

Making disciples

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[0 : 0 0] Amen. Amen. All greetings to each of you this morning and blessings.! Thank you, Brother Joe, for what you shared.

! The Christmas story and also the admonition.!

Yeah, a blessing to be here this morning. God is good. He is Lord. He is King. Something that Brother James said last Sunday that keeps ringing to me is, I forget the exact words, but that we didn't make baby Jesus a King or something in that, but rather that the King was, the King became a baby.

We didn't make Him the King. He was the King. Always, the meaning behind that is He always was King, wasn't He? He still is today. Okay. I'd like to turn maybe to Matthew chapter 28.

And just, yeah, I want to reflect a little bit too on God's commission to us, His plan for us, His plan for salvation, coming as a baby.

[1 : 4 2] That scripture that was read, how that in Luke 2, For unto us is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

You will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Just some thoughts here about all this. When Jesus came into the world, He did not arrive as people expected a King to arrive.

The promise of a King, the promise of a Savior was for generations. And they knew that. God's people knew that. They were watching for that. But He didn't come in a palace.

There was no crown. There was no army. Instead, the King of Heaven came as a baby, laid in a manger, surrounded by animals, and visited by shepherds, first by shepherds.

But this was not weakness. It was love. Jesus showed us that God is not distant. He came close. The hands that created the universe were small enough to be held.

[2 : 5 6] The King who rules forever chose humility so that everyone, rich or poor, young or old, could come to Him. Jesus was a King from the moment He was born.

But His kingdom was different. He was also King before He was born, like we said. But His kingdom was different. He rules with grace. He conquers with love.

He invites us to follow Him not by force, but by faith. If you've tried following Jesus by force, you've discovered that it doesn't really work.

But when you have faith in your heart, it works. They did not make baby Jesus king, but the king became a baby, like we started with.

There's that statement. And when we think of all the things that Jesus did in His ministry and His, you know, from what, about 30 years old, I believe, He started His ministry and then was crucified, I believe, at 33.

[4 : 1 2] Am I right about those numbers? And if you think about all that and what He did and what He taught, we can think of the Sermon on the Mount.

His teachings, many other profound teachings, His example, His love towards sinners, His rebuke to the unholy religious leaders.

They often rebuke them. They often challenge them because they thought they were right. They thought they knew more than God in essence.

and I'm just kind of going through, you know, from baby to when He left the earth and then we'll get into the rest of the message.

But just to stretch maybe our memory, our thoughts about who Jesus was, what He did here on earth. I have to think of the lady that was speaking of the religious leaders and then His love towards sinners.

[5 : 18] My mind goes to the woman caught in adultery and how they brought her in front of Him and how He didn't condemn her either.

but He told her to stop sinning. I believe blessed her and she became a disciple of Jesus, a follower of Christ.

All those things that Jesus did and I think about all the New Testament, the teachings, the doctrine of Christ and then I want to talk about how He gave us a commission.

that's where I want to end with mostly is what He has committed to us, His people, His followers. Why do we call it the Great Commission there in Matthew 28?

Need a little bit more light up here maybe. Oh, I guess they are. Why do we call it the Great Commission? They are in Matthew 28.

[6 : 37] I have that verse here. Starting in 16, Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him. But some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. And we call it the Great Commission because it comes from the greatest authority.

There is no greater authority than Jesus Christ. In fact, He says, All power, that word power in the King James simply means all authority is given to me in heaven and on earth.

[7 : 59] That's everywhere. All authority. That's the King that we serve. That's why it's a great commission. It's not great because of what we do or something that we make great.

It's because the commission comes from the one that is in all authority. and unless we understand that, I don't think we can fulfill the Great Commission.

Unless we understand that we are under His authority and that He is all power and all authority and He is the King of Kings, then fulfilling this calling is impossible over heaven, over earth, over life, over death.

He has authority over everything, over time, over eternity. This mission is backed by the full authority of God Himself.

It is great because Jesus reigns as King. The message of the Gospel, it saves, it changes lives for eternity.

[9 : 18] eternity. What is the scope of this commission? It's all nations, every race and all people. No one is excluded in the human race in this commission.

