

# A Charge to Discipleship - Week 1

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[ 0 : 00 ] Turn to the Gospel according to Mark. Go ahead and turn to chapter 1 with me this morning.! We are going to take a break from our verse-by-verse working through the Gospel of Mark.

I can't tell you exactly how many weeks that's going to be at this point, likely for the month of February, we're going to do this. And we're doing so because I think there's an issue in the American church, which is true of our church as well, that needs to be addressed. And we need to take some time to sit and to consider and to really search our hearts concerning the matter. Let me first give you a hug before I step on our toes.

As a church, we do so much right. I'm immensely grateful for all of you, and I don't know all of you in the room. Some of you are guests with us here this morning.

This church is a wonderful church. There's so much that's good and healthy about what we're doing. In fact, as I meet with pastors in the area to be encouraged and to press one another on, I always leave those meetings so happy to be the pastor of Christ Family Church.

[ 1 : 20 ] Because I don't deal with nearly the messes that they're dealing with in their churches. I found myself being a little bit mean about it.

Like, hey, you want to meet with me so I can hear all your trouble so I can be really happy about my life and my church and the things that are happening in our congregation. But there's more, and there's better work that we can be doing.

And there's a danger that we always look at the good things, which we should certainly look at. We should certainly give God much praise for those things that are happening in the life of our church. But that we, in doing that, we ignore those things that need to be worked on.

And I don't think that I would be a good leader to you if knowing those things are true and not telling you about them and not pushing you beyond them, not looking for a greater degree of growth in your life.

It would be unloving for me to withhold that from you. There's a school of thought that says if it isn't broken, don't fix it. It's a very American way of thinking about business, for an example.

[ 2 : 27 ] But I say there's always more. Jesus comes back today, we're done. But until that time, we're not perfected. And we have much work to do.

And that's why I want to take some time to address this issue. And I will say that as we get into it, that there are many of you who do this well.

That the Lord is pleased with the work that you're doing. And my charge to you would be, help me give leadership in surmounting this problem for us.

So what is that? The Gospel of Mark, the great labor of it was to give evidence that Jesus is the Christ. Mark does this at great pains.

He establishes Jesus' power over demons, over sickness. His power over Satan, religion itself, the traditions of men. His power over nature and his power over sin.

[ 3 : 26 ] So Mark really wants his readers to see Jesus is the Christ. And as such, he wants his readers to see what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

That if Jesus is Lord, what does his Lordship look like? And how does it bring bearing in our lives? How then should we live if we're to be disciples of Jesus Christ?

And if we're to say that we're disciples of Jesus Christ, this means that we follow him. That we walk in his ways. And if this is true of us, we as believers must be about the work of making disciples.

We must be. And I think that this is a fairly large failure on our part. Certainly to say that there are various giftings in our church. There are those with a particular evangelistic gifting that do such a wonderful job of opening the door and inviting people in.

There are those who are really gifted teachers and can explain things with such clarity to help people understand. And a shame is that in our American churches, we have so segregated and so specialized the ministry that we have left that work in the hands of few, while the many do very, very little.

[ 4 : 55 ] I want this to be untrue of our congregation. And I hope that in these coming weeks, it will begin to be the case for us. But let me take you through Mark and just help establish what Jesus is trying to do in his ministry and the way in which Mark, led by the Spirit, records it for us.

Look first in chapter 1. Almost every chapter. Chapter 1, verse 14 and 15. Now after John, that's John the Baptist, was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, the place where he ministered primarily in his earthly ministry, proclaiming the gospel of God, the good news of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel, in the good news. The very thing that Jesus came to do, even as he's establishing his power on the earth, was coming to preach.

Just after this, he calls the first disciples. Chapter 1, verse 17. He says to Simon and Andrew, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

If you were to follow me, the thing you're going to be about doing is not fishing for fish any longer, but fishing for men. Chapter 1, verse 38.

[ 6 : 16 ] After some people, a crowd is looking for him, Jesus says, let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also. For this is why I came out.

Chapter 2, verse 17. Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

Jesus didn't come to hang out with those who thought they all had it figured out, who thought they were already righteous, but rather those who were humble and who were broken and knew they needed a Savior.

Chapter 3, verses 33-35. Jesus' family has come to take him back.

