

All Disciples Go (Part 2)

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[0:00] Today we are finishing up an eight-week focus on our discipleship pathway, but I don't want you to think that as we finish up this eight-week focus on discipleship that we are finishing our focus on discipleship because discipleship is not something that we focus on for eight weeks or for a season but discipleship is what we give our lives to.

It's a part of the everyday Christian life. It's not a seasonal thing. It's something that we have a part of our lives each and every day. It's not intended to be optional, but rather it's intentional. It's deliberate. It is for all believers, and it is transformative in our lives.

You see, discipleship doesn't allow for complacency or simply going through the motions because at the heart of discipleship is the shaping of our lives to look more like Jesus's life.

That's the heart of discipleship, and so as we begin to make our lives look more like Christ's life, then it changes us. It doesn't leave us the same. We can't simply go through the motions. We can't simply just be complacent with where we are, but we are looking towards Jesus.

And so as we begin today, I want you to think with me about this question. What has had the biggest impact on your life spiritually?

[1:30] I want you to genuinely think about that with me for just a moment. What is it that has had the biggest impact on your life spiritually?

Some of you may have an event of some type that has had an impact in your life. Maybe a conference could be a difficult time in your life. It could be anything.

But my guess is that most of you right now, if you're actually doing what I ask and thinking about what has had the biggest impact on your life, you're not thinking about something, but you're thinking about someone.

You're thinking about people that have influenced your life, that have invested in your life. You're thinking about those that God has placed in your life to shape you. When I think about what has shaped my life the most spiritually, people start coming to mind.

My parents come to mind and how they raised me, the example they set before me, the way that I saw them live out their faith. Catherine comes to mind and the way that she challenges me each and every day, the way she encourages me, and sometimes reminds me how far I still have to go.

[2:43] But no, just this constant encouragement. There's those people that have got his place in our life. I'm reminded of people like Ken Jones and James Forrester when they come to mind.

These people invested in me during my college time.

They were campus ministers who poured into me, not only told me what it means to be a follower of Christ, but showed me with their life what it means. People like Steve and Kim Pace come to mind, who are members of the first church that I worked at in North Carolina.

Steve and Kim realized that we live six hours away from our closest family, and so they decided to bring us into their family and began to invest in us, began to invite us on weekend lake trips, began to invite us to their Sunday evening dinners with their family.

Steve was a teacher in the Sunday school class and not only taught God's Word, but lived it out, setting the example for us in our early days in ministry and early days as a married couple.

People like Andy Childs, Carlos Silly, David Rissi, many of you in this room, many of the staff, my kids come to mind. You know, there's not much more humbling than when your kids listen to a sermon and then they bring that up later to make sure that you're following what you say in front of everyone.

[3:58] All of whom have invested in my life. And so this morning, as we close out our series, I want us to focus on the last four verses of Matthew.

And so if you have a copy of God's Word, I want you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 28, and we're going to start reading in verse 16 and make our way through the end of the chapter. And so Matthew 28, starting in verse 16, this is what the Word of the Lord says. It says, Now this is always interesting to me right here.

Let's just pause for this. This is really interesting to me. They worshiped Him, but some doubted. What is left for them to doubt? What is left for them to try to figure out about Jesus as far as if He really is the Messiah?

The risen Savior is quite literally standing in front of them. What is left for them to doubt? Did they doubt maybe whether or not they should worship Him? Maybe, but probably not.

[5:06] Did they have doubts and confusion about this whole thing and what was going on? Possibly. But Jesus is standing in front of them. And one commentator suggested he said maybe they were doubting whether or not they could serve Him.

Maybe they were doubting because of their past, because of their past experiences, because of their track record. Maybe they were just coming doubting and just unsure about this whole thing. I want to say right now that because of Jesus, because of who He is, He makes all things new. And so it doesn't matter our past.

It doesn't matter those things that we've been through. When we come to faith in Christ, He can use us. Now, yes, there are things that our past may prevent us from serving in different capacities, may prevent us from being able to have different offices.

But if we are a follower of Christ, He wants to use us. He wants to use us in different ways. And so we continue reading here.

[6:05] It says, And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and 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. And so this morning, as we look at this section, I want to primarily be focusing on the last three verses of this.

