

Where do we go from HERE?

Today we are closing out our series called **ON TARGET**. Over the past 4 Weeks we have been exploring the MISSION we have as followers of Jesus and what it is that we are supposed to be doing with the gifts God has given us. God wants to use our giftedness to reach people with the Gospel of HOPE. This is the TARGET of our mission and this is what we are to use our spiritual gifts to accomplish.

Over the course of this series we are ASKING and ANSWERING FOUR QUESTIONS to help us understand our mission better. In **Week 1** we dealt with the question of **WHY? “Why are we to make disciples?”** And as we looked at **Matthew 28:18-20** we determined that the answer to that question is because **“It’s what followers of Jesus do.”** We are to make disciples because Jesus our Lord commanded us to and it is through this process that we experience His intimate presence. We are to make disciples because as followers of Jesus we have a new identity and our new identity is that we are ministers of reconciliation for Him building bridges between God and those who do not know Him.

In **Week 2** we asked the question of **WHO? “Who are we to reach?”** **We are to reach the world!** We are to start with our physical sphere of influence (our Jerusalem -the place where we live, work and play) and while we do that we are to keep our heart open to how God may want to use us in the world at large to engage others with the Gospel of Hope.

Last Week we asked the question of **WHAT? “What do we say?”** **We started by defining the Gospel by giving 5 passages of scripture that concisely layout the simple message of the Gospel (John 3:16-17, Romans 10:9-13, Ephesians 2:1-5, Colossians 2:13-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).** We then gave 3 thoughts we need to consider when sharing our faith.

- 1) **Don’t let questions people have about God intimidate you.** Utilize those questions to find out where people are in their relationship with God but don’t let them distract from you inviting people to Jesus.
- 2) **Develop a brief version of your Personal Testimony.** You should be able to share in 1 to 2 minutes.
- 3) **Invite People to Jesus** (Whether that is to explore the word of God on their own, or do so in Bible study with you, or invite them to church with you, or simply to receive Jesus into their life. Extend them an invitation!)

That’s the **Why?, Who?, What?** of our Mission. So today, as we close out our series I want to answer the question of **WHERE? Where do we go from here?** **Let’s PRAY before we jump in.**

As we close out this series and begin the process of GOING and MAKING DISCIPLES I want to leave you with FOUR important reminders to help you stay focused so that you will be successful in the MISSION God has called you to join Him on. Here is the **1st Reminder:**

Make sure your PERSONAL WITNESS for Christ is in order. In other words, how are you doing at living out your own faith? It is hard to share your faith with others if you are not currently living this out in your own life. This doesn't mean you have to be perfect but it does mean you are trying to practice what you proclaim. It does mean that you are working out your faith. You may not be perfect at it but you are making progress. You may not have arrived yet but you certainly are not who you used to be. There should be evidence that Christ is at work in you.

Philippians 2:12-16 (NIV) 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, **13** for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. **14** Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **15** so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky **16** as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.

Philippians 3:7-14 (NIV) 7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. **10** I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. **12** Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. **13** Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Btw, don't use your personal struggle with faith or your poor witness as an excuse to not share your faith. If you have drifted in your relationship or you are struggling with sin, use this as an opportunity to get right with God through (Confession, Repentance and Reconciling with God). Remember God is a God of reconciliation. He wants you to be in right relationship with Him. He has done everything to make that possible and to set you free from sin so don't live as if He hasn't. But you will have a hard time witnessing to others about the remedy for their lives if you are not partaking of it in your own life especially when we consider that as AMBASSADORS for Christ we are in essence to be TOUR GUIDES to God's GOODNESS. **Make sure your PERSONAL WITNESS for Christ is in order**

Here is the **2nd Reminder:** **PRAYER is to be a CENTRAL PART of the MISSION.** As we have been pointing out throughout this whole series the MISSION we are on is God's MISSION! It's

not our mission. It's His. The work we are called to is a supernatural work that requires the supernatural power of God.

Therefore we cannot accomplish this mission without God's help and His leadership. At the end of the day this is a work of God. Prayer was a vital part of Jesus' Life and ministry while on earth. And if it was a vital part of His life, it should most definitely be a vital part of our life also. Before Jesus began His public ministry He fasted and prayed for 40 days in preparation for His MISSION. **Matthew 4:1-2** Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. **2** After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. There are many challenges and distractions to the MISSION we have been given and we will not be able to stand up to them in the power of our flesh. We will need the Word of God and His Holy Spirit to empower us. Jesus needed the same thing as He successfully attempted to live life as we have to live it. He purposefully set aside His divine power regarding Himself and He lived heavily dependent on the Father for strength and guidance.

He not only prayed at the beginning of His MISSION, but Jesus prayed along the way while carrying out His mission! **Matthew 14:22-23 (NIV) 22** Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. **23** After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone,

Luke 5:16 (NIV) 16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Jesus also prayed at the end of His mission right before His crucifixion! **Matthew 26:36 (NIV)** Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." Just as it was for Jesus, PRAYER should be a vital part of our life and mission. If we don't make PRAYER a CENTRAL PART of the MISSION we will be tempted to try and do it in our own power and strength. If we do, we will become discouraged and defeated real quick as the weight of the mission will over time wear us down.

Make sure your PERSONAL WITNESS for Christ is in order
Make PRAYER a CENTRAL PART of the MISSION.

