

Matthew 28:16-20  
"Go and Make Disciples"

I attended the World Missions ZOOM Fest last Saturday. It was a great time. I heard the testimonies of missionaries who have been sent to various countries. Some were sent to mountain communities in certain countries, some were sent to places where the gospel was not being proclaimed, and some were sent to lead people in war-torn areas to proclaim Jesus Christ. I praised God for each of these ministries, knowing that they were done by the power of God to express His greatness. Included at the end of Matthew's Gospel is the Great Commission that Jesus spoke. How are we sent into the world as disciples of Jesus? Today we will read the Word of God from Matthew 28:16-20, titled "The Disciple-Making Commandment."

**Matthew 28:16-20**

**16**Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

**17**And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And

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

**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."

What is this "disciple-making command" of Jesus Christ? First, it is a command issued by the authority of Jesus Christ; second, it is a command to make new disciples of Jesus; third, it is an encouragement that the Holy Spirit will be with us as we make disciples of Jesus. To summarize this sermon, the "disciple-making imperative" is a command issued by the authority of Jesus Christ to produce disciples of Jesus and the Holy Spirit will be with us.

Matthew 28:18-20 is the passage known as the "Great Commission. It is said that this passage was first named the "Great Commission" by Hudson Taylor, an English missionary who devoted his life to evangelizing the interior of China. In the beginning, the "discipleship mandate" was a command issued by the authority of Jesus Christ.

Verse 16 says, "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them."

Twelve were invited to be disciples and apostles of Jesus. However, Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus and took his own life, so at this time there were 11

apostles. After Jesus' resurrection, an angel appeared and spoke to the women who had come to Jesus' tomb, telling them that Jesus had risen and that if the disciples went to Galilee, they would meet the risen Jesus. The disciples came as far as Lake Galilee. Lake Galilee is where the disciples met Jesus. Then the disciples went up to the mountain where Jesus instructed them to go. There are no detailed descriptions in the Gospels about the mountain to which Jesus gave instructions. However, it is said to be Mount Arbor, which rises on the west side of Lake Galilee.

Let's look at verse 17. "And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted."

The disciples met the resurrected Jesus and worshipped Him. However, Matthew notes that some disciples still had doubts even after seeing the resurrected Jesus. In John 20, one of the disciples, Thomas said in John 20:25, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

Even the disciples, who were always with Jesus, could not believe in the fact that Jesus had risen.

Matt. 28:18, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

These words are the preamble to the command that Jesus is about to give to His disciples.

What exactly does it mean to be given all authority? Authority can be defined as "the ability to voluntarily cause someone or something to consent or to submit. And authority is associated with "kings" in the Bible. In the Old Testament, Joseph prophesied to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, that there would be a famine in the land, and advised him to gather grain from the cities by the king's authority to help the famine pass. Moses was given authority by God the Father and used it to bring the people out of slavery in Egypt. And Jesus, too, was shown authority. Even when Jesus taught on the mountain in Matthew 7:29, people were taught His teachings as one with authority, not like the Pharisees or the scribes and Pharisees. When Jesus was in a small boat with His disciples, they encountered a storm. But when Jesus rebuked the wind and the stormy sea, the storm and the stormy sea calmed down. At that time, the disciples were amazed and afraid of Jesus, who used his authority even in weather and other matters.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

What does disciple-making have to do with it? In short, disciple-making is a powerful command of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, who created and rules over all the world, to be agreed upon and obeyed.

Producing disciples is not a "recommendation" or a "should do" piece of advice. It is an authoritative command from God. In other words, those who have become disciples of Jesus Christ must produce disciples of Jesus. We should voluntarily agree to and follow this command. This will be a great challenge for me and for all of you. For God is telling His disciples to produce disciples, and the command to make people disciples of Jesus will entail great changes, hardships, and sacrifices in our way of life.

My wife and I have been given a baby boy. We are doing our best to raise our child, and I see a great connection between parenting and the fact that it is an authoritative command from God to produce disciples of Jesus. By becoming a parent of this child, I have the right and the obligation to nurture and raise this child until he reaches the age of adulthood. It is an authoritative order from the state. In order for the child to grow into a full-fledged adult, this authoritative order must be obeyed. Over time, the child's body may grow like an adult, but the mind does not grow on its own. Parenting involves a great deal of time and great sacrifice. I will also teach and nurture my child in the hope that he will believe in Jesus and walk as a disciple. It will be hard work, but there will also be much joy and blessing. Producing disciples of Jesus is an authoritative command from God, just like raising a child.

Producing disciples of Jesus is an authoritative command from God. Those who have become disciples of Jesus Christ, produce disciples of Jesus! This is the command and will of God. We are still in the middle of the road, there are still failures, there is still labor and sacrifice in producing those disciples. But what a joy it is to see people become disciples of Jesus and work at having their lives transformed. We need to obey this authoritative command from God.

Making disciples is the authoritative command. And the lifestyle of a disciple is a command to produce new disciples of Jesus. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Jesus continues in verse 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."

The "make disciples" part of this passage is imperative. The command given by Jesus to his disciples is to "make disciples" of people. And these people are from all nations. The disciples were only Jews at this time. But on earth, Jesus was extending his saving and healing hand to the centurion, the Samaritan, the Canaanite woman, and many others. And now the disciples were commanded to go and make disciples of all nations. In Acts, we read of a

Gentile man named Cornelio who believed and the Gospel spread as Gentiles became disciples of Jesus Christ.

Jesus then tells them to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Baptism means that in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we express it as a sign of God's promise of inner sanctification, forgiveness of sins, new birth and life brought by the Spirit, eternal protection in Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit, through the washing of water. Jesus told his disciples to baptize. Jesus commands his disciples to baptize.