Earlier in the chapter, we see that they thought that he was insane, that he totally lost his mind. So they're standing outside, and the disciples tell them that they're standing outside. In verse 33, he says, Who are my mother and my brothers?

[ 7 : 22 ] And looking about those who sat around him, he said, Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.

We're to be part of the family of God. We are to do the very will of God. Chapter 4, verse 8. He tells the parable of the sower. He says, And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding 30-fold and 60-fold and 100-fold.

Some soil receives the good news of the gospel, the seed planted in them, and grows up and produces more gospel, growth in the kingdom.

And he gives explanation of that in verse 20 of chapter 4. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, 30-fold and 60-fold and 100-fold.

It doesn't make this a conditional thing. If you are in fact found in Christ, if you have accepted the word, you will produce fruit. Chapter 5, verse 19.

[ 8 : 36 ] Jesus heals the man with the subtitle in my copy. It says, A Demon, but we find out that it's actually a legion of demons cast them into a group of pigs who run off into the sea.

This man wants to follow him, but rather Jesus says to him in verse 19, Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.

This man wanted to devote his life because he had been delivered from these demons to Jesus.

The way Jesus has him do that is to go back to his family, back to his friends, and to share about the mercy of God on his behalf.

Chapter 6, verses 10-12. Jesus sends out the twelve apostles and says to them, When you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there.

And if any place will not receive you, and they will not listen to you, there's a proclamation happening. When you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.

[ 9 : 39 ] So, they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. Jesus sets them in motion to do the very thing that he intends for them to do when he departs from them, gathers them back together, and teaches them lessons because of their experience.

Skip over chapter 7. It's a great chapter. Verse 34. I'm sorry. Chapter 8, verse 34. I'm going to come back to this in a moment.

But just the statement of verse 34. And I will tell you that this is the statement that has just been resonating in my heart as we've been preaching through Mark, as I've been seeing thematic this development.

Not that this is a strange concept to us, right? Like, we know this, right? Like, as Christians, we're meant to share our faith. We're meant to preach the gospel, right? I think we get it here, but it needs to work down in and work around inside of us.

So, this is the major statement of Christ that's been working in my heart. If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Let him set aside his self-determination, his self-worship, and let him die and follow me.

[10:49] Death and the pain that comes with death to pursue Jesus. chapter 9, verse 35. There's a debate amongst the apostles about who is greatest, who will be the best of apostles.

Jesus says in verse 35, if anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all. Chapter 10, verses 44 and 45.

Once again, we have some debate. James and John want to sit at his right hand in the kingdom of God. And he says, whoever will be first among you must be slave of all.

For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. Chapter 11, verse 17.

Jesus goes into the temple and he cleanses it. He flips over all of the tables and he runs out the money changers. He stops people from cutting through the court of Gentiles. And he says, is it not written, and this is from Isaiah 56, 7, my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations, but you have made it a den of robbers.

[12:06] The very temple of God was meant to serve as a place to ask God's blessing for all peoples. We see this in Isaiah. We see it other places in the Old Testament. Jesus confirms it for us here in Mark chapter 11.

Chapter 12, verse 29. Jesus asks a question to test him by a scribe, kind of a modern day version of a lawyer slash theologian.

And Jesus answers, the most important is, hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

The second is this. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. Chapter 13, verse 10.

We're almost done. Jesus is telling the apostles things that will come to pass at the end of the age.

[13:18] In verse 10, he says, and the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ must first be proclaimed to all nations. We saw in chapter 14, Jesus' arrest, and that's where we are now taking a break.

In chapter 15 and 16, we're going to see his trial, his death, and his resurrection. And intentionally, I think this is such a good place for us to stop because we're about to really reflect upon the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

He's now been taken captive. The motion is going now. There's going to be this final thing, his death on the cross. And we're going to be really considering that in the coming months.

But to stop and think about the cost for us to follow him. Recall that he's made predictions. Chapter 8, chapter 9, chapter 10, in all of these places, he's made predictions about what he's going to suffer when they finally make their final trip to Jerusalem.

There's some objection to that. And even if there's not outward objection in some of those cases, they have objections in their hearts because they begin to debate about who's going to be greatest in the kingdom.

