

LIVING STONES DISCIPLESHIP GROUP



THIRD SEMESTER
UNIT 3



"[Y]ou yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1Peter 2:5

UNIT 3:

The Mission of the Church



IN THIS SESSION

- :: What is the Mission of the Church?
- :: How God Accomplishes His Mission
 - :: What is a disciple of Christ?
 - :: How does discipleship work?

UNIT 3: The Mission of the Church

// OPENING SCRIPTURE

"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'"

John 20:21

// OPENING PRAYER

// FOLLOW-UP FROM PREVIOUS UNIT

Memory Verse :: Ephesians 1:9b-10

Homework :: Unit 3 Completed

UNIT 3: The Mission of the Church

// How God Accomplishes His Mission

:: In the previous unit, we sought to understand the mission of God. God sent His Son into the world to save Hell-deserving sinners by paying the penalty of their sin on the cross. God raised Him from the dead and now the Lord Jesus sits enthroned in Heaven. God's mission, we discovered, is to bring glory to Himself by uniting all things in Christ (see Ephesians 1:9-10).

:: This unit is about the *how*. *How* does God bring glory to Himself in uniting all things in Christ through the gospel? What are His means? The Bible's answer: the church. Specifically, through disciples of Christ making disciples for Christ.

:: After His resurrection, the Lord told the disciples in John 20:21, "**As the Father has _____ Me, even so I am _____ you.**" (ESV) Jesus was sent from the Father. In the same way, Jesus is sending His disciples. Sending them where? And to do what? Let's see why Jesus was sent.

:: Look up **Luke 4:18-19**. The Lord lists five things God sent Him to do. What are they?

:: One word is repeated three times in these two verses. What is it? _____

:: The Greek word translated proclaim means to preach the gospel. Jesus was sent by God to proclaim the good news, to preach the gospel. As the Father sent Jesus, so Jesus sends His disciples. He made this promise: "**And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**" (Mt 24:14) The method, of course, was outlined in the Great Commission (on the next page).

“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.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

:: The church exists to go into the world and make disciples through the proclamation of the gospel.

// We Follow Our Leader(s)

:: Jesus was the disciple’s example. They are ours. Read **Acts 2:1-13**. When the Holy Spirit falls on the 120 disciples on Pentecost, He empowers them to speak in “**other tongues**”, spoken languages of the surrounding nations. When the crowds hear them, what are they hearing them say? (Hint: verse 11)

:: Then Peter stands up and preaches. The Lord saves 3000 people through the preaching of the gospel. In the days following Pentecost, the Bible records the church devoting themselves to meeting regularly for fellowship, prayer, and preaching. “**And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.**” (Acts 2:47) Through preaching the word, disciples are made and the church grows.

:: As the gospel is proclaimed, people are saved, churches are planted. This has been the way since the beginning. The book of Acts ends with the Apostle Paul in Rome “**proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.**” (28:31)

:: This, we see, is the mission of the church. Every Christian carries on this mission: go, proclaim the good news and make disciples. As members of the church of Jesus Christ, we exist to “*go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit, gathering these disciples into churches that they may worship and obey Jesus now and into eternity to the glory of God the Father.*”¹ Next we look at your part in all this.

¹ DeYoung, K., & Gilbert, G. (2011). What Is the Mission of the Church?: Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission. Living Stones Discipleship Group | S3: Unit 3

// Disciples Making Disciples

:: Back to the Great Commission. Jesus told the disciples they were to “**Go...make disciples of all nations...**” A disciple is a learner, a follower of Christ. Every disciple *of* Christ is called to make disciples *for* Christ.

:: Many Christians take a ‘consumer’ approach to their faith. They come to church to hear a bible-based message, apply it to their lives so they can be happier, have healthier relationships, and be more comfortable. The responsibility of discipleship—they believe—belongs to church leaders. But this is a misunderstanding of the purpose of the church, of church leaders, and of Christianity as a whole.

:: Consider **Ephesians 4:11-16**. The Apostle Paul tells us Jesus gave five gifts to the church. What are they (verse 11)? _____

:: In verse 12, Paul tells us why Jesus gave them to the church. “**To _____ the _____ for the work of _____**”. According to the Bible, who should be doing the “**work of the ministry**”? _____

:: Verses 13-16 give a long and glorious list of the effects of the equipping of the saints. Read through these verses and write down the effects you see. (*Example: “unity of the faith”*)

:: All this is culminated in verse 16, “**when each part** (every individual believer) **is working properly... the body grow(s), so that it builds itself up in love.**” The Apostle is teaching us discipleship is the role of every believer. Again, every disciple *of* Christ is called to make disciples *for* Christ.

Disciple [dih-sahy-puh l] noun —

:: μαθητεύω mathēteuō

:: *a learner and follower of Jesus Christ, called by God, sanctified by God’s Spirit, and commissioned to imitate Christ by proclaiming the gospel and making more disciples of Christ.*

// Praying & Proclaiming

:: Making disciples begins with evangelism. Evangelism means to communicate the good news. This is done with words. Lewis Drummond defines evangelism as “a concerted effort in the power of the Holy Spirit to confront unbelievers with the truth about Jesus Christ and the claims of our Lord with a view to leading unbelievers into repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus, into the fellowship of His church so they may grow in the Spirit.”²

:: Few Christians have had the joy of leading someone to the Lord. This is probably because few Christians evangelize. Many are afraid of failure, or rejection, or of presenting the gospel poorly. Fear is understandable, but shouldn't be an obstacle. Our job is not to save anyone. Salvation comes from the Lord (Jonah 2:9). Our job is to pray and proclaim the gospel. The results are up to God.

