

Conviction 4: Who Makes Disciples?

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[0:00] When you're a preacher and you're writing sermons, you end up leaving a lot of your material on the editing floor, so to speak.

And some of the material you leave on the editing floor, God intended just for you. Yesterday when I was preparing, Ephesians 4 has this quote from Psalm 68.

So I was in Psalm 68, and later on in verse 19, there's these words, Blessed be the Lord, for He daily bears us up.

God is our salvation. That was just the word I needed yesterday and today. So let me just pray one more time. God in heaven, we're so grateful that Your grace, Your spirit is sufficient for the cause, for the challenge.

And You daily bear us up. That is no labor on Your part. We gladly receive Your grace and strength. And now, Father, would You pour Your spirit about on us as we look to Your word.

[1:18] Would You compel us unto Jesus. Amen. I spent a couple summers in Ocean City, New Jersey when I was a college student.

And I had the opportunity to watch the building of boardwalks. Ocean City is right on the Atlantic coast. And Ocean City is known for its boardwalk.

Well, what would happen is you bring these big steam-driven pile drivers in, and they would take this huge pylon, which is basically a giant tree that's been stripped of all its branches, dipped in tar, and they drive that thing down through layers of sand, layers of soil, all the way down to the bedrock.

And then when that pylon hits bedrock, they're able to build on it, build a boardwalk on it. This morning, we're not building boardwalks.

What we're talking about is building a church culture of disciple-making. In an order for us to build a disciple-making church culture, certain biblical truths must be driven down in us.

[2:33] These biblical truths must be driven down past just hearing, past agreement, past saying, yeah, that sounds really good, down to the bedrock of conviction, where we say things like, I've got to do that.

That's God speaking, and I must respond in faith, in action. That's when it hits bedrock. We must act together by faith.

This whole revision series is seeking to drive five biblical truths down to the bedrocks of our beings so that we could build a culture of disciple-making.

And so, the first... Where did my thing go? The first... The first conviction that I have shared with you is...

I've got to find my pen. No, this is a different thing. I just had it. This is phenomenal.

[3:41] Hey, thank you, buddy. It's not going to work. Well, give it a shot. Hey, I found it. Thank you, Jacob. All right. So, conviction number one, we talked about weeks ago.

And the conviction one, or these convictions are posed as questions. Why make disciples? Do you remember how we answered that? We make disciples because God has a big plan. So, the first thing we've got to remember is that there is a triune God, and He is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and He is reigning over everything.

Remember that? Ephesians 1, 3 through 14. And God has this plan for the fullness of time. We depicted it as a big arrow.

It includes all people, all time. The triune God is moving everyone to a particular ending point, and we've depicted that as a big throne.

Matthew 25, where Jesus sits on the throne, and He separates all nations, all people, the sheep from the goats. He is the one who is the judge who sits upon the throne, and let's just put a crown on Him.

[4:52] Not only is He the judge to come, but the game changer in salvation history was the cross of Jesus Christ. God's central to God's plan is the cross of Jesus Christ.

It is where God poured out His grace. Grace to change people from those who are worshiping anything but God, and do this radical work in their heart to orient us to God, to make us worshipers of God.

And so this plan for the fullness of time, where Jesus is, the cross is at the center of it, we've talked about this as a people-moving plan, as a disciple-making plan. So this is where my technical drawing skills come in really helpful for you all.

So we know of people, we depicted like this, who were running away from God. I can't tell you how many hours I've put into practicing that.

And they're running away from God, and this is the DOD, not the Department of Defense, but the domain of darkness. And those God has created in His image, corrupted by sin, are running away from Him.

[6:08] I used to be in that pack. Many of you used to be in that pack. But God did something, all by His grace, through the power of the gospel. He called us to Himself.

He delivered us out of the domain of darkness, and He made us alive in Jesus. And so now, that's kind of scary.

So now we are running together in a pack to Jesus. And what I've been telling you all along here is that, according to Revelation chapter 7, this is what John was praying for just moments ago.

God is gathering Himself, people from every tribe, tongue, and nation, surrounding Him on the throne. And they are singing His praises. These are arms raised. Praising God.

God. Lifting up their praise to Him. Salvation belongs to our God. To the one who sits on the throne. And to the Lamb. Salvation and glory, power and might, be to our God forever and ever.

[7:12] And so this right now is happening, as we speak, in glory around the throne. And so, this big plan, is a glory plan. He's flipping people living in the domain of darkness and making them His disciples.