[14:29] Right? And the correction he brings to them is that the first will be last and the last will be first. That if we're to follow Jesus, we're going to follow him into his death.

And upon his resurrection, he gives a command in chapter 16, verse 15, go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And there's a more famous record of Jesus' great commission found in Matthew 28, verses 18-20, where Jesus says, So it is the great call on the Christian life.

There's much conversation about calling in our society, what God has called you to. And the New Testament is only clear on two things that you've been called to, all believers. We've been called to

believe.

We've done that thing, I hope, for everybody in this room that's true. And the second thing is that you're called to make disciples. To be about the work of having others believe. These are the two things that you can be very sure of.

[15:58] The particulars of how you'll do that, I don't know. But you could be about that activity, not simply making converts, but disciples. disciples. Teaching them to observe.

Not just teaching, but teaching them to observe all the things that Jesus has commanded us to do. Now go back, if you will, with me. Turn back a few pages back to Mark chapter 8.

And I want to just expand our text a bit. I think that verse 34, what Jesus says here is kind of this axiomatic statement.

This statement on which many things hinge. And to look at the context is so massively important for us. As we see what he begins to do, verse 31, he begins to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed. The suffering that he's going to experience is told to them and after three days he will rise again. He even gives to the apostles in this prediction of his death the hope that he will again rise.

[17:13] And he said this plainly, verse 32 says. Right? He says it plainly to them. He doesn't speak in any kind of parable. He doesn't try to confuse in any way whatsoever. He says this to them plainly.

This thing will come to pass. And Peter misses the point altogether. He takes him aside and he begins to rebuke him. And I believe that Peter does so out of a love for Jesus.

Don't say such things, Jesus. Don't say that this is the way the kingdom is going to come to pass. That you're going to have to suffer and you're going to have to die. That's not the way I envisioned this happening. And in so doing, he's formed Jesus the way he wants him to be.

Here is the Son of Man, the predicted one, the Christ, the Lord of all. Recall some of the things that Jesus has accomplished up to this point that Peter has been witness to. Phenomenal things.

The one that continually blows my mind because I love nature and being outside and I did so much study on the Sea of Galilee. Was he calling that storm? Storm. Phenomenal thing. This period of the year, storms kick up on the Sea of Galilee.

[18:21] Ten foot waves on a body of water about the size of Lake Lanier. Can you imagine being on Lake Lanier in like a fishing boat and ten foot waves begin? And Jesus just says, be still.

And it all stops. Dead. He's seen these kinds of things happen. And then he tells them what will come to pass. And Peter still says, oh no. No, no. This is not the way that Christ comes to reign. And I'm afraid in many ways we do the same thing. We fashion Jesus the way we want Him to look. Right? We in this church certainly shun the gospel of prosperity.

I'm not sure that we shun the gospel of comfort. We think that if we add Jesus to our life, life will get better by our terms. And when it doesn't, many people reject it altogether.

We're apathetic because we know that being obedient will lead us into uncomfortable discomfort and we don't want it. We make Jesus into our own fashion.

[19:20] That Jesus would come and sit amongst us and chill out with us wouldn't be the case if He were to visit. It would be clear He won't visit again until He's ready to vindicate and wipe the slate clean once again.

But if He were just to come and hang out, He might pop by and just say what's up. To our crowd. Sitting together in our comfort, doing our comfortable things. I'm convinced He would be someplace dangerous.

Someplace working. Getting in the face of those leading people astray. Laying out His life for the sake of the kingdom of God. Verse 35 says, For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it.

Look at the promise there. If we're willing to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of the kingdom, this promise that our life will be saved. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and to forfeit his soul?

Nothing. It profits him nothing. For what can a man give in return for a soul? Absolutely nothing.

And then verse 38. For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

[ 20 : 43 ] And I think that those words need to sink into our hearts. And I think that we need to think about the times in our lives when we have been given opportunity to be obedient to the call of Christ.

when we know full well we can proclaim the gospel in a situation and we shrink back and we're ashamed. Certainly at the core of all of this is an issue of heart.

If our hearts were properly aligned, if we love God the way we're meant to love God, overflowing from us would be proper response and obedience.

So it's an issue of heart and therefore it needs treatment in that way. Like not by some new program or some new model but we need to really examine our hearts.

