

## Make Disciples

Jesus' post resurrection appearances were obviously perfectly calculated with divine, eternal wisdom. It is clear His purpose was two-fold. First, convince His followers that He had risen from the dead, then persuade them to make and teach disciples from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. How could I make such a specific, definitive statement about something Jesus said and did 2,000 years ago? The bible tells me (and us) so. Two most familiar.....

**16** The 11 disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. **17** When they saw Him, they worshiped, but some doubted. **18** Then Jesus came near and said to them, **19** “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **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, **20** teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. **And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

**Matt 28:16-20 (HCSB)**

**8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **Acts 1:8 (HCSB)**

Is it not reasonable to assume that Jesus, in His infinite wisdom and eternal purpose, chose His words and time with His followers very carefully? Can we not confidently conclude that Jesus did not spend His last 40 days on earth casually chit-chatting with His disciples and devoted followers about things that had no substance or purpose? Then we must, at the very,

least acknowledge Christ' mandate to go and make disciples and reasonably accept it as a top level priority for His followers then as well as now.

No one, who is a truly born-again, devoted follower of Christ and believes the bible to be God's inerrant, infallible word to us would reasonably, in their right mind, reject Christ' Great Commission mandate for every believer to be His witnesses in our Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth. We have no problem acknowledging in our heads, and even our hearts, the mandate. So why haven't we won the world to Christ? Our problem is in execution. We believe it but we don't do it. Why do we have so little problem agreeing on the tenets of the Great Commission but so great a problem in carrying them out? I would like to address that question and offer some solutions in the next few weeks.

I propose that **fear** is probably the number one obstacle most of us face. Fear of- rejection, of saying something wrong or stupid, potential confrontation, or not being able to respond intelligently to legitimate questions. **Ignorance** is probably up there to. We don't know what to say or think we don't know what to say. **Apathy** probably rounds out the top three. Apathy will lead us to think or say, "let someone else do it," "there's plenty of time," or "I just don't care."

I hope in this series of messages to help break down these obstacles and get the church as a whole on task to fulfill its purpose on earth to "make and teach disciples for the glory of God." That is not just our church's mission statement. It is Christ's purpose for all churches.

How will we do this? By examining the actual encounters Jesus Himself and some of His brightest students had with unsaved people. Then we will try to apply these principles of making disciples to our daily life appointments. Are you ready? Let's start with Jesus the Master evangelist and let's start with a very familiar story- The Woman at the Well.

**4** He had to travel through Samaria, **5** so He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar near the property that Jacob had given his son Joseph. **6** Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, worn out from His journey, sat down at the well. It was about six in the evening. **7** A woman of Samaria came to draw water. **"Give Me a drink,"** Jesus said to her, **8** for His disciples had gone into town to buy food. **9** "How is it that You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" she asked Him. For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. **10** Jesus answered, **"If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would ask Him, and He would give you living water."** **11** "Sir," said the woman, "You don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do you get this 'living water'?" **12** You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and livestock." **13** Jesus said, **"Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. **14** But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again—ever! In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up within him for eternal life."** **15** "Sir," the woman said to Him, "give me this water so I won't get thirsty and come here to draw water." **16** **"Go call your husband,"** He told her, **"and come back here."** John 4:4-16 (HCSB)

Discussion: Her immorality, true worship.

<sup>25</sup> The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will explain everything to us.” <sup>26</sup> “I am [He],” Jesus told her, “the One speaking to you.” John 4:25-26 (HCSB)

## Learn from the Master

**On His way**- Jesus did not make a special trip to Sychar. He was on His way to Galilee. He was just passing through. But while He was there, He saw and seized an opportunity to present the kingdom of God to the woman of Sychar. The woman at the well.

**Application:** This is **not to say** that we shouldn't make special plans to go to some one or some place with intentions of sharing the gospel. It **is to say** that we should be ready, as we go through our daily routines, to speak of Christ and share the good news about Him with people we encounter throughout our day. We might even go so far as to consider each person we encounter as we go through our daily routines a divine appointment.

