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Mission ~~im~~Possible  
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It wasn't long after my wife and I had moved to Campbell River, that I had shared with her that I would be interested in going to church. She was excited as she had a relationship with Christ. I also shared that I wasn't interested in being part of one of those Foo Foo "care groups" that her parents were a part of in their home church. I just wanted to go to church.

God is funny though. What is amazing is we want him to change us, and that is just what He does and never how we think he will. How did I end up in a growth group (much less end up leading and training our growth group leaders)? I was invited by a couple, who we had a good friendship with. It wasn't weird, awkward, or foreign. It was with some people who invested in us. It was natural and with people we cared about and we learned a lot from them.

Let's fast forward a few years later. I find myself leading a growth group. The couple who led it moved away to Victoria, and the next couple decided to stop leading as well. I was asked to lead it.

Let me tell you what our group focused on. We prayed for each other. We studied the bible. We cared for one another. We shared burdens. We became very close and I have those friendships to this day. Do you know what else? I don't know if we made a disciple.

We will be talking about making disciples today. What is a disciple? How do we make them? In fact we are going to be talking about biblical community and mission and how they can't be separated.

First, what is the mission:

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Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> 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, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This is the Mission that Jesus gave his disciples before he ascended to heaven. This is a huge task. Where to even start. So, they are to go and make disciples from all over the world, baptize them and teach them everything that Jesus taught and showed them. Sounds difficult.

Second: What is a disciple:

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Holman New Testament Commentary

**Disciples**—Persons who follow and learn from Jesus Christ; sometimes used more specifically as alternate designation for twelve apostles.

If this is the what, then how about the how do we make these followers of Christ:

The book of Acts picks up where the gospels leave off. Jesus came, hung out with sinners (like you and me, prostitutes, tax collectors, etc). Led a sinless life, made disciples, (those who make other followers of Christ), then was crucified on a cross for the sins of the world and ascended into heaven. We pick up the story with the early church. And by early church we mean a

gathering of believers in Christ (not a building). We are the church.

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Acts 2:42-47 ESV

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

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What they did (The Plan):

1. Apostles teaching - not just words/manuscripts - but on the job training. You see a disciple is a follower of Christ and you learn by doing. Think apprentice - not student.
2. Fellowship - this is a oneness, common goal, common purpose - the gospel. MISSION. This is why we do Sermon based curriculum. So we are all on the same page. Will the results be the same – no. God will lead us to different people, different places, and different circumstances. But he will change lives.
3. Breaking of Bread- not just communion but also meals.
4. Prayers - Led by the Holy Spirit. Mission is hard. The mission Jesus has given us is impossible without the Holy Spirit. We are filled with and led by the Holy Spirit.

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What were the results:

1. They shared what they had. Changed hearts. They didn't focus on themselves.
2. Spent time together at temple and in homes and elsewhere. The mission is hard. We need to encourage one another. You don't make disciples in an hour a week. Its about life on life.
3. Led by the Holy Spirit they gave to those in need and were thankful for God's provision.
4. Many came to Christ. Those who did not know Christ could see His work in their lives and gave their lives to Christ.

You can't have an Acts 2 church without going through Acts 1:8.

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Acts 1:6-8 ESV

<sup>6</sup> So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Don't worry about when or what- I have a mission for you. And I am sending the Spirit to lead you, strengthen you, and to give you the very words to say. Jesus is going to build his church and does it through average people like you and me. He has given us a family to do it with and the Holy Spirit who leads us and calls others to himself.

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Acts 4:32-35 ESV

<sup>32</sup> Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. <sup>33</sup> And

with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup> There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold <sup>35</sup> and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Those who came to Christ - singular purpose. Generous. Pointed others to Christ by their changed hearts.

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Acts 5:12-16 ESV

<sup>12</sup> Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. <sup>13</sup> None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. <sup>14</sup> And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, <sup>15</sup> so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. <sup>16</sup> The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit. Jesus performed miracles through everyday people who believed in him. Many came to Christ as they saw how Christ had changed them and was changing lives.

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Key: small groups are about making disciples who make disciples. If you don't have a plan to make disciples, you won't. You will have a bible study, or a self help group. You need to be untentional.

