

Matthew 28:16-20

'Disciple Making Disciples'¹

Ernest Shackleton, the great explorer, allegedly placed an advert in the Times newspaper to recruit volunteers to join his Antarctic expedition.

- The advert read: *"Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages. Bitter cold. Long months of complete darkness. Constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success."*²
- By all accounts a number of men signed up for this expedition and the other unsuccessful ones that Shackleton led.
- What attracted them I'm sure was their sense of adventure.
- As they set off I'm sure the feelings in the team would have been a mixture of excitement, the adrenalin rush of being involved in the mission, and maybe fear that this would be the last time they saw their homeland and loved ones.

There was another great man who called a group of men to be the first to join Him on a mission.

- Not to go to Antarctica, but to save the world.

READ MATTHEW 28:16-19a

- *"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.*
- *When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.*
- *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*
- *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..."*

Sometime after Jesus' resurrection, His first followers, the eleven disciples (the Twelve minus Judas Iscariot) went to Galilee, and to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

- That in itself was significant.
- Galilee was the land of the Gentiles. It was the part of northern Israel that had been captured by the Assyrians in the days of Isaiah, and had been occupied by Gentiles ever since.
- Isaiah described the people there as walking in darkness.
- Galilee was also the place where Jesus began His ministry. It was as He opened His mouth and preached to the people that Matthew said Isaiah's prophecy about a child who was God's King was fulfilled.
- And so in Galilee of the Gentiles, the eleven disciples come to meet Jesus.
- But not just anywhere in Galilee, on a mountain. Again this is significant.
- Mountains are where God makes a new world begin.
- The world starts on Mount Eden.³
- After the flood, the ark settles on Mount Ararat.
- On Mount Sinai, God revealed Himself to Moses and gave His law to the Israelites.
- Jesus delivered His famous Sermon on the Mount on this mountain in Galilee, telling His disciples what life is like in His Kingdom.

And here on a mountain, Jesus meets His eleven disciples.

- There were some there who doubted. And that's understandable isn't it?
- Only 42 verses ago Jesus was hanging on a cross.
- Only 34 verses ago Jesus was dead.
- Only 13 verses ago Jesus was supposed to be buried in a tomb.
- Now here He is, alive, and with His disciples.

¹ Inspiration for sermon came from The Trellis and the Vine by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne

² Richard Coekin, London Men's Convention 2008

³ Ezekiel 28:13-14

But they all worship Him.

- Because this is the right response to the Risen Lord Jesus.

There is a legendary story told about a time when Lord Hailsham was walking through the House of Commons in his robes.

- In one of the corridors blocking his path was a group of American tourists.
- In the distance Lord Hailsham saw Neil Kinnock, at the time the leader of the opposition.
- And he shouted to his friend “Neil! Neil!” to which all the American tourists obediently fell to their knees.⁴

Kneeling, bowing, falling down and worshipping are how we should respond to Jesus.

- When the Magi saw Jesus they bowed down and worshipped Him.⁵
- And here the disciples do the same.
- They recognise who Jesus is. That He is who He says He is.
- The one who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth.
- Jesus is the son of man in Daniel 7 who receives all authority, glory and sovereign power.⁶
- Abraham Kuyper famously said: *“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”*⁷
- Jesus is Lord everywhere. There is no part of the world that does not belong to Him. From the slums in Nairobi, to high rise towers in New York.
- Jesus is Lord over everyone. Everyone in this world must bow the knee to King Jesus.
- Jesus is Lord over every event. Nothing is happening in this world right now that He isn’t Lord over.
- Jesus gives every authority that people have and holds them responsible for using it for the glory of God.

So this is the scene.

- Jesus the Risen King, the one with all authority, is on the mountain in Galilee, with His disciples who have come to worship Him.
- And as they are worshipping Him, He gives them a command.
- We see this happen a few verses earlier.
- Mary and Mary Magdalene go to the tomb only to discover that the body has gone and in its place is an angel telling them that Jesus has risen and to go and tell the disciples.
- Then in Matthew 28:8-10 we read:

READ MATTHEW 28:8-10

- *“So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.*
- *Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him.*
- *Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.””*

The women worship Jesus and He gives them a command to go and tell the disciples to go to Galilee.

- As they worship Him, He tells them to go.
- And here on the mountain as the eleven disciple’s worship Him, Jesus says to them, go and make disciples of all nations.
- Being a disciple maker is how they are to respond in obedience to Risen Lord Jesus.

And we know that they obeyed Jesus’ command.