And what we've been talking about, disciples are anyone who has experienced God's grace, and as a result, they lay down their lives for Jesus.

There's five L's. Lay down their lives for Jesus in order to learn from Jesus, live for Jesus, become like Jesus, all because we love Jesus. That's what disciples are.

Those who are living for Jesus now. And then, that's conviction two. What is a disciple? And then conviction three is simply the question, how do you make disciples?

How are disciples made? And last week, I told you the four Ps. Now, I'm not going to quiz you on this. Just take it in. The four Ps are this. How do we make disciples? Well, we make disciples by the proclamation of God's Word, prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit, people are God's fellow workers, and the last P is persevering step by step.

[8:23] And I told you last week that this week, I was going to expand on that third P. People are God's fellow workers. Which brings me in your bulletin, if you're following along, we've just done the review of convictions one through three.

The claim, the conviction number four claim is this. Let me just first ask the question. How, who makes disciples? Disciples? Here's the claim. Every Christian must be making disciples.

God has this plan, where He is moving people who are under His wrath to moving people to under His grace. He's doing it right now, and we get to join Him in doing that.

He's doing that work right now in our city, in our state, country, and world, and we get to join Jesus in what He's doing. So, who makes disciples?

We do. Every Christian must be making disciples, because every Christian is a disciple. And if you are a disciple of Jesus, you're going to be joining Him and making more disciples of Jesus.

[9:30] So what this means is, we are moving people together towards Jesus. Both non-Christians and Christians were always moving people

towards Jesus, either coming into a relationship with Him or deepening their relationship with Him.

Every member of this church is a minister. This is the biblical truth that was recovered back in the Reformation, and it's known as the priesthood of all believers.

We're all, every member, is a minister in this church. I had an illustration last week where we're all members of the Christ the King Church ministry staff team.

Every one of us. So this morning, I've got six observations for you from Ephesians 4, and let me read that for you. Now, don't fret.

This is not going to be a 90-minute sermon. I'm going to move through these six observations pretty quick. But let me read this passage for you. Ephesians 4, 11 through 16.

[10:35] Robin, would you put it up? If it's not up, thank you. And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the He, by the way, is the risen and ascended Christ. And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together, by every joint with which it's equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

First observation, each of us called. Each of us called. In verse 12, we read this, to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

Saints is another way of just describing Christians, all Christians. Every Christian is a saint. And every Christian is a disciple of Jesus, someone who has responded to God's grace by laying down their life, learning from Jesus, living for Jesus, becoming like Jesus, all because we love Jesus.

So saints are Christians, a.k.a. disciples of Jesus, speaking to all of us. Now, also in verse 12, we see, to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

[12:26] What is that? Well, you see in the verse, for building up of the body of Christ. So whatever this work of ministry is, it builds up the body of Christ.

And that's Paul's way of talking about making disciples. Don't make a contradiction in your mind. Paul's not talking about something other than making disciples.

When he talks about building up the body, he's not talking something other than making disciples of Jesus. What he's doing is, he's speaking of making disciples in terms of a unified body, of distinct parts working together to move people towards the head, Jesus.

And that phrase, the work of ministry, is not just one particular ministry. ministry. It's not only saying this is what ministry looks like very narrowly defined.

This is a very broad category. It's actually referring to a variety of ways individual Christians use their gifts to grow together into Christ.

[13:35] This is, what you need to see here is, the saints, all Christians, are being equipped for doing gospel ministry. ministry. But there are a variety of ways to do gospel ministry.

What I want you to see here is that each and every Christian is called to be a minister in and through the church. Last week, I used this illustration.

Imagine going to the Christ the King Church website. You go to the menu, and in the menu, there is this tab that says ministry staff. You click on that, and before you, our page after page of every member and regular attender of Christ the King Church, because we are the ministry staff of this church.

We're the ones. You're the ones who do the ministry. So, here's the application. Do you see yourself as primarily a recipient of the ministry of this church, or primarily as a participant in the ministry of this church?

Do you take primarily, or do you give primarily? Biblically speaking, it's actually both. Every member in this church receives grace from other brothers and sisters, and gives grace to other brothers and sisters.

[15:05] That's the way it's designed. But are you, do you pull one way or the other? The call is to do both. Remember the ad campaign for milk, milk it does, milk it does, the body good.

