
Desire of Disciple-Making

1. INTRO

- This term we're exploring the theme of discipleship
 - That is ... we're seeking to grow or 'move the right' as we live to BE and MAKE disciples
 - That's what we're on about here at C@P
 - We live to BE and MAKE disciples

- When it comes to living to BE disciples, I think evangelical Christians in Australia are pretty good at that
- Go to any evangelical church and you'll generally find they're good at:
 - Worship
 - Community
 - Loving one another
 - Reading the Bible
 - Following Jesus
- But on the whole ... they're not good at evangelism
- They're good on BEING disciples ... not great on MAKING disciples

- What about C@P?
- NCLS data from 2016 showed we are
 - Strong on serving
 - Inspired during worship services
 - Value sermons, preaching & teaching
 - Strong sense of belonging

- But when it comes to sharing our faith
 - On 26% said they feel at ease sharing their faith and actively look for opportunities

- Let me put it another way ...
- If you're a Christian here this morning ... have you ever led any one to Christ?
 - Some of you no doubt have
 - If you have ... praise God
- If haven't led anyone to Christ before ... or if it's been ages since you did ...then that's a very honest assessment
- Now if that's the case ...
 - What do you think is the barrier?
 - What's stopping you?

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- Is it because:
 - You've just never thought of it before?
 - You think the pastor's job?
 - Lack of desire?
 - Fear or anxiety about
 - rejection or
 - not knowing what to do, what to say?
 - The real measure, the real acid test of how we are going as disciple-makers ... is how many people have become a Christians here at C@P in the last 12months, 2 years, 5 years
 - A bit hard to tell because we don't re-baptise adults
 - But I did a rough count ... I reckon on average its about 1-2 a year
 - In one sense ... that's awesome ... praise God
 - In Luke 15 the man rejoices when just one lost sheep is found and returned to the flock

 - However, if we're fair dinkum about seeing all of Peakhurst transformed by the good news of Jesus ... at that rate it's going to take us 1000 years ...
 - And quite frankly ... we haven't got that long!

 - It seems to me ... we need a radical mindset and culture shift when it comes to disciple-making
 - We need to think differently and do things differently than what we've been doing in the past
 - By and large ... the way we've been thinking about evangelism (and I'm to blame for this) ... is this
 - 'Let's invite as many people to church as we can and as they come to church, they'll hear the gospel and we'll pray they'll come repent and believe'
 - That's good
 - That's one way
 - But is not the only way ... and in fact it a really limited way ... because it relies on the person coming to church and hearing the preacher
 - But what if
 - they aren't willing to come to church
 - can't come to church
 - So, we need to re-think things ...
 - We need to recalibrate our thinking
 - We need to recalibrate our methods
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- **Illustration – Reverse Bike**

- Many years ago, Liana and I were watching a street performer
- He had a bike that had been engineered so that the front wheel turned in the exact opposite way to the handle bars
 - Turn the handle bars left, wheel would go right
 - Turn the handle bars right and the wheel would go left
- He was challenging anyone in the crowd
 - If they could ride the bike from one line to another line ... a distance of about 5m ... he would give them 5GBP
 - He was so confident ... he said you could have three attempts
- Easy right?
 - Who can't ride a bike 5m?
- So up steps Stu ... "I can do this ... just need turn the handle bar the other way ... no worries"
 - I didn't even get across the start line!
- Why?
 - My thinking is so ingrained to turn the handle bars a certain way in order to maintain my balance
 - I needed to totally recalibrate my way of thinking to do something radically different
- We need to recalibrate our mindset when it comes to making disciples

- **Illustration - 100m Race**

- It's like we're in a 100m race but where everyone is walking
- As everyone one is walking down the straight ... they're constantly looking across and cross-referencing each other
- Compared to everyone else ... they're going great
- But the reality is ... it's the slowest 100m race in the history of the world

- We need to get better at making disciples and I include myself in that
- We need to move to the right when it comes to helping people come to know and believe in Jesus

- So, this morning ... I want to look the desire of discipleship
- And I want to address both the
 - Theology and practice
 - The why and the how
- So, looking at two headings
 - **Fuelling the desire** to make disciples

- **Facilitating the desire** to make disciples

PRAY

2. FUELLING THE DESIRE TO MAKE DISCIPLES

The Command

- Where does the desire come from to be so single minded in making sharing the good news of Jesus?
- Why do it?

