

Go and make disciples

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 November 2016

Preacher: Errol Wesson

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. You've had read to you from Matthew's Gospel what we call the Great Commission. Now, this morning, I want to share a message with you and I've got notes so if Adrian, you or somebody or a brother here in the front can help us give these out.

I wasn't sure how many would be here. So if couples could perhaps share some notes. And I'm going to go through this with you this morning. It's going to be a bit of a different message.

It's not so much a preaching message. I look at this more as a teaching message, the notes that you get in. But they're for you. You can take these notes home and you can go through them again yourselves.

And it's all about disciples. It's about go make disciples. That's what Jesus said to us. And if you go back to the reading, the Great Commission, there in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus says there, Go, therefore, and make disciples. Now, we've been talking about the Gospel. We've been talking about winning people to Christ.

That's what we've been doing here in the last few Thursdays. We've been preparing a small group in your church who have now been equipped with how to share the Gospel story, how to go to somebody, and how to actually introduce them to Christ, get them to receive Jesus into their lives.

[1 : 3 6] Now, that's wonderful. That is wonderful, friends. That is the start. The Christian life starts, not when you are born into the world. You're born into the world away from God.

You're born as a baby away from God. You're not born close to God. You're born away from God. You are born a sinner. You come into this world. You never need to be taught how to sin.

You know how to sin from a young child. You know how to screech their ass down. You know how to stamp your feet. You know how to tell a lie to your mother. You don't get taught to do that. You just know how to do it.

It's a natural thing. You have to come to the place where you are born again in order to enter God's family. You're born into the devil's family. And when you're born again by the Spirit of God, you enter God's family.

Now, you might be sitting here today, and you might be still part of the devil's family. Horrible thought. You think you're sitting in a Christian church, singing the beautiful hymns, listening to the Bible, Christians all around you, but you're not in God's family. And you need to consider that. You need to consider moving out of Satan's family into God's family.

[3 : 0 2] It only happens in the moment of being born again. That means the moment you receive Christ, you are moved from the devil's family, from the Father who was our Father when we were born, into God's family who is the good Father, the eternal Father, the one who made us for himself.

Now, if that's happened in your life, be thankful. If that's happened in your life, rejoice. If that's happened in your life, you're a new creature in Christ Jesus.

And God is trying to work in your life to make you more like himself. That's what it's all about. He wants to make us more like himself.

Now, the notes that you've got here is about discipleship. And once you are born again, you are then a disciple of Jesus.

You're then a follower of Jesus. For the next part of your life, till the day that you die and are transported into heaven, you're going to be a disciple.

[4 : 09] It's not something that you ever get past. You're a disciple for the rest of your life. Now, discipleship, as I put there, is simply taking seriously the words of the resurrected Christ, the head of the church.

Taking Jesus' words seriously. Where he said here in Matthew's gospel, Go and make disciples. Now, he's our commander-in-chief.

He is the main one in the church. He is the head of this church. It's not your pastor. It's not the church board.

It's not the woman's league. It is Jesus who is the head of this church. He says to you today, Go and make disciples.

He didn't say, Go and make decisions. He didn't say, Go and get new members. He didn't say, Go and build bigger and better buildings.

[5 : 12] He didn't even say, Take up larger offerings. He didn't say that. But he did say, Go and make disciples. That's what he said to us.

This church surely is here today for one reason and one reason only. To make disciples. If you fail to do that, you fail.

That is the main reason for the existence of any Christian church, any church of Jesus Christ in this world, is that they are there to make disciples.

Now, here I've given you three things that constitute a disciple. To make disciples involves three simple things.

Number one, it is going. Number two, it is baptizing. Number three, it is teaching. Where did I get that? Right here, in Matthew's gospel, in those verses that were read to us.

[6 : 16] Now, we're going to look up a few other verses as we go along. So I want you to be ready with your Bible. If you've got it with you, there's one in a pew. And be ready to open your Bible and to see the verses.

I am not talking something that I've concocted. It's not something I've thought up. It's in God's word. So the three things. Number one is going.

The Bible says go. G-O, go. It's not a difficult word to understand, by the way. You know, some words are very difficult to understand.

