

Preaching the Kingdom
DWJD - Week 3
Matt 28 + Mark 1
9/25/22

Introduction + R&F Recap

Tim. Pastor. **Matthew 28:16-20.**

Continuing series → **Do What Jesus Did**. I've got quite a bit of teaching I need to do today first, to get us all on the same page, and then we're going to end extremely practical. So hang with me, I'm going to take us somewhere I promise.

Pray + Jump right in.

Matthew 28:16-20

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

Just to make sure you know where we're at in the story:

- Post-death + resurrection
- Pre-ascension → Jesus is about to go to the right hand of God the Father, ruling and reigning where He's been for the last 2,000 years
- Last words to his closest 11 followers, or disciples

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

*GAME CHANGING REALITY

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,

Jesus comes to these 11, these guys who he's been discipling for 3 years - training, leading, teaching, shepherding - and He gives them this direct charge → **Go make disciples.**

Go take everything you've seen in and learned from me, find some other folks and teach them to follow me as well.

Then he says where they're to do this → **of all nations**. Jesus' ministry was primarily focused among Jewish people in Galilee and Judea, but now the disciples are going to take this to the ends of the earth.

Then Jesus continues into what this means. **Go make disciples** is the charge, but then He gives sort of guiding instructions of what this should entail. Two verbs.

19 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, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Go make disciples! That's the command. Or as it's often been called in church history - the Great Commission. The great charge given to all of us as followers of Jesus – go make disciples, apprentices, followers of Jesus.

“Make Disciples”:

1. **Baptize** (Father, Son, HS)
2. **Teach** (to observe/obey all that Jesus commanded)

We'll deal with teaching to obey next week. Really excited about that.

Tonight I want to deal with the first part → Baptizing.

Or as we're calling it for this series → **Preaching the Gospel.**

Theology of Baptism

Now, first things first, let me deal with this obvious question →

How do we get from Jesus saying “baptize” to us calling this practice “Preaching the Gospel”?

To understand this, you first have to understand what baptism is. What does it mean to be baptized?

Our English word “baptism” comes from the Greek word used here in Matthew 28 - “βαπτίζω” - which means “to dip, to immerse”.

Simply - Baptism is an outward physical expression (immersion) of an inward spiritual reality (salvation).

New City Catechism - Baptism is the washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; it signifies and seals our adoption into Christ, our cleansing from sin, and our commitment to belong to the Lord and to his church.

From the very beginning (Gen 17), God has given His covenant people a symbol, or sign, of his covenant relationship to them.

- In the Old Testament, if someone was born into the family of God - which in the Old Testament + Old Covenant was the Israelites (the descendants of Abraham) - that sign was circumcision. If you were born as a son of Abraham, that carried with it spiritual realities, and circumcision was the physical sign and symbol of that.
- In the New Testament, if someone is born into the family of God - saved. Turn from their sin, put their faith in Jesus - available to all regardless of background, ethnicity, heritage - the sign is water baptism. If you are born as a child of God, that carries with it spiritual realities - and baptism is the physical sign and symbol of that.

Think of it like a wedding ring. A wedding ring doesn't make you married, but it is a sign and symbol that you are. Baptism doesn't make you a saved child of God, but it is a sign and symbol that you are.

Colossians 2:11-12 - 11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

So if baptism is a sign of conversion, faith in Christ, then what Jesus has in mind here when he says “go baptize” is not simply - get a bunch of people dunked in water. He has in mind - **go lead some people to salvation.**

That people would be saved - from their sin, from the just and righteous wrath of God, from themselves.

Which then leads to another question → **how are people saved?**

Well what does Paul say in Romans 10? Look at it with me...

Romans 10:13-15 - 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

- To be saved, you must believe the gospel.
- To believe the gospel, you must hear the gospel.
- To hear the gospel, someone must preach to you the gospel.
- To preach the gospel, that someone must be sent.

Here’s the reality though - **You already are.**

If you’re a follower of Jesus, we said this a few weeks ago, you are sent.

Jesus commissioned all of His disciples in Matthew 28 - go make disciples, baptizing and teaching. But that’s not just for the 11, that’s for all who would follow Jesus.

In fact, this commissioning is such a big deal, and is so central to our call as Christ followers, it actually shows up in every single one of the 4 gospels:

So we saw Matthew 28, but look also at...

Mark 16:15 - 15 And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Acts 1:8 (Luke’s 2-part gospel) - 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

John 20:21 - 21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

Go and do the work you see your Rabbi doing, the work of Jesus - go preaching the gospel to the lost world.

Awkward Sales Pitches

This is the work we are called to do. And it is the very work we see Christ Jesus doing here on earth.

Christ spends quite a bit of time during his earthly ministry preaching and proclaiming the gospel. But what’s fascinating to me, is if you hone in on what preaching the gospel (or evangelism as it’s often called) looked like for Jesus, it is much different than how many of us probably think about it.

