

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
Jonathan Pokluda  
Series: Family Matters  
August 22, 2021

Discipleship  
Matthew 28:16-20

**16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 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.”**

Let's go church family! It's great to be with you guys! How are we doing? Let's go! Come on...come on! So fun just to watch God move in and through each of you! If you're new here, here for the first time, new to Waco, new to Harris Creek, welcome home! We are sincerely glad that you're here. We want to do everything we can to make this large place feel small. And so, know that we've got a team of people here focused on doing exactly that this morning.

I hope you guys had an amazing summer. Hope you got to do something fun; find some rest in the midst of that. You know how sometimes people will just say, “Hey, you should come and stay with us!” Maybe they move off, maybe you move off, maybe it's family or something. “You should come and stay with us. Hey, get the family, and y'all come and stay with us.” Every now and then someone will say that. “Hey, you should come and stay with us.” And so, you know what, depending on the relationship, if you want to do that or not, you know, if it's the family you want to stay with or not.

Well, a friend that I've been doing ministry with for years, said, “Hey, you should come and stay with us. Get the family and come and stay with us.” But the difference is, the catch is, this particular friend lives on Maui. So, I'm like, “Okay, you know, all right! You got it! Let's go!” I get on Orbitz.com, find the cheapest airfare, load the family up, and we go stay with him. I've never been to Hawaii. I've never been to one of those islands. And so, I'm thinking, you know, beach, sand, water, palm trees. That's what I see in the pictures.

But my friend actually lives up on a volcano, so kind of high over the mountains. We get in his car, which he had parked at the airport, and we drive up these really windy roads, up this volcano to get to his house. We pull onto his property, and we don't even go inside the house, because he's outside watering his plants, his trees, and such. Again, I don't know what I pictured, and as I think about my friend, kind of the last thing I think is farmer, if you will.

But sure enough, he lives on this orchard. There are all these trees. And so, we don't go inside. He's kind of giving us a tour. He's like, “This here, this is an avocado tree. We'll make some avocado toast for you guys because it drops avocados every morning. We'll pick those. And here's an orange tree. We're gonna have some freshly squeezed orange juice in the morning.” And so, he's just living the dream. Waking up, eating from the earth, out there in Maui. And then he says something interesting that I want to put before you. He says, “This here, this is a lime

tree that makes limes.” That’s what he says. “This is a lime tree that makes limes.” And I was like, “Huh.” I’ve been thinking about that statement for a little while. “Now, this is a lime tree that makes limes.” Yeah, I can tell you guys are amazed, too. You’re like, “Welcome back, JP. Okay, you all right?”

Let’s look at that for a minute. That’s a lime tree that makes limes. What’s the problem with that sentence? What’s the issue there? Somebody? It’s redundant. It’s redundant; it’s repetitive, it repeats itself. Yeah, yeah, what else? I mean it’s not like, “Hey, that’s a lime tree that makes apples.” Now I’d be like...WHOA! Let’s see that! That’s amazing! “Hey, that’s a lime tree that doesn’t do anything.” Well, that’s interesting. But, “That’s a lime tree that makes limes.” You’re telling me the same thing twice.

Have you ever heard, there’s this phrase in Christendom; churches say it? I’m not sure if you’ve heard it before, but in circles that I run in, I hear this all the time. “We want to make disciples that make disciples.” You ever heard that? “We want to make disciples that make disciples. Like if we could, we want to make disciples that make disciples.” Churches say that. That’s like saying, “That’s a lime tree that makes limes,” because there are no other disciples than the disciple-making kind of disciples.

The distinction of a disciple is that they make disciples. There are no other kinds of disciples. Let me define disciple, because that’s kind of a Christianese term. We can hide behind the mystery of the word. A disciple is just a follower of Jesus. That’s it. And so, what it means to follow Jesus, is to do what Jesus did. When Jesus was on the earth, His priority, His focus, was making disciples. So, if I follow Jesus, in Jesus’s way, then I am about making disciples. So, to say, “That’s a disciple that makes disciples,” is to over-explain what the disciple is, because a disciple makes disciples. The essence of being a disciple is to make disciples.