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Key: some people think they are in community when actually they are just in proximity. Biblical Community results in heart change and fruit. Repeat.

Often I get the question "Why are we always talking about evangelism". Isn't there anything else?

Answer: No. God's covenant with Abraham - was so that all people would come to him. I will be your God and you will be my people. So that when they saw them, they would Worship God.

And yet we couldn't hold up our end of the bargain.

A: New covenant through Jesus. It's why he came.

John 3:16 ESV

<sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Ever since the fall, God had a plan to reconcile us to him. (Sin had to be dealt with for us to be reconciled to God). Jesus had to come/ die/ resurrected.

If you don't have a relationship with Jesus let me tell you something.

Jesus took your sin and my sin on the cross. He took the sins of the world and died on the cross and was raised 3 days later. This is how we can have a relationship with God. It is our sin that causes the barrier between us and God. He paid the price for your sin. You just have to ask Him to save you. You have to put your trust in Him, and what he has done, for your

salvation. If you have done that today or recently, come and tell us. That is the most amazing thing ever.

The reason we talk about it is because God loves you, values you, and wants to have a relationship with you. And until Christ's return- he wants to change our hearts so that the mission of telling others about him is important to us. He wants us to love others as we love ourselves. We don't share Christ out of obligation but out of gratitude. The difference is all about where your heart is.

We get distracted easily. We can get distracted by the bible itself and it is God's word. We can get distracted by our kids sports, our sports, our hobbies, and by our self indulgent-consumer driven lifestyle.

Yet, It needs to be all about Christ.

Even our love for one another is so that others will see Jesus in it!!

John 13:34-35 ESV

<sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”<sup>1</sup>

This is important. No fancy pictures. Just some truth. There is nothing else. We are to make disciples.

Let me go back to my story about leading my group.

We prayed for each other. We studied the bible. We cared for one another. We became very close and I have those friendships to this day. We shared burdens. Do you know what else? I don't know if we made a disciple. We had most of the “things covered”. I won't say it was a waste of time but I will say, it took me 2 years to go through the book of Romans. Let me tell you we went “Deep into the Word”. By the way, when someone says they are going deep into the word, it is usually code for study without heart change and without mission.

We were family. We had community. We read our bibles. Cared for one another. But we lacked purpose, intentionality, or in other words: MISSION. We did not ask the Holy Spirit to lead us, to open conversations with our neighbors/strangers, to change my heart for those he has planted me amongst.

The problem is, I led and did not let the Holy Spirit lead us, to change our hearts toward others.

Brian Miller shared last week about Becoming Human (more like Jesus). Loving others especially those who are hard to love. Its why we were created.

Why don't we do it? Why is it such a struggle? Ask the question.

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Because we are selfish indulgent, prideful, care- about- ourselves people. We are born into it.

So... what is the answer, well, Jesus has you covered. You have a bill you can't pay and He gives you the platinum Visa to cover. He gives you a family to walk with you, he gives you his Word the Bible, the holy spirit to lead you, and your sin debt is completely covered.

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And he says, I have a plan for you. I did not save you for you to waste your life on things of this world. You need a plan but not have it all worked out. Leave room for the Holy Spirit to lead. Build the bridge as you walk on it.

In full submission to Christ, not doing my own thing.  
Surrounded by family (brothers and sisters in Christ) not lone ranger.  
Heart changed by God.  
Accountable to others.  
Serve not be served.  
Intentionally led by the Spirit not my agenda.  
Full of grace, not self righteous.

On Aug 16th we saw 6 people baptized. 3 people shared how it was through their growth group where they found Christ, his Love, his grace, his truth and his mercy and were baptized. This is important stuff. Why are we talking about evangelism and making disciples who make disciples?

Because the king of kings, lord of lords has given us a mission. We need to stop talking about it. And listen and do.

I leave you with 2 points today.

1. If you are not in a growth group, sign up this morning.
2. Pray, pray, pray for the Holy Spirit to change you and lead you and to open up conversations with those around you. Get your group to pray and seek what God will do with your life, submitted to Jesus. Be intentional and led by the Spirit not driven by an agenda.