And the very best way I know to do that is by the scriptures. The scriptures are a two-edged sword in this case. I think maybe a scalpel to really get at and to do some surgery on our hearts.

[ 21 : 47 ] And so I want to give to you eight cuts. I hope that they're fine cuts. I hope that they hurt a little bit.

Eight things I think we may believe or believe improperly. I'm sure there are more. But things that we can begin to think about and to look at and to process and to pray through and consider if this is why there's not a greater movement of God amongst us.

If this is why we're content with addition and not excited and looking toward multiplication. God bringing people into His kingdom in droves.

So eight cuts. Number one. We may not. It is possible that we do not understand the heart of our Father.

We do not understand the heart of our Father. For His great name's sake, He is building a family.

[ 22 : 58 ] He is adopting those into His family that have no right to be part of His family, who have sinned grievously against Him, have in every way said to Him, I do not want you to be my Father.

And yet, He does a work in us and He calls us into His family. He is not exclusive. But the God of Scripture seems to be so very inclusive, drawing people of all variety to Himself.

Revelation 7, 9 and 10 gives us a peek at this. John's vision, he says, 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 and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

a multitude that no one can number, a vast, vast number. Do you sometimes think that those in heaven are going to be the minority of humankind?

I can't say for sure, but it seems to me that as God wins this great redemptive battle, it's a sure thing, that maybe He wins in numbers too. Maybe those who will one day be glorified will outnumber those who will be damned.

[ 24 : 21 ] Either way, we certainly know that He loves and He loves immensely and He's building a family for the praise of His name. I find sometimes that we seem to operate under the assumption that God does not want to save people rather than under the assumption that He does and that He fully intends to and that He's powerful to accomplish this and that because He loves us, He wants us to get involved in that.

That He just is waiting, just go share, just go be the friend you know you're supposed to be. Open your mouth and give gospel proclamation and I'll change their heart and you'll both be immensely blessed and I'll be glorified in this.

Do you find that you do that with your friends assuming that they're so far gone? They're so dark in their understanding that God can't change their hearts? He changed yours.

You're no further, you're no better off than they are. Secondly, God's love for us may too often be stale in our minds and hearts.

Not fresh, stale, like it's a forgotten thing how incredibly God has loved us. Turn to Psalm 103. For our ministry apprenticeship, we're reading through the Bible in a year, this chronological Bible reading plan we're doing and Psalm 103 was part of that reading a couple of weeks ago and God just really arrested my attention and I've been meditating on verses 8-12 and it is good.

[ 26 : 10 ] Let me read it to you. I hope it'll have some of the same effect it's had on me. Psalm 103 verses 8-12 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

He will not always chide nor will He keep His anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities.

Praise Him. For as high as the heavens are above the earth Anybody know? Infinite. That's what is trying to be communicated here. I'm sure there's a measure but it's infinite is what is being communicated here.

As high as the heavens are above the earth so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him. Just stare up at the sky when you walk out of this building today.

Verse 12 As far as the east is from the west so far does He remove our transgressions from us. Do you know how far the east is from the west? It's infinite.

[ 27 : 13 ] No matter where you go no matter where you travel in the circumference of this planet the east and the west will always be infinitely far from one another. This is God's great love for us.

It is infinite in its nature. It is good. 1 John 4.19 says that we love because He first loved us. that the reason in which we can reach out and we can love others that we can have affection for other people is because of God's great love for us.

Luke 6.45 Jesus says the good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

beloved what do you speak about? What do you get excited about talking about? Many of you know that kind of sort of in a past life of mine some oh a decade ago I used to do a lot of white water paddling very into that Wes and I part of our friendship was formed around paddling together in fact Wes has most of my gear and just uses it you are welcome I used to be a white water kayak instructor and still to this day if somebody talks about white water my ears perk up and I want to go over and hear what's going on like what river they were on and what they experienced it even if from rafting class 2 to paddling class 5 I want to know what's going on that excites me I want to be around it do we do the same thing with the good news of Jesus Christ do we find ways it not because there's some duty to share it but because the love of