If I’m following Jesus, then I take an interest in what Jesus is interested in. If I’m a follower of LeBron James, I’m interested in basketball. If I’m a follower of Elon Musk, I’m interested in Tesla, or SpaceX, or sustainable energy, or dogecoin. Right? I’m interested in what he’s interested in. If I’m a follower of Olivia Rodrigo, then I have taken an interest in angsty music about boys and breakups, right? I mean that’s because I’m following her, so I’m interested in what she’s interested in. If I’m a follower of Jesus, I’m all about making disciples. I’m all about it.

That’s what I want to talk about this morning: making disciples. We’re going to be in the Great Commission. If you want to turn there, that’s in your Bible, Matthew chapter 28. First book of the New Testament, chapter 28. We have been, throughout the summer, in the Old Testament in a series called B.C. We are going to move back into the Old Testament and camp out in the book of Ecclesiastes, but before we do, we’re going to spend four weeks talking about Family Matters. These are just things that our leadership team here believes that we need to be focused on as we move into a new season, for our church. So, four weeks in the New Testament discussing our Family Matters, if you will, and then we’ll be going through the Chapters of Ecclesiastes.

Today, talking about discipleship. Discipleship can be another ‘Christianese’ word. It can be confusing, right? I can’t tell you how many people have told me, “You know what, I’ve actually never been discipled.” You might feel that this morning. “You know, I’ve never been discipled, never had somebody pour into me in that formal way.” Because we think about discipleship like 6:30 at Common Grounds, sitting around a table, got some other people there, Bible’s open;

that's discipleship. Some of you might be like, "No, no. Discipleship, it's just you observe my life as I follow Jesus. Just come and fix the fence with me, build the deck with me." Right? So, you got kind of this formal thing over here. You got kind of informal thing over here. And discipleship can be everything in between. We've complicated this. Let me define it for you.

Discipleship is intentionally spending time with someone to help them follow Jesus. I believe that if Jesus was here, this is how He would define it. Something really close to this.

Intentionally spending time with someone, to help them follow Jesus. If we say THIS is the only way, we've made a Biblical mistake; if we say THIS is the only way, we've made a Biblical mistake. The only thing that needs to happen, for you to leave here this morning and be all about discipleship, is you just change your perspective as you're spending time with people. To say, "Hey, the reason that God left me here, and there's breath in my lungs, and my heart beats in my chest, is so that I can help people follow Jesus." So, I want to reframe those relationships. And so, why don't we do this? Because we have doubts. We think, "Well, what if they don't want to? What if it doesn't work? What if we don't know how?" And I want you to know today that His authority assures you.

You think, or you may not think, about what's at stake if we don't do this. What the scripture says. What's going to happen if I don't do this? No big deal. I just go to church. I don't need to make disciples. And I want you to know that His commission of you compels you. And I think a reason that we don't do this is because we're so distracted with our life, our classes and our work, our families and our conflicts. We're busy. We're tired. We just don't have it in us. And I don't think, as a church in 2021, we spend enough time focusing on the life of Jesus so that we might emulate it for others. What does it look like to focus our life on following Jesus?

I'm in Matthew 28. Matthew wrote this to a Jewish Christian audience. What's happened, the context of this chapter, is Jesus has died, and He's risen from the dead. He shows back up. He appears to over 500 people, and He has a meeting. This is the only meeting that He's actually called, in between the resurrection and the ascension. The ascension is when He goes up to be with God forever at the right hand of the Father.

There are 11 disciples left. Judas is gone, and it says this, Verse 16, **"then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go."** We know that in Matthew 26, Jesus said at the Last Supper, "Hey, you guys meet me in Galilee." So, they're just doing what He said when they realize that He's risen from the dead. "Hey, we're gonna go meet Jesus in Galilee." **"When they saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."**

And if you've been in church long, you've probably heard this. It's a passage we like to celebrate. Who's it to, though? Is it to the disciples, the eleven? Is it to the apostles, those who got to experience Jesus incarnate? Is it to the church corporately? This is one of those things that Harris Creek needs to do. Or is it to you? And the answer is yes. But the only one that you need to worry about, the only category that you need to concern yourself with this morning is that last one. You.

