

**Multiplying Disciples Through Connection Groups: Connecting for the Gospel**  
**Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-47**

Review and introduction: to the sermon topic.

- Explanation of the importance of the Body, spiritual gifts, disciple making and community (one another's) in fulfilling the Great Commission

Review and Introduction:

In this series titled "Connected: Finding Your Place in Our Journey of Faith," we've explored the foundational aspects of our Christian walk within the context of community and discipleship. Our journey began with the recognition of our individual significance within the Body of Christ, as we discovered our unique roles and contributions to the church family (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). We then dove into the transformative power of love, understanding that it is the essence of our relationships within the church community (1 Corinthians 13). Following this, we emphasized the importance of growing together in Christ, recognizing the value of connection, obeying & practicing the one another's and unity in our spiritual journey (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Final Message:

Now, as we approach the culmination or climax of this series, our focus shifts to the overarching mission of the church: the Great Commission. In this final message, we will explore how connection groups serve as a catalyst for fulfilling the Great Commission, as outlined in Matthew 28:18-20. We'll reflect on the significance of disciple-making, the utilization of spiritual gifts, and the vital role of community in this divine mandate. This message will serve as a wrap-up, summarizing the purpose and foundation laid in the previous three sermons, leading us to the climax of our journey as we strive to fulfill the Great Commission together.

Our

**Main Idea:**  
**through mobilizing our connection groups we empower gospel outreach**

This final message will bring us full circle, reinforcing the importance of our interconnectedness in Christ and empowering us to actively participate in fulfilling the Great Commission as a unified body of believers, encouraging one another, via Connection Groups!

Review the main idea is empowering gospel outreach through mobilizing our connection groups. Now let's look at our first point of our message.

**Point One:**  
**A solid foundation ensures multiplication (Acts 2:41-47)**

Read Acts 2:41-47

**41** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. **42** And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. **43** And awe<sup>[a]</sup> came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. **44** And all who believed were together and had all things in common. **45** And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Last week we learn the biblical basis for small groups to practice the one another commandments! We also learned the purpose for small groups.

In our modern culture, small groups are often viewed merely as a program or a fellowship ministry within the church. But for the New Testament church, it was a way of life, saturating every area of their lives. Their relationships with one another were critical to their pursuit of Jesus, their growth in Christ, and their witness to the Good News. It would be impossible to experience biblical community apart from spiritually significant, intentional relationships with other believers. Relational structures like small groups, therefore, are an integral part of "being" the church and not just "doing" church.

It is in small groups that people can get close enough to know each other, to care and share, to challenge and support, to confide and confess, to forgive and be forgiven, to laugh and weep together, to be accountable to each other, to watch over each other and to grow together.

Personal growth does not happen in isolation. It is the result of interactive relationships. Small groups are God's gift to foster changes in character and spiritual growth.

We live in an increasingly fragmented and disconnected world. Though social media and other technology have made our world seemingly more connected, people have fewer genuine friends than ever before. It feels scary and threatening to allow ourselves to be known or to invest in knowing someone else at a deep level. It is much easier and more convenient to stay on the surface. Yet when we take the risk of being authentic with a small group of people, we can experience God's grace and love coming through others, which leads to freedom and transformation.

**John Ortberg writes: "God uses people to form people. That is why what happens between you and another person is never merely human-to-human interaction—the Spirit longs to be powerfully at work in every encounter."**

So the goal of small groups is to create environments where Spirit-driven, life-giving experiences can flourish. The main goal, and objective Of the connection group is to ultimately help people engage in relationships that help them become more like Christ. Spend time building an environment that allows true relationships to Develop an ethos or make up that takes the:

## **\*\*Small Groups on a Mission Beyond Themselves**

### **Read Matthew 28:19**

**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 mandates that every follower of Christ is on mission to "go and make disciples of all nations." Jesus gave this instruction to all his followers, both as individuals and as the body of Christ. We, as a small group and as a church, bear collective witness to the good news of Jesus Christ.

