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The Mission
Matthew 28:16-20
September 16, 2018

Today we are at the end of the Gospels in our journey through the Bible. For those of you who may not be familiar with how the Bible is put together, it is divided into two major parts.

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The Old Testament begins in Genesis with the creation of the world and the call and gathering of God's people, the Jews. His call for them, back in Genesis 12, was that they were to be a blessing to all nations. God called Abraham to become a people through whom he would redeem humankind and fix the problem that started when Adam and Eve chose to believe the lie that they didn't need God. More often than not, God's chosen people forgot or neglected that call and lived their lives independently, as if God had called them for their own sakes. They continually forgot their mission. God would then raise up prophets at various times in the history of Israel who spoke for him in an attempt to call them back to his purposes for them.

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After the Old Testament is the New Testament, which begins with four books called Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These are stories of Jesus with his disciples. Sometimes people misunderstand the Gospels to be the start of a new religion called "Christianity." It's not. The Gospels and the entire New Testament are a continuation of what God had been doing since the fall of humankind in the Garden of Eden in Genesis.

The New Testament is a continuation of God gathering a people for himself who would be all about joining him in blessing the world with his love. So, the first four books are about the life of Jesus as he gathered followers and taught them what business God is really in and how to finish his mission on earth.

Before we get to our main passage this morning I want to take a look at one of the passages in which Jesus called some of his first disciples.

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Matthew 4:18–22 (NLT)

18 One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. 19 Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" 20 And they left their nets at once and followed him.

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21 A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. 22 They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

Most of Jesus' disciples were commercial fishermen. They would have fit in well here in Campbell River, the "Salmon fishing capital of the world." Jesus saw his first potential followers working at their trade in the fishing industry. He called out to them to follow him, with the bait that he would give them a higher purpose to live for. And then for three years he spent every day with them, training them how to get along with each other, what it means to be leaders in his kingdom, and how to gather more followers of Jesus. He used every opportunity to teach them. They were immersed for three years in his teaching.

The kind of teaching Jesus did was not teaching in the way we think of teaching today. Jesus' disciples were apprentices, much like we have apprentices in the trades. Can you imagine a mechanic or an

electrician or a carpenter going to school for four years, never touching a tool and then attempting to work their trade? Would you trust someone to build your house who called themselves a carpenter but had never touched a tool? They spent four years in class reading all kinds of books about how to use tools and build, but had never actually strapped on a tool belt. Of course you wouldn't. That would be foolish.

What Jesus did with his disciples was teach them on the job. There were his apprentices. Their goal as apprentices was to become, in every way, like Jesus. They followed him everywhere he went, watching how he interacted with different kinds of people. They saw how he dealt with people who were very broken and knew it, and they watched how he dealt with the religious leaders who were also very broken, but didn't know it. And then *he* watched how *they* interacted with different kinds of people and then gave them feedback. He used every chance possible as an opportunity to teach them what it means to really love and lead well.

Remember when the children were wanting to spend time with Jesus and his disciples scolded them and told them not to bother Jesus? What did Jesus do? He saw this as a learning opportunity. He took a little child, held her in his arms and taught them what real leadership is, and that every person is important in God's kingdom.

He taught the crowds while his apprentices listened. Then they asked him questions of clarification and he answered them. They watched him heal people and cast out demons. Then he sent *them* out to do the work themselves and they would come back and report on what they had experienced and what God had done through them. And he would teach them again. That is what discipleship in action looks like.

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They didn't just talk *about* discipleship. They lived it.

Is anyone here in a fishing club? I have wanted to join one so I could rub shoulders with people who are more knowledgeable than I am so I could learn from them.

Could you imagine a fishing club where everyone comes to talk about fishing, but they don't fish? They learn how to tie flies like a pro. They know about all the different kinds of lures. They own all the best equipment, and they even bring it to their fishing club meetings. They dress up with their chest waders and their fishing vests. And every day they come to the meetings to talk about fishing. They study fish in their habitats. They even practice casting in an empty soccer field wearing all their fishing paraphernalia. But they never go fishing. They've never felt that exhilaration of the head tug of a fish on the line, and they have never landed a fish.

