

Life Group Study

Multiply: Our Vision



Texts: **Matthew 28:18-20**, Luke 4:14-21, Isaiah 61:1-3

Introduction: Key question from Matt's sermon: We all know what it means to win in sports. **But how do we, Kingsway Christian Church, know if we are winning?**

The seemingly simple answer is revealed in what is called "The Great Commission," the last words that Matthew records of Jesus' speaking to His disciples:

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matt 28:18-20

Q: So the obvious question is then: If we are to make disciples, what exactly is a disciple?

- Francis Chan, in his book *Multiply*, says that **a disciple is a follower**, one who is "obeying His call to follow." In addition, Chan says (quoting Luke 6:40) that **disciples who are fully trained will be like their teacher.**
- Merriam-Webster online defines it as "**someone who accepts and helps to spread the teachings of a famous person.**"
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer speaking of Jesus' calls to follow: "Only one thing was required in each case – **to rely on Christ's word, and to cling to it as offering greater security than all the securities in the world.**" And Bonhoeffer again – his most famous quote: "**When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.**"

Q: Summarize the "definitions" above in your own words. What does it mean to be a disciple?

Q: Which of the following words do you think best fits the biblical meaning of disciple: adherent, enthusiast, fanatic, pupil, fan, spectator, groupie, admirer, supporter, convert, none of the above, or something else?

Q: (Taken from *Multiply*) At this point in your life, would you call yourself a follower of Jesus Christ? A disciple, or something else? Why do you say that? Do you see evidence of your faith as described in Luke 6:40 (I realize none of us are there, but is there movement in that direction)?

Q: (Taken from *Multiply*) Evaluate your approach to following Jesus. Would you say that you view Jesus as your Lord, Master, and Owner? Why or why not? If not, what word(s) would best describe your approach? Great moral teacher? Role model? Cafeteria style (I'll pick and choose)? Someone I admire? Or something else?

Background: After Jesus crucifixion, the Jewish religious leaders persuaded Pilate to seal and guard the tomb (Matt 27:62-66). When Jesus arose from the grave despite their efforts (28:1-10), they concocted a story that Jesus' disciples had stolen His body and they bribed the guards to stick to that story (28:11-15). The eleven disciples met Jesus on a mountain (we are not told what mountain) and there they worshiped Him although

some “doubted.” Was this doubt in some of the eleven? Maybe (remember the Thomas account in John 20:24-29), but Scripture also does not say that the eleven were the only followers there. In any case, is the presence of some doubt, even in the hearts of Jesus’ closest followers, much of a surprise?

Key Points in 28:18-20:

- “All authority in heaven and on earth” (18). God the Father has delegated to the risen Christ the Lordship of the universe. He is the Lord, whether people acknowledge Him as such or not. Someday all will (Phil 2:9-11).
- The making of disciples is a seamless 2 part process: “baptizing” – initial belief and submission to Jesus Christ at conversion. “Teaching” – the curriculum is a lifelong and probably eternal transformation toward Christ-likeness (Luke 6:40; Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21; Col 3:10; 2 Cor 3:17-18). Jesus never gave us an option of stopping the process after baptism.
- “I am with you always.” Our Lord Jesus Christ is Immanuel (Matt 1:23) – God with us! Matthew opens and closes his gospel with that assurance!

Conclusion: Is it possible that our contribution, or lack thereof, toward making disciples goes on whether we participate or not? C.S. Lewis thinks so. *“All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations [Heaven or Hell] . . . There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal.”* (From *The Weight of Glory*)

Q: Do you agree with Lewis? Why or why not? Is his assessment unfair, too burdensome? Do you find it much easier not to think about such matters (I do!)?

More questions for reflection and/or discussion from *Multiply*:

Q: As you look at your life, how would you say that your love for God is shown in your actions?

Q: If you choose to obey or have chosen to obey Jesus’ call to follow, what might it cost you or what has it already cost you? (Avoid being vague. Will following Jesus cost you specific possessions, comforts, or relationships?)

Q: What might hold you back from following Jesus wholeheartedly at this point? Are you willing to let go of these things if necessary?

Spend some time in prayer. Ask God to work in your heart and prepare you for what is ahead. You don’t need to have all the answers or know specifically how God will use you. He simply calls you to follow wherever He might lead. As you pray, be honest about your doubts, hesitations, and fears. Ask Him to give you the strength to proceed and follow Him no matter what the cost. As Lewis says, *“Meanwhile the cross comes before the crown and tomorrow is a Monday morning. A cleft has opened in the pitiless walls of the world, and we are invited to follow our Great Captain inside. The following Him is, of course, the essential point.”*

Will we, will you, will I, follow “our Great Captain” and help others to do so? Will we choose to be wholehearted disciples and partner with the Church to be disciple-makers, or will we choose to leave the disciple-making to the professionals?

Is the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart right now about some small steps you can take to be both a more devoted disciple and a more effective disciple-maker?