Proclaim the Gospel and Make Disciples | 10/22/17

- The Great Commission | Matthew 28:19-20 & Mark 16:15
 - If we ask ourselves what is the most important task that Christians are to do with their time on earth, we can find the answer in the great commission.
 - The Scriptures are filled with how we are to live our lives, the sins we are to avoid the good that we are called to do.
 - These things ultimately point to same overall goal which is to proclaim the Gospel and to make disciples.
 - Mark 16:15
 - "And he said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."
 - Matthew 28:19-20
 - "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. And behold I am with you always, to the end of the age."
 - There are two key directives, one is to proclaim the Gospel and the other is to teach them to observe all that Jesus has command us.
 - To proclaim the Gospel is to be a witness and lead others to Christ.
 - This is the first step, before one can become a disciple they first must be a believer.
 - This is done through proclaiming the Gospel and being a witness for Christ.
 - To make disciples is to teach them to observe what Christ has told us about what it is to be a Christian.
 - This is the second step, after conversion one should grow and learn as much about Christ and what the Scriptures teach.
 - Jesus said to teach them to observe ALL that He commanded, so everything that He has commanded in Scripture is very important.
 - This leads to those who then desire to also share their faith and repeat the process of witnessing and sharing the Gospel.
- We represent God by being ambassadors (a representative) for Christ.
 - o In our role either in sharing the Gospel or making disciples we are a representative for Christ.
 - o 2 Corinthians 5:20a
 - "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."
 - O What does it mean to be an ambassador?
 - In the political world an ambassador is the representative of an entire country.
 - When a politician is chosen and sent to a foreign country that person is the representative of the United States.
 - It is important that the ambassador properly represents the United States and is a voice for all of us in a way that properly reflects who we are as a country.
 - If the voice of the ambassador is good or bad it can directly affect how the world perceives us.
 - We would expect appropriate behavior out of our ambassador both in speech and actions.
 - An ambassador for Christ must represent Him to the world.

- As Christians we are all part of the body of Christ, we all are a representative of Him.
- Just as we expect our political ambassadors to properly represent us to the world, so does God expect us to represent him.
- God expects us to be His ambassador both in our speech and actions because everything we do as a Christian can have a direct influence on how the world sees Him.
- When we share the Gospel, we are sharing the truth and the love of Christ, we are His chosen vessels to deliver the lifesaving message of the Gospel.
- When we disciple other we must strive to be a true representative of a Christian that is portrayed in Scriptures, to help bring others closer to Christ and living lives as He has called us to.
- o <u>If we think of ourselves as a true representative of Christ what kind of impact should that</u> have on our lives?
- Why do we need to share the gospel?
 - o If we do not share the Gospel, then the lost will not be able to hear it.
 - We know that we are saved by grace through faith. They must have genuine belief.
 - Ephesians 2:8
 - "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift"
 - Then how does the lost person obtain this saving faith? By hearing the Gospel
 - Romans 10:17
 - "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ."
 - God speaks to others through us, He appeals through us.
 - o 2 Corinthians 5:20a
 - "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."
 - If we as Christians choose never to share the Gospel, if we disobey God and keep this truth to ourselves, then how will the lost have faith to believe?
 - Romans 10:13-14
 - "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. <u>But</u> how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And <u>how can they believe without hearing about Him?</u> And how can they hear without a preacher?"
 - This Scripture reinforces the Great Commission. That it wasn't just a suggestion, but that Christians plays an important role in spreading the Gospel.
 - Don't think that "preacher" means a select few, we all play a part in God's plan for others to come to know Him.
 - o Who is responsible for witnessing?
 - What do you commonly hear as who bears the responsibility to witness?
 - Common Christian views on the responsibility of witnessing
 - It's the pastors, deacons or teacher's responsibility.
 - It's for someone who is really knowledgeable about the Bible and is portrayed as a good Christian.
 - It's someone else's job
 - It is our Godly appointed duty to be a witness to others to share the gospel of Christ so that the lost can believe and be saved