- The starting point is because Jesus calls us to make disciples
- See this most clearly in Matt 28:19-20
 - *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*

- The context here is
 - Jesus died on the cross to pay for the sin of the world
 - Risen from the grave to prove he is the Messiah and has conquered sin and death
 - Before he returns to his Father in heaven, he spends 50 days with his disciples giving them a crash course in theology and ministry
 - And just before he goes, he commissions his disciples to carry on his mission once he has gone
- And what is that mission?
 - According to Jesus in v19 ... it's to get on with the business of disciple making

- Our English translations obscure this somewhat ... because it looks there are two commands
 - Go AND make disciples
 - Actually, in the original language there is only one command ... which is make disciples
- It literally says ...
 - You (pl) / 'youse' ... make disciples
 - This command is surrounded by three dependent phrases
 - Going
 - Baptising
 - Teaching
 - They explain the command
 - They tell how to make disciples
- So, the SMV Bible ... Stuart Maze Version says

- 'As you are going, make disciples by baptising and teaching'
- So far in our series on discipleship and disciple-making ... we've been focusing on what it means to **be** a disciple of Jesus
- You and I are called to recognise Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God and follow him
- To recognise the demand of discipleship
 - Following Jesus is not easy
 - Following Jesus and proclaiming him and his kingdom must be a disciple's greatest priority ... even greater than family
 - Following Jesus requires commitment to him and not looking back
- Friends if you call yourself a Christian ... if you say you are a disciple of Jesus ... then an intrinsic part of you being a Christian includes ... being a disciple maker
- That is ...
 - Discipling non-Christians towards conversion
 - Discipling Christians towards maturity in Christ
- You can't call yourself a Christian and not be engaged in the process of making disciples
- This is why our vision here at C@P is 'we live to be AND MAKE disciples'
- Because part of being a disciple of Jesus is being engaged in the mission of Jesus ... which is disciple-making

- A Christian must not and cannot be content just to
 - know Jesus,
 - know the salvation he brings through his death on the cross,
 - attend church / growth groups / youth group / discipleship groups ... and not be engaged process of making disciples
- Because Jesus has commanded you and I ... not just to repent and believe in him ... although that is obviously the first step any Christian must take ...
 - But says ... as you go ... make disciples
 - As you go to uni ... make disciples
 - As you go to school ... make disciples
 - As you go to work ... make disciples
 - As you go on parenting ... make disciples
 - As you go on holiday ... make disciples
 - As you go about your daily life ... make disciples

The Vision

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- And so, as we consider the desire for discipleship ... what's the motive for disciple-making?
 - We could end the sermon there by simply quoting Matthew 28:19 and saying "because Jesus told us to"
 - However, ... God in his goodness and grace has given us much more to motivate us to be engaged in the mission of disciple-making
 - God gives us more than just a bare command – just do it and stop complaining
 - He's let us in on why disciple making is so important and so urgent
 - The common thread running throughout the Bible is that God is planning to gather his people into his kingdom people from every nation
 - This desire is seen in many passages in the Bible, one of them is in Ephesians 2
 - However, the Bible's depiction of human history has a dark underbelly
 - It is a consequence that stretches right back to our first parents in the garden
 - In Ephesians 2 the Apostle Paul elaborates on that reality when he explains that the state that the Ephesians were in before they were converted was
 - They were dead in their transgressions and sin
 - Objects of God's wrath
 - This was true for the Ephesians and it is true for all humanity
 - Everyone who is yet to turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and put their trust in him for the forgiveness of their sins ... is dead!
 - Spiritually dead
 - Facing God's judgment and eternity in hell
 - Later in Ephesians, Paul goes on to further elaborate the dire straits that all humanity is in without Christ
He says in Eph 5:8
 - *That you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.*
 - In other words, Paul is saying ...
 - This captive state that you and I and all humanity are in is 'darkness'
 - And that the world we live in is a 'dark world' (Eph 6:12)
 - You don't need me to convince you that this is true
 - You just need to watch the 6 o'clock news
 - But God's plan was not to leave humanity in the darkness
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- For he says in v4-5
 - *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-*
- And more than just save us from the wrath of God we all deserve ... which is extraordinary and humbling and gracious ...
 - But as he goes on to say ... he will **also**
 - *Raise us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus*

