

May 15, 2022

The Disciple-making Church

Matthew 28:19-20

LTS. Matt:16:14-25

The impulse to Proclaim the excellencies of Christ compels us to make disciples and plant churches.

I. Recall to mind our Highest Purpose

II. Clarify the Mission before us.

III. Chart a course of faithful Service

This morning I would like you to open your bibles to Matt. 28 in preparation for this message. We will be sharing the Lord's table at the end, so my time is of the essence.

Today I am tasked with the happy responsibility of talking to you about some of the core distinctives of Calvary Bible Church. These past two Pandemic Years have presented some extraordinary challenges for the church of our Lord.

In times like these its appropriate to ask with the Apostle Paul, "Who has known the mind of the Lord, and who has been His counselor? As Nebuchadnezzar declared, "God does as He pleases with the power of heaven and the people on earth and no one can hold back His hand or question, "What have you done?" These past two years are a testament to the truth that "man makes His plans, but the Lord directs his steps.

In the midst of all the medical, political and often relational confusion of these most recent years, we could have predicted that our church would have experienced some significant down-sizing. But the Lord had other plans.

Much to our surprise, Calvary Bible Church has grown through these years in unprecedented ways. Over the past few months, attendance numbers have repeatedly crushed anything this little church has experienced in its 72 year history.

As you can imagine, this has brought on some significant challenges for the elders of our church.

- How do we shepherd a congregation that's rapidly growing in a building that cannot

grow?

- How do we help people get connected and build discipleship relationships?
- How do we maintain our doctrinal bearings without compromising as the world rapidly changes around us?

We love the fact that so many of you have recently decided to make Calvary your church home. And we are convinced that in this situation the best way we can love you, besides ministering the word week after week, is to kind of pull back the curtain, as it were, and let you see what's on the inside. By that, I mean I want to talk to you about some of the things that we value most as a church— things that have made Calvary Bible Church what it is today. A church full of sinners? Yes! But a church that Jesus loves and seems to be blessing in wonderful ways and unexpected ways.

This morning I have three major themes to discuss with you before we share the Lord's table this together. First, I want to

I. Recall to mind our highest purpose:

Let's begin by reminding ourselves of the purpose statement Calvary adopted many years ago. It's printed in your bulletin on the last page next to the announcements. First, we're going to recite it, and then we'll look at the key Scripture behind it.

We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ in all things, to the
Glory of God in the joy of all peoples.

We derive this statement from several passage of Scripture, but the root of it is found in 1 Peter 2:9 which reads:

But you [church] are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A
PEOPLE FOR GOD'S OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of
Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

My friends, this is why God put us here. We exist to proclaim to all peoples, in every age and all circumstances that Jesus Christ is worthy of our exclusive trust and hope and dependence, and love and adoration and worship both for now and forever. That's our purpose.

There is so much more I want to talk about relative to the biblical underpinnings of this

purpose statement. If you are going to remain or become a member of Calvary, you need to know this. You need to know what drives us, what motivates us. And if that passion isn't what you are hoping for in a church, perhaps Calvary is not for you?

I wish I had time to say more on this point, but perhaps we can do that on another day. For the sake of time, then, let's move to the second major theme. Having called to mind our highest purpose, let's now...

II. Clarify the Mission Before us.

1. In order to do this, I want to take a few minutes to look at some of the Great Commission passages of the N.T.
2. Perhaps most famously, we have...
Matthew 28:16-20.

turn there with me for a moment and let's refresh what the Lord said here. We read...

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. ¹⁷ When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. ¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

3. Now, the first significant observation I want to make about this "Great Commission passage is that there is both an indicative and an imperative. What does that mean?
 - a. Well, An indicative is a word that indicates what is.
 - b. An imperative, however, is a word that commands us to do something.
4. In this verses the indicative is found in v. 18, "All authority is given to Jesus in heaven and earth." And there is another indicative in verse 20, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
5. This is a really profound and empowering declaration! Jesus' words here harken back to the prophesy that Daniel recorded in Daniel 7:13-14 where Daniel takes us into the eternal throne-room of heaven. And this is what we see...

