

Of All Nations: Part 1

**The Mission: Make Disciples**

Matthew 28.18-20

Introduction

You guys know how the internet is awesome right? One of my favorite things online are the “YOU HAD ONE JOB” memes. You know the images people post where the idea is that there was a very simple, singular task someone needed to do and they got it wrong. For Example...

The DOT needs to Paint SCHOOL on the road by the School. One word and the guy on the job does this:



Or the Target Employee who needed to put up the signs that tell people which doors to enter.



Or The T-Shirt Designer who must have failed 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Geography



Or the grocery store employee who was supposed to put price stickers on the new inventory...



I could do this all day. It happens right. That's what makes it so funny because there was just one simple, clear task...and somebody got distracted from it and because of that they ended up doing SOMETHING but not the ONE THING they were supposed to do.

I share that with you because today we are going to talk about the ONE thing the church has to do well. If we miss this, then everything else we do is pointless.

The one thing the church is supposed to do is make disciples of Jesus Christ. We can do lots of things. God willing we'll land a great building, we'll build great kids and students ministries, great college ministries, I will try and preach great sermons, our community groups will flourish...but if we don't make disciples then we fail. Period. That's our one job.

Over the next three weeks we are going to talk about this one task. We are going to talk about as a mission. Because that's what it is. God's mission, his marching orders to the church...is to make disciples. I want to show you God's calling on your life to make disciples and how you can get started.

**Big Idea: To be a Christian is to be a disciple maker. You have one job.**

First let me walk you through a passage that will be familiar to some of you. I realized this week that I never preached on this passage. So, I'm gonna preach a lil bit on it today. Matthew 28:18-20. Now a warning if you know about this particular passage. I managed to hear this passage multiple times and it wasn't until college, after I'd heard it explained at least 15 times, that it became personal to me. That's what I'm hoping today. For some today will be an awareness moment to what God calls you to. For many, your step is not agreeing with what you hear today but making a decisive choice to respond to it.

Ok v.18

[18] And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

Jesus is talking to his disciples and before he gives them their orders, he reminds them who the one is giving the orders. "All authority" is pretty much all encompassing isn't it. He's making it very plain to them that it will be *his* authority and even *his* presence that will bring about the success of the mission he is calling them to. In fact, over in Luke to make it clear that they had no power to make disciples on their own...he told them that after he went away their first task was to wait. That's Luke 24.49. Your first task when I leave...go sit in a room and wait on the Holy Spirit. When he comes, THEN you'll be able to get started. In other words, I'm telling you what to do, and even though its just ONE JOB, wait til I get there to do it. Because I'm going to be the one to really do it. After all you don't have authority, I do. But listen, I'll do it through you.

See this is the first and most important truth someone has to understand to be a disciple of Jesus. And it's a beautiful truth

**A disciple submits his/her life to the authority *and* power of Jesus.**

Here's why this is so beautiful: a lot of Christians know in their head that they *should* submit themselves to the *authority* of Jesus. After all he does present himself in scripture as your king. And I know you are being raised in a democracy but Jesus isn't your eternal president, he's your eternal KING. Which means he says what to do and you obey.

You can't treat Jesus like he's your favorite advice giver that you get counsel from but then YOU make the call on what to do with his advice. NOPE. He's your king. You don't consider what the king says, you obey it. Period. And for non-Christians listen to me this is probably the hardest part about becoming a Christian and we want to be upfront with you about that.

Becoming a Christian means stepping down off of the throne of your life and allowing Jesus to sit down in it. And from that seat he directs everything. And listen there are plenty of people who've been around church for a long time but you've never taken that step to let Jesus on the throne. You've kind of scooted over a little like come on Jesus squeeze in here. That don't work. Nobody more miserable than half-way-in Christians. Its all or nothing. You can't squeeze Jesus in. He won't take it.

But ok listen I feel like many of us do submit to his authority and we WANT to fulfill his mission yet we forget about the POWER that comes with his authority. And we forget that his power is with us, we feel the weight of doing the ONE JOB Jesus gave us ALL BY ourselves. AND we THINK....I CAN'T DO IT!

And Jesus says...OF COURSE YOU CAN'T!

