

Why Multiply?

Matthew 28:16-20; May 21, 2017

Today is the final sermon in our *Steps* series. We've been looking at each key component of our Discipleship Strategy, explaining its significance and challenging everyone to consider taking next steps.

- Why Worship?
- Why Groups?
- Why Teams?
- Why Covenant Membership?

The reason we've been focusing on steps is because "steps change stories." When you take a step (and I've seen people take steps over the past four weeks) it changes your story (as an update, my little league team is taking steps and we've won...). The subtitle to this *Steps* series is, "Journey with Jesus." Jesus is both our guide and our goal. We have his teachings and we have his Spirit to guide and help us. But he is also our aim. God's desire for your life is that you grow to become a mature follower of Jesus, one who is becoming more and more like Jesus (Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28). I guarantee you that if you keep taking steps to prioritize Sundays, Groups, Teams and Covenant Membership, you will become more and more like Jesus because you are placing your life in the rivers of God's grace that he uses to change us.

When you take steps, it changes your story...but it also has the potential to change someone else's story. And now that person's changed story now has the potential to change someone else's story. And now that person's changed story has the potential to change someone else's story.

What if you completely leveraged your life to see God use you to change other people's stories.

This is what the last circle on our Discipleship Strategy is all about and it brings to completion the tagline on our strategy: Helping all people become mature and multiplying followers of Jesus. Today I'm going to answer the question: Why Multiply?

Context: For the answer to this question, we're going to look at the last words of Jesus that he spoke to his disciples before he ascended into heaven. These verses are known as the "Great Commission." I can't emphasize enough the significance this passage should play in how you think of all of life.

Read Matthew 28:16-20

Pray

The main point of the Great Commission and Jesus' last words is this:

The Point: Maturing followers multiply (maturing followers) local and global.

If you're going to multiply local and global, this passage demands that we respond to Jesus in the following three ways:

I. Submit to the Authority of Jesus (28:18).

What is unique about Jesus' authority?

- It is not that Jesus' teaching is more authoritative now, but rather, as a result of his resurrection and exaltation, the sphere in which he exercises absolute authority has been enlarged to include all heaven and earth (Eph. 1:20-22). God's authority is now mediated through Jesus, the reigning King.

The primary implication

- "God does not send out his church to conquer. He sends us out in the name of the One who has *already* conquered. We go only because he reigns" (DeYoung and Gilbert, 46).
- Since the Great Commission proceeds from the authority of Christ, we can engage in this mission with great confidence.

Why Multiply?

- Because Jesus reigns and his mission will not fail.

Is Jesus the supreme authority in your life?

- One of the main hindrances to the fulfillment of the Great Commission is a lack of submission to Jesus' absolute authority.

Why don't Christians submit to Jesus' authority?

1. Someone else has taken his rightful place.

- We claim to be followers of Jesus but he's not the authoritative relationship in our lives. We have given others that role: self, parents, boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.

2. You don't think Jesus is speaking to you.

- We all get that a person's authority doesn't lay claim on our lives unless they are actually speaking to us. An objection is that Jesus' command was limited to his original disciples.
- That objection doesn't add up for the following reason:
 - Jesus did not envision these eleven disciples making disciples of all the nations.
 - They were to teach their disciples to obey *all* the commands of Christ (v. 20), including this one.
 - Jesus' promise to be with them to the end of the age looks past the initial eleven disciples to those that would come after them.

Why Multiply?

- Because Jesus' command is for all disciples, not just a select few.

*** If RHC is going to shake the nations for the glory of God, we must be a people characterized by complete submission to King Jesus and his rightful authority over our lives.

II. Obey the Command of Jesus (28:19-20a).

A few initial observations:

- The main command in these verses is “to make disciples.”
 - Just to state the obvious: it’s a command, not a suggestion.
 - The reason we call our strategy a “discipleship” strategy is because this is the mission of the church.
- Who do we make disciples of?
 - We make disciples of “all nations.” We are not commanded merely to disciple individuals but entire nations; in fact, all nations. This refers to all people, including Israel.
- Let me help connect some dots for you guys real quick:
 - Genesis 12:3 - The Abrahamic Promise

“I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:3 ESV)

- Matthew 1:1 - Jesus and Abraham

“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” (Matthew 1:1 ESV)

- Matthew 24:3-14 - The Return of Jesus

What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matt 24:3 ESV).

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt 24:14 ESV).

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands” (Revelation 7:9 ESV).

Why Multiply?

- Because Jesus won’t return until the gospel has spread to all nations.

How do we make disciples?

- The three participles in these verses follow explain how we are to make disciples: going, baptizing, and teaching.

1. Make Disciples by Going.

- Go LOCAL: “As you are going”
 - Making disciples should be the pattern of your life. This is what we mean when we talk about *intersection, not addition*. Who are the people God has already placed in your life? Leverage your life to make disciples.
- Go GLOBAL: “Go”
 - At times, God calls people to go to the nations. This is mission through addition.
 - Video: The Smith’s in South Asia (3:23)
 - Instead of asking God if you should go, why not ask him, “Should I stay?” In other words, “God, why not me?”