- God's great plan ... his cosmic plan from the beginning ... is to raise people up with Christ and have them seated in the heavenly realms that they may be gathered around the risen Lord Jesus in the presence of Almighty God for eternity

- **Application**
- This is an important aspect of the **why** of disciple making
- God's plan is a rescue mission for people trapped in an awful and inescapable darkness
- The world we live in is not neutral territory
- It is not a bright sunny place where people just get on with their lives and work and interests, and where Christians are people who just happen to have a particular interest in going to church
- Of course, it can feel that way sometimes, especially for those of us blessed to live in peaceful and prosperous parts of the Western world
- We live and breathe among a multitude of educated, healthy, peace loving citizens ... living a life of stimulating work, abundant food, find entertainment, and friends and family

- The daily exposure to this view of the world dulls our perception of this present darkness in which we and everyone around us lives
- It's like the dimmer switch is turned up so the darkness doesn't seem so dark, and people don't seem so lost in it

- This has multiple effects and consequences for Christians as well
 - Perhaps the most serious is how drastically it saps the urgency out of making new disciples of Christ
 - That is, it's very easy for Christians to settle into a comfortable week by week church existence, where they're happy to be together and to help each other grow as disciples of Christ, and to be frank, are reasonably content with the world around them is continuing on its way to hell

- It's so easy to lose sight of
 - how deep the prevailing darkness is
 - how lost and blind are our neighbours and friends and community
 - how desperate and sad is the plight of the millions who remain in darkness
- **A Vision of the Lost – William Booth – Salvation Army**
- William Booth was the founder of the Salvation Army
- He famously wrote this short article titled A Vision of the Lost
- *I saw a dark and stormy ocean. Over it the black clouds hung heavily; through them every now and then vivid lightening flashed, and loud thunder rolled, while the winds moaned, and the waves rose and foamed, towered and broke, only to rise and foam, tower and break again.*
- *In that ocean I thought I saw myriads of poor human beings plunging and floating, shouting and shrieking, cursing and struggling and drowning; and as they cursed and screamed, they rose and shrieked again, and then some sank to rise no more.*
- *And I saw out of this dark angry ocean, a mighty rock that rose up with its summit towering high above the black clouds that overhung the stormy sea. And all around the base of this great rock I saw a vast platform. Onto this platform, I saw with delight a number of the poor, struggling, drowning wretches continually climbing out of the angry ocean. And I saw that a few of those who were already safe on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the angry waters to reach the place of safety.*
- *On looking more closely I found a number of those who had been rescued, industriously working and scheming by ladders, ropes, boats and other means more effective, to deliver the poor strugglers out of the sea...*
- *As I looked on, I saw that the occupants of that platform were quite a mixed company. That is, they were divided into different "sets" or classes, and they occupied themselves with different pleasures and employments. But only a very few of them seemed to make it their business to get the people out of the sea.*
- *But what puzzled me most was the fact that though all of them had been rescued at one time or another from the ocean, nearly everyone seemed to have forgotten all about it. It seemed the memory of its darkness and danger no longer troubled them at all. And what seemed equally strange and perplexing to me was that these people did not even seem to have any care- that is any agonizing care- about the poor perishing ones who were struggling and drowning right before their very eyes... many of whom were*

their own husbands and wives, brothers and sisters and even their own children.

- That's very sobering! I would recommend you read the whole article this week. It's very pointed
- But I know I need a sobering vision like this to be reminded ... how this world is in desperate need of rescuing from the darkness of sin, suffering, evil and death and that God is doing just that
- And he's rescuing people from every nation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ ... and bringing them into a new creation where death and evil are no more
- If we need any more motive than the explicit command in Matt 28 ... this picture surely provides it
- The multitudes all around us in this present darkness are in desperate need of saving and God's eternal plan is to do just that ... to deliver and transfer people into his eternal kingdom
- And understanding that through the gospel ... this is God's salvation plan for a world that is lost and drowning in the darkness
- And this therefore ... gives us the right perspective and desire ... when it comes to disciple-making