It's for the whole world. What's the method of this commission? the method is discipleship, teaching all what Jesus has taught and to obey Him.

What is the promise that we find in these verses? The promise is Christ's presence. He will never leave us. He will never leave us.

I am with you all even until the end of the world. And here's a thought too. You know, He was saying this to the eleven disciples but He said He won't leave them until the end of the world so who is He really talking about?

Who is He, I mean, who is this for? Was it just for the eleven? I think we know the answer to that. that God's heart, His heart in this commission is that it continues on.

[10 : 42] It multiplies. It grows. It keeps going. It's all the way down to you and me. If this commission would have stopped a hundred years ago, where would you and I be today?

Think of that. If the preaching of the word would have quit. If people wouldn't have reached out to people and those people to other people and finally even me.

God reached my heart through people. The result, the end result of the commission is that eternal lives are changed and Christ is glorified and He reaps the reward of His suffering.

We read about that in the Bible. That the Lamb of God reaps the reward of His suffering. and again, the great commission is not great because it is easy.

It is great because Jesus is great. And He invites us to join Him in the greatest work on earth.

[11 : 58] You know, we could, this thing of discipleship, we could talk about it as in different terms even. we could use ministry, ministering to other people or we could say evangelism, we could say teaching or other gifts in the body of Christ.

But I'm primarily looking at discipleship today. I want to read these same verses in the Amplified again in verse 16.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated and when they saw Him they worshipped Him but some doubted that it was really He.

Jesus came up and said to them all authority all power of absolute rule in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

we need to proclaim that to those that don't believe Jesus was God. Verse 19 Go therefore and make that word therefore because of this because I have all authority on earth and in heaven go then and make disciples of all nations help the people to learn of me to believe in me and to obey my words baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you and lo I am with you always the Amplified says that I am with you always remaining with you perpetually regardless of circumstances and on every occasion even to the end of the age

[13 : 59] I just like the way that the amplified it a little bit every believer is commanded by Jesus to make disciples who obey him and help others do the same you know it's already difficult but can you imagine if we wouldn't have a king that is the head of the church the one that is in full authority you know we're not just called to make converts or church members a disciple is a follower a learner!

and an imitator I was going to look that up in Luke 9 verse 23 but it talks about denying self and take up our cross follow daily grace saves us but discipleship shapes us we're saved by grace but we learn more we learn Christ more by becoming a learner and I want to talk about that today too about how we're not just here to make other disciples but we're here to be one right we're here to be a disciple in fact I think I have this later on but without being one you can't make one without us me personally being a disciple of Christ a learner!

that the other day I had a I was about an hour and a half with somebody a man out of town and I remember thinking soon into the conversation I should probably witness to him about Christ and now I still don't know for sure that I should have or shouldn't have but I did not feel peace to even bring Christ into the picture because he was so full of himself and he talked nonstop and I just had this feeling he doesn't want to learn anything he knows everything and I never said a word about God or anything which in a conversation that long should be unusual for us but in that case I guess point that out to you know he's not a disciple and I don't think he wants to be maybe someday I'll hopefully meet him again and I thought about that that maybe I'll have to give him some little shock value of how full he is of himself there's no room for

God you know but you meet people like that there's probably because of an emptiness in their heart they're just so full of themselves and talk and talk and talk about themselves and forget that you're even a person that might have a story as well so I don't think we should you know you can't waste time on people like that as far as trying to make them a disciple but hopefully we can throw some seeds out there that take root that grow that maybe could make you know give them some salt salt makes them hungry or thirsty supposedly that so how do we how do we do this making disciples and before I forget you know this is not something for

I'm not preaching to church leadership today I am to myself to James but any believer is to be a disciple and any disciple is to make disciples so it's I believe that I believe that God when he chose you when he calls you to be a follower of Christ he doesn't want it to end there he doesn't want it to end there and it starts I believe primarily if we have families it starts with our children in our homes many godly evangelists preachers of our past that have made huge impacts in the world in the kingdom were taught and become disciples on their mother's lap they were taught the things of God to fear

