

“Go and Make Disciples” – Matthew 28:16-20

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

How many of you have played “Simon Says” as a child, or even a 25 year old adult? It’s a simple game in which you follow what the leader says. If “Simon Says” pat your head, you would pat your head. If “Simon Says” balance on one foot, you would balance on one foot. The whole game is to follow what “Simon Says.” But if the leader says, touch your nose, you better not touch your nose, because Simon didn’t say to. It’s a fun game to play, but it’s more fun to try and trick the people to do something Simon doesn’t say. We try so hard to listen and obey to what “Simon Says,” yet how hard do we listen and obey what Jesus says?

In Gospel message, “Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus Says, “go and make disciples.” It’s pretty simple. Go and make disciples! He even tells us how we make disciples. By baptizing and teaching. So, why is it so easy for us to play a game “Simon Says,” but not live our life as “Jesus Says.”

As a child, did your parents ever tell you to do things? For example, my dad would say to me, “Tyler, clean your room.” What would happen if after an hour, my dad came up to me and asked if I did what he told me to do, and I responded, “No, but I memorized what you said. You said ‘Tyler, go clean your room.’” My dad would be upset with me. But then I would tell him, “Don’t worry dad, a couple of my friends are going to come over later and we are going to look at what you said in the Greek and talk about what cleaning my room would look like.” That sounds crazy doesn’t it. When our parents tell us to do something, it is our responsibility to do it. Yet when Jesus says, “go and make disciples” we want to spend so much time talking about and studying it, that we actually don’t do it. The Great Commission has been worshiped, but not obeyed. I want to repeat that again, the Great Commission has been worshiped, but not obeyed.

I find it interesting how willing we are to speak up and proclaim the things God says we should not do. For example, how vocal many Christians are about how they feel about same sex

marriage. Yet when it comes to things God specifically says to do, like discipleship, we remain quiet. Why do we become so willing to preach on the things that we don't struggle with, yet on the stuff that applies to us personally, we rather pretend it doesn't exist?

Discipleship is what we, as Christians, claim to be all about. The question we have to ask ourselves personally and then as a body, am I willing to actually disciple/connect people to Jesus? Or do I just like the idea of it? As a church, are we willing to disciple/connect people to Jesus? Or do we just like the idea of it? It's a hard question to ask. I am sure many of us at first would love to say that is what we are about, but do our actions and behaviors reflect the same thing? Are we intentionally disciplining/connecting people to Jesus? A key to discipleship is replication. I want to share a quote I read, "The Great Commission without multiplication is evangelism paralyzed from the neck down." Basically, are we getting caught up in talking about, in the knowledge of discipleship, or are we actually applying it and doing it.

I want us to look at the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand and apply it to discipleship. There is a large crowd following Jesus; so He says to His disciples "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" Philip replies, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite." Still more of Jesus' disciples reply, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

For us today, in terms of discipleship the question Jesus asks is, "how are we going to share the gospel with all the nations?" We reply, "It would take this amount of money, this group of staff, and a newly remodeled church. But all we have is ourselves, our talents and gifts, we don't have what it will take to share the gospel with all the nations?"

But look what Jesus does with just the five loaves of bread and the two fish. He takes them, gives thanks, and distributes them to the crowd. After everyone ate to their fill, they collected twelve baskets of left over pieces. Jesus does the same thing with each of us. He takes what we have to offer, our time, talents, and treasures. He gives thanks and blesses them and hands them out to be distributed and shared.

There is a funny quote I heard the other day, "Christians are like manure. You leave them in one pile and it stinks. But if you spread it out it makes things grow." It's funny, but has some truth. As Christians, we are called to "Go and Make Disciples." Go and actually do it. Jesus

has given us the formula, He has given us our time, talent, and treasures. He has blessed them. He now says, go and do it.

Let's go back to what our Gospel says. We missed the most crucial phrase. "Then Jesus came to them." (Pause) Did you catch it? Let me read it again. "Then Jesus came to them" period. Jesus came to His disciples. The same guy who they all witnessed die on the cross. Jesus, their best friend and teacher who they had been following round for three years. The man they loved and have been mourning over his death. This man. This Jesus, "came to them." He lives. Jesus rose from the grave, comes to His disciples and listen to what He says next. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore..." WOW! This is no longer like listening to dad when he says, "clean your room." Jesus the only Son of God, who had lived a perfect life, went around healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out demons. Jesus who the disciples watched being tortured and crucified. Who died before their very eyes. This man is now before them and says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore." It should not matter what comes after the "Therefore." Whatever this man says, I am going to do. And Jesus says, "Go and Make Disciples."

Will you go? Will you make disciples? Do you hear the voice of the maker, the man who holds all authority, calling to you to go and make disciples? I pray you do. I pray that you feel called. That you know that you have been prepared. That you do not go out alone, but Jesus the man with all authority go's with you. He has given you all that you need to succeed. I would love to ask how many of us feel called? How many of us are going to actually "Go and Make Disciples?" But only time will tell the truth. We will have to wait six months to year before we start seeing the true results. To be a follower of Christ means you are sent. All Christians are sent.

In college, I was on the football team for Concordia University, Nebraska. Most people think that all students who go to a Concordia University are Lutherans, but that's not the case. There are a variety of Christian denominations and a quite a bit of non-Christians. Well there was this one guy on my team named Alex, he was also on the offensive line. He was a smart kid, seemed to be fairly nice. However, at lunch and dinners, he would love to bring up conversations involving God. He would try to ask questions and make statements just to create

an argument. He knew the ends and outs of making people mad. Then one dinner, he sat at my table. He started up a conversation and was immediately successful at making the guy next to me mad. However, I remained calm, partially because I thought it was humorous. I would patiently answer his questions, and would even ask him a couple of questions. I took a lot of time listening to his point of view and even agreeing with him on a couple of things, which really threw him off. Well these kind of conversations kept happening between him and I, but this time even during football practice. I would help him with some football drill and techniques. He would ask some questions. We had a trust built. Well, one day he asked if he could interview me for one of his Christian doctrine classes, which we were all required to take. After about a month, his teacher came up to me (he was supervisor of the Pre Seminary club on campus). He told me that Alex wrote a paper on me and shared that Alex came to faith through our friendship and conversations. I was able to disciple Alex through football and being a friend.

Do know that you don't go alone. Jesus goes with you! He have given you all the tools you need. You will not always be comfortable. You want always succeed. You won't always feel happy. But Jesus will be with you always to the very end of the age. He has put us together to encourage one another. To support one another. And to challenge one another. Now go and make disciples.

Amen/Prayer