And sometimes we have to find an explanation for them. We've got to go to the dictionary. Or we today look it up on the internet to find out what different words really mean.

But the word go, do we need to explain it? No. It doesn't need to be explained. It's what it means. Go. And Jesus said it.

[7 : 15] He said go. Now, here in these verses, the word is in what is called the present participle. It's a present participle.

It's not a command. It's this. It's going. It's the word going. It's a going. In your going.

That's what it means. So in other words, you need to realize as a Christian, as a born-again person, you are going. You're already going.

You don't have to make up your mind today that I'm now going to start to go. No. Since you became a Christian, you've been going. You're on the way. You're on a journey. You're walking through life.

You've got Christ in you. You're going. Now, in your going, you need to be a shining light. Your life needs to be a testimony.

[8 : 15] People need to see Christ in you, in your going. They need to hear your lips speaking. They need to hear that you know Christ and you stand up for him and you make a difference where you are.

In your going, you need to be making a difference. You need to be affecting other lives. You need to be drawing people to Christ through your life, in your going.

You don't have to decide to go. You're already going. And if your going is not a great witness and is not a shining light, you need to do something about your life.

You need to clean it up. You need to get right with God. You need to put things right with other people until you are a shining light, a shining instrument in your going.

People are watching you. Now, going, in going, is involved the whole thing of evangelism. Evangelism is simply sharing the good news with other people.

[9 : 23] So, in our going as a church, we should be daily, naturally sharing our faith with other people. That's why we've just done this course.

To be able to learn in a more effective way how to share our faith. If you weren't involved in it. Maybe the next time they do the training, you need to be there so that you can be included in how to share your faith with other people.

So, in our going, we do evangelism. We share the message with the intent to bring people to Christ. And we saw that happen on Thursday night.

It happened through some of you sitting here. It happened. That's going. Then there's baptizing. Now, I don't want to get on the wrong side of any church.

And I know that there are different ways to talk about baptism in certain churches. Obviously, I have a view on it. I can't go against my own view.

[10 : 30] I believe in I believe in baptizing by immersion. And I believe in baptizing believers. Baptism, whatever form it takes, let me tell you what it is.

It is a decisive step by someone. And that decisive step is to say to the world, I believe in Jesus Christ.

I am one of Christ's followers. And I'm putting my banner up or I'm putting the flag up to say whose I am and whom I serve.

What a nation we are. We love our rugby, right? And it's amazing how everything's got to revolve around that on a Saturday afternoon for some people.

But you know what I see as I drive around? The guys put up their flags. Do you see them? They put up their flags. Whoever's playing, I know, I don't follow it closely, so I know by the flags what's going on.

[11 : 36] What are they doing? They're saying South Africa's going to win. So they put up a South African flag or they put up a Stormers flag or something like that on their houses to say who they're trusting in, who they're hoping will win.

And that's baptism. You put up the flag, you know. You say, listen, I'm Christ. I serve Jesus. That's me. And then there's teaching.

These are the three things involved in discipleship. Going, baptizing, teaching. Now, when it comes to teaching, sometimes we get scared of that word because we think that we're dumb or we think that our mind's not working properly or we're not a good thinker and you say to yourself, oh my goodness, what do you want to teach me now because, you know, and we run away from it.

Teaching, teaching, teaching. Teaching is simply helping you to understand. Helping you to understand. Teaching. And Jesus says here, teaching them to observe all things.

That's what he says. We've got to teach people. People in the church. People in the Sunday school class. The youth. We've got to teach them to observe all things that Jesus has taught us.

[12 : 54] That Jesus has taught in his life. Taught in his teachings in this book. We've got to teach people. And teaching doesn't happen quickly, by the way.

If you've been a parent at all, how many times did you tell your child something? Ten times? How many times did you tell him to make his own bed?

You know, after 20 times and he still doesn't do it. You know, that's teaching, right? We've got to teach children, we've got to teach people to obey. To become obedient.

The Christian life is about obedience. It's about obeying Jesus. It's about obeying the word of God. And to be a disciple. It takes time.

And we need to be taught everything that Jesus taught his disciples. We need to teach that to people. And we need to teach it in different ways, in different means, that they come to know what Jesus wants of our lives.