And there is great freedom and empowerment in knowing I'm just the messenger. The one with the power, let me tell you about him. And whatever you do with it, that's between you and him. This is why someone who has been a Christian for 5 minutes can share the gospel without fear. Cause I don't care how many classes you take, or degrees you get, the power to transform lives doesn't belong to you. It belongs to your king.

Ok that sets us up for the next sentence. The next sentence contains YOUR marching orders from your king. So whatever comes out of his mouth next, you either obey or disobey.

[19] Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (ESV)

Here it is. I’m going to come back to the “of all nations” but first we gotta figure out the task we are to do among all nations. This passage has been taught many times and some of you have been in church long enough in your life to know about this. So the question is...what is the imperative command here? In the greek the words “go” “baptize” and “teach” are participles. Which mean they derive their force from the one command, the one verb: “Make Disciples.” Which means as you are going along, teaching and baptizing are only good in so far as they lead to the end of making disciples.

Robert Coleman. A big part of what I’m doing today is introducing you to something he said in 1962 when he wrote his classic book called *Master Plan of Evangelism*.

“The great commission is not merely to go to the ends of the earth preaching the gospel, nor to baptize a lot of converts into the Name of the Triune God, nor to teach them the precepts of Christ, but to ‘make disciples’—to build men like themselves who were so constrained by the commission of Christ that they not only followed Jesus themselves, but led others to follow him, too. The criteria upon which any church should measure its success is not how many new names are added to the roll nor how much the budget is increased, but rather how many Christians are actively winning souls and training them to win the multitudes.”

Coleman is just clarifying the win Jesus laid out right here in Matthew 28. What does this mean for Mercy Church? Well it means a lot but one thing that it clarifies is what we need to celebrate as a church. The primary thing...the aim and focus of our ministries and the aim and focus of our celebration should be on how many disciples we make.

Yes, attendance increase is a good thing! ONLY IF it means more people are being introduced to and connected to the disciple making efforts of Mercy Church. Baptism...WE love celebrating Baptism...But we are foolish if we only care about someone’s conversion and not their discipleship. Jesus didn’t say Baptizing them and...nothing else. He said Baptizing them and...teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you.

- Did you know the word “Christian” only appears in the Bible 3 times? Yet the word “disciple” appears 281 times in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>
- That means we are fools to celebrate conversion MORE than discipleship. Let’s say your friend ran a 5k and asked you to come support. Say they ran in the rabies awareness fun run race for the cure 5k. Would you cheer more for them starting the race or finishing the race? FINISHING of course.

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<sup>1</sup> Robby Gallaty, Grow Up, 20.

- Which means it might be an indictment on us not because we celebrate conversion. We should continue to do all we do there and more! It's a big deal to start the race. But, are we celebrating discipleship or conversion more? You see, what it means to become a Christian is to trust in Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. That's conversion. But a true conversion leads to lifelong discipleship, which means you go on to pursue Jesus for the rest of your life and do all that he has commanded. I'm not against counting numbers, Mercy. I just want to make sure we are counting the right ones<sup>2</sup>

So let me make point #2 as clear as I can:

## **2. God calls every disciple to make disciples, and that means you.**

You may read the verse and think...no its just the apostles. Nope. 2 reasons: First, if they teach others all that Jesus taught them, then that will include Jesus' teaching about teaching others. In other words, you haven't made a disciple unless said disciple is also making a disciple.

[2] and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2

On top of that, Jesus says he is with them to the end of the age. Yet the original disciples were all dead by the end of the first century. The age hasn't ended. So who is Jesus "with" now? DISCIPLES! Right...we Christians who claim to be his followers!

And what is our commission? MAKE DISCIPLES!

That's our ONE JOB. YOUR ONE JOB. Make disciples. A disciple is a follower of Jesus who is always being changed by Jesus while on mission with Jesus. We are going to talk more about the practical aspect of this calling in a little while.

Before we do though we gotta see one very important clarification he makes to the calling. We are to make disciples...OF. All. Nations. That's big. It's the only clarifier to our task. Make disciples **of all nations**. So let's talk about that.

