**Follow the King to the Cross**

**Follow the King in Mission**

Matthew 28:16-20

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We are in a series leading up to Easter, Follow the King to the Cross. We are ending the series today, how do we respond to the life and ministry of Jesus? He tells us how to response in 28:16-20.

Today we look at the great commission Jesus gave us, the way we fulfill that commission, and our involvement in that commission. After his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples to meet him in Galilee (28:10) so the eleven[[1]](#footnote-1), go to Galilee. When they saw Jesus some worship him but others doubted or a more accurately, hesitated. It seems they did not know how to relate to the risen Jesus. Some were ready to worship him as God[[2]](#footnote-2) but others hesitated in doing so. Then Jesus Matthew records Jesus’ final instructions, make disciples of all nations.

**Jesus Gave us a Plan (19)**

Jesus is passing the baton, having spent over three and a half years discipling them and now he is giving them the same task. Making disciples is the main verb in this passage and tells us the main point. Jesus’ disciples must carry on his mission, make disciples. That is our measuring stick. In response to what Jesus did for us in his life, his death, and his resurrection, he commands us to take up his mission. The most succinct text verse describes a disciple is, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men (Mat 4:19).” This verse gives us three characteristics that describe a disciple: a disciple is someone who follows Jesus, that comes from Jesus’ command, follow me; second, a disciple is someone who is formed by Jesus, that comes from Jesus’ promise, I will make you; and third, a disciple is someone who is faithful to Jesus’ mission, that comes from fishers of men. So, a disciple is someone who follows Jesus, is formed by Jesus, and is faithful to Jesus’ mission. A disciple is a christian. CCC is about making disciples and we have a specific pathway and process for making disciples because we believe, in the end, we will be evaluated whether we are making disciples or not. This command is the pattern for us individually and collectively as a church. In short, disciples make disciples.[[3]](#footnote-3) So Jesus gave us a plan and secondly, Jesus gave us a process.

**Jesus Gave us a Process (19)**

Jesus describes the process making disciples as going, baptizing, and teaching. From these three words we can identify five characteristics of Jesus’ process for making disciples. The first characteristic of Jesus’ process is being intentional, Jesus tells the disciples to “go,” to influence the spiritual lives of others. Making disciples requires that we live intentionally. Our lives are lived around Jesus’ mission not our own. Disciples see that Jesus has placed us in Homer primarily for his mission. We recognize that God has placed people in our lives, how he has placed them in there, and why he has placed them there. Jesus was intentional when he chose twelve men to disciple. He invested in a few to change the world. The second characteristic of Jesus’ process is being gender specific when making disciples. Jesus had both men and women disciples but he chose twelve men to invest in personally to reproduce his life in them. Even within the twelve he had four who he spent even more time with, who were his inner core. The third characteristic of Jesus’ process is centered around the local church. Jesus instructs his disciples to baptize them and teach them. In baptism, a disciple is identifying with Jesus and his church and teaching is sitting under the teaching of the local church. The pronoun them, baptizing *them* and teaching *them* means that all those who come to faith are part of a local church and are involved in the discipleship process. To be a disciple is to be part of a local church. In the western world which celebrates individualism, this point needs to be constantly emphasized. Jesus’ process was to invite others into a discipling relationship and they then formed the church. The process of making disciples and discipleship cannot be accomplished apart from Jesus’ process. Without the involvement of other disciples in our lives, making disciples cannot happen. The fourth characteristic of Jesus’ process is spiritual growth, Jesus said “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” The goal of teaching is joyful obedience. Teaching is the primary means of discipleship, becoming like Jesus. That means all of us are to teach others. The purpose of teaching is to obedience, obeying all Jesus’ commands.[[4]](#footnote-4) So a disciple is one hears Jesus’ teaching, understands Jesus’ teaching, and also obeys Jesus’ teaching.[[5]](#footnote-5) The last characteristic of Jesus’ process is personal accountability. Accountability is essential to a life of obedience and spiritual growth. Accountability is the right to ask and answer questions about our lives with others.

**Jesus Gave us a Promise (18, 20)**

Imagine how overwhelmed the disciples were. Jesus gave them a ginormous task, make disciples of all nations. Most of them had probably never been out of their own village until they traveled with Jesus. Jesus knew this was impossible so he gave them two promises. The first is found in verse eighteen, “All authority has been given to me, *therefore* go and make disciples.” He gave the command to make disciples because of his universal and sovereign authority. No longer is Jesus the humble Suffering Servant Messiah but stands before them as the risen and soon to be exalted Lord of the universe (Heb 1:1-4). Jesus knows the plan is humanly impossible outside of his authority, so he gives us the right and the power to accomplish the plan. He is the great doer in our doing. The second promise is, “*behold* I will be with you always, to the end of the age (20).” In our going and our making, we have the promise of Jesus’ presence and with his presence comes his power to accomplish the plan. He is with us by his Spirit who fills us and empowers us to overcome our inadequacies. Making disciples is not optional, it is Christianity.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. What is the goal or measuring stick for Christians and the church?
2. Are you making disciples? Why or why not?
3. What are the three characteristics of a disciple?
4. How are you doing in each one of these characteristics? Following Jesus, being formed by Jesus, and faithful to the mission of Jesus?
5. What are some of the characteristics of Jesus’ process for making disciples?
6. How can you integrate some of these characteristics into your life and relationships?

1. Judas is no longer included because of his betrayal. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hurtado, *Honoring the Son*, 50-52; see also discussion in Wilkins, 955. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Paul makes a close connection between being reconciled to God and the ministry of reconciliation 2 Cor 5:18; see also 2 Tim 2:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 28:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 12:46-50; 7:21-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)