God overflows out of our hearts and into our speech this is what Jesus is saying will happen the good treasure of your heart the thing you care most about is the thing you will talk about most so what does it say about us when we don't when we find ourselves in situations where we would rather fit in and be cool and share the thing that we love the most double minded acts 8 1 through 4 this is after the stoning of Stephen it says and Saul approved of his execution and there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the apostles devout men buried Stephen made great lamentation over him but Saul was ravaging the church and entering house after house he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison and so there's this great deal the early days of the church that formed in

[ 30 : 08 ] Jerusalem after the days of Pentecost there's this great deal of persecution at the hands of Saul and look at the way that God is even now using Saul to and a better word that's translated here into our English preaching would be and gossiped the word but we think of gossip as a bad thing so we got to be careful about our translation but it literally means they went about just talking about what had happened in Jerusalem and what Jesus had done for them they went about sharing that with everyone they encountered we see this great massive advance of the gospel because of the persecution because of the work of the apostles out and beyond because it overflowed out of their hearts and I'm afraid for many of us too often that truth is stale in us forgotten it just doesn't have effect any longer the way you renew that in yourself as you get into the word of

God and you let the gospel speak to you and speak to you get around the church and let people preach the gospel to you you come and you sing gospel songs the reason we keep the volume low so you can hear everybody in this room reminding you that the gospel is good and precious and has effect in our lives number three I should move faster than I am right now we may not understand the nature of the enemy or the accomplishments of our victor we may not understand the reality that the power of Satan has been destroyed in a similar account chapter 8 Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ in Matthew we get a bit more detail beginning of verse 13 now when Jesus came into the district of Caesaro Philippi he asked his disciples who do people say that the son of man is and they said some say John the Baptist others say Simon

Peter replied you are the Christ the son of the living God and Jesus answered him blessed are you Simon Barjona for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my father who is in heaven and I tell you you are Peter and on this rock that truth I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it there's a sure promise in scripture that the work of the church by the grace of God

will advance upon the gates of hell don't hear we have gates and we hold out hell many churches function in this way many individuals function in this way keeping at a distance the evil of the world but rather we advance on it and the gates of hell will not prevail against the advance!

It's a military idea that we will make this accomplish this war by the grace of God Jesus' final words it is finished on the cross has such far reaching implications and he's certainly saying when he dies that the death blow has been delivered to the dragon he has plunged his sword deep into his heart and the things that we're experiencing now that are carried!

by Satan are just his writhing and seething as he's dying he has been defeated and in fact Jesus has his foot on his neck he lets him act only under his authority it's been subjected to him this is our God the darkness of the world seems so overbearing at times if you're in the Lord's army God is for us who can be against us so we may not understand the nature of the enemy or the accomplishments of our victor it is finished he will accomplish his will we are part of that we're part of that army marching behind him number four we may not consider the condition of the world or the nature of hell hell we may not consider the condition of the world or the nature of hell

[ 34 : 32 ] I find this to be true in me often I become kind of numb and I don't tend to look at people through spiritual eyes so there's that agitation about the guy that pulls out in front of you on the road that's an eternal soul the one that you're so frustrated with because he inconvenienced me 30 seconds on my commute from Gainesville to this building who cares really the world is broken it's falling apart because of this writhing and seething of the enemy having its effect pay attention to the news put on talk radio and just hear about all the tragic things that are happening in the world about us the effects of sin it is having its way here and now beyond that these people will be delivered to eternal damnation does that have any effect in your heart at all do you remember what you've been saved from or has

Christianity just always been like this happy hunky dory thing that! Have you ever actually really considered what your sin purchased for you and therefore what Jesus delivered you from eternal damnation 2nd Thessalonians 1.9 Paul says they will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction being destroyed for forever and I can't even possibly wrap my mind around what eternity is like but forever this destruction will go on and he adds to this probably the more piercing aspect of it away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might separated from God forever it's a great deal of tragedy in that whiteboard it's been here for a while hasn't it I'm going to try to stand in such a way that everybody can see I tried to draw the three counties that we mostly affect and live in

Dawson County Lumpkin County Hall County here's your city centers Dahlonega Gainesville Dawsonville and this is approximately where we are it's a star I'm sure it looks like a blob from where you are out there so just three counties and we certainly have some effect beyond that we have people who live in white county we may have some folks here from Forsyth county as well but just if we are an army for God that we should be working and moving and this is how many people live in this area 232,000 people for curiosity's sake 180,000 in Hall County 30,000 in Lumpkin County and 22,000 in Dawson County 232,000 people now we're part of the Chattahoochee Baptist Association which is a collection of churches and according to their statistics people okay now I think that's probably a pretty positive number unchurched because this would be people who are just saying