## **3. God sends the church to make disciples of all nations, so we gotta go.**

The call to make disciples is global. God's desire is that all people, no matter what people group they belong to, worship him. He's been saying it since early on in Genesis. Genesis 12 God says to Abraham ALL of the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. Psalm 67 – let the nations be glad and sing for joy! Ps 117 – let all the peoples praise you. Isaiah 52 the suffering servant will bring many nations to God. The story of scripture and the story of human history is God bringing people back to himself. And here's the thing: he allows us to get in on it. To get in

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<sup>2</sup> Got this wording from J.D. Greear's sermon "Start pt 4: Making Disciples."

on people coming to hear the gospel for the first time and believing and having their lives transformed.

In fact, in his providence he has designed salvation to be the fruit of one person sharing the gospel with another person. One people group passing the gospel along to another people group. This is Romans 10.

[17] So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

This is why Paul looks at the church in Rome who is living in the cultural epicenter of the known world and says listen guys...there are people groups across the world who don't know the gospel. They are dying and going to hell apart from Jesus. And God has commissioned us AND empowered us to take the gospel to them. To make disciples of all nations. SO

[14] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" Romans 10:14–15

MERCY, This is why we get involved in overseas church planting work. This is why every Sunday we tell you that you are Sent. Because you really are sent! And unless Christians go preach the gospel they won't hear it! It's why we embedded church planting in unreached people groups into our church culture from Day 1.

Because there are SO many people groups who just don't have access to the gospel & God has commissioned US to take it to them. Give you a couple examples:

- India. We are working with a church planter there who has told us that the only thing they are missing is more people to help them share. They keep reaching people but need more to help. Here's why: In their province, their state, they have as many people as TX and CA combined. 85 million people. And right now that state is .03% Christian. People in CA, TX, and the rest of the U.S....they are dying and going to hell out of defiance to the gospel. BUT, the vast majority of people in this state in India are dying and going to hell because of ignorance to the gospel. And our church planters there – good friends of mine – here's what they say: Man we just need people. We keep sharing & people keep coming to faith. We just need more people.
- Middle East: Country we've been working with for 2 years and are finally starting to make inroads in one little community. But the COUNTRY is 1.4% Christian.
- NYC: Right here at home. Our missions pastor John Hellams told me this amazing stat this week: If all the people from unreached people groups living in metro New York were counted and were considered a city, they would form the second largest city in the United States, with a population of more than four million. RIGHT HERE.

Where this got personal to me: Aaron. Chinese student who had never heard it. Led him to faith. He said spence, you gotta come back and tell everyone. Nobody knows this. I taught him to share, but the next week I was in the mountains of Mongolia where nobody knew. And they are, according to scripture, without hope. Eternally lost.

Jesus looked at the situation with so many lost around him and he turned to his disciples and said

[37] ... "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; [38] therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Matthew 9:37–38

listen to me: Missions...by that I mean taking the gospel to people who haven't heard it...that's not a church program you opt into. It is a direct command from God. And we gotta go. And we gotta go now. 3.15 billion people in the world who don't know Christ. 6,989 people groups. Our church can't reach all of them. But we believe God has given us a couple of places where we have relationships with Christians on the ground that we can go help. We gotta go.

I believe most people in this room have heard some version of this. So let me take a moment and address what I hope will be an obvious question at this point:

### **WHAT KEEPS US FROM MAKING DISCIPLES?**

If this calling is so obvious and so urgent, why are so few of us engaged in this mission in a meaningful way? We nod our heads in agreement but our feet stay in place. Why don't we go? Two reasons:

#### **We are distracted by false loves**

God Loves People. People that he made in his image. All people. He loves them. From the moment sin entered the world he's been out to rescue and redeem people. The bible from beginning to end is the story of a father's love for his lost children driving him to do whatever it takes to bring them back home. God loves you. That's how the gospel message begins. He loves you. And his love for you is the true love that you were created to be fulfilled with. But you ran away from it and started chasing false loves. You are craving love but nothing has satisfied you.

"What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself"<sup>3</sup>

The gospel says that love has been sent by God in the form of Jesus! You can finally grab hold of the love, the soul filling, peace giving satisfaction you've been seeking. Have you ever done that? Given Christ your life? For the proud, it is hard because you have to admit you need him. But only then can you be truly made whole.

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<sup>3</sup> Blaise Pascal, Pascal's Penses, 148/428.