We do not exist for ourselves, but for others to reach the nations to make disciples! Not just converts but disciples committed followers of Christ!

One of Jesus' final instructions to his disciples is found in

### **Read John 13:34**

**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.**

Note that Jesus did not say people will know we are Christians by how many churches we build, how many Bible studies we complete, how many prayers we say, or how many people come to our church. The litmus test is clear: people will know we are Christ-followers when we love each other the way Jesus does.

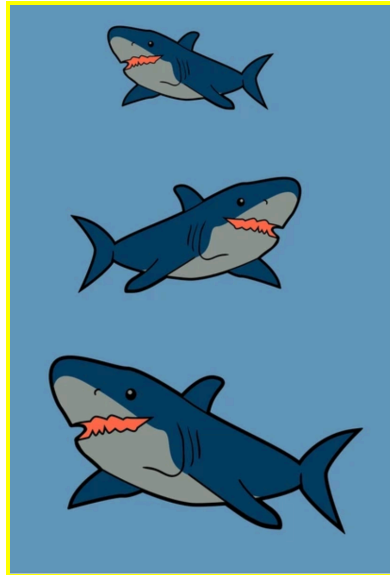
**\*\*Theologian Francis Schaeffer asserted, "Our relationship with each other is the criterion the world uses to judge whether our message is truthful—Christian community is the final apologetic."**

Our non-believing friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors are watching and deciding on the validity of the gospel message. We need others to help us live lives worthy of God's calling so that people will see the power of God's love in and through us.

Ultimately, small groups are a way of living out our purpose, both as individuals and as a collective group of believers—to be the church. We share a common foundation of faith and God has called us to live out the implications of that faith in a relational community, in the context that we call a small group.

- A. The Formation of the Early Christian Community
  - Response to Peter's preaching: repentance and baptism
  - Fellowship and communion
  - Devotion to the apostles' teaching

- B. Characteristics of Authentic Community
  - Unity and mutual care
  - Sharing of resources and needs
  - Worship and prayer
- C. Growth and Multiplication
  - The Lord adding to their number daily
  - Impact on the surrounding community
  - The role of small groups in nurturing and multiplying disciples.
  - 
  - SMALL GROUPS ARE THE IDEAL PLACE TO DEVELOP LEADERS AND DISCIPLEMAKERS.
  - Small shark and Big shark John 14:15 “If you love me you will keep my commandments.



- Review the main idea through mobilizing our connection groups, we empower gospel outreach our first point of our message is 1. A solid foundation insures multiplication and our **second point** is:

**Point Two:**

**Connection group members are commissioned to Make Disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)**

Read Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

## THE SMALL GROUP GROWS IN AN ATMOSPHERE WHERE EVERY MEMBER IS IMPORTANT AND USEFUL.

As you probably have noticed, Small Groups are not to be like a Sunday worship service held outside the Church building on a different schedule. They are to be a tool for evangelism, discipleship and care.

In his book called, *Multiply*, Francis Chan writes:

“Imagine Jesus walking up to the first disciples and saying something like this, ‘Hey, would you guys mind identifying yourselves with Me in some way? Don’t worry. I don’t actually care if you do anything I do or that you change your lifestyle at all. I’m just looking for people who are willing to say they believe in Me and call themselves Christians.’” Chan adds, “The call to be a disciple of Jesus Christ is open to everyone, but we don’t get to write our own job description. If Jesus is Lord, then He sets the agenda.” And what is our agenda? Jesus’ claim to all authority sets up His command of commission.

We will be a church that trusts His strategy

“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.”  
(Matt 28:18–19)

He begins with “therefore.” Because Jesus is the rightful ruler, He has the authority to direct His disciples to their next steps.

In this verse, there is one main verb and three participles that support the main verb.

The main verb, the very essence of the Great Commission is “make disciples.”

A disciple is simply a follower of Jesus, one who follows His teaching.

A rabbi would have disciples and they would “walk in his dust,” literally following them around and learning as they went.