I go to a church so believe it or not what kind of church what kind of denomination I don't really know but let's just use their statistic and this that's our unchurched population in those three counties 185,600 people that's a massive number of people who likely couldn't be sure but likely do not know Jesus is Lord who right now are separated from him and will be separated from him for eternity the mortality rate I didn't take the time to do the math on this population but the mortality rate for the United States means that every year two and a half million people die so even life itself is fleeting opportunities to share the gospel with people is fleeting right there's a population here that's fleeting it's passing away it's going away to eternal damnation right we're at war we're not at peace we're at war there are dark forces working at keeping this the same way we ought to be about the work of changing that of moving that in another direction it ought to be heartbreaking to us that people don't know

Christ right the great treasure the treasure in a field that we go and sell all that we have and buy that field right this thing that we want to share with everyone we're so unloving so often because we don't press at people to respond to the good news of Jesus Christ one of my favorite Charles

Spurgeon quotes he said if sinners be damned at least let them leap to hell over our dead bodies let's die for the sake of sinners and if they perish let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees imploring them to stay if hell must be filled let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for this is a massive work but don't be overwhelmed by this you have a part to play that you'll be held accountable for that you should be obedient to and if we would do that if the people of God would respond to the call of God to make disciples I can't say exactly what

[ 40 : 03 ] God would do with this parable of the sowers there's different types of soil I don't know for sure what he would intend to do I want to work under the assumption that he just may let revival break out in these three counties and all of these people would be counted amongst His family we may not consider the condition of the nature of hell we may not actually think about it day to day what have we been saved from beloved if the gospel is precious to us we'll know that we'll know that we've been delivered from eternal damnation that's part of what makes it so good fifthly disciple making may not be worked into the DNA!

of new believers we coddle far too much in fact many of us probably became believers at a very early age and what happened after we became believers at very young ages is we sat in Sunday school classes and we got lots of nice Bible stories about the different people in the Bible that we should emulate but no one ever said and I could be wrong about this I probably am and just didn't hear it as a seven year old I didn't feel pressed to go share the gospel with my seven year old friends we don't work it into the DNA we hide people away we kind so much image bearing capability to accomplish so much but everybody says wait wait you're not ready yet hold on hang on how much exactly do we have to know before we're willing to go and to build and to mark 4 17 says this is again the parable of the soils says of the rocky soil and they have no root in themselves but endure for a while!

so this appearance Christianity then when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word immediately they fall away young believers need to be pushed out into the sun of tribulation kick them out of the shade and into the sun they need to be spurred on to being obedient to the things they know and they know the gospel so they should share the gospel the gospel isn't just for an individual it's for all of those that be counted in God's is the sharing of it is the going and the sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ and yet we keep them in the shade no no block out the sun block out the sun don't let the sun hit them they need to be pushed out we need to be pushed out into the sun right we need to have our faith affirmed in fact experience emboldens belief moved in such a way having your heart changed that you want to share the gospel that you want to be weird that you want to be seen as strange that it's okay if people think that of you because you're sharing you're rejoicing in the suffering of

Christ affirms that kind of stuff in you we coddle far too much disciple making may not be worked in the DNA of new believers that could be! the! the! It's not part of your DNA you didn't realize the best of intentions sitting here today you just may not have known that it's so massively important for your Christian living sixthly wow in a moment I'm going to say seventhly and eighthly how about that that doesn't happen often sixthly disciple making may not be the cultural norm in our churches!

And I would argue In most cases! this is true the great deception of the devil that he's turned our churches into events and our members into audiences we need to recognize that the church is a gathering of saints around the event of Jesus life death and resurrection and return and that we're an army we're his army an extension of who he is in this world and this is a war not fought with missiles or!