And when you do that, God comes in and renovates your heart. Your love of those old things will, in time, start to fade. And new love will start to emerge. You will start to love what God loves. And guess what God loves? People. That saving work he did in you he wants to do in others. And he wants to do it through you. So you will start to become more generous, kind, patient...because all those character traits are visible in how you interact with...you guessed it...people. God loves people.

So Christian: Where is your love out of step with God's love right now? If you haven't told others about God's love...your first step is to go back to his love for you. He loves you. John 15.9 – abide in me and you will bear much fruit. If you are struggling to get off the sidelines and make disciples, lean back into the father's love for you and sit there.

Cold feet in God's mission are usually the symptom of a cold heart towards God's love. Don't move the feet before you allow the Lord to warm your heart again.

### **We are immobilized by false fears**

Some of us, and this is often me, are waaaaay more concerned with how PEOPLE will view us than we are with how God already views us. Like if we are being honest. Let's take me for example:

This week I chickened out sharing the gospel with this guy. I had the moment and I thought...man I'm going to see this guy regularly I don't want to make things weird. Then I started preparing this sermon. Which is always killer for me. And I realized...I feared this guy's approval of me more than I feared him spending eternity apart from God. I cared about my image more than his soul. And I repented before God and that dude better watch out next time I see him. I'm coming in hot.

Some of you are afraid of making disciples of younger Christians. Courtney and I are realizing we now need to serve in many ways as Spiritual Parents to younger Christians and that's scary. We've got incredible men and women in their 40s, 50s, & 60s who've been walking with Jesus for a while and guess what...you need to make disciples! Titus 2 – and you are scared to do it because you think you don't know anything. YOU KNOW JESUS! And HE has the power to change people. Not you! Some of you won't lead community groups because you don't feel like you know enough. YOU'LL NEVER KNOW ENOUGH to affect life change. But you are called by God to make disciples so step out and give it a shot! Trust that God will use you! Our biggest space issue right now is not on Sunday AM, its in our groups. Come down here after service and tell Scott Urbanek you want to serve.

What are you afraid of when it comes to being on God's mission to make disciples? Afraid you will fail? Afraid others will ostracize you? You are missing out on God's incredible saving power and who cares what people think. Sad reality that dates all the way back to the Old testament: **The cowardly people of God are always the biggest obstacle to the mission of God.** It's true of me too. Trust Him!

### **Where do we start?**

1. Repent & Believe – You and I need to get before God for where we’ve been casual about what he considers urgent. We need to repent of our sin of idleness, of fear, of false loves and believe the gospel that says if we confess our sin he is faithful and just to forgive us. Church the awakening we are praying for starts with an awakening in our hearts. Let the heart drive the feet.

2. Go on a short term missions trip – We’ve set a goal that in 2018 we want to see 100 people go on short term mission trips. That’s because we believe these trips are incredible catalysts for your walk with God. We spend a good deal of time training you before you go and that training translates to how you can make disciples of Jesus right here at home too. You need to see the remarkable things God is doing around the world.

- In 2 weeks, November 28 – We are having Mercy Missions Night. It’s one of our favorite nights of the year. We introduce our short term trips and get crazy hype about it. This is one of those things you bring the community group to. You get first dibs on signing up for trips. We are going to NYC, ME, India, and a few other spots I am not going to tell you about yet. We’ve got spots for 100 people. RSVP?
- College Students: You need to go on City Project next summer. Ask one of our college staff members but its going to change your life as you spend it learning how to make disciples here and around the world! We’ll talk about that and more at missions night.

3. Take a step with someone you know

We have a question we ask around here: Who is someone far from God but close to you? Someone you could take a step with. What step? Offer to read the bible with them. Read mark together. Offer to share your story of how God changed your life. Commit to pray for their salvation every single day. You have one job.

Let me close with this: I love being a church where non-christians feel comfortable coming. And for a little while now we’ve been that kind of church. I love it. And this is one of those things that may make you pretty uncomfortable. “mission” talk. Let me say this: You don’t have to agree, but I hope you appreciate the posture we are trying to take. We may not do it perfectly but I think you’d agree that if God really does love us and we really are lost for eternity without his love, then this is news that every person deserves to hear. Now you may not yet agree with the main point that Jesus is God’s chosen way we can receive that love. That’s fine you gotta get there. But if its true...I hope you see how it changes everything. And I hope you’ll consider it afresh today.