Pastor Dennis Rouse of Victory Church in Georgia lists ten qualities of a disciple of Jesus:

A disciple is: passionate committed to Jesus Christ, they have an extraordinary love for people, they have the heart of a servant, they are sensitive and submitted to the Holy Spirit, they are governed by the authority of God’s Word, they live morally pure and they are evangelistic bold, they are engaged in Biblical community, they are just and generous, and they live their lives with purpose and on mission.

Let me stop and ask you another question - are you a disciple of Jesus Christ? Or are you simply someone who attends church?

Pastor Brian Bill asked this question:

“Would it be better to disciple 10 people a year for 30 years or one person every two years, but that person would in turn disciple someone else and that person would disciple someone else etc. Option one would yield 300 disciples over a lifetime but option two would produce 32,768 disciples.”

This is what multiplication looks like! I would love to show you pictures of what is going on and has been going on in the Philippines, the last two years! Myanmar! In Thailand! God is multiplying his church! Patrick, I got pictures after pictures after pictures and pictures from one place we started in July and they broke ground last week With almost 100 new believers to build a simple church structure as others continue to start connection groups and outreach Bible studies.

### Let the River Flow

Steven Lawson, A well-known Pastor, gives three word pictures of Christians today:

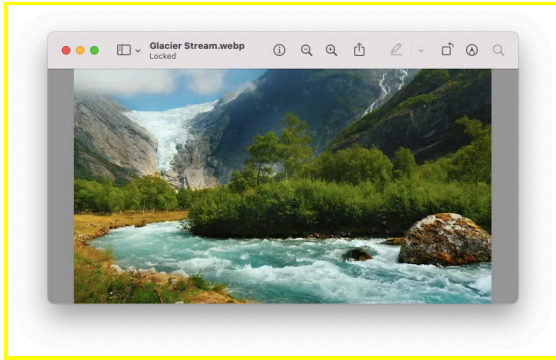
1. Some Christians are like a **wilderness** - they are **dry, barren, have no flow of water**, they have nothing to give to anyone else.



2. Some Christians are like **swamps** - there is water flowing in but there is no outflow, the water stays in and stagnates. A lot of biblical knowledge blowing in, but no application, no fruit, no outreach, No disciples making disciples!



3. Some Christians are like **rushing rivers** -



the snow melts and flows down the mountain and the river swells and overflows its banks. It feeds into multiple smaller rivers, giving energy and life. Which one are you?  
Fruit, Growth, multiplication!

#### Applications

1. Are you a disciple of Jesus? If you aren't, then today is your day. Admit you are a sinner. Dry desert? Put your faith and trust in Jesus as your sin substitute Savior and surrender everything.
2. Have you been baptized? We will be scheduling another baptism soon.
3. Who are you going to overflow into this year? Who are you going to help to grow spiritually?

The Art and Science of Disciple making questions How do we overcome the tendency to just be a spectator Christian.

#### The Art and Science of Disciple-Making

Most Christians are content to be spectators instead of becoming obedient disciple-makers. True blessings, power and fulfillment is found in being a multiplying disciple-maker. Let us see how we can think, do and become what the Lord's will for our life is. Failure to do so is a sure recipe for self-destructive behavior and thinking. We must move in the process of growing and maturing to become more like Christ by obeying his commands.

#### Obedience based discipleship

**2 Corinthians 13:5. Read! Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!**

**\*\*Illustration: The African impala**



can jump to a height of over 10 feet and cover a distance of greater than 30 feet. Yet these magnificent creatures can be kept in an enclosure in any zoo with a 3-foot wall. The animals will not jump if they cannot see where their feet will fall.

Application: Faith is the ability to trust what we cannot see, and with faith we are freed from the flimsy enclosures of life that only fear allows to entrap us.

What is keeping you from multiplication what is holding you? I'm sharing your faith naturally in relationships both inside and outside the church that helps people to see your fruit by your love for God and for one another?