[ 44 : 12 ] bullets hear me it is not okay for you just to come here and sit and consume it's not okay you must find a way if you're going to be part of this church or any other to invest in those people for equipping for every good work and going it's not about putting on an event this thing we do on Sunday morning and I get that there's a consumption aspect to it but you have a responsibility to do something with what you've been given so many of us are so spiritually fat you get carb loaded on Sunday morning and you don't do anything with all the energy those carbs provide you just louse around pack on some weight right what if we just said 150 we're probably a few more than that this morning but what if we just said there's a consistent 150 people that come to our

Sunday morning services who would say they're part of Christ family church whether member or regular attendee or whatever we're a part of Christ family church we want to be about the work of God using this church we just said 150 and if you just put on some evangelical imagination with me

what if each of those disciples of Jesus Christ were about the work of making another disciple of Jesus Christ in a year one in a year now to be sure some people may do many more some people none at all some people may give their very best effort to it like Jeremiah God delays blessing they press and they press and no one responds!

no one seems to care very hear me out but just a little evangelical imagination what if you just said make a disciple whether that's somebody who's converted to Christ and grown up or somebody who's really nominally committed as a Christian and you can just get them to the point where they go and they turn they do the same thing multiplication is what we're going to talk about here I have a!

cheat! It's easy in year one I could probably go a couple years year one 150 people that's what I'm using as my starting point just imagining together in the next year 300 we've outgrown our meeting space and I would challenge you push the leadership of this church to do something about that what we'll do exactly I do not know but I welcome that we filled!

the room you might be thinking that's okay we filled the room hey that's not okay we'll go further and beyond this building could be leveled we could meet in a different building I don't know what we'll do right but make us have to make decisions and offer alternatives to you guys okay 300 here we go 600 1200 you can see how smart I yep and that's why I lose it 38 4 76 8 okay so let me just I know most of you can't see this but in year 10 you'd have 76 800 disciples of Jesus Christ right again assuming right God works God moves this is his work and his doing right I'm not suggesting some pragmatic thing like if you do it this way this will be the result of course right but what if what if God was so loving that he wanted to save people and we just were obedient to to working that method out to doing the things that the scriptures tell us that we ought to do right mature obedient believers of

[ 48 : 11 ] Jesus Christ 76 800 right now to get to this number or this number whichever you prefer make a bit of a jump somewhere between year 11 and 12 year 12 would be this 307 200 people so we far exceeded this number at that point the population of north Georgia 39 counties Atlanta and north is 6 million people the population of Georgia is 9 million people in the same year you would see this accomplished so about 4 million oh my gosh I'm writing all these out there's like 4 to 9 million people year 16 and 17 and just for fun the population of the United States is 313 million people and in year 22 you'd be at 314 million people now I know I've made a ton of assumptions in doing this

I didn't work out the math for what I could do by myself right but it certainly isn't this it certainly doesn't equal this kind of expansive growth Jesus Christ came into the world at the perfect time right it had all been worked out so perfectly he didn't come into the world when there was technology I believe intentionally so right that people might go and person to person share the gospel of Jesus Christ I think Jesus hangs his head and wags it back and forth with online TV and the insanity of churches there's a church which I won't name the name of that's on the west coast in California and they're starting a version of that church in India and they're so arrogant to think that the Indian people need to hear his preaching that they're simulcasting him into India the arrogance of that kind of thing the kind of pride that comes from that rather than just equipping people equipping people to go and do good works right the gospel is on three continents in one generation after Jesus death resurrection because they went and they shared and they started churches and they went and they shared and they equipped and we never should have stepped outside of that model right we all have a responsibility to play in this process right you start eliminating some of you from this number and this multiplication gets dramatically smaller and I know and I know that many of you have hearts for this many of you are pressing and driving I have been so encouraged in the last couple of weeks for the amount of sharing I've heard about intentional gospel proclamation really connecting really pressing it's been massively encouraging to me and we're not seeing fruit of that yet but stick to it and keep going

I don't think it's the cultural norm what if we change that culture in our churches what if it became strange if you didn't show up and have something to share about the work of God in your life in the gospel proclamation that week what if it was weird that all your buddies are talking about oh yeah I got to talk to so and so and this is what he said how would you have answered that question oh man this response this was really fantastic what if that was the case and you were like opposite of this it's plastic in so many regards how are you today brother oh I'm really good we go through our motions we are in a lot of ways a social club and we believe a lot of the same things and we're

pressing and I know that you guys love holiness and you're working on those kinds of things but we're inwardly focused not outwardly focused if we're an army this is base camp you get here to get equipped you get trained you get ammunition say to people all the time