Grace it does, grace does Christ's body good. And every member of this church has grace to give and grace to benefit from.

Each of us called. The second observation I want you to see is that each of us is gifted. If you're in Ephesians 4, look at verse 7.

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. In 1 Corinthians 12 and in Romans chapter 12, the one who gives particular gifts to individual Christians is actually the Holy Spirit.

Here, it is the risen, ascended Jesus. Which means the triune God is involved with giving gifts to individual Christians. Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

[16:16] Which means this, our risen, and ascended Lord Jesus decided what gift and how much of that, what measure of that gift He would give you and He would give me.

Which means there's no need for gift envy in the church. If you're envying somebody else's gift, you actually have an issue with Jesus' decision making. but what is clear from all of these passages is that a grace gift is given to each and every Christian and each gift is intended to build the church. Imagine with me a business woman who returns from an international business trip from Zurich, Switzerland. And she arrives and gives boxes of Swiss chocolates to each of her children and husband.

To one of her family members, it's Swiss chocolate caramels. To another, it's Swiss chocolate nut clusters. To another, it's another kind of Swiss chocolate truffle.

And her intention in giving these boxes of chocolate to each of her family members is not that each member would hoard the box, but to enjoy what's in the box and share it with the rest of her family.

[17:40] The gifts she gives tended to share with everybody else. The gifts our risen Christ gives to each of us, we're not to hoard them, we're to share them, we're to put them in play.

And so what happens is, if you were in that business woman's family, you'd be, oh, thank you, and Swiss chocolate is great. for us, it's, Jesus, thank you for this gift you've given me and given her and given him.

All glory to your name. Which raises the question, I'm guessing, how has God gifted you? What is the gift he's given you?

Well, let me just give you, there's a few spots in your Bibles in which the Apostle Paul or the Apostle Peter gives us some lists of gifts. They're not exhaustive, but helpful to know.

Let me read you a couple. This is Romans 12 verses 4 through 8. For as in one body we have many gifts and the members do not all have the same function.

[18:44] Did I just get lost? Is this on now? Is anything on?

Thank you. I'm very aware that there are certain powers that don't want you to hear what I'm saying. I'm not kidding. For as in one body we have many members and the members do not all have the same function.

So we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them in proportion to our faith.

If service in our serving, the one who teaches in his teaching, the one who exhorts in his exhortation, the one who contributes in generosity, the one who leads with zeal, the one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness.

There's a similar list in 1 Corinthians 12. There's a similar list in 1 Peter 4 verses 10 through, I believe it's 10 and 11. I'm not going to read that.

[19:48] Go there. Check it out. The point is there's a variety of gifts that the risen Christ gives us for the building up of the body and he has given you one.

How do you figure it out? I'll ask a couple questions. Where do you gravitate? What do you gravitate to in the church, in the ministry of the church that just, that gives you juice that you like doing it? What is it? Is it logistics? Organizing? Administrating? Is it sharing the gospel with non-Christians? Teaching? Leading? Pay attention to those burdens. Or, you can be listening to what other people are saying.

Wow, you are really good at that. Man, when you're in that zone serving that way, I'm encouraged by that. That has an effect.

The sweet spot of your ministry is when there is a need in the church and it intersects your gift. That intersection is the sweet spot of your ministry and you want to find it.

[20:56] Ask God to direct you. Ask others for help. The point is that each one of us has been given an individual gift not to hoard but to put into play so that everybody benefits.

Each of us gifted. The third observation is each of us speaking. we see this in verse 15.

Is it enough to be using your gifts? Let's say you have a gift of service. Is it enough to serve or is there more?

Well, verse 15 seems to be pointing to more. Verse 15 says, rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head into Christ.

He's still speaking to every Christian in the church. Here's how I know that. Look down at verse 25. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor. We were members one of another.

[21:57] This is intended for every member of the church that you're to be speaking the truth in love to one another. So in addition to using your gift, you speak the truth in love to one another.

The truth is a reference to the Bible. The content of this book. The truth of how God has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. And notice, it's speaking the truth.

It is communication of this. You can text it. You can put it on Twitter. You can use it on Facebook. You can call people, FaceTime people, but there's no substitute to speaking the truth in love in someone else's presence.

That's where the money, that's the gold right there. Speaking the truth in love captures that first P of how we make disciples.

The proclamation of God's Word. That this book is every word originated in the mind of God and it is profitable. It equips people to follow Jesus.