[14 : 00] So, that's discipleship. Discipleship involves three things. Going, baptizing, teaching. If you're doing them, you're fulfilling the Great Commission. But now, let's have a look.

Firstly, I put there, and I'm not going to go over everything on this paper, because there's also something on the back, but we'll watch the time. Why be involved in discipleship?

Why should this church, St. Mark's, why should you be involved in discipleship? Well, look at it. Because Jesus commanded it to be so.

In Matthew 4, 19, so turn with me there if you want to. Matthew Gospel, chapter 4, and verse 19. I'll give you a moment to find it.

4, 19. There's a simple verse there. Matthew 4, 19. What does it say? It says there, then he said to them, the he is Jesus, then he said to them, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

[15 : 15] You see that? Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. Now, that's his word to all of us. He said, follow me. Now, if you're born again, if you're a real Christian, if you know your name's written in the Lamb's Book of Heaven, then you're following him.

You've already decided that, you're following him. But now he says, if you follow me, I will make you a fisher of men. That's what he says.

He wants you to be a fisher of men. He wants you not just to be an engineer, not just to be a shop attendant, not just to be a school teacher, no, he wants you to be a fisher of men or a fisher of boys and girls, a fisher of young people.

He wants you to be a fisher of men. Now, most of us don't have a problem with the first part of that verse. We have a problem with the second part.

We say, I'm following Jesus. I'm going to St. Mark's. I'm on the board. I'm in the Sunday school. I'm doing something for God.

[16 : 25] I work in the office or I make tea. I'm following Jesus. But the next thing is, are you fishing for men? Have you caught anything?

You know, most fishermen, you know what it's like, they fish for hours, don't they? And I don't know what they catch, you know. I don't know why I had to move to the Cape years ago because I don't even like fishing, you know.

But Jesus is telling us here, fish for men. That means get people, get people and bring them, bring them to the Savior.

We need to be fishers of men. Now, Jesus commanded this. Secondly, because it was the apostolic method in the early church. When the church of Jesus Christ came into being in those early days, read it in the book of Acts, what happened?

Well, it was their method to do discipleship. You don't believe me? Then turn with me to 1 Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2.

[17 : 37] Turn there with me, I'm going there. 1 Thessalonians, two very important verses that you might not have noticed. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, small book in the Bible, in the New Testament, so don't miss it, Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verses 7 and 8. It's in your notes. Now, I'm going to read them to you. It says, now Paul is writing, get the picture in your minds, Paul is writing to this church in Thessalonica and this is what he says to them, but we were gentle among you just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.

So affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, notice, not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives because you became dear to us.

Now, you can read those verses yourselves again and again if you want to, but I want to tell you those verses are what discipleship is all about. Paul says here, he talks about a nursing mother.

How many nurses or sisters do we have here? Put up your hand. Any nurses here? Don't tell me there's none. Male nurse, I see male nurses, no nurses, but I hope there's some spiritual nurses here today.

[19 : 17] All right, he says here as a nursing mother. So how many mothers, let me see your hands, mothers, put up your hands. Okay, he says as nursing mothers.

How many of you remember you nursed your children or you're still nursing? Adrian was walking around here with his little boy on his shoulder today and that little boy was enjoying his father's shoulder so much boy.

You know, and Paul is saying as nursing mothers cherishes their own children, he says, so we, we, the church, the early church, the church enacts, so we, he says, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel.

So it's not only the gospel we must give people. he says, but our own lives because you were dear to us.

Now that's discipleship. Discipleship is when I impart my life to you and you learn from me. I impart everything I know to you about Christ, about the gospel, about living the Christian life.

[20 : 34] so because Jesus commanded it, because the early church practiced it, and then thirdly, new believers need it. New believers need it to grow strong and to stand firm.

Here's a verse, it's not in your notes, but write it in. Acts 2 from verses 40 to 47. Acts 2 from verses 40 to 47.

That's about the early church and what they did as the early church, all the things they did to be a proper church, they disciplined people in the faith.

And then the fourth thing is because it's the way of the church to grow and to multiply. That's why we must do discipleship. It's the way of the church to grow and to multiply.