"one like a Son of Man" came up to the "Ancient of Days and was presented

before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, that all the people, nations and men of every language may serve Him. And His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away.”

6. Standing there on the mountain before the disciples that day was this very Son of Man, the King of kings who had been given dominion over the whole world forever. And so, before laying out their marching orders; before issuing the great imperative (Great Commission) He reminded them of the Great Indicative; namely, that He alone possesses all authority to accomplish all His holy will in all the world, even to the end of the age. That is the great Indicative.
7. As Kevin DeYoung observes, “There can only be a mission imperative because there is first a glorious indicative. God does not send out his church to conquer. We go because He already has conquered. We go only because He reigns.”¹
8. This sets us up to look at the Great Imperative. What does Jesus, the King, command his original followers to do? What is the Great Commission?
9. Look at v. 19

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...
10. Now, I realize that most of the time when men preach on this passage the emphasis is on the word “Go.” But the imperative (the command) in this sentence is NOT “GO.” The word for “go” here is actually a participle. The imperative (command) is actually “Make Disciples.” The emphasis is NOT on ‘going.’ In fact, the participle is probably better translated ‘when you go’ or ‘as you are going.’
11. Collin Marshall observes,

The commission is NOT fundamentally about mission out there somewhere else in another country. It’s a commission that establishes disciple-making as the normal agenda and priority of every church and every Christian.”²
12. The great commission is about making disciples, followers of Jesus. “The remaining participles, which can have the force of imperatives, flesh out what is entailed in the disciple-making process. We go, we baptize, and we teach.”³

¹ Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, (Wheaton, Crossway, 2011), 46

² Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine*, (Matthias Media, 2009), 13

³ Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, (Wheaton, Crossway, 2011), 46

13. Now let's turn to another version of the Great Commission.

Luke 24:44-49

Jesus said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ "You are witnesses of these things."⁴⁹ "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

14. Once again, the disciples are being sent out on a mission, and the ground of the mission is divine authority. But whereas the authority in Matt 28 was the Person of Jesus, here the authority is the Scriptures.

15. The disciple's message is that Jesus is the fulfillment of the O.T. scripture concerning the promised Christ.

16. The disciples were to proclaim "repentance for forgiveness of sins... to all the nations, and "the promise of the Father" (i.e. the H.S.) would empower them to accomplish God's goal – namely, to make disciples wherever we are and where ever we go.

17. Turn with me now to Acts 1:8, where we read...

...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

18. Once again, the theme is Spirit-empower witness about the Person and work of Jesus. And when we read the rest of the book of Acts we discover that the mission was overwhelmingly focused on proclaiming the Word of God and bearing witness of Christ.

19. Darrell Bock puts it this way:

The commission (Acts 1:8) describes the church's key assignment of what to do until the Lord returns. The priority for the church until Jesus returns, a mission of which the community must never lose sight, is to witness to Jesus to the end of the world. The church exists, in major part, to extend the apostolic witness of Jesus everywhere.

20. This is what we see throughout the book of Acts. Followers of Christ are committed to witnessing to the person and work of Jesus Christ in fulfillment of the O.T. Scriptures. Disciples are made, baptized and taught to obey the Scriptures as the apostles (and others) moved from place to place – establishing churches as they went.

21. It all begins in Jerusalem. Then Philip takes the gospel to many villages in Samaria, and to the Ethiopian eunuch, after which he takes the message to Caesarea.

22. Paul and Barnabas proclaim the word in Cyprus, and Antioch in Pisidia, at Iconium and Lystra. Their mission, however, is not just evangelism, but deep discipleship. “They win converts [i.e. making disciples], plant churches, and build up existing congregations.

23. From there the Spirit empowered Paul and others to go to Derbe, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and then back to Jerusalem. Then Paul preaches the message while in chains before the Jewish council, and then before Felix, and Festus, and King Agrippa and Bernice. Then it was on to Crete, Malta, and finally to Rome.