And it's my hope and prayer that as we look at a passage that I guess is pretty familiar to many of us, if you've been coming to this church for any length of time, this is a passage you've probably heard and referenced.

But it's probably a passage that is very familiar to us. But I want to encourage us to come this morning with fresh eyes to look at what God has for us in store today.

And so pray with me for just a moment. Father, I thank you for your word. I thank you for what it teaches us about you. Lord, I pray that if we have ears to hear, Lord, that you would help us to listen well this morning to your word, not just hearing the words, but applying them to our life.

[7:18] And so, Lord, give us a heart for you. Give us wisdom to follow you and give us courage in the process. And so, Lord, we thank you. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. In these verses right here, Jesus is passing the torch to his disciples. He's getting ready to go back to the Father. And he's passing this torch to his disciples.

He is promising to be with them, but letting them know that they have a mission, that he's calling them to something, a mission that Jesus has called all believers to be a part of.

And so from this passage that many of us may be familiar with, I want us to make a few observations this morning. To begin with, what I want us to clearly see is that as disciples go, disciples go under authority.

Disciples go under authority. It says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Jesus can only make this claim if he truly is fully God.

[8:21] You see, when tempted, Satan offered Jesus an earthly kingdom, but God had so much more in store for him. When tempted, there at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Satan offered him, oh, this earthly kingdom, but God had so much more in store for him.

In fact, Daniel 7, 14 tells us what the son of man's kingdom will be like. In Daniel 7, 14, we are told, and to him will be given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away in his kingdom, one that shall not be destroyed. I think many times this is hard for us to wrap our minds around.

This is hard for us to comprehend that Jesus' kingdom is so much greater, that his authority, that his reign is so much greater than anything. But I want you to think about it like this with me for just a

moment today.

Imagine that you had this giant scale, and you were to put all of the authority, all of the power, all of the prestige of everybody that is influential in the world, all of that, those kingdoms, all those countries, all the present, all of those things, you were to put them on one side of the scale, and then you put the authority of Christ Jesus on the other side of the scale.

[9 : 43] It's not going to be something that, you know, slowly starts balancing out and just slightly tips in one direction. No, this is going to become a catapult. And because the authority of Jesus, the authority that God gives him, is so much greater than anything and everything in this world, the authority this world, all the authority this world can muster pales in comparison to the authority of King Jesus.

John Piper said it well when he said it like this. He said this, Here is our witness to the world. The risen Christ, your king, is your king and has absolute, unlimited authority over your life.

If you do not bow and worship him and trust him and obey him, you commit high treason against Christ the king, who is God over all. The resurrection is God's open declaration that he lays claim on every person and tribe and tongue and nation.

All authority on earth is mine. He says, Your sex life is his to rule. Your business is his to rule. Your career is his to rule. Your home is his. Your children are his.

Your vacation is his. Your body is his. He is God. He says, So if you resist his claim, feel no admiration for his infinite power and authority, and turn finally to seek satisfaction from thrills that allow you to be your own master, then you will be executed for treason in the last day.

[11 : 16] And it will appear so reasonable and so right that you should be executed for your disloyalty to your maker and redeemer that there will be no appeals and no objections.

It says, Your life of indifference to the risen Christ and of half-hearted attention now and then to a few of his commandments will appear on that day as supremely blameworthy and infinitely foolish, and you will weep that you did not change.

As you can tell, John Piper is not known for beating around the bush. But I agree that this is not a light issue that we shouldn't take seriously. This is something that we should clearly see.

Jesus is king, and if we believe that, then we submit our lives to that, then we give our lives to that. If we truly understand that he is on the throne and reigning, then our response to that is, Lord, here's my life.

What do you want me to do? Where do you want me to go? What is it that you have called me to?

And so after Jesus reminds everyone of his authority, after he has their attention, he probably already had their attention because if you die and then come back from the grave, you probably have the attention of anybody that you speak to.

[12 : 33] And so he has their attention. He says, With this authority, there's something that I'm calling you to do. And so with this authority, we clearly see what it is that we're called to do, and that is disciples go and make disciples.

Disciples go and make disciples. It says, Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching to them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Understanding that as disciples, we go under authority. Understanding that as disciples, we have the authority of King Jesus over us, who has the right and responsibility to tell us how to live our lives, understanding that we are going under authority and that he's called us to go and make disciples.

