

# Celebrating Gospel Transformation Through Baptism

Matt 28:18-20

April 29, 2018

Today we celebrate the power of the gospel to transform lives in the baptism of four individuals so I want to spend some time sharing with you how baptism relates to making disciples. The mission God gave us, the reason we exist, as a church and as individuals, is making disciples. Making disciples can be boiled down to helping others understand the gospel and then help them follow Christ so that they can in turn make disciples.

The elders have an ongoing discussion on how we are doing as a church and specifically making disciples. We are determined to create a culture that centers on making disciples. So, let's look at Matthew 28:18-20. The main verb is make disciples with three participles that describe how we make disciples in summary form: by going, by baptizing, and by teaching. So let's first define what is a disciple and then we will look at the process.

- First, a disciple follows Jesus (Mat 4:19; Jn 1:43; Mk 1:17-18; etc) by coming to Jesus for salvation (Lk 9:59; Mt 19:21-22; Lk 14:26; Mk 8:34). That is, you repent (Mat 4:17; Lk 5:32; 3:8), turn from your sin, and turn to Christ in faith (Jn 2:11; Mk 1:15). But salvation more than a one time decision separated from the rest of your life. It is a faith commitment to follow Jesus, learn from him, and obey him. Faith not only delivers you from the penalty of sin through the forgiveness of sins but it also frees you from the power of sin by changing us through the gift of the Spirit.
- Second, a disciple is spiritually formed by Jesus so that they become like Him (Rom 8:28). At salvation, God implants the desire and the power to be like Jesus, which can be simplified to loving God and loving others (Jn 15:12). But we do not follow Jesus alone or in isolation, we follow in a community of disciples, the church. So, a disciple follows Jesus and is formed by Jesus in the context of a community of disciples, the local church.
- Third, a disciple is faithful to the mission of Jesus, making disciples. That is, disciples point others to the work of Jesus in the gospel, and help them follow Jesus also. Faithfulness to making disciples means that if we are making disciples, we are reproducing ourselves in the lives of others. If we are not reproducing, then we are not making disciples.

## 1. We Make Disciples by Being Intentional

The marching orders of the church is to make disciples, the marching orders of everyone Christian is to make disciples. We are told to go and make disciples. Go means to be intentional with how we live, pointing others to Jesus and helping them follow Him. It is not necessarily about adding something new to our schedule, but being intentional about the relationships we already have. One of the questions we have in our discipleship groups is, who has God put in your life that needs Jesus? And, have you shared the gospel with them this week? Sharing Jesus with others is on my mind more when I know someone is going to ask me about it.

## 2. We Make Disciples by Connecting Others with God's Church

The pattern in the early church was to believe and immediately be baptized. The church baptized those who gave evidence of faith in Christ (Mk 16:16; Acts 8:36-28; 16:31-33). For instance, "Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38) or "Those who accepted his message were baptized." (Acts 2:41). This is why Paul, when he wrote to the church in Rome, a church he had never been to, assumed that all of them have been baptized. Listen to what he says, 'do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ (6:3).' He does not say 'some of us' or 'most of us' but 'all of us who have been baptized' because everyone had been baptized! Baptism is the disciple's initiation/incorporation into the church. Baptism says, I am following Jesus and becoming a part of his people. Connecting with others is one of God's tools to form us to become like Christ. Being created in the image of God tells us that we are designed for community. So being connected to God's church is fundamental to discipleship. Here is our process for making disciples. Our first step is to help people know and worship Jesus Christ through our Sunday services. Secondly, we have midsized groups for training and education like Sunday School

and our periodic training classes. Our third step is small groups for sharing, caring, and community. But we see the need to add another layer or step to the process that is more intentional in making disciples. So, we are adding gender specific groups focused on spiritual formation, life change, and accountability for a defined period of time. Our desire is for everyone who calls CCC their home to be involved in making disciples.

### **3. We Make Disciples by Teaching Towards Obedience**

Teaching is indispensable for making disciples but public preaching is not the most common way of teaching. Jesus spent 75% of his time with the twelve disciples in a highly relational environment, teaching them, mentoring them, and modeling for them to reproduce themselves in the lives of others. When Jesus told them to go make disciples, he did not need to explain himself. Jesus focused his time and energy on the twelve and changed the world! Most of Jesus' teaching was to this small group of men. The goal of teaching is not just information but obedience. I am convinced that spiritual growth and becoming like Christ requires accountability. This is one of the driving forces behind adding another layer to our discipleship process. Smaller groups of three to five individuals of the same sex gathering for life change and accountability.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. Why do you think this passage is often called the great omission?
2. Have you ever been discipled? Have you ever discipled someone else?
3. Are those you discipled, making disciples? If not, have you really discipled them?
4. How does David define a disciple? Making disciples? Are you discipling people? Do you feel responsible to do so?
5. What do you think about David's definition? Would you add or change anything?
6. How does baptism relate to making disciples?
7. What is God saying to you this week from this text?
8. What is teaching for obedience? Why is teaching for obedience necessary?
9. Have you ever been in a relationship where you held others accountable?
10. What do you think or feel about making disciples?

