

How to Use Sermon Resources

- **READ AHEAD TOGETHER** - MCG's should use the Devotional at the end of this resource as a reading plan for the week leading up to your meeting.
- **SIT UNDER THE WORD** - This resource is filled with scripture references. Read them aloud, together before you answer any questions.
- **APPLY TRUTH** - The goal is deep discussion and application, not necessarily to complete this resource. Don't squash a good discussion. If you get into something important along the way that's fine.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer [2 mins]

Use the Overview [5 mins]

- Cover any key points for people who missed parts or all of the sermon

Scripture Deep Dive [30-40 mins]

- Opening Question
- Read the scripture for each question then ask the question. Some have multiple scriptures.

Close in Prayer

- In this extended prayer time, ask others to pray as they feel led, pray in a circle, pray over one another, pray to your left, or pray for someone specific. Whatever seems best.

Split Time (if applicable)

- Men with men, women with women
- Share in a circle. "What's one thing you want to celebrate? What do you need prayer and accountability for?"
- After everyone shares, pray in a circle for the person to your left/right.

SERMON OVERVIEW

“Actively Seeking to Disciple Others” - Matthew 28:16-20

Sermon Summary: This sermon focuses on the Great Commission and what it means to be active disciple-makers. Pastor Matt emphasizes that being a follower of Jesus involves three key components: being in a growing relationship with Jesus, being engaged in biblical community, and actively seeking to disciple others. The message challenges the congregation to understand that disciple-making is not about perfection but faithfulness, not wishful thinking but intentional action, and not self-reliance but dependence on God's Holy Spirit.

Key Points:

- A disciple is defined as someone in a growing relationship with Jesus, engaged in biblical community, and actively seeking to disciple others
- Disciple makers are faithful, not perfect—even those who worship may have doubts and hesitations, but God still calls them to make disciples
- The standard for disciple-making is being FAS: Faithful, Available, and Spirit-filled
- Disciple makers are intentional, not wishful—discipleship requires strategic action, not just hoping people will grow
- Formation is happening whether we're intentional about it or not—Americans spend 40 hours per week on screens being formed by secular influences
- Three primary life stations for disciple-making: home, church, and places of influence (where you live, work, and play)
- Parents are called to prioritize spiritual formation in their homes just as they prioritize education and physical health
- Disciple makers are dependent on God's Holy Spirit, not self-reliant on their own abilities
- The church's vision is that members are on mission, not that members are the mission

Scripture Reference:

- Matthew 28:16-20 (The Great Commission)
- Matthew 14 (Peter walking on water—referenced for the word "doubt")
- Matthew 1 (Emmanuel, God with us—referenced as bookend to Matthew 28)

Stories:

- Matthew Emmons, 2004 Olympic rifle shooter who hit a bullseye on the wrong target in his final shot, costing him the gold medal and dropping him to eighth place—used to illustrate the importance of aiming at the right target as a church
- Pastor Matt's experience coaching t-ball, where children would run to third base instead of first base after hitting the ball—used to illustrate that skipping steps in discipleship (growing relationship with Jesus and biblical community) makes you ineffective at making disciples
- D.L. Moody's quote that if he had his lifetime of ministry to do over again, he would give it all to kids' ministry—used to challenge the congregation about serving in children's ministry
- Personal illustration about tutoring children in math when they fail tests, compared to investing time in teaching children to read the Bible and pray

Scripture Deep Dive

Opening Question:

Thinking about your typical week, which activities or priorities most clearly show what “target” your life is aimed at (career success, comfort, family, spiritual growth, etc.)? How does that compare with Jesus’ target in Matthew 28:18–20?

1. Disciple-makers are faithful, not perfect:

- **Matthew 28:16–17:** In light of this passage, and comparing it with Matthew 14:28–31 (Peter walking on the water), what evidence is there that the “doubt” in both passages is hesitation rather than total unbelief? List at least two concrete observations from these texts that support that conclusion.
- **Matthew 28:16–20; 2 Corinthians 4:7–10** – Even though some disciples doubted, Jesus still entrusted them with the Great Commission. In what specific ways do these two passages show that God deliberately chooses to work through imperfect, weak people? Identify at least two truths from these verses that should prevent a Christian from waiting for “perfection” before engaging in disciple-making.

2. Disciple-makers are intentional, not wishful:

- **Matthew 28:19–20:** According to this order (faith → baptism → ongoing teaching), how does Jesus’ pattern challenge the common church practice of front-loading all teaching before baptism and then neglecting teaching afterward? Give at least two practical implications for how a church or small group should structure discipleship based on this sequence.
- **Matthew 28:19–20; Ephesians 4:11–16** – Both texts describe an ongoing process of growth (“teaching them to observe...,” “mature... to the full stature of Christ”). From these passages, identify at least two responsibilities that belong to every believer (not just pastors or staff) in intentionally helping others grow, and explain why passive or “wishful” discipleship fails to meet those responsibilities.