I love what Craig Bloomberg notes here. He says, Jesus has the right to issue his followers their marching orders, but he also has the ability to help them carry those orders on the basis of his divine authority.

This passage of scripture has been the fuel, has been the motivation, it's been the inspiration for so many missionaries going to the nations, and it should be. This should be an inspirational thing for us to see the fact that we should go to the nations.

[13 : 52] However, we must not miss the emphasis this verse is playing on what we should be doing. We must not miss the emphasis this verse is placing on the what it is that we should be doing.

When you look at this verse in English, it is easy to miss where the emphasis is placed. However, in the Greek, the commandment has one verb here, one action that we are called to do that Jesus

with all of his authority is calling us to do, and that is to make disciples.

Now, this main command of make disciples is surrounded by several complimentary participles that are translated as go. Some translations try to capture the essence of it and say, as you go to do this, then, of course, you see baptizing and teaching, and so from those participles, we are better able to see how this command to make disciples plays out, and so we are to make disciples of all nations.

The object of this verb, to make disciples, is all nations. We're to make disciples of all nations. Now, when you came in today, you didn't know you were gonna get an English lesson, did you?

And you probably didn't guess that I would be the one to give that lesson, but when you look at this passage here, what you clearly see is that Jesus is focused on us making disciples of all the nations.

[15:14] Now, this plays out in the way that we teach, the way that we baptize, the way that we do these things by going, and so while we don't have time to fully discuss baptizing and teaching and what all that entails, I do want us to consider what it means to go for just a moment.

After all, we're in the final week of our discipleship pathway, focusing on the fact that all disciples go. Here we see the need for the gospel presence in all nations.

In Luke's account of the great commission that we talked about in length last week, we talked about the fact that as we go, that God has called us to go to Jerusalem, to all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, reminding us that not only are we called to go locally where we are, but we're to take that gospel message to people who may not want to hear it, who may not like us, and may not want to be able to hear this message, and not only that, to our surrounding area, to places where we may not like them as much, but we're called to take this gospel message to them, and also to the end of the earth, to places that we've never even heard of before.

We are to go to these places and make disciples. William Carey, the founder of the modern missionary movement, who famously said, attempt great things for God, expect great things from God.

As you can imagine, he had a lot to say about this passage of scripture. And in a journal entry on March 29th, 1794, Carey wrote these words.

[16:47] He says, Oh, what is there in all the world worth living for, but the presence and service of God? He said, I feel a burning desire that all the world may know this God and serve Him.

This is why we go and make disciples. Love how James Montgomery Boyce, a pastor who died in around 2000, he said this concerning this great commission.

He says this, this is the greatest work any person can ever have. And he said this, he says, and it is for all Christians. This is a tremendous message.

How can we not tell it boldly to those who are perishing apart from Jesus Christ? I think we often understand that we are all called to be a part of the great commission.

I think this is something that nobody would really argue with us, that we are called to share our gospel, this gospel message with the lost and dying world to those that need to hear that salvation lies only with Christ.

[17:48] But I think many times, our willingness to obey this is in direct connection to our comfort level and what we feel like we are capable of.

I feel there's a direct connection there with understanding this in light of living an easy life at times, so long as it's convenient and does not require much of us.

But if we are serious about fulfilling the great commission and not only sharing the gospel, but sometimes doing the harder work and honestly, always doing the harder work of making disciples, then we've got to be committed to thinking and training ourselves to take this gospel message.

And this means that we are serious. If we're serious about knowing people and the ways to best communicate the gospel to them, we've got to take this seriously.

If we care about people and getting the gospel to them, then we will put in the time and effort and make those sacrifices to do this most effectively.

[18:51] I shared a story with our men's group on Wednesday night a few weeks ago, but I think it really fits this well. I think it gets to the heart of what we're trying to communicate here that we should have a heart to reach the lost and dying around us and to think strategically about it, to plan for it, to do what God has called us to do.

And I got to thinking about it in a relationship with something that many of you may be familiar with. Some of you may remember years ago, when our middle daughter, Ressie, was born. And you remember that she spent the first month of her life in the NICU before she was released from there. And so before we could take her home, there was a few things that she had to pass and complete.

