

deeper

word faith life

Season 4

The Doctrine of the Church
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Acknowledgements:

Wayne Grudem

Rick Cornish



Episode 4 – The Mission of the Church

When Jesus said that He would build His church, He gave us the authority and the power to build with Him. He does the building, but He graciously invites us to work with Him. The church has a mission to complete before Jesus returns. Sadly many believers are unaware of this mission. In a survey done a number of years ago in the US, results indicated that 89% of Christians believed that the church exists to meet their needs and those of their families. Only 11% believed that the church exists to reach the unsaved.

The Mission of the Church

Jesus' parting shot to His disciples: His, if get nothing else, get this, is found here:

Matthew 28:17-20 "When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus has given the church authority to make disciples. There is a difference between converts and disciples. Conversion is easy and we all have to start there, but making a disciple is another thing entirely. The goal of conversion is an emotional response to the message of the gospel, which we need to have, but it cannot stay there. The goal of discipleship is a life transformed by the power of the gospel. And that is the mission of the church. Jesus sees being a disciple and making disciples as the same thing. He expects disciples to be disciplers.

He said to Simon and Andrew who were on the beach casting their fishing nets into the lake, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19) The implication here is that followers of Christ will be concerned with the eternal destinies of people in their spheres.

Making disciples requires that we get involved in peoples lives, that we lead by example and we carry them in prayer. It requires that we rejoice with people as well as mourn with them; that we are there in their success as well as their failure. It's a journey that we go on together, teaching them to obey Jesus.

Galatians 4:19 - "...until Christ is formed in you..."

Romans 8:29 - "For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..."

Discipleship is for every Christian, not just a select few; every believer is capable of discipling somebody, we have Jesus authority to do so.

Jesus has also given the church His power to make disciples. "And surely I am with you..." He hasn't left us alone in this mission, He has given us His Spirit to empower us to get the job done. Acts 1:4,5,8 - "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost recorded in Acts 2 was intended by God to empower the church to go into all the world, to bear witness of Jesus, and to make disciples. Throughout the book of Acts we see evidence of this momentum of the Holy Spirit transforming society as churches were established across the Mediterranean region.

Acts 16:5 - "So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers."

Part of the empowering of the Holy Spirit is the bestowal of spiritual gifts to the church. These gifts are primarily given for the task of building up the body so that it can make



disciples. A mature church will accept the responsibility of the mission

Ephesians 4: 7-16 "But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, He took many captives and gave gifts to his people."

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

God's plan for every believer is that they grow up and make disciples. Sadly today many believers see this as optional. Equally sad is the notion that the presence of the Holy Spirit is for their own experience. We have got to keep our eyes on what Jesus has given us to do on the earth, then we will experience the power and presence of the Spirit like never before.

How do we Complete the Mission?

How do we actually go about making disciples?

Shine Your Light - In order to shine we have to go where there is no light. Get involved with your community.

Matthew 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Invite People - Either to your home or to church. It's a great blessing and a real gift to gather people together for God's purposes. Building a bridge is a critical component to discipleship.

Preaching the Word - Some people are called to disciple with their teaching and preaching.

2 Timothy 4:2 - "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction."

Lead a Small Group - This is a great way to make disciples by regularly sharing a meal and learning together, being there for each other.

Acts 2:42-47 "

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Church Planting - The best way to disciple a nation is to plant churches in every village, town and city.

Make full use of every opportunity - Be aware. Sometimes we get so caught up in our own lives, we forget why we're here.



Ephesians 5:15,16 - "Be very careful, then, how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Your life is your message - People are looking at you because you are a believer. We need to live our lives in such a way that others see Christ.

1 Timothy 4:16 - "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

Much more could be said about the mission of the church, but we should rather get busy doing it than spending too much time theorising and discussing it. Let's get on with what Jesus has commissioned us to do while there is still time to do it.

Memory Verse

Matthew 28:18-20 "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