3. Disciple-makers consider and leverage their “life stations”:

- **Deuteronomy 6:4–7; Ephesians 6:4** – These passages describe parents discipling children in the home. Identify at least two specific practices these verses command or imply (e.g., frequency, setting, content) and explain how those practices differ from the idea that a child’s discipleship can be outsourced mainly to church programs.

- **Hebrews 10:24–25; 1 Peter 4:10–11** – Read these verses about the gathered church and spiritual gifts. What two specific conclusions can you draw about why “not just attending but serving” in your local church is necessary for biblical discipleship, rather than optional “extra credit”?
- **Matthew 5:13–16; Colossians 4:5–6** – Apply these verses to your “places of influence” (where you live, work, and play). Based on the commands and images in these passages (salt, light, wise conduct, gracious speech), identify at least two intentional behaviors a disciple-maker should cultivate in everyday contexts, and explain how these differ from simply “being a nice person.”

4. Disciple-makers are dependent, not self-reliant

- **Matthew 1:23; Matthew 28:20** – Compare “Immanuel... God with us” at Jesus’ birth and “I am with you always, to the end of the age” at the Great Commission. What does this beginning-and-end framing of Matthew’s Gospel reveal about the relationship between Christ’s presence and our mission? State at least two doctrinal truths you can infer from putting these verses side by side.
- **Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8; John 15:4–5** – These passages link Jesus’ authority, His presence, and the Spirit’s power to our mission. From these texts, identify at least two indicators that someone is relying on God rather than on themselves in disciple-making (for example, habits, attitudes, or priorities), and explain how each indicator directly connects to a specific phrase or promise in the verses.

5 Day Devotional

Day 1 – Worshiping with Doubt

Reading: Matthew 28:16–17, Jude 1:22

Devotional: Even standing before the resurrected Jesus, some of the disciples doubted. Their doubt did not cancel their worship, and it did not disqualify them from being commissioned. Scripture distinguishes between unbelief and the kind of hesitation or inner conflict that believers sometimes feel. Jesus does not wait for flawless faith before He involves us in His mission; He works with worshipers who are still learning to trust Him fully. Your doubts can be brought into His presence, not hidden from it.

Reflection / Prayer: Ask the Lord to bring to mind a specific area where you are hesitant (obedience, calling, sacrifice, trust). Pray honestly about that doubt, and then thank Jesus that He still invites you into His work even as you wrestle.

Day 2 – The Lord of the Mission

Reading: Matthew 28:18, Colossians 1:16–17

Devotional: Before Jesus gives the Great Commission, He reminds His disciples who He is: the One with all authority in heaven and on earth. His call to make disciples does not rest on our competence but on His kingship. When we feel overwhelmed or inadequate, this verse pulls our eyes off ourselves and fixes them on the Lord of creation and redemption. Mission is not a human project; it is submission to the One who already reigns everywhere.

Reflection / Prayer: Reflect on one area of life where you tend to act as if you are in charge (work, family, plans, fears). In prayer, consciously “hand back” that area to Jesus’ authority and ask Him to show you how His Lordship should reshape your attitudes and choices there.

Day 3 – Go, Baptize, Teach

Reading: Matthew 28:19–20a, Ephesians 4:15

Devotional: Jesus defines disciple-making with three verbs: go, baptize, and teach. Disciples are not mass-produced by programs but formed by intentional relationships that lead people to faith (baptism) and then into lifelong obedience (teaching to observe). Teaching is not mere information transfer; it is helping others grow into Christ by truth that is lived out. Whether at home, church, or work, every believer is called into this pattern, not as spectators but as participants.

Reflection / Prayer: Ask God to bring to mind one person you could intentionally help move one step closer to Jesus (toward faith, toward baptism, or toward obedience). Pray for that person by name and ask the Lord to open a concrete opportunity this week to “speak the truth in love” to them.

Day 4 – Formation vs. Drift

Reading: Matthew 28:19–20a, Romans 12:2

Devotional: Everyone is being formed by something—media, habits, relationships, or God’s Word. Jesus commands His disciples not just to teach His words, but to teach others to observe them, to actually live them out. Without intentional formation in Christ, we will drift into the patterns of the age by default. True discipleship therefore requires deliberate practices, community, and instruction that resist passive conformity.

Reflection / Prayer: Reflect on your past week: what has most shaped your thinking and desires (Scripture, screens, conversations, worries)? Ask God to show you one practical change you can make (a habit to start or reduce) that would help you be more intentionally formed by His Word rather than by the surrounding culture.

Day 5 – Never Alone on Mission

Reading: Matthew 28:20b, John 15:5

Devotional: Matthew begins with “Immanuel... God with us” (Matthew 1:23) and ends with Jesus’ promise, “I am with you always.” The Great Commission is framed by the presence of Christ, not by human effort. Our fruitfulness in disciple-making flows from abiding in Him, not from clever strategies or strong personalities. His presence by the Holy Spirit turns ordinary obedience into eternal impact.

Reflection / Prayer: Spend a few quiet moments acknowledging Jesus’ presence with you right now. Pray: “Lord Jesus, help me to remain in You today—remind me that I am never alone in Your mission. Produce in me the fruit I could never produce by myself.”