- o Matthew 28:19
 - "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, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
- How can the whole world be reached if only certain Christians are to be a witness?
- It requires all Christians to spread the Gospel.
- God has chosen to use us to reach others, when we choose not to we are being disobedient.
- o To share the gospel of Christ is to share the cure for the eternal punishment of sin.
 - If you had the cure for cancer would you share it?
 - Isn't sharing the gospel that brings eternal life greater than the cure for a disease that only affects the body which is temporary?
- Do you think we forget or overlook how important our role is in bringing the Gospel message to others?
- O Do we get caught up in our "Christian bubble" and forget that there is a world full of people needing to hear a message of hope and truth?
- To share the Gospel may not always be easy but we must fulfill our ministry
 - While in a since it seems quite simple to share the Gospel, but in reality, we know that it can be difficult.
 - o In fact, Paul knew this, and God inspired him to encourage Christians to do it anyways.
 - 2 Timothy 4:2
 - "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."
 - "In season" means a good opportunity or convenient.
 - HCSB translation "Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not..."
 - We must be ready
 - We must always be ready to share the Gospel, we must always be ready to tell others about the hope that we have in Christ.
 - 1 Peter 3:15
 - "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;..."
 - The best defense and the best reason that we have to portray to others about our faith in Christ is tell them WHY we have hope.
 - We should all be able to tell anyone about the hope that we have within us, the hope that makes it real to us.
 - What is the hope that you have within you? What would you tell someone?
 - We must proclaim the Gospel and disciple others even if it isn't convenient
 - We can come up with a lot of excuses for why we do not share the Gospel and it being inconvenient is certainly a common one.
 - In fact, it's likely "always" going to be inconvenient if we are not intentional about it.
 - Sometimes we have to go out of our way to make a difference in the life of someone else
 - If we are discipling someone we will have to put time and effort into it, it does require personal sacrifice.

What is a common "inconvenient" excuse"

- We must reprove (correct), rebuke, and exhort (encourage) with great patience.
 - To disciple someone is to essentially be a mentor, we must pour ourselves into them and help them on the path to become more spiritually mature.
 - This means we need to be attentive to their lives and help when they have gone astray.
 - This is to be done with love and grace and plenty of discernment.
 - There is a difference between longingly helping guide a fellow Christian and just calling out all their faults as if we were their judge.
 - Matthew 7:3
 - "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?
- We must be patient when we witness and disciple
 - Just because we witnessed to someone doesn't mean they will instantly become a Christian. It's not up to us, it's between them and God.
 - We must simply do as God has called us and it may require a significant amount of patience.
 - But if God has called us to plant the seeds and to be a good example then that is what we do and He may have us work with someone for a long period of time even years.
 - And with discipleship it's a process that also requires great patience.
 - When you set out to essentially mentor someone in teaching and instruction we cannot expect them to immediately become a mature Christian.
 - It will likely take time and patience on our part, to keep showing them God's love and grace and show them what it means to live the Christian life.
- Ultimately, we must fulfill our ministry
 - 2 Timothy 2:5
 - "As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."
 - This is a powerful passage that should encourage us to do the ministry that God has called us to.
 - Regardless of our excuses and fears for sharing or discipling, we must put those aside and do what God has called us to do.
- We proclaim the gospel, but do we make disciples?
 - There is no question that Christians and the church understand the importance of witnessing and sharing the gospel message.
 - At most churches, there is ample opportunity given to all to hear the word and to make a decision.
 - The Gospel is preached and taught so that those who are lost will hear the word and God then moves in their hearts.
 - There are programs, pamphlets and ministries of all types from VBS, sports and revivals.
 - At your Christian concerts and mass revival events there is always the alter call.
 - God works and moves on the hearts of those who attend, and many do come to true faith in Christ.
 - But perhaps the second most important task which is to make disciples, isn't something the church or Christians in general do as well at.
 - There are many times where brand new Christians come into the family of God only to be left without any direction.

- This happens for various reasons, but one is when we put so much focus on leading someone to Christ that once they believe we consider that a "win" and we move on to the next.
- We can become so focused on the number of people being saved in a ministry and not put any emphasis on the follow up, to make those new Christians disciples and to help them on the path to spiritual maturity.
 - Now this is not to say that counting conversions is wrong, it is perfectly
 OK to praise God for the number of people who have come to Christ during a campaign like a revival or VBS.
 - But there is no question that there is less emphasis on the follow up and helping them to become a disciple.
- We must not forget the importance of helping those who are new Christians as well as those that are still spiritually immature.
 - Just because someone has been a Christian their whole life does not mean they are not still in spiritual infancy.
- What do you think? Do Christians and the church perhaps at times not put enough emphasis on making disciples? If so why do you think this happens?
- o What can we do to be more intentional about making disciples and to help others grow?