That's sort of what we can tend to do in the church. We come into a sanitized church building, put on our church mask with the smiley face on it, shake some hands, tell everyone we are "doing just fine thank you, and you?" Meanwhile inside we are feeling crushed from the pain of broken relationships. Then we listen to a talking head blather on about learning to love each other better, and our need to reach our community for Jesus. After the talking head finishes droning on and on, we shake a few more hands, head towards the door where we take our smiley faces off and then fight with our family on the way to lunch. Then we come back the following week and do it all over again.

And we may even go to a midweek Bible Study where we learn more *about* God. We learn how to speak Christianese so we can talk the talk. We know all the lingo and all the "ologies:" eschatology, soteriology, hamartiology, demonology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and zoology. We know our Bible's inside and out. We know *about* God, but do we really *know* him? Has he captured our hearts, or are we just captivated by the pursuit of knowledge *about* him?

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Have we accepted the invitation from Jesus to take his yoke on us and learn from him because he is gentle and humble in heart? Are we really learning from him, minute by minute, day by day, how to love like he loves? That is what discipleship is.

I love what one lady in the church told Ruthie last week. She has been coming to the church for about a year and a half. She said she loves coming here and hearing the simple Gospel message. She said,

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“Sometimes we make it too complicated. It’s simple. Let Jesus change your heart, and go out and love people.”

That is discipleship in action. It’s allowing Jesus to change us so we can love others better, so they see Jesus in us and join us on our journey towards the heart of God.

We are going to look at the passage of Scripture in Matthew where Jesus spoke his last words to his disciples after he had been raised from the dead. So, he had already been betrayed by Judas, one of his disciples. He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. The disciples scattered like scared rabbits. Jesus went on trial in front of the Sanhedrin, which was a ruling body of seventy-one rabbis, including the high priest. Meanwhile, out in the courtyard where Jesus was being tried, Peter was lurking around and was confronted by three different people at different times who recognized him as one of the disciples. Each time he denied he even knew Jesus.

The Sanhedrin found Jesus guilty and handed him over to the Romans to crucify him on a cross. Three days later he rose from the dead and showed up and spent time with various of his disciples, teaching them for forty days before he ascended to heaven. The passage we are going to look at today contains some of Jesus’ last words to his disciples, where he gave them his mission for them. We call this *The Great Commission*. Dallas Willard has called it The Great Omission because of how the church has often missed the main point.

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Matthew 28:16–20 (NLT)

16 Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

We don’t know which mountain he told them to go to. Tradition holds that it was Mount Tabor, near the Sea of Galilee, but we don’t really know for sure. We only know that it was in Galilee in the northern part of Israel. They went to the mountain and waited for Jesus. Then he showed up like he said he would.

17 When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!

This is quite interesting. Some of them worshiped him. Some of them doubted. I don’t quite know what to make of this. Who was in the group that saw Jesus in this passage? Could it be that some of the eleven disciples who had just spent three years with Jesus, watching him do all those miracles and then witnessing his crucifixion and death and then seeing him after he was raised from the dead, would actually doubt him? I think that is highly unlikely. I would imagine that others joined the eleven on the mountain to wait for Jesus. Remember, Jesus had hundreds of followers. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 6, said that Jesus was seen by over 500 of his followers at one time after he had risen from the dead. This could have been the event where they saw him. Some of them doubted, but most of them fell down and worshiped him.

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

We alluded to this last week. Jesus had and has all authority in heaven and on earth. If I told you that I had all authority in heaven and earth, you should be very wary of everything else I say. Jesus, on the other hand, had just defeated death, and spent three years with his disciples proving that he really was who he said he was. He came from heaven to earth on a mission, to gather for himself a people who would carry on his work after he ascended to heaven. He, and only he, had and has all authority in heaven and earth.

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,

So, with the authority that only he has he gave the disciples a job to do. What's the main verb here? This is a verse that is used at many missions conferences to inspire people to join the mission field and go overseas to win the lost for Jesus. It's a great verse for that. We need more people going into missions. As a church, we financially support at least sixteen different missionary families all over the world because we believe passionately that Jesus has called us to go and bring his good news to all nations.