Turn with me to 2 Timothy 2 2. This is again another key verse. A little bit further on in the New Testament you come to Timothy 1, Timothy 2 and it's 2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 2.

[21 : 43] That is in your notes. Very important verse here. Chapter 2 and verse 2. This is what it says, I hope you're going to look at it with me.

And he says now Paul is writing now to Timothy. Timothy is a young pastor in the faith. He writes and he says, and the things that you have heard from me, he says, among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

What is he saying? This is what he's saying, friends, listen, look at me. This is what he's saying. He's saying, what I heard. talks about many witnesses.

He heard the message. The apostle Paul was not always a Christian. He was against Christianity. He was putting people in prison if they said they were Christians.

But when he traveled on that Damascus road one day, the light shone down from heaven around him, and he was struck down from his horse. He fell to the ground, and he realized this is the Lord speaking to him.

[22 : 54] He said Lord what will you have me to do? He changed like that. He turned around and Christ did a miracle work in his life. And Paul who was Saul became Paul became a new creature in Christ Jesus.

And now he is saying these things that I heard must be transmitted or transferred onto other faithful men.

and those faithful men must then give it out to others, must teach it to others. Now that's the way it's supposed to be done. What I know about Christ I must share with some of you or others that I know and they must get so into it themselves, so mature in Christ, so knowledgeable in Christ that they can teach others also.

That's discipleship. that's discipleship. Pass it on, pass it on, pass it on. This is why we must be involved as a church, not only in the gospel, but in maturing believers in Christ.

So secondly, and then I'm finishing with this, secondly, what is a disciple? And just quickly, what is a disciple? A disciple is someone who will obediently learn about Christ.

[24 : 22] Jesus says in Matthew 11, 28 to 30, he says, learn of me. My yoke is easy, my burden is light, come, learn of me, he says, learn of me.

So what is a disciple, A there? He's a learner. You want to know what a disciple is? He's a learner, someone who's teachable. I was an apprentice at one time, I was in the workshop, I had to go through five years of apprenticeship before I was given my papers to say that I was a trained person.

I had to be teachable, I had to learn in order to become a tradesman, to become qualified. And that's exactly the same in the church with believers.

You've got to be a learner, you've got to be willing to learn. Someone said if you stop learning today, you stop growing tomorrow. our task is not informational only, but transformational.

The word of God is not to make you a smarter sinner, so that you can just go to heaven or hell smarter. No, that's not the idea.

[25 : 39] As we say here, it's to make us more Christ-like, more like Jesus. Jesus. So information without illumination is education.

Our country always says education, education, education, education, that's all we need. No, you're only educating them to be more corrupt, that's all, if it's without Christ.

It's not just about education, but information with illumination is revelation. That's what happened to some of you, when you came to Jesus, you had a revelation as Christ changed your life.

So learning is not just gathering facts, it's not just filling heads with knowledge. It's right to have some information, but eventually Morocco leather must become shoe leather.

What am I saying? This is Morocco leather here. My Bible, I like Bibles, and I like them, they must be flexible, so I can preach, and go, and find my place to be.

[26 : 48] But this is a good leather Bible, by the way. This one says genuine leather. It's often called Morocco leather. So that Morocco leather must become shoe leather.

What am I saying? I'm saying what's in here must become part of my life. I must live the Bible. I must walk the Bible. Some people will not see any other Bible, than what they see in you.

So what are they seeing? Are you really a good disciple of Jesus Christ? So a disciple is a learner. Secondly, a disciple is a follower. I said that to you already.

Someone who imitates and models another. If you want to follow, if you want to follow, don't follow people, by the way.

Don't just follow people. you must follow someone that is a significant model. Someone that you can really look up to.

[27 : 50] Jesus did this. He did this. In Mark 2, 13 and 15, you can look it up for yourselves and further on, you see him spending time with sinners.

Jesus. And he was criticized for that. You spend your time with all these bad people. Well, it's like a doctor. You go to a doctor, you know what the doctor does all day.

He spends his time with sick people all day. What a job. Everybody who walks into his office is a sick person. Well, there are a lot of sick people around, friends, sick physically, they sick spiritually.

And you and I must be involved in their lives because they're sick and they're needing help. They're needing help. They're needing encouragement. They're needing hope.

