**Vision Sunday**

**Remaining Focused**

**Matthew 28:18-20**

The measuring stick Jesus gave is making disciples. That is the mission of the church, every church. Yet there are so many good activities that distract from that task. So today I want to look at the mission Jesus gave us in Mathew 28:18-20, in today’s message Remaining Focused. In Matthew 28:18-20, we see that Jesus gave us a plan, a process, and a promise. My Big Idea is that Jesus calls us to remain focused on making disciples who make disciples.

**Jesus Gave Us a Plan**

Jesus gave us a plan, make disciples. A Christian is a disciple. If that is so, it is critical that we understand what a disciple is if we are called to be disciples and make disciples. Jesus describes a disciple when he calls Peter and Andrew to follow him, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men (Mat 4:19).” This text gives three traits of a disciple – a disciple follows Jesus, a disciple is formed by Jesus, and a disciple is faithful to Jesus’ mission. We see the first trait in Jesus’ invitation, “follow me.” To follow a rabbi or be their disciple in that day meant to put yourself under the authority of their teaching, it meant following their teaching. Part of choice to become their disciple was to follow their teaching. That was true of Jesus, but he took that one step further, following him meant coming to him for salvation by repenting and believing in him (Mar 1:15). So, a disciple follows Jesus and secondly, a disciple is formed by Jesus.

We see this in Jesus’ promise, “I will make you.” A disciple seeks to be like Jesus, his teaching shapes their life. As we follow Jesus, he forms us, so we become like him (Ro 8:28; Eph 4:13). This is discipleship or what we normally think of as sanctification. Jesus forms us as we are *intentional* about our spiritual growth two primary ways. Frist, disciples form habits and practices that Jesus uses to form us into his image. Secondly, Jesus forms disciples in the context of a community of like-minded individuals. So, a disciple *follows* Jesus, a disciple is *formed* by Jesus, and third, a disciple is *faithful* to Jesus’ mission.

Jesus promises to make us into fishers of men/women or as he says here, make disciples. Disciples make disciples. Making disciples is walking alongside others to help them follow Jesus. Making disciples is *primarily* accomplished in a relational environment. So, a disciple is someone who follows Jesus, is formed by Jesus, and is faithful to Jesus’ mission. The mission/measuring stick Jesus gave us is to make disciples, people who follow Jesus, are formed by Jesus, and who are faithful to the mission of Jesus. We have seen that Jesus gave us a plan, secondly, Jesus also gave us a process.

**Jesus Gave Us a Process**

So what does it mean to make disciples and how do we do it? Making disciples is what we are called to do as a church *and* as individuals. Making disciples is the task Jesus gave each of us. Jesus starts out with “go,” meaning I am sending you out to do what I did with you, make disciples. From this text and Jesus’ life and ministry, we see that Jesus’ process for making disciples has several characteristics, we have time to look at six briefly. The first characteristic of Jesus’ process is being *intentional*, we see this in the command to go. Jesus preached to the crowds, but he spent between 75 to 90 percent of his time with his disciples. Even in his preaching he called people to a follow him in discipleship. Jesus was *intentional* when he chose twelve men to disciple. Making disciples requires an *intentional* process of helping others follow Jesus. Secondly, the process was *relational*, when Jesus called his disciples to follow him, he called them to be with him (Mk 3:14). The third characteristic of the process is *community*, making disciples is centered around the local church. We see this in the phrase, to baptize and teach. In baptism, a disciple is identifying with both Jesus and his church. Following Jesus meant becoming part of the community of disciples. The fourth characteristic of the process is *discipleship* *or spiritual growth*, Jesus said “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” The goal of teaching is worship and obedience. The fruit if faith is obedience. The last characteristic of this process is *accountability*. Teaching them to obey means that one is submissive to others. It means that they are in accountable relationships that are helping them to follow Jesus. Jesus expects disciples to obey him and accountability is essential to a life of obedience and spiritual growth. Relational accountability includes confessing our sins and struggles to others who encourage us and hold us responsible to obey Jesus. Finally, the process is *reproducible*, when Jesus told his disciples to go and make disciples, they made disciples because they knew what to do. Jesus’ plan was not just to make disciples but make disciples who make disciples, who reproduce.

It is the elder’s task to establish a process for making disciples at CCC so that you all know that process and participate. Our process starts with Sundays Services, identifying with His body, worshiping together and hearing God’s voice together. The next step in the process is Life groups, where we share and care for each other and discuss and apply the sermon more thoroughly. The final step in our process is Discipleship Groups, where we encourage each other in following Jesus and equipping each other to make disciples. Discipleship groups are smaller and more focused than Life Groups. That is our basic process. We have seen that Jesus gave us a plan, a process, and finally, Jesus gave us a promises.

**Jesus Gave Us a Promise**

The mission Jesus gave is humanly impossible, so Jesus gave them two promises. The first promise is found in verse eighteen, “All authority has been given to me, therefore go and make disciples of all nations.” The mission is divinely authorized by the resurrected King Jesus giving us the right and the power to fulfill it. Jesus 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, Jesus promises his presence and power to accomplish it. This promise is fulfilled in the Spirit filling us and empowering us to accomplish his mission. Being a disciple, following Jesus and making disciples is not optional, it is normal Christianity.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. What do you think of when you think of a disciple or discipleship?
2. Have you ever been discipled or discipled anyone?
3. How did David define a disciple? Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. Based upon this definition, are you a disciple?
5. Would you add anything? Why?
6. Do you remember the five characteristics of the process for making disciples?
7. What do you think of these five characteristics?
8. Have you ever taken responsibility for the spiritual growth of another person?
9. What do you think of the statement, disciples make disciples.
10. Are you faithful to Jesus’ mission?