In about 25 minutes, you're going to get up from that seat, and you must have a crystal-clear vision for your life, about how you're going to spend the time, between now and being face-to-face with Jesus, focused on making disciples. That's awesome! A lot of people here. You guys probably haven't been out there. (JP points in the direction of the foyer where many are sitting.) It's complete chaos. If you're sitting out there, thank you. I've already been out there to thank them once. Thank you for sitting out there. I understand what you endured on 84, I saw it from this window, safely from this window. People are like, "You excited, JP?" Only in relation to our ability to make disciples of each one of you. The crowds did not excite me. I never have any goal, any desire, to be big because big is exciting. I'd rather take 11 of you who are all about discipleship than 11,000 of you who aren't. Because that's what Jesus was about. That's what He was about; that's what He gave His life to. And if we're going to follow him, that's what we must be about.

Those 11 guys, they got it, and they carried the mission forward. I wanted to show you something in this text that you may have missed before. These are the 11 that have been with Jesus, and what it says is, "**When they saw Him, they worshipped Him;**" and some, what did the other "some" do? They doubted!

And so, maybe you're here right now, and you're like, "Man, I don't know if I can do that." "What does that mean?" and, "That's big! That's like 'Boil the ocean!' and I'm kind of concerned!" and, "Oh no!" and, "I'm stressed!" and, "This is heavy!" and, "Do I really have to?" and, "Is there any way that I can read this book and find some permission not to?" And if I'm Jesus, right, these guys; they're constantly, like, they're scared! They're scared when He shows up on the water. They're like, "It's a ghost!" They're scared when the storm blows in. They're like, "Oh no! Whatever shall we do?" They're always scared.

Jesus dies. They're hiding in the upper room, scared. And so, right about now, when Jesus has come back to life, if I was Jesus, which I definitely am not. But if I was, this would be that moment of face-palm emoji. "Come on guys, what are you doing? You really, you're still going to doubt me? That's how we're going to roll? You're constantly going to question everything? Second-guess yourself?" But what does this say that Jesus does? He goes to them.

Jesus is always moving toward the one with doubt, and He assures them. I want you to find some peace in that right now. He moves toward them, and He assures them. That's my first point; the authority of Jesus assures us.

### *1. The Authority of Jesus Assures Us.*

He says, "I have the power. All authority is mine; authority in heaven and authority on earth." There's two words that you could choose to use here in the Greek. There's *dunamis* and *exusia*. Okay, these are words for power and authority. And he goes with *Exusia*, but let me tell you what *dunamis* is. Because at first, you might think, "Man, why didn't He use that?" *Dunamis* is where we get the word dynamite. It's an explosive impact power and authority. You can move things with *dunamis*.

*Exusia* brings *dunamis* under its control. *Dunamis* is like a bazooka. BOOM! Explosion! Impact! That's *dunamis*. *Exusia* is like the soldier who holds the bazooka, and he points it, and he controls the trigger, and he makes it do what he wants it to do. Actually, *exusia* is like the commander-in-chief who tells the soldier where to point the bazooka, where to go, where to

move toward. That's exusia. Exusia bring dunamis under its control. That's what Jesus is saying here. "All the power in all the world, that my Father used to create you, and all the creation, and everything you see and know, has now been given to Me. And I'm going to invite you into something. You need not doubt. You need not be afraid."

So how do you know if a soldier is a good soldier? They go where their commanding officer tells them to go. That's 2 Timothy 2:4, "**No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.**" This is a life of disciple-making. Focus on God, and saying, "Why do you have me here? Where do you have me going? What shall I do when I get there? Let me tell you what I'm seeing, Chief."

You've got to connect this passage in Matthew 28, to another passage we talked about recently in Matthew 16. In Matthew 16, is where the church is born. That's the first time this word ecclesia shows up in the Scripture. We talked about it in our series, Ecclesia. This is when Jesus walks up to his boys in Caesarea Philippi, and He says, "Hey, who do they say I am?" And they say, "You know, some think you're John the Baptist, others, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets." And Peter says, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus says, "That's right, Peter. I'm going to build, through this declaration, this unstoppable force, that the gates of Hades won't be able to overcome. And Peter, I'm going to give you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. **Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**"

And He's saying, there's this authority transfer. "I'm inviting you into my rights, privileges, and access, because you understand who I am." But those guys, they leave that moment, and they're complete and total cowards. They take away all your excuses, because they constantly mess it up.