3. FACILITATING THE DESIRE TO MAKE DISCIPLES

Overcoming Rejection

- I imagine most of you get the command and the desire for people come to know Jesus
- However, some of you ... maybe many of you are sitting there feeling
 - Guilty
 - Overwhelmed
 - Anxious
- I get that
- Typically, when it comes to disciple-making and sharing the good news of Jesus with others ... many people think
 - "I wouldn't know where to start"
 - "I've only been a Christian a short time ... I wouldn't know what to say"
 - "I'm worried about being rejected"
 - "What if they ask a question I can't answer?"
- Let me address some of those for you ... and hopefully you'll feel more encouraged and equipped to be the disciple-maker Jesus calls you to be

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- One of the things that stops us is a fear of rejection
 - We assume that people are hostile to Christianity and therefore we risk a hostile response ... or at the very least it's going to damage our relationship

 - The reality is ... your friends are not as hostile as you assume
 - They're actually much warmer to hearing about Jesus than you think

 - So, for instance ... Sydney based research company McCrindle Research published one study in 2017 that found the following:
 - 55% of Australians talk about spirituality or religion at least occasionally
 - Attitudes towards Christianity
 - 1 in 4 are 'warm' to Christianity, saying
 - *I consider myself a Christian (38%)*
 - *I believe in Christianity, but don't consider myself a Christian*
 - *I believe much of Christianity, but still have some significant doubts*
 - *I believe in the ethics and values of Christianity, but I don't practice Christianity in any way*

 - Another question the research posed was this ...
 - How important was Jesus life to you personally?
 - 31% extremely
 - 32% somewhat / slightly
 - 63% > somewhat to extremely important ... that's pretty good odds!

 - Yes, there are people who are hostile, negative and cool towards Jesus and Christianity
 - But there's a **huge** proportion of our population ... a huge proportion of your friends ... who are open
 - On the whole, you're not necessarily going to end up in a debate with hard-nosed atheist want to tear shreds off you!

 - Example - Q&A Monday night
 - Interesting watching Q&A on the ABC this week
 - Very diverse range of guests as usual
 - Catherine McGregor – Transgender writer, & activist
 - Jordan Peterson – Canadian psychologist and Professor
 - Labor Politician - Terri Butler (both right wing)
 - Liberal politician - Alex Hawke
 - Writer and commentator - Van Badham (both left wing)
 - A question from the audience asked if they believed in God

- 2 – Christian
- 1 – believer
- 1 – agnostic
- 1 – refused to answer
- Here's 5 educated, socially and politically aware public personalities ... all of whom were either positive or warm to Christianity ... or at the very least neutral
- For example – Liam's mate engagement party recently
 - Said grace and prayed for Liam and Jess and gave thanks etc
 - One of Liam's uni friends commented to one Liam's Christian mates about the prayer and me being a pastor
 - They got chatting
 - Within few minutes the Christian guy asked the other mate if he would be interested in catching up to read the Bible with him and Liam
 - And he said "Yes"
- You and I need to see that when it comes to disciple-making and sharing the gospel ... it's not as hostile as you might think
- And that actually ... people are much warmer to discussing and finding out more about what you believe ... especially ... especially if they see your faith is authentic and you live out your faith in an authentic way

Spiritual resources

- Something else that holds us back from making disciples is
 - Not knowing what to say or how to go about it
 - What if they ask questions I can't answer?
 - You know what to say / you're confident you could share the gospel ... but you find it hard to get into situation where you can share it
- I want to show you two things that will encourage and equip you to overcome these concerns
- The first comes from the Bible
- In Acts 4 ... Peter and John are hauled before the Jewish ruling council because they've been teaching and preaching the gospel
- And they were asked
 - "By what power or what name did you do this?" (v7)
- Peter doesn't answer their question directly
 - He declares the gospel
 - Jesus Christ was crucified

- But God raised him up from the dead
- *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."* (v12)
- And Luke records
 - v13 – *When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realised that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished, and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.*
- So, here's these two fishermen ... standing before the religious and social elite of their day ... and they just boldly share the gospel
- Despite the fact
 - They were uneducated
 - They were working class
 - Dealing with a massive power imbalance against them
 - They're not intimidated
 - They're not fearful
- They were just ordinary guys ... sharing an extraordinary message

- How did they do it?
 - v8 tells us they were filled with the Spirit
- God the Holy Spirit gave them the words and courage and conviction to declare the message of salvation to those who were in darkness

- And friends ... if you're a follower of Jesus ... you have that same spirit
- And you and I are just very ordinary men and women
- But if you're a Christian ... you have the Holy Spirit in you ... and therefore you have the same power and resources as Peter and John to be sharing the gospel and making disciples