This is no small or insignificant lesson. We may incorrectly think that we have to “go witnessing” at an appointed time and place like Tuesday evenings at 6:15 or on mission trips. Certainly those are great times to go and I hope you'll consider coming, but Christ' command to go and make disciples certainly applies to our daily activities and plans as well. Some of the most interesting and exciting encounters I've had with people in sharing the gospel have been “chance” encounters. Don't underestimate the purposes of God and the working of His Holy

Spirit to bring you and someone else together who desperately needs Jesus!

**Normal conversation-** Jesus, eternal Son of God, could have said when He first encountered the woman at the well, “You are a miserable, wretched sinner. You are lost and you will die and go to hell if you don’t repent and believe in me. I am the Son of God and you will never get to heaven if you don’t put your faith in me.” Everything He said would have been true but what would have been the woman’s response? She would have probably thrown her water pot at Him and ran back into town screaming “There’s a wacko at the well.”

What did Jesus say? **“Give Me a drink.”** And I believe it was as gently and politely as He could have possibly said it. In doing this, He immediately stirred her curiosity and began to open the door of interest for her in who He was for Jewish men did not “normally” speak to Samaritan women.

**Application:** In most situations, before a stranger or anyone would be open to listening to you about your faith, they will first have to let down their guard. They must believe that you are a “normal,” caring, sincere, honest, genuine person. How in the world can you accomplish all that? Conversation. And this conversation must consist of- transparency, honesty, humility and a large dose of listening. Attentive, affirming listening shows that you genuinely care. If someone figures out that you genuinely care about their feelings and opinions, that will be a huge step toward opening the door.

**Pivot** In basketball, once you have stopped dribbling the ball, you must remain stationary. If you walk while holding the ball,

you will be called for traveling and you will have to turn the ball over to the other team. But, you are allowed while holding the ball to pivot on one foot while the other foot moves around. You can quickly change the direction you face, even by 180 degrees, in order to pass or shoot the ball. You may have received the ball facing the scorekeeper but you can pivot and make a shot at the goal.

What started out as a natural request by Jesus to quench His own thirst became an extremely useful and valuable pivot point in the conversation with the woman. Jesus Pivoted an earthly conversation about water and thirst to a spiritual conversation about living water and eternal life. This is genius, inspired, amazing ....How can something so common and earthly as being thirsty be a pivot point for turning a conversation to spiritual things? Of course Jesus had all the wisdom and resources of His eternal deity. But, with prayer and help of the Holy Spirit, you can turn just about any earthly conversation to spiritual. Try it- fishing, economy, hair style, news, economy.....

**Set the hook-** When I go fishing, I don't use a rod, reel, line, hook and bait. I prefer to get in the water, seek and shoot fish. But most people fish with rods and reels which requires baiting a hook, dropping it into the water, and then a lot of waiting and hoping. You may get several nibbles as a sign that a fish is liking your bait but you have to be patient and wait until you get a really firm, strong bite, then you set the hook. That's the moment of truth for you and the fish to tangle with the reality of what's for supper.

There comes a time in a spiritual conversation when it is time to set the hook. When Jesus confronted the woman about her marital status, that seems to have been the moment of truth for her.

**Application** Once we have managed to turn a conversation into spiritual we must be prepared to “set the hook” when the proper time arises. The fishing application seems a little cold and cruel at this point so let’s drop that picture. But, we need to make sure we don’t miss the most important part. Once the person has become receptive to us and our spiritual conversation, we must present the message of Christ. Not every conversation may lead to spiritual things and not every spiritual conversation may lead to presenting the gospel and the person being saved. But we must be ready when the opportunity rises and the Spirit leads.

**Result** She didn’t throw her water pot at Jesus but she did run back into town. She didn’t shout “there’s a wacko back at the well.” Instead she said,

**28** Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the men, **29** “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could this be the Messiah?” **30** They left the town and made their way to Him. **J**ohn 4:28-30 (HCSB)

**39** Now many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of what the woman said when she testified, “He told me everything I ever did.” **40** Therefore, when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them, and He stayed there two days. **41** Many more believed because of what He said. **J**ohn 4:39-41 (HCSB)

**Application** We may or may not see a whole town turn to Christ because of our witness. But, if we are faithful, we will see some fruit.