You fast forward, and they're constantly scared. They see Jesus do these amazing things; they should have no reason to doubt, but all they do is doubt. Until this moment, right here. In Matthew 28, where they like, "Whoa! You came back from the grave! It's all real! It's all real! Let's go boys! We got work to do! Make war! Come on!" Because they say it. They're like, "Let's do work!" Because here it is. They've invited Him in; they get it. They're like, "Okay, if He can overcome death, what are we afraid of?" And they gave their entire lives to this message right here. The essence of being a disciple, a follower of Jesus. He's invited them to their access; His access, rights, and privilege.

Traveling right now, Covid is a little crazy, especially places that are Covid-conscious and open, because everyone's flooding there, particularly Maui. The lines in the airport were outrageous. Hours. And we were instructed to get to the airport three hours before we had to leave. But I'm like, "It's domestic." And they're like, "You need to get there early, okay?" And so, we're walking through the airport with the fam, but your boy is TSA pre-check. Okay? (Congregation laughs.) That's right, some of you know what that is. TSA pre-check means you don't have to take off your shoes. TSA pre-check means you don't have to pull your laptop out of your bag. TSA pre-check means you don't have to pull liquids out of your bag. TSA pre-check means you can keep your belt on. TSA pre-check means you don't have to wait in that long line. You've got this extra-special short line.

And when I went and I booked my tickets, what they did is, they put all my children TSA pre-check. They were invited into my rights, privileges and access because of who they're with.

That's what's happening here, and it's so much more awesome than TSA pre-check. Jesus says, "Come on!" You've been commissioned with Him. That's my second point; the commission of Jesus compels us.

## *2. The Commission of Jesus Compels Us*

The commission of Jesus compels us. Commission is more than a command. A command says, "Hey, go to that meeting." Commission says, "I want you to go to that meeting for me and represent me." Or it could even mean, "We're going to go to that meeting together." The prefix *com* means with. So what commission means is 'with Jesus on mission.' He's inviting you to go on mission with Him. That He's going to be with you. **"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." Matthew 28:19, 20**

And what we've, done as a Church, in modern church history, is we've taken this, and we've turned it into three categories: the 'baptizing,' that's evangelism; the 'go into the nations,' that's mission; the 'teaching them to obey,' that's discipleship. So, you've got missions, evangelism and discipleship. That's what we've done with this passage, and that's a categorical mistake, because it's all discipleship. He says, "I want you to go and make disciples." And the way that you make disciples is you share the Gospel; the way that you make disciples is you go where people need Jesus; and the way that you make disciples is you teach them to observe the things that I taught you. All of that is under the umbrella of discipleship. So, He has the command, then He shows you some of the methods, or the things, the components, that are within the command. Spending time with people to help them follow Jesus.

Where it says therefore go, you could actually translate that, it's not translated wrong, but it could be more accurate to say, "as you go." "As you leave here, because all authority is mine, now go, because of the authority that I have, and us going together." As you go. Redefine relationships to helping people follow Jesus. "Prioritize what I prioritize." Understand what's most important. What's at risk if you don't do this? If we don't do this, what's the big deal? What's at risk? If you aren't on offense, the enemy is.

Every human being is possessed by a spirit, demonic spirits or the Holy Spirit. And if you have the Holy Spirit, now you've been recruited onto God's team to go back and get recruits and train those recruits up in the way of the Lord. So, we are the Lord's army, yes sir! Right? This is what's happening. So, what's at risk if we don't do this?

When Osama Bin Laden led forces to fly planes into our buildings, we went after him. We moved into Afghanistan, where the Taliban harbored Al-Qaeda, who was Osama's forces. In that a U.S. soldier stayed there, and as U.S. soldiers were present, evil was at bay, watching, ready to act, but at bay. U.S. soldiers pull out, evil infiltrates. Infiltrates, takes over, consumes.

Don't be distracted by any political argument in your head or heart. Not my point. I'm glad I don't have to make those really difficult decisions. But you are seeing a picture of what happens if we don't make disciples in our land.

You love your grandkids; make disciples. You want your grandkids kids to live in a world of peace and prosperity and being able to attend church and worship songs and have Bibles; make disciples. If you don't, they won't. That's what's at risk. This was God's plan, to cover the world with His followers. And it's made it to you. Don't drop the baton. Don't drop the baton.

