

Week 3: A Purpose We Must Pursue – The Church Multiplied

Day 15: Multiply and Conquer

The Passage: Matthew 28:1-20

The Focus: “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.’” (Matthew 28:18–20)

The Meditation: “All authority . . . has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples”

Empowering Truths: An electrical current needs a wire to run through. Its potential power is present, but it must be conducted from one place to another. Without this conduit, the electricity fails to accomplish the purpose for which it's intended.

In the same way, the empowerment of the Spirit needs a conduit to run through. The “wire” is ordinary folks like us, who have no power on our own but have the ability to channel great spiritual power. This power is not to give the wire goosebumps as it flows through but to produce something . . . such as light, heat, toast from a toaster, or a song through the radio.

In Jesus' final commission to his disciples in Matthew 28, we see this power unveiled and directed in three very specific ways: 1) power to go, 2) power to baptize, and 3) power to teach. Jesus commissions these disciples to be his conduit, to become a multiplying kingdom force.

The church has played fast and loose with this compelling commission. She has missed the three-year context of the command. Jesus deliberately chose twelve disciples who would learn, and then repeat his strategy. For three years the twelve were “being disciplined” for the purpose of “making disciples.”

Thus, when Jesus gives them this discipleship command, the eleven disciples (since Judas flunked Discipleship 101) know exactly what to do. It had been modeled for them, taught to them, prayed into them, practiced by them, and they were ready to repeat the strategy. They aren't thinking, How can we gather a crowd and keep them together? They are thinking, Who are my twelve?

What we often miss in this Matthew 28 commission is the “power sandwich.” Jesus begins by being very clear about the power they go in, “All authority is given to me in heaven and earth.” Then he uses a little Greek word, *oun*, that carries a huge impact (*oun* means “therefore.”)

Then there's the commission. But then Jesus closes with the other slice of power. “And be sure of this, I am with you always.” Follow me through this “if/then/therefore” logic: if Jesus has all authority/power (28:18) and if the disciples have Jesus with them (28:20), then they have all the power they need. “Therefore” they can go and do what Jesus did (28:19)!

One of the devil's key strategies is “divide and conquer.” But Jesus' mission is based on the opposite strategy: “multiply and conquer.” This is why he invested more than 75 percent of his time into the twelve disciples. He taught multiplication, not just addition.

May we receive afresh the authority and presence of Jesus for the purpose of multiplying disciples and conquering the darkness of sin.

Power Truth: The power of Christ with us is the power to go and multiply disciples.

Our Prayer: Lord, forgive me for not focusing on receiving your power and presence before I go out and try to do your work. Forgive me for forgetting you are actually with me in every kingdom effort. Forgive me for wanting to build your kingdom using a different method than you taught your disciples. Jesus, empower me to go, to baptize, to teach, and most of all to multiply disciples who will do the same. In Jesus' name, amen!