And one of those things was a hearing test. And so a few times before we left, they tested Ressie's hearing because she kept failing this hearing test.

And they told us it's probably nothing. This happens a lot of times with NICU babies. A lot of things could be going on. There's a lot of things going on here. Just follow up with it in about a month from now.

[20:01] And I'm sure that everything will be okay. So we left not thinking very much about that. And then about a month later, we followed up with it and we took her to another place. And this time during this hearing test, they realized there might be something else to this.

Not only did she fail it, but it was also pointing towards something that we had never heard of, which was auditory neuropathy. And so we didn't know very much about it, but we could tell from the reaction of those who were doing the test that this was probably not the best case scenario in this situation.

And so shortly after that, we had someone from the state come by the house to share with us some different options that we had. And I will never forget the lady told us when she came there that that Ressie can't really hear anything based on the results that she really can't hear anything.

And so this was the first time that it kind of floored us. And she, and so I'll never forget, she also told us that because of that, you probably don't even need to be worried about being quiet when she's napping and all of those things, which looking back, we missed out on some good naps because of that.

But, but I remember her telling us that she probably can't hear anything. And I'll never forget the response from one me and Catherine, but also our family. All of a sudden we started getting books on sign language.

[21:20] All of a sudden we started figuring out different options going forward because while we didn't know exactly what the future held, we didn't know exactly what it was going to look like.

We knew that there wasn't going to be anything that kept us from communicating with our little girl. We knew there wasn't going to be anything that stood in the way from us being able to effectively communicate with her, to let her know how much we loved her, to let her know that we were going to be there for her.

And this has got to be our heart for the nations as well. This has got to be our heart for the lost and dying in our community. It's not just something that we go through the motions to say, hey, let's be a part of the great commission.

Let's be a part of sharing the gospel. This is something we've got to be intentional with. It's going to take hard work. It's going to take sacrifice. It's going to take all sorts of things, but we've got to be committed to getting the gospel message to those that need to hear about it.

One pastor that I listened to years ago put it very bluntly in a sermon when he said this. He said, if you are not learning to express the gospel to people around you in ways that are effective, one, either one, you don't believe that it's true, or two, you don't really care about those people at all.

[22:45] If you are not learning to express the gospel to people around you in ways that are effective, you either one, don't believe it's true, or two, don't really care about those people at all.

And I realize this is a bold statement, but it may it be our prayer that we are willing to do whatever it takes to not only share the gospel, but pour into and invest in the lives of those around us.

May we be intentional with this. May we be focused on this. The marching orders have been given, and those marching orders are great.

It's called the Great Commission because it is a great message we get to share, but it's also a challenging mission that God has given to us. But what this message also reminds us of, what Jesus tells us very clearly as He closes this out, is that not only do disciples go under authority, not only do disciples go and make other disciples, disciples also go with a promise.

Disciples go with a promise. It says, And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. The great promise is that Jesus is going to be with us in this journey.

[24:05] The one who has all authority, who spoke the world into existence, think about that with me for just a moment. The one who spoke and formed everything that we know about from the

largest star to the smallest Adam, He spoke it into existence out of nothing.

The one who never takes time off. The one who loves you and me with an unmatched love. The one who freely left the glory of heaven, came and lived the life that we couldn't live, died the death that we deserve, went to the grave, conquered the grave, rose from the grave so that we can have new life.

This is the one that says, And behold, I am with you always. No matter what I'm calling you to, no matter where you are going to go, I am with you. And that carries significant weight.

This is the one who is going with us. And I think this is probably one of the most overlooked aspects of the Great Commission. It's an impossible task to do on our own. This is an impossible thing that God has called us to do on our own.

But God said, Jesus said, And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Not to a certain point, but to the end. I am with you.

[25 : 21] I've heard it. You've heard it said many times. God doesn't call the equipped. He equips the called. Church, this is a mission he has called us all to. And when we step out in obedience to that call, we take great comfort in knowing that he is with us to help us and with what he has called us to do.

There are things that we must pray about and details that must be considered. But there is no doubt that God's plan for the church is to live out the Great Commission.

J.D. Greer, once again, in regards to the Great Commission, he said, I don't understand the way that looks at life and says, I'm just not that concerned with what is going on around the world.