When my dear friend, Jenny, was interviewed, she was asked, “What needs to change in our world?” She said, “We don’t need to be confused. The way we change the world is through discipleship. What needs to change in our world is we need to make disciples.” I agree. And I think what’s happening, in our context of church, is we don’t have the patience to make disciples.

We come into a relationship with Jesus. Someone is patient with us, and then we don’t have the patience for someone else. We did a membership class, and someone asked the question, “Hey, what about modesty? Like our reservations of joining this church is that sometimes on Sunday we see people dressed inappropriately, and it’s a distraction for us to worship. How are you going to handle that? We don’t think that there should be anybody in church dressed inappropriately.” I said, “Yeah, okay, let’s talk about that for a minute. The reason someone’s dressed inappropriately is because they don’t know any better. Right? Let’s just say they’re dressed like a prostitute. Maybe they’re a prostitute, and we want to be the kind of church that prostitutes go to and find Jesus.” And so, some member has leveraged all of their relational equity with a prostitute saying, “Hey, come to this place. You’re going to experience God.” And we grab them out in the foyer and say, “Whoa...whoa...whoa. Go back to your car and put something else on.” It’s probably not going to be the way the gospel infiltrates their heart.

But we become the older brothers so fast. So fast. We’re so quick to sit over here, like, we memorize the scripture. Yeah, but you stopped living it. Yeah, you got it all up here, but nobody wants to be around you. You don’t like non-believers. You can’t even be around them. You can’t even tolerate them without being frustrated. And if you can, they don’t like you. What happened?

I don’t think we understand that the surest sign of maturity is immaturity. Anytime you see a large tree, you see little seedlings. Anytime you see a mature cow, you see a nursing calf. The surest sign of maturity is always, in creation, immaturity. Wherever you see a mature church, you will see baby believers.

I’m not talking about being seeker-sensitive. I’m talking about you making disciples. Leveraging any relational equity you have with people to say, “Come and see, not my church, but my Jesus. Come and see, right?” And so, the surest sign, like, you think, “No, no, the surest sign of maturity is maturity. Like, there’s a mature church is where everyone knows the Bible, they understand the Greek and Hebrew, they’re going to Sunday School.” No, no, no. That’s a dying church. He won’t be there in 30 years, because everybody who understands the Bible won’t be there in 30 years; that’s a dying church.

See, it’s a cycle. It’s a cycle. That is God’s plan. That’s His strategy. I said, “What do we do? How do we make disciples?” We change our perspective; we change our focus. To make disciples, you focus your life on following Jesus. To make disciples, you are a disciple. Disciples make disciples. And a disciple is a follower of Jesus. So, to make disciples, you change your focus to following Jesus. To make disciples, my third point, to make disciples, focus your life on following Jesus.

### *3. To Make Disciples, Focus Your Life on Following Jesus*

He says, “**Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**”. Your version might say, “**Teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you**”. Most translations I

think actually use the word observe here. In my NIV, it says obey, but how do you teach someone to obey commands?

I've seen the result of parenting for 15 years now. And I tell, I will tell you, that they will sometimes do what you say. They will most often do what you do. The way you teach someone to obey commands is you show them. If I was going to teach you how to obey this command of 'go and make disciples,' I would be making disciples. And I would say, "Hey, do you see me do this? Now you can do this. You do it." That's how you teach someone.

And so, what we do if we're teaching someone to follow Jesus, then we follow Jesus. That's the way that we teach you. "Hey, watch me. Follow Jesus like I follow Jesus. It's so easy. I can give you instructions." If you remember MapQuest, or whatever, I can print off turn here, turn left, turn right. You know, watch for the stop sign. But it's better if I just say, "Hey, I'll take you there. Follow me. And that's what we're doing. God's strategies. "Hey, follow me. Follow me."