Let me ask again, what is the main verb in this sentence? ***19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations..*** Often times we put the emphasis on the command "to go." However, in the Greek, the main verb is one word which means "make disciples." Everything else, including "go," modifies this verb. As you go, as you are doing life what should you do? Make disciples. How do we make disciples?

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1. Baptize them.

baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In the New Testament there was no such thing as a follower of Jesus that was not baptized. Read the book of Acts and you will see over and over again when people believed they were baptized. They didn't wait until they had everything figured out. They didn't wait until they went through a catechism class or series of theology courses to make sure they had all their doctrinal "i's" dotted and "t's" crossed. They believed in Jesus and they were baptized. That is the order.

That's why at CRBC we don't baptize infants or anyone who has not trusted Jesus to forgive their sins. We don't baptize as a religious ritual. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward reality. It is a picture of something that God has done in your spiritual heart — already. When we trust Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins, there is a transaction that happens in the heavenlies. You have been made right with God. He paid your debt and washed away every sin you ever committed. He made you right with God, so you can have a relationship with a holy and just God.

Once you have said yes to Jesus the next step is to be baptized to make a statement to the world, the flesh and even the Devil that you are now a follower of Jesus, forsaking all others. Today after the sermon we are going to give you an opportunity, if you have never been baptized, to come forward and take that step of obedience today. We have extra shorts and t-shirts and towels if you didn't come prepared. If you are a follower of Jesus you need to take a step of obedience and get baptized.

2. Teach them to obey Jesus.

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20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.

This is the essence of discipleship. Teach them to obey. A disciple is a follower, not just a learner. In Matthew 11:28-30 when Jesus invited us to learn from him, he wasn't just saying he wants to download a bunch of information about God to us.

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What he was saying is he wants to teach us a new way of thinking that translates into a new way of living.

Notice the order here. You believe in Jesus first, then you get baptized, and then you get taught, and then he changes your heart, little by little so you live in the way he designed you to live. We often get that backwards. We put so many obstacles and hoops for people to jump through. We want them to measure up to our standards before we will say they are saved. We think it's *our* job to decide who is in and who is out. The problem with that is that we can't see the heart. Only God can. When someone trusts Jesus, we baptize them and then we teach them all about what Jesus said and how to follow him in obedience.

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Discipleship is about a transformation of our hearts and minds. We talk about this a lot at CRBC. Jesus has called us to learn from him. That is discipleship. He has not called us to just learn *about* him. We are to be apprentices of Jesus.

Jesus has called us to allow him to change us so the evidence of change in us points others to Jesus. Sometimes that call seems daunting because we see how far we have to go. It seems impossible, so it's easy for us to get discouraged. Here's the thing. None of us are where we should be, but all of us should be further down the road today than we were this time last year. We should be a little more loving, a little more kind, a little more gentle, a little more joyful, a little more peaceful, and little more patient...

It's not about being perfect. Satan will use the lie that you have to be perfect in order to be accepted by God. He will tell you all kinds of lies and half truths that you aren't good enough, that you don't measure up, that you don't belong, so you will stay in hiding. He wants to heap shame you and isolate you so you stay in the dark.

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The full truth is that Jesus was and *is* perfect for us. **He has called us to grow in maturity. It's about movement.** That's why Jesus called us to learn from him. He knows we are not where we should be and he wants to help us move forward in our journey towards maturity.

In staff meeting last week, Leora led us in a wonderful devotional from Matthew 11:28-30, where Jesus invites us to take his yoke upon us because he is gentle and humble in heart. Ruthie made a comment that stuck with me. She said that in one of her university courses on education she learned that in order for people to learn, they need to be in a place where they feel safe. If we don't feel safe there are what is called 'affective barriers' (or emotional barriers) that go up and prevent learning. There are walls that need to be brought down in order for anyone to learn.

That's why Jesus assured us that he is gentle and humble in heart. He knocked down those affective barriers so we would know he is not condemning us. He is not pointing his finger, or shaming us. He is not expecting us to be somewhere we are not. He will take us from where we are to where we should be. And he said, if we will do that, we will find rest for our souls.

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And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

We are not on our own. This is not just an empty promise. This is not just a theological platitude. It is an actual fact. Jesus lives in us. He is with us. He is in us. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us.

