights and authority as the risen king to tell us what to do.

There's no denying it. And so here we are, Christ the King Church, looking at this commissioning, and we've got to ask ourselves, Well, what does this mean?

[2 : 51] So here's how we're going to proceed. That little word, disciples, Go, therefore, make disciples, disciples of Jesus, that word disciples. Let's ask it five questions. Why make disciples?

What is a disciple? How do you make disciples? Who makes disciples? And where do you make disciples? So the first half of the sermon, or this teaching, is going to be on the first two questions. Why make disciples? And what is a disciple? Here's what you need to be aware of. If we aren't clear on this, we will end up as a church in the individual members of the church, living for good things, but less important things.

This commission is defining for us. It aims us as a church. And so I'm committed to deliver a message like this at least twice a year, in order to keep us focused on what Jesus has commissioned us to do, so that we're all on the same page, because we can drift from these things. All right, having said that, let's ask this first question, why make disciples? And this is a time to come draw with me.

[4 : 11] Who likes drawing pictures? One person. All right. Why make disciples? Well, you could say, well, Jesus commanded it, and that is on mark.

But we can ask another question, well, why did Jesus command it? And he commanded it, because God's got a plan for the fullness of time. This is Ephesians 1.10. To unite all things in Christ, things in heaven, and things on earth.

And so, God has a big plan. It's a plan. And so, there's five components to this plan. The first is, it is a Father, Son, Holy Spirit, triune plan.

That's the first thing you need to understand, that this is a triune plan. You remember in the Great Commission, Jesus says, baptizing them in the name, singular, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a triune plan. But it's not just a triune plan. This is a big plan. This is a big plan for all people and all time.

[5 : 19] So, the triune God is reigning over all people and all time, accomplishing His big plan. This is why we make disciples.

We get to join Him in what He's doing. So, this is a plan for all people and all time. But we also know that this plan is a Christocentric plan.

This is a plan in which Jesus plays a central role. God the Father ordains salvation. God the Son accomplishes salvation. And God the Holy Spirit applies that work to us.

And so, what we want to represent it is this way. Jesus is at the center of this plan. His cross work. His death and His resurrection. But we also know that Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, is the Creator.

And we also know that the second person of the Trinity, Jesus, is actually the judge of all. So, this is a Christocentric, this is a Christ-pervasive plan.

[6 : 29] This is a big plan for all time, all people, and it's focused on Christ. God's going to unite all things in this plan for the fullness of time in Christ. It's a big plan, with Jesus at the middle of it.

But it's also a people-moving plan. This is the hardest one to draw. I know you were wondering. What we learn from our Bibles is that people are born into sin, and they reject God.

And so, instead of running to the cross of Jesus Christ, they're actually running away from it. They are created by God, but they don't want to have anything to do with God.

They are living for idols. They're living for created things, not the Creator of all things. And so, what God in His grace and mercy does is those people who are living in the domain of darkness, Colossians 1.13, He graciously calls to Himself through Jesus Christ.

And what He does is He's creating a people who are born of God. They get flipped by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and now they are living for Him.

[7 : 45] And we talk about this as together following Jesus. This is how the church is populated.

How the new people of God comes into being. It's through the work of Jesus Christ. And so, this is a triune plan. This is a big plan for the fullness of time.

It's a Christocentric plan. It's a people-moving plan of God delivering people from the domain of darkness and transferring them into the kingdom of the beloved Son.

But we also know that this plan is a glory plan. This is about God's glory in all the world by rescuing people from Himself.

So this is Revelation chapter 9, or 7 verse 9, where God is, through His gracious work, populating the throne room of God with worshipers.

[8 : 48] John Piper talks about it as missions exist because the worship of God does not. And so what He's doing is He's creating for Himself, gathering for Himself from every people, tribe, and nation, a blood-bought people, a new people who have Jesus at the center of their very living.

So this is why we make disciples. So what are we supposed to be doing in between Jesus going and His coming? Well, we get to join in what God is doing in His big plan for the fullness of time.

And it starts reorienting you in how you think about your daily schedule to get to join in what God is doing. Okay, so the next question becomes not just why make disciples, He's got a plan for the fullness of time, but we've got to ask an even more basic question, what is a disciple?