- Not only in fact that the book of Acts records that they did.
- But also that they are disciples of Jesus alive today. We are proof of this.

⁴ <http://www.snopes.com/embarrass/mistaken/kneel.asp>

⁵ Matthew 2:11

⁶ Daniel 7:13-14

⁷ Quote from Kuyper’s inaugural address at the dedication of the Free University

The doubts that any of them had at the time must have disappeared because each of the Eleven gave their lives to the mission of Jesus.

- Peter was crucified upside-down in Rome.
- James, son of Zebedee was beheaded.
- Andrew, Peter's brother, was crucified upon a diagonal cross.
- Philip was crucified.
- Bartholomew was skinned alive and then beheaded.
- Matthew was killed with a halberd.
- Thomas was killed by a spear in India.
- James was beaten to death with a club after being crucified and stoned.
- Judas was crucified.
- Simeon the Zealot was crucified.
- John was the only one to die of natural causes due to old age. But even then he had miraculously survived being boiled in oil and life on the Roman prison island of Patmos.⁸

But why did Jesus leave His disciples on the earth?

- Why didn't He take them to heaven with Him at His ascension?
- Why does He leave them on the earth with this mission of being disciple makers?
- Ultimately it's part of God's plan to have a new heavens and a new earth populated by people of all nations living under the rule of King Jesus by obeying His Word and enjoying the blessing of relationship with Him.

That was why God made the earth in the first place.

- To be full of people who live under His rule and enjoy the blessing of relationship with Him.
- And that's what happened at the start.
- Adam and Eve ruled God's world by obeying His Word, and the earth would have been populated as they obeyed the command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.
- But they rejected God's rule over them by disobeying His Word and they were punished by God.
- Instead of a world being populated by people living under God's rule, it was filled with people who rejected His rule who instead of receiving God's blessing face God's judgment.
- Into this world God appears to one man Abraham and made him an incredible promise that from him would come a new people who trusted God through whom God's blessing would spread to all people.
- But this was only partially fulfilled in Israel.
- God also promised that a King would come who would rule over His people and the one who would bring God's blessing.
- The good kings of Israel like David were hints of what this King would be like, but they weren't the King, because they didn't always live under God's rule. But God promised David that this King would come.

At the start of Matthew's gospel there is a genealogy that links Jesus to Abraham and David.

- Basically saying that Jesus is the King God promised to David and the one who would bring God's blessing to the nations as He promised Abraham.
- Through his death on the cross Jesus brings blessing to world by taking God's judgment on people's sin and giving them His Spirit to enable them to live under His rule by obeying His Word, so that one day they would live in the new heavens and a new earth.
- This blessing is received as people are brought into His Kingdom as they recognise who Jesus is, the one with all authority, and submit to His rule over their lives, trusting that His death will deal with the sin that puts them under God's judgment.

The Eleven disciples on the mountainside in Galilee with Jesus had received this wonderful blessing.

- But Jesus wanted more than just the Eleven from Israel in His Kingdom.

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deaths_of_the_Twelve_Apostles

- He wanted people from all over the world to receive this wonderful blessing.
- So instead of taking back to heaven with Him, He gives them this great commission to be disciple makers.
- To go into the world with the help of the Holy Spirit and announce that Jesus is the King who brings God's blessing to the world by saving people from their sins.
- That the only right response is to repent of your sins, receive His forgiveness and live under His rule now, otherwise when He returns you will be forced to bow the knee and recognise the rightness of His judgment of hell.
- And as they do, God will save people.

This was the mission Jesus gave to the 11 disciples, and it's a mission He gives to every disciple

- Part of being a disciple maker is to teach new disciples to be disciple makers.
- And this mission has been passed down from generation to generation continuing until Jesus returns.

A verse in the hymn 'Facing a Task Unfinished' puts it well.

- *"We bear the torch that flaming fell from the hands of those who gave their lives proclaiming that Jesus died and rose.*
- *Ours is the same commission, the same glad message ours; Fired by the same ambition, to Thee we yield our powers."*

And this is where we join the story.

- As disciples of Christ at the start of the year 2010.
- As a group of disciples who make up Banstead Community Church, a local expression of God's global people.
- What is our number 1 priority this year, individually, and corporately as a church?
- As we come to worship Jesus, what command does He give us and send us out with?
- What does Jesus the one with all authority want us to do?
- How does He want us to serve Him?