[18 : 54] God to trust God all the things that you know that's often their story is I learned it from my mother maybe my father too but I just wanted to throw that out there that if you think that oh you don't really this is kind of not for you I believe every person we either have a brother we have a sister we have a mom or a dad or we have somebody that we can be ministering to and I believe that we need to according to scripture allow that living water that is put in us that is supposed to flow out like a river is supposed to touch other people's lives it's not just for our own benefit I want to look at a few things and why I don't do more of that why I don't do more denying self taking up the cross following him daily being being intentional this isn't my note here but being intentional where life happens baptism is a public identification and obedience something done publicly teaching to obey transformation not just giving somebody information but the goal is transformation biblical teaching always leads to teaching obedience to the

Bible to the word of God wherever God has put you in life wherever God has put us in life you know and life has its seasons to to be to be to be married usually and then children and then the children grow up and then they have children and you know we're going through seasons in life and wherever God has us right now how can we minister are we ministering to others are we reaching out teaching our children to follow Christ teaching them that he alone is king I believe we do that right in our homes we teach that in our homes in the church I believe our children know already at a very young age that Jesus wasn't just a baby he's also the one that's coming back one day he's the one we serve the one we pray to what a blessing to be able to teach that freely in our in our homes the goal for

Christ I believe for God is that that he is glorified Jesus said in John 15 verse 8 here in is my father glorified that ye bear much fruit so shall ye be my disciples God is glorified by fruit he wants to see fruit and he wants to see much fruit he wants to see a Christ like character he wants to see other disciples after us I was thinking about that this morning how some of the people some of the men in my past some of them 30 years ago how they reached out to me when I was in a dark place and how they not only just loved me or ministered to me but they also cared enough to teach me things they talked to me they wouldn't have had that they could have said well forget him he's no good which

I wasn't but they cared men that cared and if me following Christ in a sense not to give them honor or whatever but in a sense though maybe I was their fruit maybe I was one of the fruits that came out of their lives their willingness to reach out spiritual maturity is measured by fruitfulness it is what God is looking for and this thing of reaching out is just one aspect of that there's fruit in our lives in many other ways too but in our own development our own spiritual maturity but reaching out to others is one of the fruits I believe and

God is looking for that multiplication you know you have these network marketing companies right it's always interesting to me how they promote that and how they teach the power in numbers and how that you know you sign up two people and then they each sign up two people and by about the seventh level there's thousands well the idea I'm not saying it should be in marketing but the idea of that didn't start with probably didn't start with making money the idea is the gospel if God saves you you share that you you communicate that you you reach out you're a vessel you become a vessel and through being a vessel you reach others and those others reach others and it just keeps multiplying

[25 : 08] I mean how do we think in the early church how people were added quickly and many thousands were added to the church and I believe it was by the testimony of the people obviously also the preaching of the word but multiplying what a difference it can make by bringing one soul to Christ or even just taking a soul that is with Christ to encourage that individual you know it's not always about reaching a non believer sometimes it's just inspiring a believer maybe it's a brother that's down and discouraged and he's not a vessel he's on the verge of he's on the fence like we talked about a week or two ago and not sure which way to go with the Lord I believe

God wants us to make a difference in people's lives whether they're saved or not Christ promised to be with us some questions in this thing of discipleship who am I discipling and maybe more importantly who is discipling me who speaks into my life and shows me new truth and I know we read the word of God we study it and that alone is being a disciple as well but I believe that God wants to use us to disciple each other what step of obedience is God calling me to take I believe that the church grows strongest when disciples make other disciples you could just use the word learner you know somebody that learned somebody that's here teachable would be another word being teachable it's not possible to be a disciple of

Christ without being teachable is it like that man that just knows everything he's going to have to come to a place where he doesn't know what he's talking about my ancestors 30,000 years ago he's talked so fast I couldn't even mention 6,000 years but being teachable is a requirement for being a disciple there are reasons that believers do not disciple others like I mentioned earlier one of that and I believe that probably the number one reason is that we are not willing to be a disciple ourselves are we truly committed to follow Christ deny ourselves and walk in true obedience to him not allowing the negative influences to guide us but the word of