Let's just say that we are a company working together to build carbon fiber handlebars for mountain bikes. or we're a company building really cool pants to be walking in.

So we would have to be very clear on what this product is and the kind of things where we're using it and how we go about making these things and so that we are actually kind of fulfilling our purpose as a company and generating these items, right?

[10 : 09] We've got to be all united on what this is that we're moving towards, and that is a disciple of Jesus Christ. We all got to be clear on what is a disciple of Jesus Christ, not only for our own

sake, but as we make them more and more.

So I am basically, you can call a disciple of Jesus as a wholehearted follower of Jesus. It's all about Jesus.

But we use an acronym around here to kind of spell that out. And it's the acronym TUMB. I know this might be hard to see because it's so low for those in the back.

But what I've written is the word TUMB, T-O-M-B, and it is vertically laid out. Now here's why I'm doing this. Jesus went dead into the tomb and came out of the tomb alive.

This is gospel. This happened in real time, in real space. And He went into the tomb dead and came out alive so that we could treasure Him above all else.

[11 : 21] He went into the tomb dead and came out alive so that we could obey Him in all that He commands. He went into the tomb dead and came out alive so that we could magnify Him among all people. He went into the tomb dead and came out alive so that we could belong to Him with all who treasure Him.

That we would love one another just as He has loved us. And so when we talk about this idea of tomb, what it is, is just simply talking about kind of the functional centrality of the gospel, if you've heard that before.

This is the centrality of Christ operating in our midst. So let's just spell this out a little bit. So Jesus died, went into the tomb dead, and came out alive so that we would treasure Jesus above all else. You know that command? You shall have no other gods before me. That's what we're talking about here. That Jesus is our greatest treasure. How did Paul say it in Philippians 3.8?

I think he said it like this. I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

[12 : 35] That's value talk. That's treasure talk. That's recognizing that Jesus is His greatest treasure. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Next week I'm going to start preaching through the book of Colossians. And we're going to be in the book of Colossians all the way most likely through June. And the title of the sermon series is Christ Central.

Because He is preeminent and pervasive in all that we are and do. And so treasuring Jesus, I know that might sound great, but boy, it's a daily fight for the allegiance of our hearts.

And so here's how that shakes out on a daily basis. Sometime during the day. For me it has to happen early, otherwise other things will lay claim to my heart.

It's got to happen early. And it goes something like this. It says, Jesus, You are worth everything in my life. I'm not my own. You've bought me with a price. I belong to You. All that I am, all that I do, I am Yours.

[13 : 44] You are worthy. My life is forfeit for Your namesake. Because You're worthy of that. So could you imagine if more and more of us on a daily basis are purposefully treasuring Jesus above all else and recognizing it's through His cross work that He makes it even possible.

So, treasuring Jesus above all else, I'm going to make an argument. That is the very headwaters of discipleship to Jesus.

It's where everything starts, where everything flows out of. And so if you're trying to obey Jesus without treasuring Him, it's going to be a little challenging.

But if you're going to obey Jesus out of saying, Oh, He is my everything, you know what happens to obedience? There's joy that rings through it. Okay, so let's keep moving.

So treasure Jesus above all. Obey Jesus in all. There's that little spot in the Great Commission where Jesus has just said, Hey, go make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

[15 : 01] Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded. To obey Jesus in all that He commands. That's what it means to be a disciple.

That we're taking Jesus' words and obeying them. Because He's the all-authoritative King. All authority on heaven and earth has been given to Him. So what He says goes.

And if you're treasuring Him above all else, when you hear Him tell you to do something, you are like, Of course I will do that. There's no one like you. I'll obey you.

Because I want more and more people to treasure you as well. So that obedience, if you're kind of like, Well, that sounds great. Where do I look that up? Where do I look to find where to obey Jesus?

A great spot is the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Jesus lays out for His followers what it looks like to obey Him. It is a beautiful passage.

[16:06] And so He addresses moral issues. He addresses all sorts of different issues. He addresses where our hopes lie, how to deal with conflict. It's all there. So what is a disciple?

Wholehearted follower of Jesus who treasures Jesus above all else, who obeys Jesus in all that He commands, who magnifies Jesus among all people.

And when you hear that word magnify, maybe you think microscopic magnification, where you have a little beep-boop-beep-boop, little microscope, and you've got little things, and you're trying to make little things bigger than they are, and you're like, Oh, that's pretty interesting.