They're needing deliverance. You see? And it's about modeling. It's about modeling. That's discipleship. It's about modeling.

[28 : 54] And modeling is the most unconscious form of learning. Children, in your home. How do they learn? By watching you. By watching you. They learn and they model what you do.

If you're a blasphemer and a swearer and if you're a critical person and if you're an unkind person, you're going to raise kids like that. They're going to follow you.

And I used to say to mine, don't just follow me, man. Just do what I tell you and don't take my bad habits like you do, man. You know, it's amazing how they do it.

They follow you. You see, that's what happens even in the Christian life. So we must model Christianity so people can follow us.

Paul said, be imitators of me as I am an imitator of Christ. And then the last thing is the disciple is a reproducer.

[29 : 56] He's a reproducer. They must reproduce firstly a lifestyle. A lifestyle. A lifestyle that is marked.

A lifestyle that is marked, number one, with love. As a disciple of Jesus Christ, you need to reproduce a lifestyle around you, wherever you are, in your office, in your workplace, in your neighborhood, wherever you go, you need to be known for the love that you have.

The love that you have for God, the love that you have for what Christ did for you, the love that you have for all people around you. They must see that love.

Look at John 13 sometime. And then obedience in Luke. Obedience. You're a person that's obedient. Obedient to the rules of the land.

Obedience in the way in which you live as a person in the community. Obedience to Christ. And what you are producing, producing in the lives of people that you are working with.

[31 : 09] We have to reproduce ourselves, you see. And therefore that's what's called fruit. Fruit. So the question is, how fruitful are you as a Christian?

How fruitful is your life? In John 15, we are told to bear fruit. Not only much fruit or more fruit, but we do produce fruit that remains.

Fruit that remains. Are you reproducing your life? Are you? Are other people seeing Christ in you? As a church, are you reproducing yourselves?

discipleship because that's what discipleship is, to get a person saved, schooled, taught, to the point that he can then go and reproduce and save someone else and see them come to that strength in Jesus.

Now, I can't go on to the back here. I'll leave that with you. One day in the future we might get on to that. But that's what I use when I disciple people. I take them through that.

[32 : 22] And some of you might be saying, how can I disciple somebody? Well, I brought some booklets with me this morning. I'm not giving them to you. I'm only showing them to you. Here are some booklets that I use to disciple people.

Now, discipleship is not a quick fix. It's a long thing. You can sit with them for a long, long time to disciple people. I was with a vice principal of the Bible Institute the other day.

And he said to me, we need to disciple our students. He said, we are getting students from churches coming here to this college and they're not disciplined.

We need to start off with discipling before we can start lecturing them the Bible. It's quite an admission, that. Well, I take people through this.

I started with my own boys when they were young at school, teenage years, and I said to them, sit around this table, I want to teach you this stuff. There's 16 booklets like this on various interesting subjects that Christians need to learn.

[33 : 33] And many Christians that have sat in pews for years have never gone through it. And I take them through this stuff. And the last one being a very exciting study on the crowns, the five crowns that you will get one day when you get up yonder.

I don't know what crown you're going to get, but anyway, there's five of them. Have you ever heard of them? Do you know what they are? Do you know what they're for? How you can get them? Well, it's all in here.

But anyway, I'm showing you that to say that's the practical side of it. We need to be doing it. And it takes time and it takes effort, but it's so rewarding to see lives just change and mature and grow in Christ.

Now, I know I've taken too much time, so I apologize, and I'm sorry for that. But this is what God had laid in my heart for you as a church, now that you've done some training in the gospel, and you get people saved, where do you go with them?

You take them now, and you start discipling them. And then you will see the real change, the real growth. taking place. Amen? Amen.

[34 : 44] Let's pray. So thank you, Father, for this time together this morning, on this Lord's Day morning. What a beautiful morning. What a wonderful day you give us this one day in seven when we can come and focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

Help us with our lives. Help us to live a life that is truly a life of love and obedience and fruit, that others can be affected by the way we live.

We commit this message to you. Use it in the hearts of these people that have heard it. And as they take the notes away, help them to go over it, look up the scriptures themselves, and help them to become the disciples that you want them to be.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thank you. Amen.