It's been said of the disciples that they would follow a Rabbi so close they would get covered in their dust. But what I want you to know is, you're not the goal, is not that you would be a disciple of me. I'm not trying to make you a disciple of Paul or of Gamaliel or of Apollos. I want you to be a disciple of Jesus. And the only way that you can become a disciple of Jesus is if you're surrounded by people who follow Jesus; that they spend like Jesus would spend, they invest like He would invest, they love like He would love, they speak like He would speak, they care for people like He cares for people, they share the gospel as He's taught us to, they parent as He would have you do so, they take interest in what He would take interest in. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11, "**Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.**"

When I was hanging out with my friend in Maui, he taught me something as he was showing me his collection of fruit-bearing trees. We got to the banana tree, and there it was. It had this big cluster of bananas on it. And he said, "Did you know that a banana tree will only produce one cluster of bananas? When you pick that bunch of bananas, the tree then dies. It ceases to ever exist again." Anybody know that? I did not know. Okay, great, there's three of us that now know that. So, banana tree, it produces one cluster of bananas, and then dies. Takes nine months to make those bananas and then the tree ceases to exist.

So, how do people have banana trees? How do they continue to get bananas? So, basically, you plant a tree just for one cluster. He said, "That's the interesting thing. When the tree dies, all of these other banana trees pop up all around it. And you can take those, and you can replant them. So, you can create an entire plantation of banana trees from one tree. That when the tree dies, all of those other trees pop up."

I thought, "What a picture of the Christian life." In fact, it reminds me of John 12, "**Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.**"

He says, "**where I am, my servant also will be.**" This is Great Commission language. "**And lo, I am with you always till the very end of the age,**" but the way that you get there is you die. What does He mean by die? You die to your preferences. You die to yourselves. You die to your



insecurities. You say, “Here’s my life. I’m a living sacrifice, presented holy and pleasing to God. Do with me as you please.”

For some of you, that’s an unlearning. Like, I’m going to leave. I’m going to walk through that door and say, “Okay God, I’m going to die to all of my dreams and all of my visions and everything that I want to do, that may not be what you want me to do, for the purpose of making disciples.” If we did that as a church, we’d be a really unique church. But it would be Jesus’ church. It would be the picture of church He’s given us.

Some of you young people, you’re fresh out of the nest. You’re going to college. All of the freedom. Now’s the time. I can’t tell you how many people I’ve seen tank their life in the season that you’re in. You’re about to see all the frat parties and sorority parties and all of the options. And you’ve got your phone and your computer and you can look at whatever you want to look at.

Or you can follow Jesus and make followers of Jesus. He says, “**And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age**”. We get His presence. You get His presence, and people say all the time, “I just feel far from God. It just feels like God is far from me. Man, I don’t know what’s happened, but it just seems like, you know, I’m in a dry season. I’m in a spiritual drought. God just seems far. I don’t know what to do.” The surest thing I can tell you, what to do from the Scriptures, if you want to feel close to God, like the one thing that I believe almost always helps someone feel closer to God, is suffer for Him.

It’s what I see, like, when they’re in the fiery furnace, Jesus is there. When you’re getting stoned to death, like Stephen, Jesus is there. Paul says, “**I want to know him in the fellowship of his sufferings, being like Him in His death.**” Suffer for Him, and you sense that He’s close. And so, if you’re like, “But discipleship is uncomfortable.” In that discomfort, there’s suffering and Jesus is with you. He draws near to you. He says this, 2 Timothy 2, the soldier verse, “**You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people (This is a theme!) who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.**”

Join me in suffering. We have His access, His privileges, His rights. He’s given us the keys, the keys to people’s hearts. And you’re like, “Well, what do I do, practically?” What do you do, practically? You begin to pray for your neighbors. The ones that you don’t know, you invite them over to your dinner table, especially the ones you don’t like. Okay? Be a sanctifying work in your own heart. Say, “Hey, let me cook for you and serve you in the name of Jesus.” And as you’re with them, you think, intentionally, “How do I help them follow Jesus?” In your parenting, the ride to school and the ride home. When they lie down at night, “How do I help them follow Jesus?”

You reframe those relationships in your life group. This is our method of discipleship here at Harris Creek. When you gather, there should be an aspect of that gathering that is helping you follow Jesus. And you’re helping them follow Jesus. When you gather in your life group next, ask, “Do we do that? Are we helping each other follow Jesus?”

As you spend time with people at work or in school, in the classroom, in the coffee shop, you reframe those meetings. Why are you there? Not P&L, not general ledger. You’re there to help

people follow Jesus. You are there to help people follow Jesus. That's why God has you there. You can invite them over to help you, you can take them hunting, you can take them shopping, right? But you're not there to bag a deer or buy a bag. You're there to help them follow Jesus. That's why you're there. This is discipleship. This is the reframing.