24. And the point of all of this, beloved, is to say that making disciples and planting churches is not simply a good idea that the elders came up with a few years ago. This is what the church has done since the beginning. As God providentially moves us from place to place, we bear witness of Jesus Christ in order to make disciples. We baptize, we teach people how to obey God's word, and we plant churches. That is what the Great Commission is all about.

25. Now all of that was about understanding Our great purpose and mission. Now we need to ask the, how should Calvary Bible Church respond to these biblical ideals.

26. We started by

I. Recalling to Mind our Highest Purpose.

Then we

II. Clarified the Mission Before us.

Now, let's

III. Chart a course of faithful service.

Now this is where it all gets very practical. In fact, as I highlight each of these core distinctives, I hope you will be able to see that there is a straight line that connects our High Purpose and biblical mission. So here we go.

Core Distinctive # 1

Expository Preaching:

- a. We believe the Bible should usually be preached verse by verse, chapter by chapter.
- b. That's because we want God's message rather than the preacher's message to be proclaimed to His people gather.

Core Distinctive # 2

Biblical Evangelism:

- c. Some of you may not know this, but every other Friday evening a group goes downtown to share the gospel with people.
- d. If you need to be trained in how to share the gospel with unbelievers, we can help you learn, and provide the accountability to help.

Core Distinctive # 3

Cross-cultural Missions

- e. We have a long history of sending qualified men and women to the nations to help believers in foreign lands proclaim the excellencies of Christ where the gospel is not yet known.
- f. Dexter and Jessie May are moving to Uganda to serve with S.O.S. ministries. Their last Sunday will be June 26.
- g. My hope is that we will soon be able to send teams there and to other places where we have contacts in foreign lands.

Core Distinctive # 4

Church Membership

- h. We believe every follower of Jesus should be in a committed relationship with a solid local church.
- i. Why? Because growing deep and strong in Jesus was never meant to be an individual endeavor. We need one another!
- j. We need accountability, and we need to place ourselves under the privilege of church discipline.
- k. Listen, my friend, if your idea of church involvement means watching your favorite preacher on T.V. or bouncing from church to church without ever committing to a local body of believers, then perhaps this isn't the church for you. Or maybe its time to repent.
- l.

Core Distinctive # 5

2. Personal Ministry: (every-member-ministry). What we mean here is...
 - a. One-on-one discipleship
 - b. Biblical Counseling (Sep-Nov)
 - c. Bible Studies, and ladies E4M.
 - d. (I.S.I begins on ()).
 - e. Listen, discipleship is not just about meeting together as Christians for coffee and donuts. It's about learning to obey everything Jesus commanded us. Are you interested in that? Are you willing to commit to being discipled or discipling others? If not, then perhaps this isn't the church for you.

Core Distinctive # 6

Intensive Training in men's E4M.

- a. Next Sunday evening a handful of guys will graduate from this two-year intensive training course.
- b. A new Cohort will be forming in the Fall and a Q&A is scheduled for May 22 during Adult Sunday school. The men who are graduating will be leading that Q&A

Core Distinctive # 7

Church Planting. (see bulletin Insert)

- f. So far we have planted two churches in the Fort Worth area.
If you're a visitor and you live near Mansfield or Lake worth, we recommend you visit one of these churches.
- g. These churches are each independent with their own leadership (elders).
- h. Our hope is that in the next 3-4 years the Lord will provide all that we need to plant another church. But for now, we wait and take steps in that direction as the Lord allows.

Final thought: I'm sure many of you are asking, "But what are we going to do managing all the growth? Answer? We are actively been working on this challenge, but so far, we don't have much clarity on the issue. And that means we need to pray.

Of one thing we are sure...

Making disciples and planting churches: This is God's plan for proclaiming the excellencies of Christ to the nations. And this is what we intend to continue doing as Calvary Bible Church.

The impulse to Proclaim the excellencies of Christ compels us to make disciples and plant churches.