**Bless Every Home**

“Make Disciples”

Matthew 28:18-20

1. Introduction
   1. In our nation’s capital is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier or the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery. For 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, a platoon of 30 honor guards protects the tomb through rain, snow, and even hurricanes! It's been guarded every minute of every day since 1937. The Unknown service members laid to rest at the Tomb represent all missing and unknown service members who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedoms.
   2. Typically a single sentinel at a time guards the memorial, pacing back and forth throughout his watch. The soldier walks exactly 21 steps then pauses for 21 seconds before turning around and continuing his duty. The number 21 is in reference to the 21-gun salute which is the military's highest honor given to a soldier.
   3. When the changing of the guard takes place, orders are passed from one soldier to his relief: Here is the heart of that dialog: " Post and orders remain as directed.” Orders remain. Their original charge remains their current charge. No change.
   4. There is another tomb—empty now in Jerusalem. Our Lord, after his victorious resurrection, gave orders to his disciples some 2000 years ago and those orders remain as directed!
   5. Do you know what our marching orders are as followers of Christ? Today we will revisit those orders.
   6. Please open your Bibles to Matthew 28:18-20.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[b] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

* 1. Prayer
  2. Transition
     1. In Matthew 28:18-20 we are given our orders. And they remain as directed. We are to make disciples.
     2. When we make disciples, when we help people become devoted followers of Jesus, we bless them. That’s been our theme the last month. God has called us to “bless every home.”
     3. We bless the homes in our circle of influence as we pray for them, care for them, share with them, and make disciples of Jesus of them. That last step is our focus for today.
     4. We are called to make disciples. God’s blessing will only be experienced in its fullness when we are his disciples. You want to bless someone? Help them become disciples of Jesus.
     5. Today we’ll learn how disciples are made. Three elements are essential: we need a power, we need a plan, and we need a partner. First, then, we need the power to make disciples. I have good news: we *have* the power to make disciples—not innately, but by virtue of our relationship to Jesus. He has the power!

1. We have the power to make disciples

*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority* [or, as the KJV says, “All power”] *in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples . . .”* (28:18-19a).

* 1. Jesus’ power is stated
     1. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. That word “authority” can mean power, ability, jurisdiction, or right. Jesus has all the power and authority in heaven and on earth.
     2. LeBron James has power. Lauren Holtkamp has authority. Lauren is a referee in the NBA. Can you imagine her having authority over LeBron James. He is probably double her weight (6’8” and 250). Towers over her in height. He is bigger, stronger, and faster. But, she has the authority of the league behind her. And he has to submit to her authority. If not, she can throw him out of the game!
     3. Jesus not only has power, he has authority!
     4. That’s quite a claim. It is a claim to divinity. What will you do with it?
     5. C. S. Lewis made popular this trilogy: Jesus was either: a liar, a lunatic, or Lord. That kind of an idea had been put forward previously. The Scottish minister, John Duncan, said that Jesus was either deceptive, deluded or divine. Here’s a paragraph from Lewis:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising [sic] nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. . . . Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God. (Mere Christianity, 55-56).

* + 1. What do you conclude about Jesus based on his statement? Is he a liar? Is he a lunatic? Or is he Lord?
  1. Jesus’ power is shared
     + 1. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples . . .” Why do we go and make disciples? Because he has all authority and has delegated that power to us. He has, if you will, deputized us. He’s made us his posse.
          1. If you are familiar with old Western movies you may have heard the term, “posse.” This was a feature of law where sheriffs could “deputize” common citizens and give them authority.
          2. Here is a picture of just such a posse in real life. This was part of the largest posse in American history (hundreds of men strong). They were part of apprehending the criminals who perpetrated the Ruby murders in Arizona.
          3. The ability of law enforcement to deputize you is still valid. Interestingly, if the person called upon in such a situation is a male over 18, he doesn't even have the option of refusing.
       2. Let me remind you of a more positive example of delegated power or authority. By June of 1940 WWII was well underway in Europe. The Allied western front in Europe was crumbling before the Nazi war machine. The Germans drove the French and British all the way to the English Channel. They felt that they had them trapped. They had them surrounded and the sea at the Allied’s back was an impassable wall.
       3. The English mounted an evacuation rescue known to history as the “Miracle at Dunkirk.” In a few desperate days they rescued 338,226 men from the shores of Dunkirk. Pivotal in that effort were the “little ships of Dunkirk.” Some 800 or so small boats manned, in some cases, by civilians, came across the channel. They could navigate the shallow waters of that shoreline and shuttle the soldiers on to larger naval ships that would transport the soldiers back to Dover.
     1. They were were “pressed into service.” Commissioned. Requisitioned. They were under the command of and supplied by the Royal Navy. Many of them were “tugged” to Dunkirk by larger vessels. They were protected by the air force.
     2. We have been requisitioned. Deputized. Commissioned. To rescue the trapped, the perishing, the lost. But we should never forget that we are empowered, tugged and protected by the Lord who has all authority in heaven and on earth!

