

7. Commissioned to Make Disciples

In our last four topics, we have looked at the four calls Christ gave to His disciples. As Christ came to the completion of His ministry on this earth, He also gave the disciples a commission. In Matthew 28:18-20, we read, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.” These “Four Calls and a Commission” summarize the process Christ used to “Make Disciples”.

For those of you who like to summarize a topic using the same letter to begin each point of your outline, these four calls and the commission can be summarized by:

1. Evangelize – John 1:39-46; Matthew 9:9-10; Mark 1:30-33
2. Edify – Mark 1:16-20
3. Equip – Mark 3:13-15
4. Expand the Leadership – John 21:15-17
5. Extend – Matthew 28:18-20 (As you are going, Make Disciples.)

As we look at this commission, in Matthew 28:18-20, we notice several things:

1. The source of all authority is Christ.
2. These verses contain only one command – Make Disciples.
3. This command is to be carried out by three action words:
 - a. Going – evangelism is to happen as we are going, rather than expecting people to come to a church service seeking
 - b. Baptizing – there are eight kinds of baptism in the New Testament and the thing they all have in common is identification with something or someone
 - c. Teaching them to obey all things – we are to do two things – teach people the commandments of Christ and then teach them how to obey them (many Christians know the commandments of Christ, but they have never been taught and shown how to obey them)

We have seen that Christ used the four calls to “Make Disciples”. In the same way, Christ tells us that we will also “Make Disciples” as we invite people to:

- Come and See – John 1:39-46
- Come and Grow – Mark 1:16-20
- Come and Serve – Mark 3:13-15
- Come and Shepherd – John 21:15-17

However, we also see here, in the Great Commission, that we are to baptize those who come to Christ. As was mentioned earlier, there are eight kinds of baptism in the New Testament:

1. the baptism of John the Baptist – Matthew 3:11
(this was a baptism to identify with the message of John regarding repentance)
2. the baptism with the Holy Spirit – Matthew 3:11

(this is the baptism, by Christ, in which He places the Holy Spirit within us to identify us as His children and give us the guarantee of our inheritance – Ephesians 1:14)

3. the baptism with fire – Matthew 3:11-12

(this is the baptism by which unbelievers are identified with eternal judgment)

4. the baptism of Christ – Matthew 3:13-17

(this was the way Christ chose to be identified as the One introduced by John the Baptist)

5. the baptism of suffering which Christ experienced on the cross – Luke 12:50

(this was the way Christ chose to identify with our sins and pay for them)

6. the baptism of suffering by the disciples - Mark 10:38-39

(this is the baptism that the disciples experienced and which we can also experience because we are identified with Christ)

7. the baptism of believers – Acts 2:38-41

(this is water baptism we use to identify the fact that we have placed our trust in Christ – Acts 8:36-39)

8. the baptism of the Holy Spirit – 1 Corinthians 12:13

(this is the baptism where the Holy Spirit identifies us as Christians by placing us in the body of Christ)

One of the things we notice is that we are baptized with the Holy Spirit by Christ, as He places the Holy Spirit in us at the moment of salvation. The second thing we notice is that the baptism of the Holy Spirit places us in the body of Christ at the moment of salvation. It is important to both understand this and teach new Christians about both baptisms:

◆ The baptism with the Holy Spirit by Christ, as Christ places the Holy Spirit in us

◆ The baptism of the Holy Spirit by which the Holy Spirit places us in the body of Christ

This will prevent much confusion at a later time. This also provides a good opportunity to encourage new Christians to publicly identify themselves with Christ by water baptism.

The third action word is “teaching them to obey all things that Christ has commanded”. The problem many Christians have is that they have learned the commandments of Christ, but they have not been shown how to obey them. Paul said, in Acts 20:20-21, “How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” In these verses, we see that:

- Paul taught all that was helpful
- Paul explained what he was teaching
- Paul showed them publicly how to teach and explain these same things to others
- Paul showed them from house-to-house how to teach and explain these same things to others

The effectiveness of our teaching is directly related to how much we show others how to do what we have taught them. Christ took the disciples along for three years to show them how to develop godly character and live godly lives. During that time, they were also being shown how to apply what they were learning. One of the things we have done is adopt the Greek style of teaching, instead of following the Biblical pattern. The Greek, or world model, is to teach by telling. The

Biblical model is to teach by showing. We have also seen that this is the way both Christ and Paul developed disciples.

However, this was also the way Moses was told to teach. In Exodus 18:20, we read, “And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.” In this verse, we see that Moses was to do three things to teach the people:

- ◆ He was to teach them ordinances and laws
- ◆ He was to show them the way to walk
- ◆ He was to show them the work to do

As we teach people the Word, we help them to grow in knowledge. As we show people the way to walk, we help them to grow in character. As we show people the work to do, we help them grow in ministry. The Greek model of learning focuses only on the gaining of knowledge and does not help people learn how to apply that knowledge to godly character development and effective ministry. We might compare this to a three-legged stool with two of the legs missing. Sitting on such a stool will soon cause you to fall.

However, the Biblical model shows us that true teaching also shows people how to develop godly character and shows them how to do effective ministry. The fact that these two legs to the stool are missing in most churches is why the Christian world, and the world in general, have such a shortage of godly leaders. All four of the calls included spending time with Christ so the disciples could be shown how to develop godly character and effective ministry. In the Great Commission, Christ called us to Make Disciples following the same pattern.

The Lord gives us a great privilege by inviting us to become partners with Him in making disciples. In order to be full partners in this process of making disciples, who become healthy reproducing Christians, we need to develop others in the same way Christ developed His disciples. That involves having them with us where we live, work, and spend our free time so they can learn, from our example, how to develop godly character; and learn, from our example, how to minister effectively. May the Lord richly bless you as you help people grow in Biblical knowledge, godly character, and effective ministry.