I think most of us, at least functionally, tend to think of preaching the gospel as, in the words of my non-Christian neighbor who grew up in the church and deconstructed his faith a few years ago - “Evangelism is awkwardly selling something nobody wants.”

Do you ever feel that way?

Used Furniture. I remember when Lindsay and I first moved to Charlotte a few years ago, we went shopping for a couch. And we did something we had never done before - we went into an actual furniture store. And if you've never had this experience, it's worse than car buying. You walk in and immediately someone greets you - "What are you looking for today? Would you like to see our selection of mattresses and king size beds?" They just pounce on you the minute you step through the door. That's not a critique of those who work in furniture sales, that's just what happens.

And so we walk into one of these stores and we're dead set on buying a **used couch**. The person asks us if we need any help, we say "yes, we'd like to look at **used couches**." They don't have any. So what happens, we leave right? Wrong. We spend 20 minutes with the sales person trying to convince us to purchase a brand new recliner.

And the posture so many of us take towards evangelism, particularly in the post-Christian, post-truth, you do you secular west, is to imagine we're furniture salesmen trying to sell new recliners to someone looking for a used couch.

We think evangelism is awkward conversations to convince someone that they should maybe, possibly, consider potentially putting their faith in Jesus. "I know it's not really what you want, and I know it's got some bad reviews, but like maybe, what if I lower the price or offer a really sweet discount?"

But for Jesus, the gospel was not something to be pitched or sold by the Christian for the consideration of the lost. The gospel was a reality to be declared leading to the repentance of sinners.

"The Gospel According to Jesus"

Look with me at Mark 1. This is a fantastic summary of what preaching the gospel meant for Jesus.

Mark 1:14 - 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

After his baptism, his 40 days in the wilderness fasting and being tempted by the devil, Jesus comes into Galilee proclaiming - preaching, announcing - "the kingdom of God is at hand (here, arrived, among us), repent and believe."

For Jesus, preaching the gospel meant declaring the good news of the arriving Kingdom of God.

That is "the gospel" to Jesus - the Kingdom of God is at hand.

In order for this to carry the weight it should, you have to understand what's happening culturally when Jesus says this.

In today's society "gospel" is almost strictly a Christian or religious term. But in the first century, the time of Jesus, that word - "εὐαγγέλιον" or "good news" - actually wasn't a religious word, **it was a political one.**

It was a term used by the Romans for the heralding or proclamation of good news across the kingdom - typically about a great event such as the enthronement of a new emperor or his victory in a war or a new era of peace.

44 BC. For instance, let me give you an 11th grade history class refresher - in 44 BC, just a few decades before the birth of Jesus, the most famous Roman of all time, Julius Caesar was assassinated (It's recounted in my favorite (and arguably the best) Shakespearean play by the same title - "beware beware the ides of march").

Caesar's death kicked off a civil war between his enemies with 4 parties vying for power - Brutus, Cassius, Marc Antony and Octavian. Eventually after years and years of fighting and brutality and suffering - Brutus and Cassius were killed, Marc Antony ran off to Egypt with Cleopatra, and the one left standing to claim the throne was Octavian, Caesar's adopted nephew.

And he became a really really big deal in the world at that time. A few years later the Roman Senate gave Octavian the title "Augustus" and declared him as the "Deus Filius" or "the Son of God". He was called "Lord" and "Savior" and "Prince of Peace."

For example, one ancient inscription reads "The birthday of the god (Caesar Augustus) was the beginning for the world of the glad tidings (good news) that have come to men through him." Which is almost the exact same line as Mark 1:1. These types of inscriptions have been found all over the ancient Mediterranean.

Octavian, in response to his new rule and reign across the empire, then sent out "evangelists" or "preachers" to the far reaches of the empire to spread his "euangelion" or "gospel". The message that Octavian was not just a man, he was "lord" and he had defeated the rebels, established his throne, and had come to be the one true savior who will usher in a worldwide rule of peace and justice and hope (sound familiar?)

It was a few years later that Octavian finally got to return home after years of cleaning up from the war - and when he arrived back in Rome those on the wrong side, who were enemies of Octavian and his empire, had to decide if they were going to "repent and believe" this gospel. Meaning - acknowledge him as lord and submit the totality of their lives under his rule and reign.

And 40 years later, King Jesus in Nazareth arrives on the scene, bringing not Octavian's gospel, but the true Gospel - the good news that the one true King, King Jesus, Son of God has arrived, and brought with Him the eternal and forever Kingdom - a new rule and reign of peace, justice, healing, hope, and redemption - under the rule and reign of God - and is available to all who would repent and believe.

This is what it means to preach the gospel.

NOT:

- Come and consider if you like it or not.
- Come and try it out and see if it works for you.
- Come and get the parts of a Savior you want.

The Kingdom of God is at hand...

- Bringing with it all of the beautiful realities our souls long for and crave.
- Bringing with it deep restoration for the dark places of our hearts and lives.
- Bringing with it redemption to all that is broken in our world.

So repent (turn from thinking you're king over your kingdom, turn from running your own life, running away from God) and believe - submit the totality of your life under the rule and reign of Christ.