And then in first part of verse 20, Jesus says, "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you."

The life of discipleship for those who become disciples has only just begun. The word "disciple" means "one who learns". Therefore, new disciples need to know who Jesus is, what He commands, and what they are to observe. Jesus expressed what He commanded and what He kept in His life with His disciples. And now we are given the Bible, especially the Gospels, in which they are written. Therefore, the disciples need to continue to learn from the Word of God, the Bible.

One man who did the work of being a disciple of Jesus and producing disciples of Jesus was Luis de Almeida. He was born in Portugal in 1525, during the Warring States Period in Japan, and became a doctor in 1546. He boarded a ship in 1552 to sail around the world to Macau, which was then a colony of Portugal, with the intention of getting rich. There he met a Catholic missionary, Cosme de Torres, who was also on the ship. He wanted to serve as a missionary in Japan. After meeting Torres on the ship, Almeida made up his mind to walk as a disciple of Christ, gave up his dream of getting rich on the ship, and went to Japan to preach with Torres.

Since Xavier was already doing missionary work in Japan, Almeida and Torres used their own money to build an infant home for children without parents in Bungo Province, now Oita Prefecture, and later, since he was a licensed physician, they built a hospital. It was the first Western medicine hospital in Japan. Many sick people came to him. His motto for his practice was "Deus (God) cures disease," and he treated them with prayer, patiently taught the Bible to the patients there and to Buddhist monks who came to ask questions, took time to pray, and led them to become disciples of Jesus. He later became a priest and also practiced medicine, finally being called by God to heaven while in Amakusa, Kumamoto. Almeida brought Western medicine to Japan, and many Japanese disciples of Christ were born.

Our life as disciples of Jesus Christ is to produce disciples of Jesus Christ in all of our lives and in our lifestyles. Jesus invites you to enter into a life that produces

disciples. How can you respond to this command? You have more gifts to make disciples than you know, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Even spending time with them, even eating with them, can be used to lead them to be good disciples of Jesus.

Finally, the "disciple-making imperative" is an encouragement that the Holy Spirit will be with us as we produce disciples of Jesus. In the last half of verse 20, Jesus says, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

First, before Jesus begins these words, he cautions his disciples to listen with the word "behold." And though it is not so in the Japanese Bible, Jesus is trying to tell them, first of all, "I am with you always". Jesus will ascend to heaven later, but He will be with His disciples through the Holy Spirit, the Helper. In other words, when a person becomes a disciple of Jesus, God the Holy Spirit is always involved. What a comfort and encouragement this is to those who become disciples of Jesus.

Producing disciples will require great change and sacrifice, because it means that people's lives will be changed. And it is not something that can be accomplished in the power of the flesh. But Jesus is with us in the midst of what seems like failure, with the Holy Spirit. And Jesus Christ will be with us until the end of the world. With Jesus' atonement on the cross, the work of salvation is complete, and the Kingdom of God is near. But it is not yet completed. We live in a situation of "already, but not yet. However, Jesus promised in the Bible that He would come again to this world and complete the Kingdom of God. And until that completion, until the end of the world, Jesus will be with us with the Holy Spirit. As we work on God's command to produce disciples, Jesus is always with us through the Holy Spirit in the disciples.

Recently, a program televised in Japan has become a worldwide hit. It is called "Hajimete no Otsukai/Old Enough" in which a boy and a girl between the ages of 3 and 6 are asked by their mother and father to buy something for them.

The program follows the growth of the children as they are asked by their mothers and fathers to go out of the house, go shopping, and come back. Although there are cultural differences and controversy in other countries, this program allows us to see what happens when we produce disciples. A child follows the orders of his father or mother and tries to fulfill them wisely. The child may be alone when he or she is out shopping, but the people on the film crew of this program are always paying close attention to the child's safety and behavior, including disguising themselves so that the child cannot be found, and occasionally offering a helping hand to achieve the goal. When we live to produce disciples, we may feel anxious, nervous, and

sometimes helpless. But as Jesus said, the Holy Spirit is always with us for the purpose of making disciples.

We are being led through our lives to produce disciples of Christ. At this time, Jesus is with us as the God of Immanuel.

The Holy Spirit will share His will with us through the Word of Scripture, correcting our mistakes at times, rebuking us, and maturing us to produce disciples. Therefore, we should ask for the Holy Spirit's help in this life of producing disciples.

Jesus was crucified to pay for our sins. He died, but rose again on the third day, triumphing over sin and death. Jesus, our real King, invites us to be His disciples. There is no more honorable and wonderful way to walk in his cause as a disciple, a beloved child of the King of kings, the true King. He is calling you to make new disciples in your lives. Let us answer this call, rejoice that we have been forgiven of our sins and made children and disciples of Jesus, and go out into the world to make new disciples of Jesus. The Lord will be with us until the end of the world, until the completion of our purpose.

Let us pray.

Father, who is rich in love, mercy, and grace. We have received your Word from you. Lord, you have told us to produce disciples. It is an authoritative command. For the sake of your will, we want to willingly offer ourselves to produce your disciples. You also want us to produce disciples in all of our lives. Please enable us to produce new disciples through our lives.

May we remember our neighbors, pray for them, invite them into our homes from time to time, talk with them, and lead them to become your disciples. You also said that You will be with us until the end of the world. What an encouragement! We are not alone. You are with us. As we walk as disciples, we will experience failures and suffering in the process of creation. But your presence is the greatest comfort and encouragement. I thank you from the bottom of my heart that you are with me. With sincere joy that we are your disciples, we offer this prayer before you in the name of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.