

DISCIPLESHIP POWER



- Read Matthew 28:18-19 & Matthew 9:35-38

Jesus had compassion on the people he was teaching. He could see how many of them were ready to be a part of the kingdom of God, and yet he was deeply concerned about the fact that there were so few people who could teach and disciple them. After Jesus had risen from the dead, his final charge to his disciples was to go and make disciples of all people. As followers of Christ this charge still applies to us.

Jesus set the pattern for discipleship by: **Going → Teaching → Doing.**

We Struggle To See What Jesus Sees

- Read Matthew 9:37-38

Hostility towards Christianity seems to be rising every day. Our experience tells us that no one really wants to hear about God's kingdom and yet we are confronted with Jesus' words that contradict what we see. He said that the "harvest is ripe" and that the problem is that there are not enough workers to bring in the harvest. Most of us do not really think about the weight of that problem. We do not see ourselves as fellow workers of the gospel. If we could see what Jesus saw, knowing how many people in our very midst are ready for the gospel, we would be using every opportunity to disciple them. But instead we let life's business get in the way, and forget the seriousness of the call to discipleship.

- ❖ Q: What did Jesus mean when he said to go and make disciples in Matthew 28:19-20?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think that most of us are so passive about discipleship?
- ❖ Q: How do you feel when you think about the truth that the "harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" (Matt 9:37)?

God's Heart For His Harvest Means We Don't Labour In Vain

Jesus did not immediately tell his disciples to go and solve the problem. Instead he told them to pray and ask *God* to send out enough workers. We sometimes forget that it is God's kingdom, and that he is the one who brings in the people. He is committed to his plan. So the success of the gospel reaching the ends of the earth depends entirely on his power, and yet he has charged us with a significant role to play within his plan. This allows us to have great confidence and assurance in him as we set out as workers to bring in the "harvest".

- ❖ Q: Why did Jesus tell the disciples to pray instead of going out and spreading the gospel there and then?
- ❖ Q: Why is it helpful for us to know that it is God's harvest and not ours?
- ❖ Q: If it is God's harvest, why do we still need to go out and intentionally disciple people?
- ❖ Q: Do you tend to feel overly responsible for reaching people with the gospel, or do you feel more passive, assuming God will do it with or without you?
- ❖ Q: What should our attitude and response be towards the charge to go out and make disciples?
- ❖ Q: How are we going to make sure that this message leads to intentional discipleship rather than just a discussion on discipleship?

The Holy Spirit Is The Power In Discipleship

- Read Acts 1:8, John 16:7-10, 13-15

Jesus never intended for his disciples to continue his work without him and so he sent the Holy Spirit to empower them. The Holy Spirit plays the same role today in bringing people into God's kingdom and enabling them to disciple others. His role is clearly marked out in scripture and we can completely rely on him as we seek to obey God in disciplining others.

According to John 16, the Holy Spirit will:

- convict concerning sin, righteousness and judgment (vs.8)
- guide us in truth by speak and telling us the truth (vs.13)
- glorify Jesus by making Christ and God known to us (vs.14,15)
- ❖ Q: Why is discipleship futile without the power of the Holy Spirit?
- ❖ Q: Do we rely on the Holy Spirit when we meet with people and intentionally disciple people? What does it look like to rely on him for this?
- ❖ Q: Are you personally being disciplined by someone? Why/why not?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think we tend to feel that we only need to be discipling Christians who are weaker in the faith, and are not actively looking to be disciplined ourselves?
- ❖ Q: Who could you be discipling and who could you ask to disciple you?