:: Evangelism starts with prayer. If we truly love our friends and relatives, we will pray they come to repentance and faith in Christ. Since salvation is God's work, we begin by asking the Lord to **“open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in [Jesus Christ].”** (Acts 26:18)

:: Then we proclaim. Invite your friend/relative to lunch or coffee and share the gospel. There is no formula for this. You could share your testimony, you could ask about church, you could ask what they believe about God. What are some questions you could ask to open the door to a gospel presentation? (List a few, and work with your group to create more.)

“The responsibility of the church in the new age is the same as its responsibility in every age. It is to testify that this world is lost in sin; that the span of human life—nay, all the length of human history—is an infinitesimal island in the awful depths of eternity; that there is a mysterious, holy, living God, Creator of all, Upholder of all, infinitely beyond all; that He has revealed Himself to us in His Word and offered us communion with Himself through Jesus Christ the Lord; that there is no other salvation, for individuals or for nations, save this, but that this salvation is full and free, and that whosoever possesses it has for himself and for all others to whom he may be the instrument of bringing it a treasure compared with which all the kingdoms of the earth—nay, all the wonders of the stary heavens—are as the dust of the street. ... An unpopular message it is—an impractical message, we are told. But it is the message of the Christian church. Neglect it, and you will have destruction; heed it, and you will have life.” - J. Greshem Machen

² Drummond, L. (1992). The Word of the Cross

:: One of the most powerful ways of evangelism is telling your story—your testimony. Any Christian can do this. Tell your friend/relative how Jesus saved you. How did God expose your need for Him? How did He draw you to Himself? When did you come to repentance? What did your conversion look like? Tell the story. One part of your homework for this unit is to write down your testimony (see page 11).

// Make Disciples

:: Once a friend or relative recognizes his/her need for Christ, comes to repent for sin, and places their faith in Jesus Christ, discipleship begins. The Lord said, “[teach] them to observe all that I have **commanded**”. This is the work of the Christian ministry: make disciples, teach them to be like Jesus, equip them to do the same for others. Everyone is involved in this in one way or another.

:: Look up the following verses. How is discipleship being described?

- *Colossians 3:16*

- *Romans 15:14*

- *Hebrews 10:24-25*

:: Discipleship can be done any number of ways. Usually, the best way is through one-on-one Bible-studies or small groups. Work with your group and come up with a handful of ways in which you could be discipling others. (*example: family bible study, neighborhood bible study, etc.*)

MINISTRY CHALLENGE!

This week, you have a challenge. Seek the Lord for an opportunity to share your faith with one person, someone you know. Begin praying for them. Ask the Lord to give you an opportunity and the boldness to speak. Share your story when you have the opportunity. Be prepared to share with your group in the next meeting.

UNIT 3: The Mission of the Church

PRAYER REQUESTS // PRAISE REPORTS

Go around the room and have each person share a prayer request and/or a praise report. Members should commit to praying for these requests.

PLEASE RESPECT YOUR GROUP'S PRIVACY AND COMMIT TO PRAYING FOR YOUR BROTHER'S/SISTER'S NEEDS

UNIT 3: The Mission of the Church

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

:: Memorize the following verse(s):

**"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'"**

John 20:21, ESV

:: Complete the Unit 4 worksheets and activities (when applicable).

:: Write down your testimony on the attached worksheet.

:: Take the Ministry Challenge and be prepared to share your experience with your group.

:: Pray for the needs of your brothers/sisters in your group.

:: Ensure you are able to attend the next session.

Made Alive: Share Your Testimony

"Declare how much God has done for you." Lk. 8:39

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Your personal testimony is wonderful! Telling the story of how Jesus saved you is a great way to share the gospel. Sharing it with non-Christians makes the gospel real and personal. Sharing it with other Christians builds their faith. It's even a way of overcoming the enemy (see Rev. 12:11)!

Boil it down to a 2-3 minute explanation so you can share it in almost any setting. The Bible gives us a template from the way the Apostle Paul shares his testimony in Acts 22:3-21. Notice his structure, outlined below. After learning to share it quickly, you may find more opportunities to share the gospel.

Your Background :: < 1 Minute

Example: Acts 22:3-5

- Talk about your family life, what you used to think about God before He saved you. Let it be just enough information to communicate who you were or are.
- If Jesus saved you at a young age, you may not remember not being a Christian. If this is the case, simply communicate how you grew up.

Your Conversion :: 1-2 Minutes

Example: Acts 22:6-16

- How did you realize God was real? How did He reveal Himself to you?
- How did you recognize your sin and your need for a Savior?
- How did God reveal Jesus to you? How did your heart turn away from sin and toward Him?

Your Life With Christ :: < 1 Minute

Example: Acts 22:17-21

- Briefly explain how your life has been difference since Jesus saved you. Maybe explain the struggles of following Jesus and how God is advancing the gospel through your life.
- Give God praise for His grace and mercy in your life.