READ MATTHEW 28:18-20

- *"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*
- *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*
- *and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Jesus says:

Point 1: Be Disciple-Making Disciples

That's the job, command, commission, purpose He gives us.

- Because that's the way He gets a great multitude of people populating the new heavens and a new earth.
- He uses existing disciples to make more disciples.

A disciple is someone who is trying to be like Jesus.⁹

- For three years Jesus taught and modelled to the Eleven what that means.
- It means believing what He believed. He taught them what to believe about God, life and death, money, marriage, relationships, His death and resurrection, and so on.
- It means behaving the way that He did. How to relate to people, make decisions, pray to God, read the Bible, take up your cross and more.

⁹ Got this phrase from Paul Pease

- The disciples were more like Jesus three years on, than what they were like when they first met Him.
- Now Jesus says go and do in others what I've done in you.
- Ultimately the reason why we are disciples of Christ today is because God has worked in our lives as someone or someone's has done in us what Christ did in his disciples.
- As disciples we are to continue the process.
- And as we do blessing comes to the world as people have their sins forgiven and brought into His Kingdom.

But how do we do we do this?

Jesus says that there are two ways that we do this:

- First way is by "*baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*"
- The second way is by "*teaching them to obey everything [Jesus has] commanded you.*"

Firstly by,

a) Baptising them

This refers to everything that happens from the moment someone is told about Jesus, that He is the King who saves through His death.

- To the point at which they repent of their sins, trust in Jesus, and are baptised.
- We normally refer to this as evangelism or mission.

Making disciples involves telling people the good news about Jesus.

- That through faith in Him there is the hope of sins forgiven and eternal life.
- As God's Spirit works in a person's life, convicting them of their sin and convincing them of the truth of the gospel, He brings them to repentance and faith.
- The public sign that this has happened, that they are now disciples of Christ, is for them to be baptised.

That's what we see happening in Acts 2.

- Peter explains the gospel, the truth that Jesus is the King that they have rejected.
- The crowd asks "What shall we do?"
- Peter says repent. Turn from your sin and live under Jesus' rule.
- And be baptised to demonstrate that this is what you've done.

That's not saying that baptism is necessary for salvation.

- The thief on the cross shows this.
- But because Jesus commands us to be baptised, that's what you should do if you're one of His disciples and haven't been baptised.
- If that's you, there will be an opportunity in a few weeks time for you to obey Jesus' command.

Baptising them or evangelism is basically telling people the best news in the world.

- The good news about Jesus.

We're great evangelists at other things.

- Let me tell you some of things I am great evangelist for.
- The TV show: 24. I can tell you why the exploits of Jack Bauer are worth watching.
- The sport of: Football (especially now we're in this World Cup year).
- The iPhone.
- I am great at telling people how good these things are.
- But the best news in this world. The number one priority of a disciple. Telling people how their greatest need can be met. ???

There's a video on YouTube where the atheist illusionist Penn Jillette talks about how Christians who don't evangelise must really hate people.

- Here's some of what he said:
- *"I've always said, ..., that I don't respect people who do not proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe there's a heaven and hell, and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think that, ..., it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward..."*
- *How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize them? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? I mean, if I believed beyond the shadow of a doubt that a truck was coming to hit you, and you didn't believe it, and that truck was bearing down on you, there's a certain point where I tackle you.*
- *And this is more important than that.*¹⁰

The apostle Paul writes:

READ ROMANS 10:13-15

- *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*
- *How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*
- *And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

We make disciples by telling people the gospel, praying that God will bring them to repentance and faith shown as they step forward to be baptised.

Secondly by,

b) Teaching them

Once someone has become a Christian, the disciple making process is not over.

- They need to be taught to obey everything that Jesus taught His original disciples which includes going and making more disciples.
- Being a disciple is not making a one-off decision. It's a life following Jesus the King by obeying His rule in every area of your life.
- This is stage that every disciple is in from the moment they become a disciple to time Jesus takes them to be with Him.
- So this is the stage many of us are in this morning. We need to be taught to obey everything Jesus has commanded so that we think and live as Jesus did.
- The apostle Paul describes this as a process of putting on and putting off.

READ EPHESIANS 4:22-24

- *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;*
- *to be made new in the attitude of your minds;*
- *and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."*

As the Holy Spirit works in our lives, applying God's Word as it is taught, we put off our old self.

- The way we lived before we became a Christian.
- And the amount that we need to put off will be different from person to person.
- It often takes time to lose the old habits and attitudes you had.