This is not microscopic magnification. This is, another John Piper quote, telescopic magnification.

This is something heavenly and glorious that we are bringing into clearer focus.

And you know what? We're the telescope. We're the ones who are to a world living in darkness.

[17:15] We are the ones who get to telescope Jesus to show His great worth, to live lives that are consistent with who He is and what He's done.

There's this great little sweet spot in Matthew chapter 5. It's part of the Sermon on the Mount. Very early on, Jesus says this, In the same way, this is where He's talking about salt and light.

In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. So our very lives, telescope, magnify Jesus, or they don't.

And so this is what it means to bring glory to the name of Jesus in all that we say and do. So this is part of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

Another way to talk about it is you're no longer living for your name, you're living for the name of Jesus to magnify it, to make much of it. The last one is belong to Jesus.

[18:28] And this is the horizontal aspect of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. We belong to Jesus with all who treasure Him. It means we are making concerted, intentional, purposeful effort to love one another just as Jesus has loved us.

This is John 13, 34 and 35. This is the sticky love of being a follower of Jesus. Not sticky gross, sticky good. This is something that unites us together and it marks us.

It separates us out. Listen to how Jesus says it in John chapter 13. He says this, A new commandment I give to you that you love one another just as I have loved you.

You also are to love one another. He's about to lay down His life for them. Verse 35, But this, by this, this love for one another, people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

This is something that we teach disciples to do. It's a commandment to observe. But what I want to do is mark it out as being this is normal course for being a follower of Jesus Christ.

[19:48] Jesus went to the tomb dead and came out alive so that we could love one another as He has loved us. So we love one another over and beyond our differences.

And we're loving one another unto Jesus Himself. This is what marks us as unique. Francis Schaeffer, that old pastor guy who wore knickers, he talked about our love for one another as being the final apologetic.

It makes a claim about the validity of the Christian faith. So it's possible that someone who's not a Christian can see the way that we're loving one another and draw a conclusion.

Hold on. That is unusual love. Maybe even supernatural love. Maybe what they're saying about Jesus is true. Do you see how that works?

That's what Jesus talks about. Not just here in John 13 but in John 17 as well. So Jesus went to the tomb and came out so that we would treasure Him above all else, obey Him in all the commands, magnify Him among all people, and that we would belong to Him with everyone who treasures Him.

[21:03] So this is just kind of basic Christianity. And do you know what this little acronym does for us? It's a diagnostic. It helps you to evaluate your own following of Jesus.

Are you treasuring Jesus above all else? What's contending for your heart? Are you obeying Jesus in all that He commands?

When was the last time you looked to His commands? Are you telescoping Jesus in all that you do? Are you giving Him other people that He's the reason why you have hope?

And are you making effort to love our brothers and sisters around us? So it's a helpful little diagnostic. Do you see that? All right.

How much time have we got? I've got about 10 minutes. We've got to put it in overdrive. Okay. So why make disciples? What is disciple? So Jesus is gone.

[22 : 07] He's at the right hand of God. He's going to come back. And in between, what are we supposed to be doing? We join what God is doing in His plan for the fullness of time. And we ourselves are seeking to be wholehearted followers of Jesus and help others treasure Jesus above all else.

What a worthy calling on our lives. All right. Let's put it into overdrive. Did it come out right side up? Yes! It's like pulling out a cake and, well, it rose. Okay. So three more questions.

Next one is how to make disciples. Oh, by the way, I never mentioned this. This material originated out of a book called The Vine Project.

It's something the elders went through almost four years now. And the book is intended to help churches become disciple-making churches.

[23 : 09] I'll tweak some of it. But by and large, these questions are coming from that book to help us fulfill the Great Commission. So now the question is how to make disciples. And in the book, we are given four Ps.

First P is this. Proclaim God's Word. Proclaim God's Word. So, I hope you know this, but I'm just going to state it to make it explicit.

There's no following Jesus without God's Word. This book is a light unto our path, a lamp unto our feet. This book reveals God.

It reveals His will. It reveals God's salvation. It reveals Jesus from Genesis to Revelation. This book is absolutely vital in order to make disciples of Jesus, in order for you to be a wholehearted follower of Jesus.