Practical Resources – DBM

- The second thing I think will help you overcome the barriers of not knowing what to say or do ... is not so much theological, but practical

- Recently I realised I've let you down on this
- Over the years I know I've taught and urged and encouraged and exhorted C@P to be engaged in the mission of God and making disciples
- But I've realised I haven't really given you the tools to be able to do it
- The ah-ha moment for me came last year when it dawned on me
 - I knew I should share the gospel
 - I knew I could share the gospel if the opportunity arose
 - But I didn't know how to create opportunities to do it

- If that's the case to me as a minister of the gospel then it'll only be more challenging for most of you
- I want to share with you a really simple tool that I found extremely helpful ... and I pray it will help you too
- It's a tool called Discovery Bible Method (DBM)
- DBM is a method or process for reading the Bible with someone ...whether they're a Christian or non-Christian ... it doesn't matter ... its' all disciple-making
- Some of you are already familiar with it through meeting up with John or using it in your Discipleship groups
- But I want to show all of you, so everyone feels like they not only have the spiritual resources of the HS, but also the practical resources to be engaged in the process of disciple making
- There are many ways and means for sharing the gospel
- This is just one ... you may have lots of tools in your disciple-making tool bag ... but if you don't ... try this

- How does DBM work?
- Easy as A-B-C > Ask-Bible-Commit
- Start with Bible
 - Take a short passage from the Bible > between 5-10verses
 - Your choice ... I suggest starting with one of the gospels
 - You read it > they read it
 - Close your Bibles > both recount the story in your own words ... not word for word ... just retell it from memory
 - Open your Bible re-read silently in your head looking for what you think God is trying to say from the passage
- Some helpful questions to ask each other is
 - What's this say about God? or
 - What's this say about Jesus?
 - What's this say about us?
 - What stands out?
- Share that with each other
 - Might take 2 mins ... might take 20 mins

- Then you get to C – Commit
- Simply ask
 - What do you think this passage is urging us to do? or

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- If this is true, what do we need to do?
 - That's it
 - You come back the next week
 - Start with A – Ask
 - Ask – “How did it go with that thing you were going to do?”
 - Then carry on with Bible and Commit around a new passage

 - It's deliberately designed to be super easy
 - ABC > Ask, Bible Commit
 - It's simple enough that even school kids are using it to share Jesus with their friends

 - So how do you get to a position where you read the Bible with someone using Discovery Bible Method
 - This is thing I found so helpful
 - Do this
 - Pray and ask God to put on your heart someone or some people that you know that you could read the Bible with
 - Someone who is warm to you ... someone who respects you
 - Don't start with your friend who's an avowed atheist
 - Then call them up or text them and say this
 - “I'm looking for someone to read the Bible with, I don't know if you'd be interested?” [repeat]
 - The genius about that little phrase is
 - It sounds like they would be helping you out by agreeing to meet up
 - Secondly, it's enables them to say “No” without damaging the friendship
 - So, you can ask them confidently knowing it's not going to wreck your friendship

 - Given one in four Aussies are warm to Christianity ... you can pretty much guarantee, if you ask four friends, one will say “yes”
 - If you were in marketing ... you'd kill for that type of response rate

 - Friends, it's not hard
 - In fact, it's so simple anyone can do it
 - The mission of God in the hands of ordinary people like you and me

 - We're going to go over DBM more in GG next week
 - But in the mean-time ... here's a #10weekdiscipleship challenge
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- Why not pray to God and ask him to put four people on your heart that you can invite to do DBM with
- Then call or text them and say, "I'm looking for someone to read the Bible with, I don't know if you'd be interested?"
- And when one of them says "Yes" call John or I and we'll celebrate with you and help you get ready for your first session
- I'll be doing it ... why don't we all do it!?

4. CONCLUSION

- Friends ... do you have the desire for disciple making?
- We need to get this right first
- If you don't get the 'why' ... then you won't want to share the gospel ... you just won't think it's that important or urgent
- But when you realise that Jesus commissions his people to make disciples
- And he gives us the vision how he is saving people out of the darkness and into his eternal kingdom ... then there's our motive

- But he's given us the resources to do it
 - He's given us his Spirit
 - And so, anyone who's a disciple of Jesus can help others to become a disciple of Jesus too

PRAY