Here is **Reminder #3: Don't take it PERSONALLY if you are REJECTED.** They aren't rejecting you, they are in essence rejecting Jesus.

Luke 10:1 (NIV) After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

Luke 10:8-11 (NIV) "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. **9** Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' **10** But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, **11** 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.'

Luke 10:16 (NIV) “Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

John 15:18-21 (NIV) “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. **19** If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. **20** Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. **21** They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.

Everyone wants to be liked and no one wants to be rejected. But we have to understand that if we serve Jesus and decide to live for Him on MISSION then there is the possibility that at some point in time we may be rejected. When we are, we need to understand that it has nothing to do with us and it has everything to do with the God we serve. Don't avoid sharing the gospel because you fear your feelings being hurt. If your heart is in the right place, it's not about you, and Jesus can help you process these feeling by helping take that hurt on to Him.

With that said, let's make sure that we do all we can not to be a stumbling block to Christ. Let's make sure that the Love of Jesus flows in and through our life freely. Let's make sure that the Fruit of The Holy Spirit is ever present in our lives so that if they reject us it's because they are rejecting Jesus and His free gift of SALVATION not because we are being a jerk.

Make sure your PERSONAL WITNESS for Christ is in order
Make PRAYER a CENTRAL PART of the MISSION.
Don't take it PERSONALLY if you are REJECTED.

And that brings us to our 4th and final Reminder: **Your MISSION is NOT DONE once someone accepts Christ.** Once someone accepts Jesus you now have a disciple to pour into so that they can go and do the same as you have done with them. Let's look back at the passage we started this whole series with.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) **18** Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** 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, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Notice what verse 20 says! We are to play a vital part in helping people begin and sustain their walk in Jesus. Everything you have learned in life either someone taught you or you figured it out through trial and error. May we not leave new believers to fend for themselves but may we come alongside of them and help them be obedient to Christ and thus fulfill the MISSION God has called us to. Let's be the church God has empowered us to be through the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV) 23 Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. **24** And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. **25** not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Before we close, let me give you **7 Key Elements that are essential to Making Disciples**. In fact, if we were baking a DISCIPLE MAKING cake these 7 Elements would be the key ingredients that we would need in order to do so.

Element #1 - We are to establish RELATIONSHIPS where LOVE abounds. RELATIONSHIPS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE! One thing we can never have too much of is LOVE! People are feeling unloved more and more everyday. The cruelty we see in the world is caused by a lack of LOVE. We must grow in our love for one another for it is by our love that the world we know we belong to Jesus.

Element #2 - JESUS is our example of faith and practice. We are to call people to Jesus not only because He saves us from sin but because He also shows us how to live out the life of faith. If you need a blueprint for how to make disciples just study the life of Jesus. How He loved. How He prayed. How He cared for people. How He dealt with stressful situations. How he treated broken people. How He related to the Father. Jesus is our perfect example.

Element #3 - We need INTENTIONALITY that leads to follow through. This won't happen just because I preached a message and you were moved to say AMEN! This only happens when we are intentional and follow through by making a PLAN to do it, making ourselves AVAILABLE to God to be used in this way because we believe it is what God wants for our lives, and being intentional in EXECUTING the plan out of obedience to our LORD

Element #4 - We need a steady diet of the WORD OF GOD. We must know the word of God so we can teach it to others. The word of God transforms our minds so we will not be conformed to the world. Hard to grow in Christ w/o our guide book for life. Hard to teach to others if we don't have a textbook they can study also.

Element #5 - We must unleash the HOLY SPIRIT in our life for He is our POWER. We must learn how to walk in the Spirit and teach others to do the same. Being sensitive to the Spirit and letting His power loose in our lives is the key to possessing the power of Christ.

Element #6 - We must view the LIFE OF FAITH as a JOURNEY. When helping others discover a relationship to Christ we need to be mindful that it is a journey not a one time event. It isn't just a one time decision but a daily walk where we are being set apart daily and where we are to work out our faith with fear and trembling. We never fully arrive until our journey is completed.

Element #7 - May we be all about MULTIPLICATION. Discipleship is not just about getting people to Jesus but it is about helping people see their place in the mission. Just as we are to multiply ourselves in the lives of others. We want to teach those we disciple to do the same with

their lives. This is how the Gospel will make it all the way around the world. If we don't, the Gospel message stops with us and our generation.

2 Timothy 2:1-2 (NIV) **1** You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. **2** And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

Will you GO and MAKE Disciples?

Worship Comes Back Up

Invitation:

Will you begin making a PLAN to go share the gospel with others

- Maybe for some that plan begins with you yourself being discipled by someone
- Maybe it means filling out a list of names regarding the people in your Sphere of Influence and to begin praying for them.
- Maybe it starts by developing a 1-2 minute testimony you can share with people when given the chance
- Maybe it is for you to say to God, "Here I am, Lord use me!"

Whatever the case, will you take an intentional step today and make a PLAN?

If you are currently pouring in to someone, will you be intentional in helping them GO and do likewise (multiply)?

Have you yourself TRUSTED in JESUS? What are you waiting for?

Matthew 7:24 (NIV): "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

Matthew 7:26 (NIV): "But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand."

You all have heard the words of Jesus. Will you be WISE or are you going to be FOOLISH?

Close the service by inviting those who would like to receive Jesus to do so today and by commissioning those who are willing to God and MAKE DISCIPLES.