¹⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owZc3Xq8obk>

- And as we put off the old way of life we put on the attitudes and actions of Jesus.
- We become more mature as Christians.

So baptising them and teaching them.

- That's what we are to do.
- We need to be passionate about seeing people become Christians.
- But also Christians maturing in the faith and their lives changed more and more as they obey what Jesus has commanded.
- We need to be committed to both these things. Both evangelism and teaching people to obey Jesus.
- Some of you will be gifted more in one area than the other.
- Some will be passionate about one area than the other.
- You may not spend an equal time on both, but you need to be doing both.

Well, before I move on to look at how practically to be a disciple making disciple, let me make two more comments about this commission Jesus gives us:

Firstly,

i) Its inclusive

It's a mission that includes everyone.

- It's for all people whether they are disciples are not. There is something for everyone.
- It's for all nations. All the people and languages of the world, as far as the curse of sin is found. God's promise to Abraham was that all the people of the world would be blessed. The Kingship of Jesus is to be proclaimed all over the world.
- It's for all generations. The mission is to the very end of the age. That means it's for the next generation, so our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren need to be told the gospel and taught to obey Jesus.

Secondly,

ii) It includes a promise

READ MATTHEW 28:20

- *"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Jesus promises that as we make disciples, He will be with us.

- It's a promise of His presence.
- No matter where you go, I will be with you.
- As we serve Jesus we are not alone.
- Jesus may have returned to the right hand of God the Father in heaven, but He has not left us alone.
- He's sent the Holy Spirit, so He could be with us wherever we are.

So our purpose our mission is to be disciple-making disciples. But practically how do we do this? What does baptising them and teaching them look like in practice?

We are to be disciple-making disciples...

Point 2: By Prayerfully Speaking God's Word

That is practically how disciples are made.

- Praying because we need God to work by His Spirit in people's lives. Either enabling them to see the truth of the gospel and their need to repent and trust in Jesus or that they would be more and more obedient to Jesus' teaching.
- Speaking because change happens as the Holy Spirit applies God's Word to people's hearts.

Now there are a number of different ways and contexts in which we can prayerfully speak God's Word to the nations (remembering that this is a global commission).

- There is still a need for pioneer missionaries, people to give their lives for an unreached people group. To learn the language and culture, get alongside the people, and speak the gospel praying that God will bring salvation to them.
- Or for other to go overseas and bolster existing missionary work that is already happening.
- But for most of us, the nations are our families, friends, workplaces, schools, communities and church.
- They are the places where we can prayerfully speak God's Word.

Let's just think about them for a moment, using the headings 'home' 'church' and 'community' (which includes workplace, schools and so on).

Firstly, how can we prayerfully speak God's Word in the home?

a) Home

Probably the most obvious way is by teaching our children the Bible and praying with them.

- Ephesians 6:4 says *"Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."*
- Psalm 78:4: *"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done."*
- Another way is by reading the Bible and praying with your husband or wife.

What about in the church?

b) Church

There are lots of ways:

- For some as they preach and teach (Ephesians 4:11-12).
- But for all of us.
- As we speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:25).
- As we teach, instruct and admonish one another (Colossians 3:16, Romans 15:14).
- As we singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)
- As we urge and encourage each other to stick with Christ (Hebrews 3:12-13, 10:24-25).

And then in the community:

c) Community

Some of you may have the gift of being an evangelist (Ephesians 4:11).

- But there are other ways of sharing the gospel.
- Through our conversations (Colossians 4:5-6)
- As we tell people how wonderful God in Christ is (1 Peter 2:9).
- As we answer people's questions about the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15-16).

There are lots of different ways and situations in which we can prayerfully speak God's Word to people.

- More than I can list. There's also the part our giving, praying and actions play in disciple making too.

- But let's begin by taking time to think through how we can prayerfully speak God's Word, and who the people we can speak to are.
- This is a ministry we can all and should all be involved in if we are disciples of Christ.
- Jesus commands us to be disciple makers. Are you and I obeying Him?

The mission Jesus wants us to get stuck into as individuals and as a church is one that makes disciples of all nations.

- As the one with all-authority He commands us each to submit to His rule by doing so, but promises to be with us as we do.
- So let's get involved out of love and obedience by prayerfully speaking God's Word to those who know Jesus and those who don't.
- Trusting that one day He will return to gather all His disciples, people from all nations all who have willingly bowed the knee to King Jesus, to live with Him and enjoy the blessings of the new heavens and a new earth.

This year let's be disciple-making disciples by prayerfully speaking God's Word.