2. Make Disciples by Baptizing.

- Assumed in the command to baptize is the sharing of the good news of Jesus (his life, death and resurrection) and a call for people to respond with repentance and faith. As people respond, the next step is baptism (Matt will be an example of this today).
- This is what Peter told the people to do on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38; 41).
- Trinitarian formula: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Have you been baptized? Baptism is not a suggestion, it is a command. It is the going public of an internal faith in Christ.

3. Make Disciples by Teaching.

- Discipleship is a matter of stewardship. We have been entrusted with the commands of Jesus and we’re not to keep them to ourselves.

Why Multiply?

- Because Jesus wants you to share with others what he has entrusted to you.

“...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2; cf. Matt. 4:19).

- Our goal is not simply converts but followers of Jesus who are obeying him with their entire lives. We don’t just impart teaching or instruction to be learned, but content to be *obeyed*.
- Do you see what’s implied here? Can you teach someone to obey something you aren’t striving to obey yourself? Making disciples is saying, “Follow me as I follow Jesus.” This is also why you can’t just confine discipleship to 1 hour in Starbucks.
- This is why the point is: maturing disciples multiply maturing disciples. We are growing, not just in our knowledge, but in our obedience.
- Ills: Tour of Boston. You could hire an expert or you could show them what you know.

What is a disciple?

- “A disciple of Jesus is one who has **heard** the call of Jesus and has responded by **repenting**, **believing** the gospel, and **following** Jesus” (Stephen Smallman, *The Walk*).

I'm interested in taking the following “story changing next steps” to multiply my life:

Multiply Local

- I'll intentionally pray for at least 3 names on my Multiply Card.
 - We should all be owning and leveraging the natural relationships that God has already placed in our lives.
- I'll extend at least 1 irresistible invitation to a pathway (entry point) this summer (Sundays, BBQ, Soccer Nights, Groups outing, etc.).
 - An invitation to an invitational life (2100 irresistible invites)
 - Dream: what if every single one of us were to extend one irresistible invitation this year and that person stayed with us (I heard two people this past week share why they returned to RHC: they people were so friendly and welcoming).
- I'll host a BBQ or other event at my house and invite my neighbors over.
 - Draw a map of your neighborhood and begin filling in the names as you meet people. Then plan an opportunity to get to know them more.
- I want to be trained/equipped to share the good news of Jesus.
- I want to share the gospel with at least 1 person this summer.
- I commit to sharing a story of God's work in my life with a friend this summer.
- I'd like to be equipped to disciple others and help them grow.
- I'll initiate a discipling relationship and help them grow.
 - Will you pray an audacious prayer: “God, give me a girl or man whom I can win to Christ, or let me take one who is already won, an infant in Christ, and try to train that one so that he or she will reproduce.”
 - Relationships, Scripture and Time
 - Ask someone to read through a book of the Bible together.
 - Read through a good Christian book together.
 - What's the goal? Mature and multiplying!

Multiply Global

- I'd like to serve with Redeeming Grace this summer: _____
 - Provide childcare during their Sunday evening gatherings (5-6pm)
 - Bring a non-Christian friend from Arlington to their Evangelistic Bible Study on Thursday evenings in June/July (6:30pm)
 - Help spread the word about their Summer Movie Night by placing door hanger invites around Arlington on Saturday, 7/22 @ 10am.
- I want to explore going on a mission trip: NYC (8/9-13) and/or India (11/3-13).
 - Will you commit to giving 1 week of your time to mission efforts in the next year? I guarantee this will transform the other 51 weeks of your year. There's nothing better that you could do to burn a passion for the nations than to take a short-term trip.
 - Go ahead and get a passport.

- I want to financially help someone go on a mission trip.

III. Depend on the Presence of Jesus (28:20b).

- Jesus does not say “I *will* be with you” but “I *am* with you.”
- “The whole of every day.” The future horizon and each day is in view.
- How does Jesus manifest his presence with believers today? His Spirit (cf. Luke 24:44–49; Acts 1:6–8; 2:4).
- “The greatest hindrance to the advancement of the gospel to the nations today is the attempt of the church of God to do the work of God apart from the power of the Spirit of God” (David Platt, sermon, *The Presence of Christ*, SBTS, 11:45-59 mark).
- The greatest hindrance is not the self indulgent mentality of our society but the self reliant trust in ones self. Are we dependent on ourselves or are we desperate for his Spirit?

Why Multiply?

- Because Jesus empowers you for this task through the power of his Spirit.

The Point: Maturing followers multiply (maturing followers) local and global.

Three pastors at RHC aren't going to change Greater Boston. You know when this thing is going to explode? When we take steps collectively as a church to multiply. Steps changes stories. Can you imagine the potential impact. It's exponential. God changes people and people change the world.