And so, in summary, you have the authority to make disciples. You have been commissioned to make disciples. And so, live as the disciple who makes disciples, because it's the only kind of disciples there are. The only kind of disciples are the disciple-making kind. Like the only kind of lime trees are the ones that throw off limes. It's the essence of being a lime tree. It's the essence of being a disciple, a follower of Jesus.

When you're in close proximity of your children, you start to see all of the negative things that you've imparted to them. And so, vacation can be just that time as we share this, you know, this hotel room, this apartment if you will, where Monica and I have a bedroom, and they're all sleeping in the living room. And I just see things, like I go in that living room, and I'm like, "Whose clothes are these? Why aren't they in the suitcase? Why are they everywhere, all over the room? What is wrong with you?" And then I walk into my room and I'm like, "Oh, that's where you learned that."

You know, one wakes up, and he just goes to my phone, and he gets on Amazon and just starts to think about all the things that he can buy that day. I'm like, "Where did you learn that? Stop." Oh. Right? My bad. And then one of them, she argues like her daddy, and so, when I'm talking to her, it's like talking to me. Which is really frustrating, you know? It's really frustrating.

And so, on this particular day, I'm just worn out. I'm just like, "Okay God, I have completely failed as a father. I see it. I need your grace and mercy. I need you to help me." I'm feeling pretty discouraged. And we go to this restaurant that someone had recommended, and we're sitting there, and the server comes up. Her name is Alana, and she's covered in tattoos, and just kind of has this alternative look about her.

And we engage with her, and she's super kind, and we just start asking questions. "How long have you been here?" She moved from Portland, and she kind of entrusts us with her story. Tells us how she had lost her son in a custody battle. "What's it like to live in Maui?" And she said, "Honestly, really lonely." And all of a sudden, that lunch turned into a divine appointment.

And she walks off, and one of my kids, the really, really shy one that doesn't like to talk to strangers, says, "Daddy, I'm gonna do it." I said, "Okay." Okay, I know what she was talking about. She comes back. She said, "You're from Portland? There any churches there?" She's like, "Yeah, of course." And she goes, "Do you have a faith?"

I'm just, all right, this got interesting. You know, I'm sitting back down like, where's the popcorn, you know.

And she said, "Yeah, I believe in God." Then Weston speaks up. Family affairs. "Can I ask you two questions? Between 1 and 10, 10 being certain and one being not so sure, if you died today, how certain are you that you would go to heaven? She answers, and he says, "If you stood before God, why would He let you in?"

And I was watching, right before my eyes, the baton being passed, not just to them around the table, and to her. She got the torch now!

It's really interesting, because I only knew one other person on that island. Of all those people, there's one family that was there at the same time we were that I knew. And he texted me three days later. He's like, "Hey, we went to this restaurant, and I'd just gotten this henna tattoo, Ephesian 2:8-9. And the server asked me about it, and I got to share the gospel. And then she was telling me about you guys." Of course she was, because that's what God does!

You want to feel close to God? You partner with Him. I mean, she's done! You're all going to meet her in the Kingdom! God is after her. She's as good as in. She's probably going to play in a church there in Maui. Who knows what's going to happen? That's just what God does.

And we went to Maui like we're only going to go one time in our lives, so I tried to research all the things to do. But let me tell you something, the memories of the waterfall and the beaches, the road to Hana, the swimming with the turtles, and the snorkeling, it's all going to be forgotten. They will never forget Alana. Never. Because it takes this worldly thing that we're doing, and it redeems it for God's purposes; that's discipleship. I pray that you make disciples.

Father, help us make disciples to live for you. As we sing this song to you, as we worship you and lift our voices to you, God would you fix in our hearts a vision for how we can intentionally spend time with people, helping them follow you through your son Jesus Christ? I pray that we would be a church that prioritizes that. That that would be something that matters to this family. That that would be something that matters to this family. Right now, would you just help us to think of someone that we should engage with? Maybe 6:30 at Common Grounds or maybe at work tomorrow, at lunch, would you give us a vision? Help us to live it out. Give us the courage that we need. In the name of Jesus. Amen.