He says, I don't understand the posture that says, God, I am asking you what your will is. You see, we know what his will is. We know a lot of what God's desire is, and that is for us to live out the Great Commission.

He goes on to give the example. He says, imagine it like this. Imagine you come across a railroad track, and there's a little girl, a crippled little girl, who's laying on the tracks, and you hear a train coming.

[26 : 32] He says, you don't in that moment stop and kneel down and pray, Lord, what's your will? Do you want me to help this girl or not? Lord, show me your will. You don't do that. You know his will. You pick up the child and remove her from the situation.

You know what his plan is. You know what his desire is. Church, we know what God's desire is for us. His desire is for us to be a part of the Great Commission.

The question is not whether or not you are called to the mission. The question is only where and how you are called to the mission. And so how do we, as a church, live out the Great Commission? How do we do this in our lives? Certainly, it's not that when we think of the church, it's not this building and thinking about picking it up and taking it to different places so that people can see the gospel, so they can hear it.

Because the church is not this building. The church is you. And so when we ask, how do we, as a church, live out the Great Commission?

[27 : 35] The answer is pretty simple. You and I live out the Great Commission. And as you and I live out the Great Commission, the church lives out the Great Commission.

And so I want to give you a very practical way to start this as we close. Now, this is not intended to be a checkbox that you check off and say, well, now I've completed the Great Commission, I'm done.

But rather a starting point. Because again, just like a car, it's so much easier to steer when it's moving. When we are doing what God has called us to do, He starts revealing all kinds of things to us about what He has called us to do.

But I want you to think right now of one person in your life that is either not involved in church or you know is not a believer.

Think of one person in your life right now that you know is not involved in church, that you know is not a believer, and come up with a name in your mind right now. And if a name doesn't come to mind, if you say, well, Brett, I don't have anybody like that in my life.

[28 : 35] All of my friends go to church. All of my friends are strong believers, are growing. I don't have anybody like that. Then let me tell you, make some new friends. Because if your path that you are on right now doesn't take you alongside people who are far from God, who don't have the hope that we have, then maybe we need to change some lanes.

Yes, we want to have those people in our life that will encourage us. We want to have those strong believers in our life that will be there to disciple us, that will be there to invest in us.

But God calls us to reach the lost and dying, whether it's across the street or across the world. And so I want you to think about somebody. Have somebody in mind that you can pray for.

But then I want you to take it another step. And I want you to invite that person. Invite them to your home. Invite them out to lunch. Invite them to a Bible study.

Invite them to church. Whatever the case may be, be there for them. Pray for them. Invest in their life. Share the good news of Jesus with them.

[29:48] And can you imagine the difference this would make in our community if every single person committed to that today? Can you imagine if we all obeyed what God has called us all to do?

Can you imagine the difference that it would make if we all obeyed what it is that God has called all of us to do? And so would you pray with me? Father, I thank you so much.

I thank you so much for Jesus. Lord, I thank you for the hope that we have that only he can provide. Lord, I thank you that there were those in my life who shared this good news, who shared this hope that only you can save.

Lord, I thank you for those people. And Lord, I pray that you give us the boldness to be those people to somebody else. Lord, help us to share the gospel with the lost and dying that are around us.

Father, burden our hearts for the lost in our community today. Lord, burden our hearts for the lost around the world to those who have never heard the gospel.

[30:54] Lord, we thank you for the partnerships that you have already given us, that we can invest in, that we can pour into, of those who are taking this gospel message to the nations, to those that we can come alongside with.

Lord, but also I pray that we see this is something that we don't outsource. Lord, I pray that we see this is something that we don't let somebody else take care of, but we understand that this call to reach the nations, this call to reach the lost and dying in this community, in this state, in this nation around the world, is a call that you've placed on all of our lives.

And so, Lord, I pray that as we think about the fact that all disciples go, that all disciples are to be about the Great Commission, Lord, that you would give us a heart and a desire where you've placed us, what you've called us to do, to go and make disciples.

And Lord, we ask all this in Jesus' precious name. Amen. I'm going to invite you to stand. We're going to sing a song of invitation this morning. And I want to encourage you to stand and sing, stand and pray, stand and respond as God leads, guides, and directs.