- A. Understanding the Great Commission
  - The authority of Christ
  - The command to make disciples
  - The scope of the commission: all nations
- B. The Method of Disciple-Making
  - Going: reaching out beyond our comfort zones
  - Baptizing: initiating into the community of believers
  - Teaching: nurturing and instructing in the ways of Christ
- C. The Promise of Christ's Presence
  - Assurance of Christ's continual presence
  - Confidence in Christ's empowering for the task

Review: Main Idea: through mobilizing our connection groups we empower gospel outreach

1. A solid foundation ensures multiplication (Acts 2:41)
2. Connection group members are commissioned to make disciples  
(Matt. 18-20)

Which brings us to our **third point!**



### **Point Three:**

**Connection groups must extend the love of Christ through intentional outreach.**

#### **Acts 2:46-47**

READ ACTS 2:46-47 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

1. **Equipping and empowering members for leadership and service, Matthew 28:19. This is making disciples not just converts, growing in leadership, and service.**

#### **5 D's Slide**

- Encouraging every believer to embrace their role in
- disciple-making.
  - Encouraging accountability and mutual support, providing a safe space for growth and vulnerability.
  - Reaching out to new believers and initiating them into the community of faith, extending the love of Christ through intentional outreach efforts.

2. **Planning for Outreach and Bringing in New Believers - Intentional Outreach. Acts 2:41, 46**

#### **"My Circle Training relationships !!!!!!" OIKOS**

- **Intentional Outreach:** Encouraging connection groups to actively engage in outreach efforts, reaching out to those in the community who have yet to encounter the love of Christ.
- a. Organizing community events, service projects, or evangelistic outreaches to connect with people outside the church walls.
- b. Partnering with local organizations or ministries to address tangible needs and share the gospel message.

3. **Starting Outreach Bible Studies Slide**

Establishing outreach-focused Bible studies aimed at welcoming new believers and seekers into a nurturing environment where they can explore faith and grow spiritually.

- a. Providing a welcoming and non-intimidating atmosphere for newcomers to ask questions, share their journey, and discover the truth of the gospel.

- b. Equipping members of connection groups to facilitate these outreach Bible studies, emphasizing relational evangelism and discipleship.

4. **Disciple Makers Multiplication**: Recognizing that disciple-making extends beyond the confines of existing believers, actively seeking opportunities to multiply disciples by bringing new believers into connection groups and equipping them to reach others.

#### The 4 W,s

Acts 2: 41, 46 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- a. Celebrating each new believer welcomed into the community and empowering them to share their faith journey with others.
- b. Providing mentorship and support for new believers as they navigate their faith journey, ensuring they feel valued, supported, and equipped to make disciples themselves.

**Review: Main Idea: through mobilizing our connection groups we empower**

**gospel outreach**

**1. A solid foundation ensures multiplication (Acts 2:41)**

**2. Connection group members are commissioned to make disciples**

**(Matt. 18-20)**

**3. Connection groups must extend the love of Christ through intentional outreach.**

**Acts 2:41,46**

Conclusion:

- Recap of the importance of connection groups in fulfilling the Great Commission and the role of outreach in bringing in new believers.
- Challenge to commit to active participation in outreach efforts and to prayerfully consider starting or supporting outreach Bible studies.
- Prayer for God's guidance and empowerment as we engage in outreach and disciple multiplication for His kingdom's sake.

Closing Prayer:

- Seek God's guidance and empowerment as we commit to making disciples through connection groups for the glory of His name.

Encouraging people to **sign up**.

### **Connection Group Reflection Questions**

1. What are some highlights that you remember from the message?
2. What did we learn about God from these texts or Sunday's message?
3. What did we learn about how connection groups can impact outreach?
4. How can we as a ABC or we as a connection group improve in the area of making disciples, or reaching the lost in our community?
5. How would God like to see us make steps of improvement in this area?
6. What beginning steps can you take, or we as a group take, to make plans for outreach individually, or as a group?
7. Summarize (in one sentence) one thing that you have learned; then how would God want you to respond in obedience?
8. This coming week who would benefit from you sharing this truth or desire and who will you share it with? When?