I just need to remember why I'm fighting sometimes because the week's hard and I need to know sometimes that I'm not crazy so sing songs to the top of your lungs men don't let this room be dominated by female voices right because I need to hear your voices right I'm not a crazy man I need to know that it's just not me and the women that believe these things okay that's my sixth point seventhly we may not regularly recognize the transforming power of the gospel we may not regularly recognize it the gospel has transforming power it's transforming power in our lives all the time Paul says in Romans 1:16 for I am not ashamed of the gospel he's not ashamed right we've seen this exhortation what will happen if we are ashamed in Mark chapter 8 he's not ashamed why for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also the Greek if we change the culture if people are sharing constantly about the transforming work of the gospel in their lives and the lives of the people around them

[ 53 : 32 ] I think that would be good for us because we remember that the gospel does in fact save people that our confidence will increase and that again experience emboldens your belief get out and share the gospel and see people respond to the gospel in the strangest of ways right melt in front of you so firmly believing one thing and then finding that their entire worldview has changed in an instant and you'll know that God's word is powerful to change people's hearts and eighthly and finally feel strange to say we may not believe that we are equipped we may not believe that we are equipped but you are all more equipped than you may think you have responded in faith to the good news of Jesus Christ if you claim to be a Christian you better know the gospel because you responded to the gospel you can't be a Christian and not understand the gospel God saves all of you he saves your heart he saves your mind as well this is the way that he accesses our hearts through our minds you better be able to give at least a simple gospel outline if you're a Christian and you've been given the helper the Holy

Spirit you have within you an extension of Jesus Christ when the apostles were lamenting Jesus is leaving he said no no it's better that I go away sometimes that's hard to understand like I would have loved to sit at the feet of Jesus but he says no it's better that I go away because if I don't go away I can't send you the helper right so he has extended himself in a most magnificent way that we might all have this abiding presence of Christ in our lives to help us in what we should say and how we should say it Mark 13:11 Jesus' encouragement to the apostles as he's telling them about the end of things and the way that they're going to suffer he says that when they bring you to trial and deliver you over do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say as you're sitting in a prison and you're going to a trial likely to be killed don't be anxious about what you're going to say but say whatever is given you in that hour for it is not you who speak but the Holy Spirit so when your friend asks you a question about Christianity right and the end result may be that they just don't quite understand don't be anxious it's going to be alright the Spirit is going to speak through you you are probably going to flub it up sometimes but God seems to use the foolishness of men

I feel this way most Sundays to accomplish his work the Spirit moves we have the helper I'll give you the example of Stephen in closing mere days maybe just weeks after Stephen believes he's made some issues that are arising in the church the apostles want to devote themselves to prayer and the study of the word and he's appointed as a deacon not long after that he is going about and he's preaching he's teaching the word and he's brought to trial and I'll just encourage you to read Acts chapter 6 there's a fantastic sermon brought by the Spirit in Stephen's life but Stephen's not a he's filled with the Spirit not intellectually gifted in any manner whatsoever but Acts 6:10 says but they those are those that brought him to trial they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking read that sermon and just remember that he is an infant in the faith

I'll give maybe weeks weeks in the faith and yet by the power of the Spirit he delivers this magnificent sermon the great mark of Christian maturity beloved is not how much you know we're a smart church it's not how much you know it's what you do with what you know and I know many Christians who know very very little but are to be esteemed for their obedience the way in which they respond to the things they know and I know many Christians who are rather brilliant in what they know and do so little with it and it's a shame it's an absolute shame so I would ask are you faithful with what God has given to you are you a disciple who makes disciples the two are absolutely inseparable next week we will talk we will preach to you the things that the scriptures

show us that can be equipping the things that the model and the pattern in which we should follow as we look at the life and teaching of Jesus

Christ so be encouraged by that but this week I want you to stew in it I want you to really take an account of your life and the things that you care about and the efforts that you put towards things and I'm not suggesting that we're not good parents and employees and that we don't work hard in our classes but we do all of that with the kingdom of God and the gospel in mind this is the aim should be the aim of everything and let me close just by reading to you again what Jesus said recorded in Mark 8 verse 34 if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me let's pray together let's