So you need this book. It's living and active. Penetrates, you know, heart, mind, soul. This book is actually originated. Every word from the very mind of God, it is God-breathed.

[24 : 20] This book is central to our own discipleship and our disciple-making. And so if we're going to be making disciples, we're going to be constantly bringing people back to this book.

Helping them understand who God is. Helping them understand God's will. This book is absolutely vital to that. So we're proclaiming God's Word.

Now that doesn't mean like you're having, you're at the buzz with a friend, they're struggling with something, and you pull out your pulpit, and you set up and you preach to them.

That's not how that rolls. How it rolls is, conversationally, you're raising things from God's Word.

Have you thought about this? Do you know this is in your Bible? Okay.

Next thing is pray in step with God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit.

[25 : 23] The Holy Spirit is seeking to apply the finished work of Jesus to the life of the believer. And so we are constantly asking things like this. God, how can I help?

What are you doing in Josiah's life, or Zach's life, or Jenny's life, or Mary's life, or this life of my brother here, or this sister here? What are you doing, Spirit?

And would you direct me to love them with your Word? And so we're praying for kind of fresh pouring out of the Holy Spirit in the life of our church.

We're praying that the Holy Spirit will be applying the truth of God's Word to the life of people and transforming them for the glory of Christ. So we're praying that. Prayer is absolutely vital to making disciples.

So we proclaim, we pray. People are God's co-workers. And this can mean a couple things.

[26 : 24] It means that, I'm going to develop that more under the next question, but essentially what it means is that every Christian has been gifted by the Holy Spirit to contribute to the building up of the local church.

That's right in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. So we want to help Christians find out what their gifts are to use them to the building up of the church, but we also want to get our brothers and sisters gifts functioning in our life together as a church in order to make disciples of people.

And so people are God's co-workers. We believe in what's called the priesthood of all believers, around here, that every member is a minister. It's the last one. Persevere step by step.

There are these constant calls for endurance in our Bibles. In Colossians, it starts off, Paul's going to be praying for strength for the Colossian church that they would endure, that they'd persevere.

Making disciples requires perseverance. Do you know why? People are messy. There's a lot of people drama when it comes to making disciples.

[27 : 39] Making disciples isn't for the fainthearted. If you don't like messy, uncontrolled situations, out of control feelings, sometimes it's going to be tough to be making disciples.

But instead of trying to control it yourself, what you're doing is, you're entrusting yourself to your God. And you're persevering step by step, day by day, and bringing God's word to bear in the life of your brothers and sisters.

It requires perseverance. It requires endurance. It's hard work. You'll get yelled at. You'll get ignored. People impute motives on you because you're trying to help, but they see threat. And so this is the stuff we need to persevere through because we treasure Jesus above all else. So how to make disciples? Well, the four Ps, proclaim God's word, pray in step of the Spirit. People are God's co-workers, persevere step by step. Jesus has gone. He's at the right hand of God. He's going to come back. And so what are we going to do in between? We're going to make disciples of Him.

[28 : 42] We're going to persevere in that. We're going to help others do that. Now, you might be saying, well, that sounds great theoretically, Salvati, but man, I don't know where to start with that kind of stuff.

Would you write down in your notes three dates? March 14th, it's a Thursday. March 21st, it's a Thursday. Thursday, March 28th, it's a Thursday.

What we're going to do here is we're having a disciple-making workshop, Thursday nights in March, so that you can be equipped in how to make disciples.

Okay. Who makes disciples? Short answer is, we all do.

Disciple-making is a church project. You're not paying me to make disciples of the nations.

According to Ephesians 11, well, that'd be great if Ephesians had 11 chapters.

[29 : 50] Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 and 12, we learn that the risen Christ has given the gift of leadership, pastor-teacher in order to equip the saints for works of ministry, service.

Service. It's we, you, who are to be making disciples of Jesus Christ. The illustration that I like to use in this one is this.

If you went to our website, you hit the menu, and one of the menu features is the ministry staff of Christ the King Church. And you clicked it, and all 130 members of Christ the King Church showed up.

There you have the ministry staff of Christ the King Church. We all are the ministry staff of Christ the King Church. We believe in the priesthood of all believers.

We believe in every member of ministry. We believe that every Christian in the room has been gifted by the Holy Spirit with a particular gift to build up the church. Do you want to know where your sweet spot of ministry is?

