

“ELBOW TO ELBOW”
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There are 4 different Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus in the New Testament. 4 different ways of telling His profound story... and today we are going to look at the very end of the first Gospel, the book of Matthew...

(Vs.) Matthew 28:18-20 - 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.”

Jesus had disciples, and at the end of His time here on earth, he told them to make more disciples. That’s how the book ends...

28 chapters of Jesus life and ministry...

Seems kind of important to talk about, right?

“Father, what we know not, teach us; what we have not, give us; what we are not, make us.” -Old Anglican Prayer.

Two “Not So Simple” Questions For Today...

What is a disciple?

How do you make one?

Jesus was not the first one to call disciples...

This concept was known in this day, religious leaders would call disciples to follow them, to sit underneath them... It was an ancient form of apprenticeship.

What is a disciple? A disciple is someone who is with, learns from, becomes like, and does what their teacher does.

Jesus offers this invitation to learn His ways and become like Him...

In the next Gospel account, Mark, Jesus himself offers a description as to what it really means, requires, what it takes to be a disciple...

(Vs.) Mark 8:31-33 (NIV) - He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

At this point in Jesus ministry there is a core team (the disciples) following Him and learning from Him. They are with him basically 24/7, apprenticing in His ways. Peter is the loud and boisterous one of the group, and oversteps his role and Jesus corrects Peter...

Jesus uses this opportunity to further instruct in His ways...

(Vs.) Mark 8:34-37 (NIV) – Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?"

Jesus gives some important instructions here, and before we unpack them a bit more I want you to notice something with me... He does something interesting though...

- 34 - Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples...

It's important that we hear this... Jesus calls both groups together and he says... I want to lay out for you a vision as to what following me really looks like...

Desire – "Whoever wants to be my disciple..."

Denial – "must deny themselves..."

Death – "and take up their cross..."

All that... AND follow me!

This message isn't just for the select few, no it's for the entire crowd to hear... Here is why this matters... (Second "Not So Simple" Question)

How do you make a disciple?

- Well first of all, you don't...

(Vs.) Matthew 28:19-20 - 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."

- In the original language the New Testament is written in (Greek), the word that many Bibles translate as “go,” might literally be translated, “being already on the go,” or “as you are going.”

Notice with me the subtle but important shift....

- Go and Make Disciples...
- As you go make disciples...

How “As you go” discipleship changes things...

- ‘As you go’ teaching is without barriers, limitations, even qualifications. We share what we hear from Jesus as we go.
- It does not describe something that has already happened but a dynamic process that is happening in the life of the individual.
- We are His “ambassadors” (2 Cor. 5:20), making disciples for Him everywhere we go.
- Marketplace ministry
 - If you don’t love the people you are with, don’t talk to them about Jesus.

Great Commission /Greatest Commandment

- We always think that we need to do something big...
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“Man cannot do great things, only small things with great love...” - Mother Theresa

Remember our friend Peter...

- In the Gospel of John 21, we find him fishing... earlier in the story as Jesus is being arrested and eventually crucified, he is outed as a disciple of Christ... and the people accuse Him and He denies it 3 times...
- So, he goes back to what he knows, and that is fishing.... But they aren’t having any luck...

(Vs.) John 21:9-14 9 - When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

(Vs.) John 21:15-19 - When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

Story: Violin Maker – Elbow to elbow

- Stratovari – 17th Century Violin maker... he never wrote down any of dimensions or plan of how to make his magnificent instruments...
- You start to know something in your body that can never fully be taught with words

What is a disciple?

- A disciple is some who is with, learns from, becomes like Jesus (Desire, Denial, Death are part of the Journey)

How do you make them?

- You love them (Elbow to Elbow)
- You begin by looking at who is there now...

You aren't going to get being a disciple "right", and I think that is what is keeping many of us from "making disciples"...

- You are being disciplined and doing the work of discipling right now whether you recognize it or not...

**"Father, what we know not, teach us; what we have not, give us;
what we are not, make us."**

MESSAGE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

PONDER

1. What about the message did I feel...
 - Inspired about?
 - Convicted by?
 - Sadness, grief, or loss about?
 - Curious about?
 - Hopeful for?

EXPERIENCE

2. Did anyone have a "Wow!" moment during the message that resonated in you? If so, what was it? (Could be a new scripture/Bible story you've never heard, a profound concept, etc.)

LEARN

3. What new/fresh thing did I learn about God? What new/fresh thing did I learn about myself?

APPLY

4. How can I challenge myself this week with what I've learned? What might responding well look like?