[23:01] And we're to speak the truth in love. Did you see that? We don't pull the pin on a truth grenade and lob it in and run. We speak the truth in love, which means we speak truth to people for their greatest good.

Now we've got to ask the question, what is that greatest good? Is it for people's comfort? It's right there in the text. Look at verse 15 again.

Rather speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head into Christ. We speak the truth in love to one another unto Jesus.

Moving people towards Jesus our head. That's the goal. That's how we love people. So here's what this means. Whether you're serving as a King's Kids teacher or helper, or a life group leader, or a life group member, a vocalist, an instrumentalist, a slide tech, a sound tech, whether you are a King's Place mentor, you're a spouse, you're a Christian parent, your gift gives you an opportunity to speak the truth in love, to move people towards Jesus.

Imagine two guys with the gift of service running cable in this building to expand our Wi-Fi network. They're laboring next to each other and one of them starts to complain.

[24:39] One of them starts to express frustration about someone else in the church. It's turning to gossip. So the other brother says, hey, have you spoken your frustration to that person?

Because the other brother who's asking that question is wanting to live in Ephesians 4, let's just put our finger on it, verse 3, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

Or, Matthew 18, 15, where Jesus says to all of us, if you have an issue with another brother, you go to him. Make your offense known.

Work it out. That, here we are, two guys using their gift, but speaking the truth in love to one another.

Do you see how this is working? Imagine King's Place team, Wednesday afternoon mentoring program. I don't have anybody in particular mind with this example.

[25:44] A sister texts one of the other people on the team. I don't want to come, I'm so discouraged. That other person on the team says, you come. This sister shows up.

She's very honest. They've got to be mentoring these wonderful children in just minutes, right? This, this sister who's so discouraged said, I should not be here.

I just yelled at my seven-year-old for one minute straight. I have no business being here. to which her team then says to her, well, if that's the standard, none of us should be here.

Grace freely given, sister. You're in the spot you need to be. Jesus has forgiven that too. We serve out of fullness of grace.

So whether that's on a ministry team, do you see, you're going to be mentoring people, you're going to be doing different ministries with your gift, but it affords you a certain kind of opportunity to speak the truth in love.

[26:58] Life groups, dinners together, in addition to using your gifts, we are all to be speaking the truth in love to one another unto Jesus.

That's the third observation. Here's the fourth. Each of us equipped this raises an interesting question.

You might be saying, okay, I buy it. I'm supposed to be speaking the truth in love, okay, but what do I say? What do I say when someone's freaking out?

I don't want to mislead them. Well, in verses 11 and 12, we see this very important relationship. He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

It's a relationship. God gives leadership gifts to equip the saints for the works of ministry. So here's what this means. This morning, I am seeking to equip you with God's Word for works of ministry.

[28:11] How, you may ask, well, I haven't given you a ministry skill set. I'm trying to form in your minds a ministry mindset.

Equip you in the way you think about yourself. That you, Christian, are a minister of Jesus Christ in this church. And I'm calling you to believe it.

Because God says it. And to live that, you are a gifted and called minister of the ascended Christ to make disciples as part of this church.

And my job is to equip you to faithfully minister out of that. This word equip is part of a family of words in the New Testament.

And basically it means to outfit. It was used to describe outfitting boats that in the first century would travel rivers.

[29:11] You give everything that boat team needs in order to survive going down the river or up river. Equipping means giving you what you need to be faithful to Jesus.

So in light of that, I just want to help you think about Sunday mornings for a second. imagine Sunday morning as the flagship disciple making event of the week.

The moment we all come together to worship God, to hear from his words, and to be spurred on to follow Jesus and make disciples of all nations. There's a lot of equipping with God's word that happens on a Sunday morning.

Imagine the informal conversations before the service and after the service and how those are ripe opportunities to move people towards Jesus with his word. What happens with King's kids, right now we have a bunch of children being taught a lesson.

Yes, that is speaking the truth in love. But also, when those kids get squirrely, those teachers and helpers have an opportunity to speak the truth in love and help these children.

[30:28] Love one another. Grow in self-control. Of course, our singing, it's a kind of speaking the truth and love to one another.

Colossians 3.16 talks about the word of Christ dwelling richly among us through the hymns and spiritual songs that we sing. It forms us. It will be in your mind on your deathbed someday.

It equips you. preaching, it equips you with sound doctrine so you don't go the way of Ephesians 4.14. So you're not tossed to and fro by the waves of false doctrine.