God to guide us in true obedience people are often just not really to be and I'm right there with everyone else whereas I'm just not really willing to be wrong or told and therefore it's very hard to make disciples another reason that this goes right with the first one is just it might be proud what if it doesn't work out with this first one what if it doesn't work out with this person maybe somebody is truly open and in need and we have an opportunity and we'd like to but we're kind of like this with them because what if what if it doesn't work out and I look like a failure but keeping on and trying to disciple someone that is not willing to deny self is a waste of time

I'll just be real blunt about that I don't know and only God can give us that wisdom to know when should we and when should we when is this just a waste of time not that the person is a waste but your time is wasting does that make sense if there's no openness no willingness to deny self and you think well that's just John talking but Jesus was our example of that I believe with the rich young ruler he answered his questions he told him what it takes but he didn't want it and I've often thought about how maybe Christians today we run after people that Jesus just let them go it's like that's his decision he went away sorrowful his wealth was too great too much he's not going to surrender he just yeah he wanted eternal life

[31 : 10] I believe he did he came and asked but when he saw the cost he said no I can't do that and Jesus did not run after him in fact he spoke he used it as an example for rich people so that's why I say the statement you know for those that are not wanting it you don't waste your time there's too many people that are indeed hungry in this world there are times we just need to let go and pray that God will show them doesn't mean we don't pray for them that God will show them the error of their way but time is precious we are called to redeem the time and we need God's wisdom and direction in this doesn't mean we give up forever on people it just means I believe that we are acknowledging that they're not there at this time and you

I put this note in here this morning we learn this very quickly when we go to prison the ones that think they know everything and have no need are next impossible to minister to you might as well go to the next dorm quickly you don't have much time usually in those dorms you know sometimes it's just minutes and if somebody is just closed you might as well yeah you can tell if there's a hunger there or a thirst sometimes we in making disciples this can be family members it can be just whoever somebody you love and you have tried to help but you get rejected when you try to help people find their way sometimes we get hurt think of

Jesus though his own received him not the Bible says so don't let that stop us just because it didn't work out once and you got rejected or hurt we need to come back to the reality that it's Christ's kingdom it's his authority that we're working under not ours it's his ministry and we don't go by our own feelings so let's go on let's keep going there are more people that are open and need to be saved there are more people that need to be discipled and all the authority is in

Jesus he will never leave us never forsake us and in the end it'll be worth it all if we have children you have a golden opportunity to make disciples for Christ soldiers for his kingdom are you not glad this morning that discipling people reaching people the lost did not stop 100 years ago or 50 years or 20 years ago I'm very glad that the church was still ministering 30 years ago the people in my past that cared for me are we talking to somebody are we at least willing to talk to somebody you know like I said not everybody wants to be talked to but are we willing that's the question can

God use me maybe it's just encouraging one another Sunday mornings and bringing courage and hope to our own hearts am I a vessel for that to inspire brother Merlin so when he goes on a trip he is able to be encouraged you know I'm just thinking of you being on a trip but as we go out and we meet people and communicate with people and so on I believe that we as a church need to be encouraged in this I don't know why for sure but I know I need it and sometimes I know we have done that and maybe it feels like rejection but let's go on let's keep going brother Mike I think of you your family let's keep on going let's never quit because we have a king to serve and he has all the authority it's his kingdom and let it not stop with us well he saved me now it's

[36 : 57] I'm making it to heaven but I have nobody to reach we all have neighbors or somebody so this season let's be thinking about that how can I reach somebody let's pray together father we just thank you for your words thank you lord for that simple commission that you gave to your church and yet god we find it so hard to to walk in that and to fulfill that so often we go by our own feelings and failures lord i pray that you would forgive us and lord that you would help us to be exactly what you want us to be yes to be an example but also to talk with people so many people today in this age are not even talking to each other and and we need to talk we need to communicate your love your mercy your grace your plan your purposes your word lord just help us each one of us to have a vision for that and to be able and willing to be a vessel in your hands lord just we thank you for salvation thank you that that there was somebody in our life in the past that has reached out to us in our time of need and may we do the same we pray in jesus name amen you

Thank you.