1. We have the plan to make disciples

*“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”* (28:19-20a).

* 1. Jesus calls us to mobilize disciples
     1. The first word of verse 19 is go. We are to be a going church for a coming Lord!
     2. There are a couple of ways to understand this command mandate
        1. As we go. To school. To the store. To the children’s ball games. Fishing. Hunting. At all moments of all days. A lifestyle.
        2. But there is an imperatival sense. It is a command. Not just, “As you are going.” It is a command, “Go!” Go to the nations. How else will we make disciple of all nations?
     3. Thank you for being a “going” church.
        1. Goal of 2020 mission volunteers. 1955!
        2. Goal of five church planters
  2. Jesus calls us to mark disciples
     1. Marked by biblical baptism
     2. Acts 2:41, So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
     3. After they “received his word.”
     4. By immersion.
  3. Jesus calls us to mature disciples
     1. A disciple is marked by biblical immersion and matured by biblical instruction.
     2. Verse 20 begins, “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”
     3. Not pick and choose. Don’t be a flexitarian.
     4. Are you interested in being a vegetarian, but concerned that you might not be able to adjust? Not to worry…you can become a flexitarian. As vegetarianism gains in popularity and increases its market niche, a variation has developed. The flexitarian is a person who eats primarily vegetables, but also indulges occasionally with meat. The designation fits people like 28-year-old Christy Pugh, who says, "I usually eat vegetarian. But I really like sausage." Christy says, "Sometimes I feel like I'm a bad vegetarian, that I'm not strict enough or good enough. I really like vegetarian food, but I'm just not 100 percent committed." (John Beukema, Western Springs, Illinois; source: "Are You a 'Flexitarian?" MSNBC.com (3-16-04)).
     5. I know some Christians like that. Don’t be a biblical flexitarian. Embrace all biblical truth and live it!

1. We have the partner to make disciples

*“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”* (28:20b).

* 1. Jesus is our personal companion
     1. Not only is he on our side with omnipotence. He is by our side with omnipresence.
     2. Matthew’s gospel begins with this promise and ends with it. Matthew 1:23 says, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).” Matthew 28: 20 says, “I am with you always, to the end of the age!”
     3. Isaiah 41:10, “fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
     4. There is no greater promise than this: “I am with you always.”
        1. According to a recent (2017) article in Rolling Stone magazine, tech entrepreneur Elon Musk has it all—except love. Musk is one of the only people in the world who has started four separate billion dollar companies. After his divorce to his ex-wife Justine and his breakup with his actress girlfriend, Musk has no one with whom to share his luxurious lifestyle. The 46-year-old Musk said, "Being in a big empty house, and no footsteps echoing through the hallways, no one over there … How do you make yourself happy in a situation like that?"
        2. He added, "When I was a child, there was one thing I said: 'I never want to be alone.'" And then he whispered again, "I never want to be alone."
        3. I have good news for Elon Musk and everyone listening. You do not have to be alone! Jesus was alone so that you need not be!
  2. Jesus is our perpetual companion
     1. And behold, I am with you *always, to the end of the age!*
     2. Jesus will never leave us, nor forsake us. His companionship saves us and sustains us.
     3. In 1953 Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzig Norgay, the Sherpa guide who accompanied him, summitted Mount Everest, the first men ever to do that. In 2003 Hillary shared the story of how Tenzig Norgay saved his life. Hillary had jumped onto a block of ice that broke and collapsed into a deep crevasse. Had Tenzig not been on the other end of the rope, Hillary would have died before he ever made it to the summit. Edmund Hillary lived to tell a great story because of the help of his companion. (Adapted from Calvin Miller, "From Entertainment to Servanthood," Preaching Today, Tape No. 132).

1. Conclusion
   1. Our orders remain as directed.
   2. Through Jesus,
      1. We have the power to make disciples
      2. We have the plan to make disciples
      3. We have the partner to make disciples
   3. Let’s bless every home by making disiciples!