Ministry mindset, ministry skill set. I don't have enough time this morning, but I want to invite you to something immediately after the service.

There's this passage in 1 Thessalonians 5.14. It is a crash course in how to wisely apply God's word to someone's life.

[31:31] Just one verse. So after the service we dismiss, come on down, I'll give you a crash course in it. It'll be five minutes. You'll walk away with a sense of, oh, that's helpful.

our job as pastors and elders is to equip the saints for works of service and to do that well.

Because each of you has been called to be a minister of the gospel. Okay, so called, gifted, speaking, equipped, fifth observation, each of us positioned.

It's right there in the text, verse 16. From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Have you ever had a body part dislocate? Oh, it's not fun. It's painful. It calls for all your attention. You're unable to do what you normally do.

[32:39] Paul is painting this picture of the church as a healthy, functioning body with all of its members united together, working together. When someone's dislocated, it affects the supply of grace running through the body.

That phrase, from whom the whole body joined and held together, with which it is equipped, every joint with which it is equipped, it's a picture of this connectivity between Christians in which God uses that connectivity, that positioning and proximity to pour out His grace on people.

Some scholars think that's talking about leaders. Other scholars think that's a reference to all the saints. Whatever the case may be, it's about God's grace flowing through the body. And we all need to be in right position with one another.

Not disjointed, not dislocated, but unified. What holds together a body of Christ?

What does that? In verse 15, we see it. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we're to grow up in every way into Him who is the head.

[34:01] Look at the end of verse 16. Makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. That's the whole point of Ephesians 4, 1 through 6. United in love unto Jesus.

Have you ever seen someone dislocate a shoulder and then watched the process of it being set back in? It's kind of painful to watch. But for that person who has a dislocated shoulder, whatever pain it takes to get it reset, the result is eventual healing and full function of the body.

Here's the question. Are you somehow disjointed from the body? In general, or from another Christian in particular, are you disconnected?

And what needs to happen for you to be set back into place so that the grace of our Lord Jesus, our head, flows down through us to all body parts?

What is it going to take? Maybe it means re-engaging in our life together as a church in person. Maybe it means getting involved with a life group finally.

[35:19] Maybe it means getting onto a ministry team. Maybe it means taking some steps of faith and courage and raising topics with other brothers and sisters. That may not be easy to talk about.

If you are disjointed from the body, not only does it affect the body, we're missing God using your gift grace in our life.

It's affecting you. You're lacking God's grace. You don't need to remain disconnected and distant. Get connected.

Get close. It's necessary to your calling to be part of building up this particular body. That's the fifth observation.

Here's the sixth, and this is brief. All of us growing. It's the result. It's the result of knowing that you're called.

[36:17] It's the result of knowing that you're gifted. It's the result of speaking the truth in love, of being equipped to do that. It's the result of being rightly, humbly positioned to one another in this church.

The result is the body builds itself up in love. You have a particular gift, brother and sister, that Jesus himself has given you, and while you are using that gift in close proximity to other Christians, you get to speak the truth in love, moving people towards Jesus.

And when we are rightly connected to each other in our head, Jesus, the grace falls down. It fills us with the fullness of God.

It grows us. We learn from him. We live for him. We become like him because we love him. Grace it does.

Grace it does the body good. Grace it does. Grace it does this body good. And that includes moving non-Christians into our body when they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

[37:32] We add members. It's all about moving people towards Jesus, our head. We grow. He gets the glory. So let me conclude.

Who makes disciples, brothers and sisters? Every Christian, all of us, must be making disciples. In order for our church culture to become a disciple-making church culture, this biblical truth that we're talking about from Ephesians chapter 4 must be driven down to the bedrock of your being.

You must be thoroughly convinced of this. And when we are all convinced of this, the grace flows in greater fullness into greater effect.

You've been called into ministry, brother and sister. You're an essential member of the Christ the King Church ministry staff. And when we act on this in faith, every member becomes a disciple-maker.

The body builds itself in love. Grace it does the body good. Next week, where are disciples made?

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we're so grateful that you would call each of us out of the domain of darkness and transfer us into the kingdom of light, the kingdom of the beloved Son.

[38:59] You made us alive with Christ, Father. You've called us to be disciples. God, would you convince us of what you say to be true of us so that we can live in fullness and that we can see this body grow and that we do that together.

Lord, would you bring peace and unity? We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.