[30 : 58] Here's where it is. It's a cross-section between there's a need somewhere in making disciples, and then there's the gift the Spirit has given you.

That intersection will be the sweet spot of your ministry, of your service. And you want to find that. You want to know what it is. And so here's what we're going to do.

So we've got this disciple-making workshop coming up in March. Soon thereafter, probably in April, we're going to have a ministry fair down in the fellowship hall.

We're going to be like, okay, here are the ministries of Christ the King Church. Here's where you can get involved and now use your gift to make disciples as part of our church together.

And so we'll come up with a more specific date on that. But what you need to understand is, we don't think of Christians as being simply passive spectators in a gathering, but active participants fulfilling the Great Commission together as a church.

[32 : 05] And so if you're a member or you're a Christian and you're not using your gift, that's got to change. We need to get you in the game.

You need to be equipped. You need to get placed. And we're here to help with that. That's one of my jobs, is to find a spot for you to meaningfully serve. Last question.

Where are disciples made? Where are disciples made? Where do we make disciples? Wherever the church be, we be making disciples.

Wherever the church be, we be making disciples with one little caveat. When we're in glory, we're no longer making disciples.

So really, wherever the church be, this side of Christ's return, we be making disciples. We've got a window of time in all eternity to be making disciples of Jesus Christ.

[33 : 11] If you leave this building in the front door, in the back door, in the jam above the door, you'll see this phrase, you are now entering your mission field.

That's on the money. It's every time you leave this place. When the church gathers, the church is scattered, and you go out into your mission field. And so, moms, grandmas, grandpas, dads, you know where your mission field starts?

With your children. That's your mission field. You're living in it. That's where it starts. It goes to our neighborhoods. Do you know the names of your neighbors around you? It goes into our workplaces.

It goes into our recreation. It goes into Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon, Sunday afternoon, kids' activities. When your kids are playing soccer or baseball, what an opportunity that is.

Wherever the church be, we be making disciples. So, where do we make disciples? Well, wherever. Wherever we go.

[34 : 25] So, even if that means you get transferred by your job to another place, another city, you'll be going to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

So, wherever the church be, we be making disciples. Remember that quote by John Piper, missions exist because the worship of God does not. It's what we're talking about.

The city of Kenosha is filled with false worshipers. And we have the opportunity to make disciples. And they, to bring glory and majesty to Jesus.

Alright, let me just wrap this up. Jesus has gone. He's at the right hand of God. And we're one day closer to His return. So, what should we be doing?

We should be making disciples. Why? Because God's got a plan for the fullness of time. And we get to join Him in that. What? Jesus went to the tomb and came out so that you could treasure Him above all else.

[35 : 35] And obey Him. And magnify Him. And belong to Him. As well as help others treasure Him. And obey Him. Magnify Him. And belong to Him. How are we to do it? We're to use God's Word.

We're to pray. We're to leverage the gifts that God has given us. And we're to persevere in that. Who? We are the disciple makers. We're the ministry staff of Christ the King Church.

Where? Wherever. Wherever the church be, we'd be making disciples. So, let me ask you this. As we went through this, was there one particular area where you're saying, Yeah, God found a mark right there.

I need to take a step right there. And if you're like, well, I don't know. I don't have a particular area. I got one for you. Start with treasuring Jesus above all else.

Start with, okay, just start saying, Lord Jesus, would you reveal yourself to me in greater and greater majesty. That's the great, He is the great headwaters of discipleship.

[36 : 43] Okay, gang. I'll probably share a sermon like this with you in probably six months or so. Our tendency is to drift away from these things.

So, let's just stay focused. And when Jesus comes back or we see Him face to face, we can say, Oh Lord, we did everything we could for the glory of Your name. Let's pray.

God in heaven, thank You so much that You have rescued us from little plans, temporary plans, a purpose that has a limited scope and effect.

But You've called us to what You are doing. We are so grateful for that. Father, would You pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us that we would serve You together in gladness, making disciples of Jesus. God, would You add to our numbers, like-minded brothers and sisters who treasure You and obey You and magnify You and belong, that we are deeply loving one another. Father, we entrust ourselves to You for the glory of Your name.

[37 : 53] Amen. Amen. Amen.