David Bosch - "Mission is more and different from recruitment to our brand of religion; it is alerting people to the universal reign of God through Christ."

Mortimer Arias - "Every generation...has to be evangelized, that is, confronted with the good news of the kingdom in Jesus Christ."

This is what Jesus came doing - preaching the gospel - this is what He sends us out to do - preach the gospel.

Practical Application - Gospel Fluency

So what does this practice look like in our everyday life? Maybe you're like - "Tim, I'm in. How do I start?"

How do we 'do what Jesus did' and preach the gospel? Are we at a backyard cookout, our neighbor asks us if we want cheese on our hamburger, and we say "sure - also repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Is that the game plan?

(for the record - please don't do that).

Here's the goal - the goal is declaring the good news of the kingdom of God into the world.

That the King has come, forgiveness of sins, eternal life with God, redemptive healing and hope are on offer. Learning to speak that into the lives of our neighbors, coworkers, family, friends.

Here's a really simple and robust practice for that, it's actually something we use in our Community Groups to encourage believers, but is an incredible resource for mission as well – **Gospel Fluency**.

It means what it says - learning to be fluent, or to speak the language of the gospel in our everyday lives.

Learning to ask and answer the question - how does the beauty of the gospel speak into the life of this person right in front me?

As we're at the brewery, the coffee shop, over for dinner, on the run, at the kids soccer game - and I'm asking good questions, building friendships, caring and serving and loving this person - I'm looking for ways to speak the gospel into what they're sharing.

Because the gospel has 30,000-foot generic realities - we all need forgiveness of sins, to be washed clean, reconciled to God, brought into His Kingdom and His family.

But the gospel also has specific realities - It's good news specifically for the heartaches, struggle, and brokenness of our individual lives.

So how might this look? Let me give you just a few examples:

Coffee w/ New Mom Friend - Identity.

You're having coffee with a new mom friend who you met at your kid's school, daycare, or at the park. You're asking how she's doing with parenting a toddler. And she's sharing about some struggles she has with feeling like a failure.

"My identity is now being a mom. And I feel like I'm not living up to all that should entail. I constantly feel like a failure."

And she asks you - "Do you ever feel that way?"

Preaching the gospel in that moment looks like saying - "I do. I feel like I'm constantly not measuring up, that I'm never good enough. Can I share what's been helpful for me? I'm a Christian, a follower of Jesus - and that means a lot of things, but one of the things that it means is that my ultimate identity is not "mom" but 'child of God.' Which means I'm free to fail and fail often - because I'm unconditionally and forever loved by the God of the universe, based on His Son Jesus, not based on me. Have you ever heard of this truth before? Would you like to know more?"

Coworker new to CLT - Belonging.

You're on a run with a new coworker, who also happens to live a few streets over from you. They're new to the city, so you're asking how it's going - being in a new place away from family and friends.

"It's really hard. Charlotte is a tough city to meet new people in. And after Covid - with all the remote working, I feel like no one really wants to make new friends. I'm lonely and honestly starting to feel kind of depressed. Was it that way for you when you first moved here?"

Preaching the gospel in that moment could look like saying - "It was and honestly still is pretty difficult. I've found some good community at church - which is still difficult - but I'm starting to feel like I have a place. But even better than that, in the past few years of loneliness I've experienced a belonging even more beautiful, rich, and lasting than simply having the right friends - I've experienced being loved by Jesus. The Bible tells me He calls me His friend - and that through belief or faith - that He'll never leave me or turn his back on me. Have you heard about Jesus before? Do you have any experience with that?"

Neighbor who has the "perfect life" - forgiveness in Christ.

You're eating dinner with some new neighbors. They're sharing about how wonderful the past year has been. They both got promotions at work, leaving for a vacation in Maui in a few weeks - life is good and they live carefree.

And they ask - "how is it for you? How's everything going right now?"

Preaching the gospel in that moment could look like saying - "That's awesome. I am glad life is going so well for y'all right now. Things are good here too. I feel like work is going well, ups and downs, but one of the things I think I'm learning right now is the faithfulness of God to me in every season of my life. One of my temptations in really good seasons is to think I'm in control of my life - that I can dictate what happens to me tomorrow. I was reading a few days ago in my Bible about how we can't control tomorrow - our lives are a mist - but God watches over our days. It was a helpful reminder to me in even good seasons and bad - to make sure God is central and #1 in my life and that I'm living for Him.

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In all of this it's declaring the good news of the kingdom into the lives of those you're eating and drinking with, caring for, being friends with, living life with. Learning to declare the beauty of the gospel in such a way that captivates their attention.

Now couple of helpful things to note, and again all of this is on this week's practice guide on the sermon series page:

1. **Don't declare the gospel as if it's already true for them, because it's not yet. Declare as potentially true.**
2. **Don't declare the blessings, without the surrender.**

****End w/ time and space for folks to write down 2-3 names + pray through how to speak the gospel to them.**

Then come back up for communion + response.