



Connection to Passage

Jesus gave these final instructions to believers just prior to His ascension back into heaven. This passage reminds us that we can go about making disciples in this world with confidence because we go about this task with the full authority of our Lord.

Introduction/Opening

Many of us have faced a death or tragedy and wondered what to do next. This can be especially true when the person who died was the patriarch to whom everyone in the family turned for wisdom.

Prior to His ascension into heaven, Jesus clearly defined what His disciples were to do next. When we open our Bibles to this passage, our attention immediately goes to the command that Jesus gives to every believer in this verse. Each believer can choose to ignore this command, but no one can deny the fact that we are commanded by God to make disciples.

Outline

The Process of Making Disciples

- I. Evangelizing
 - a. One thing we know for certain is that you cannot disciple a Christian until they become a Christian. So the process of discipleship begins by leading a person to give his or her life to Jesus.
 - b. At the heart of evangelism is telling people the good news of Jesus Christ. So the first step in making disciples is recognizing that anyone's greatest need is Jesus.
 - c. We must all be prepared and ready to share God's plan of salvation with those who have never been saved. This is the first step in making disciples.
- II. Baptizing
 - a. Baptism is a part of God's plan for discipleship.
 - b. When a person is baptized, he or she is demonstrating to others that he or she has placed faith in Christ for salvation.
 - c. Baptism doesn't save anyone, but it is a part of the discipleship process. In verse 19, Jesus clearly commands His followers to be baptized.
 - d. Baptism is not only an act of identification but also an act of obedience.

III. Teaching

- a. The process of discipleship includes teaching.
- b. What should you teach Christians? The answer is the Word of God. As Christians are taught the Word of God, they learn how to live the Christian life and also the basics of the faith.
- c. At the heart of discipleship is one Christian who teaches another Christian the basics of the Christian faith.
- d. What does a mature disciple look like in real life? Listed below are five features of mature disciples.
 1. Jesus is at the center of their life. They allow Jesus to control and direct their lives. Also, they factor Jesus into every decision they make. For them, Christianity is not just a Sunday event; it is a lifestyle.
 2. They have a firm grasp on the Word of God. They make it a habit to hear the Word. But they also are diligent in reading, studying, memorizing, meditating, and applying the Word.
 3. Their day is filled with prayer. They realize that both the Word and prayer need to be abundant in their lives. They know that if they are weak in one and strong in the other, their spiritual lives will be unbalanced.
 4. Witnessing to others is a high priority in their lives. A mature disciple knows how to lead someone to Christ and is diligently trying to do so.
 5. They use their spiritual gifts in serving the Lord. Mature disciples put their spiritual gifts to work.

Conclusion

Perhaps one reason so many churches eventually become weak is simply the result of a lack of emphasis on discipleship through the years. A lack of discipleship will lead to shallow Christians and weak churches. What should you do?

1. Commit to further discipleship. Every Christian can grow to be more like Christ. No one is so knowledgeable that they can excuse themselves from the process of discipleship.
2. Look for someone to disciple. It would be a tremendous legacy to allow God to use you to disciple others.

Help your church become more effective at discipleship. Perhaps this involves beginning a new believer's class or beginning a mentoring plan for new believers.

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