I want to close by reading several verses that show that Jesus really does live in the Jesus follower.

[16]

John 14:20 (NLT)

²⁰ When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

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John 17:23 (NLT)

²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

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Romans 8:10 (NLT)

¹⁰ And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God.

[19]

Galatians 2:20 (NLT)

²⁰ My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

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Colossians 1:27 (NLT)

²⁷ For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.

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1 John 3:24 (NLT)

²⁴ Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us.

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Ephesians 3:16–19 (NLT)

¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

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Revelation 3:20 (NLT)

²⁰ "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.

I don't know your heart. Only God does. I don't know who is in and who is out. I am not the judge. God is. I want to challenge you this morning, if you do not know if Christ is in you, if you do not know if your sins have been forgiven, you can know for sure this morning. You simply need to listen to the Spirit of Christ.

You need to know that you are broken. We all are. We are all in need of a Saviour. The Bible says that we have all strayed away from God and cannot save ourselves. Two thousand years ago, Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins. If you have never asked God to forgive you based on the death of Jesus

you can do that this morning. There is no magic prayer you have to say. You simply need to recognize that you are broken and in sin and you need Jesus.

There may be people here who have trusted Jesus, but have not been baptized. We want to invite you to come this morning. There may be others of you who have trusted Jesus for the first time this morning. We want to invite you to come as well.

Don't do it for me. My feelings will not be hurt if nobody comes forward. I am not your judge. Do it as a step of obedience, following Jesus. We have shorts, t-shirts, and towels, so we have taken away some of those barriers.

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***Living in HisStory: Revealing the True Wonder of Who God Is
The Mission***

Matthew 28:16-20

Week of September 16, 2018

Objective of this study: To understand what true discipleship is, feel safe with Jesus and allow him to change our hearts.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us.]

Worship (5 – 10 minutes)

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read **Psalm 25:1-9** meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you. **Did anything “jump out at you”?**

Welcome (5 minutes)

Was learning in school a positive or negative experience for you? How so?

[It's really important when doing this study that we each think about ourselves specifically and ways we need to grow, not how Christians in general need to grow. Do the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit speak to *your* heart.]

Word (30-45 minutes)

1. What stood out from the sermon?
2. How would you define “discipleship”?
3. How did Jesus disciple his followers?
4. Read Matthew 28:16-20.
 1. What is the main verb in verse 19? What are all the other verbs that modify the main verb?

Sermon quote: “He called out to them to follow him, with the bait that he would give them a higher purpose to live for. And then for three years he spent every day with them, training them how to get along with each other, what it means to be leaders in his kingdom, and how to gather more followers of Jesus. He used every opportunity to teach them.”

1. Read Mark 10:35-45.
 1. What is going on here? How are the disciples acting? What causes the conflict among them? If you had been there, one of Jesus' disciples, how would you have felt?
 2. How does Jesus respond? How does he use this situation as an opportunity for teaching his disciples? How did he bring down their barriers to learning? What did he want them to learn?

Work (30-45 minutes)

1. Read the attached passages about Jesus being in us and pick one to memorize and meditate on this week.
2. Jesus says, “You are here. I am going to take you there. It's not about shame. Just take my hand, walk with me, and let me teach you” (Matthew 11:28-30).
 1. Where is here for you? Where is there?
3. What are you taking home this week? What changes in mindset or practice do you sense the Holy Spirit prompting you to make?

Prayer

1. Spend the rest of the time praying for each other. **Praise God together for how he works, and how he allows us to partner with him to accomplish things in his kingdom.**
2. Here are some things you can pray about for the church:
 - A. That, as a church, we would actively and purposefully engage in the mission of Jesus in Campbell River.
 - B. The decisions about how to partner in the **Radiant Life** ministry with other churches in town.
 - C. Our church board and staff as they lead us to live out the mission of Jesus
 - D. River Kids ministry as they reach out to kids in our community.
 - E. **Our missionary of the week:** Nadeem and Jamilla Qazi with Fellowship International in Pakistan. They are flying out September 23.
 - F. **Local CR church:** Discovery Community Church

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people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

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