

Chapter 1 : The Training of the Twelve (Luke) | calendrierdelascience.com

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Learning to be a Disciple A sermon on Luke 9: As we have seen in recent weeks, this section of Luke focuses on this theme. Then He tells the disciples that they too must undergo a death: There is a wrong way to save your life. If you pursue that wrong way, you actually lose your life instead of saving it; you lose yourself. But you can truly save your life! You do that by denying yourself, dying to yourself, and following Jesus. This is the way to true life. This is the way to become what you were created to be. This is the way to share in the glory of God. Our passage today elaborates on that theme by telling a series of stories. In the rest of chapter 9, Luke provides us with six negative examples, six illustrations of the disciples trying to save their lives the wrong way. Jesus sends out 72 followers who seek to save their lives the right way. They come back from their mission excited about what God has done, and Jesus then teaches them more about the right way to save our lives. Through these examples, Jesus challenges us directly: Will you learn to be a true disciple? Or will you follow the negative example of the twelve, and thus lose yourself? They saw the glory that is coming, the glory that belongs to Jesus, the glory that in part will be theirs. Our passage begins as they descend: On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth; and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. The disciples tried to cast out the demon, but there were unable. Why were they unable? Jesus tells us in the next verse: Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here. A lack of dependence on God. The idea is the same. A true disciple must depend fully on God. Losing your life means not relying on yourself in any form: While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. So Jesus had the power. Remember what Jesus did for them in verse 1 of this chapter: And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. The disciples are evidently thinking that because of their past success they could do it all again. They were self-confident, rather than God-confident. They lacked continued dependence on God. They needed to die to self rather than to exalt themselves. When Jesus casts out the demon, what happens? See the first part of verse And all were astonished at the majesty of God. The crowd would have been impressed with their authority. Instead, they are astonished at the majesty of God. That is the goal of every true disciple. Second Story Jesus then reiterates the prediction about his death that we considered last week: But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, 44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. Do they place these words into their ears? Look at verse But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. Frequently when passive voice is used in the Bible, the implied actor is God. Consider in this regard what the resurrected Jesus says to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: Jesus says that the prophets have told of all this in the Scriptures, and that they are foolish not to believe it. He says His disciples are to listen carefully to His words on this topic; He says all should be able to see these truths in the prophets. They have a responsibility to understand. So then who conceals these truths from the disciples if not God? The answer must be Satan. They are to depend on Jesus for understanding. Die to self, so that you may find true life. Third Story An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great. How do you think they are defining greatness? By comparing themselves to each other. By arguing about who is smartest, or who is most powerful, or who is loved most by Jesus. I can imagine the conversation went something like this: So great you made that stupid statement about building tents for Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. He probably took you three because He needed to teach you something we understood already! Comparing and comparing and comparing. That is not the way to life! The least among you is great. Jesus is not starting a new competition to see who can become the least! He is telling them not to

compete with each other at all. If greatness comes from how we measure up to each other, my being great hinders your ability to be great. Indeed, if I am becoming great by serving you, my being great makes it easier for you also to become great. Who was greatest among the twelve? We know Judas Iscariot was not. But what about the other eleven? All served God faithfully. All died as martyrs. Comparisons are not necessary, and do not determine greatness. Greatness comes from humbling ourselves, from faithful dependence on God. Fourth Story John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us. There are plenty of Scriptures that tells us to be careful, for Satan masquerades as an angel of light 2 Corinthians Make sure that you are depending on God. God sends out many workers. Admit that God works through others. You focus on following faithfully yourself. Thus, the most direct route from Galilee to Jerusalem is through Samaria. But oftentimes Jewish travelers would lengthen their journey by going around Samaria because of the animosity between the two peoples. Jesus plans to minister among the Samaritans. Perhaps since He is headed for Jerusalem it is obvious to them that He rejects the Samaritan claim that Mt Gerizim rather than Mt Zion is the proper place to worship God. In any event, the Messiah comes among them, and they reject Him, refusing even to listen. Did the Samaritan reject the true Messiah? Do they deserve death? The problem with James and John is not in their inference that rejection of the Messiah merits death. There will be a time for judgment of those who reject Jesus. James and John have just seen Elijah on the mountain, and they try to act like the great prophets Elijah and Elisha.

Chapter 2 : Learning to Trust: Let Go of Your Fear and Let Your Guard Down

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It goes something like this: Hi, the pastor asked me to make an announcement. So, here it goes. Just sign up in the back as you head out today. Okay, this might be a bit overly dramatic—or underly dramatic. But these announcements are as common in well-meaning churches as foghorns on the coast of Maine. They begin with an apology; they make some non-descript invitation for everyone to do something; they often motivate with guilt, ease, or fear; and they fail to capture the wonder that the God of the universe who is building his church permits us to be a part of his work. Therefore, the question hangs in the air: How do we recruit people to serve in the church? And how, especially, do we call leaders to follow us as we follow Christ? Five Principles for Recruiting Leaders From Matthew 4, the place where Jesus called his first disciples, lets consider five principles for rallying the troops and burying foghorn announcements. Jesus sought disciples not gap-fillers. Rather, Jesus sought disciples—men who were eager to learn, to take his yoke upon their necks and follow him from Galilee to the grave. He was inviting them to learn from him and to be his disciples. Though our passage Matthew 4: Thus, the first thing to understand about recruiting leaders is that it is an invitation to teach others. If you are only looking to fill a gap, meet a need, or plug a hole, something is amiss. Just the same, if someone is not interested in learning i. In the church, discipleship is the predominant context and hence a prerequisite to serving. Jesus selected people he knew. To be more concise, Jesus selected people he knew. He came to James and John, Peter and Andrew because he knew them. Following Jesus, we too must recruit people we know. Like Jesus, we must know the people we call to serve and we must go to the people we hope to recruit. In fact, with Jesus he had been preaching the gospel of the kingdom 4: It is instructive that he went to them personally and invited them to come and be a part of his kingdom mission. We must learn to do the same and never be satisfied with broad, ambiguous invitations to serve. Jesus knew where to find disciples. In Matthew 4 we observe how Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom and then pursued kingdom disciples. Importantly, he did not wait for his disciples to come to him and he did not, as far as we know, extend a prolonged altar call to surrender to the ministry. Rather, in the wake of his preaching, he walked to the shoreline and found the men who would follow him. You must go to them and give them a compelling vision to put aside their nets and follow you as you follow Christ. The best leaders are called, cultivated, and kept by shepherds who pursue them and give them a vision for serving Christ. Jesus cast vision for his disciples with the Word of God. Is it a clever turn of phrase that Jesus invites fishermen to be fishers of men? A quick cross-reference shows that it is certainly the latter. Read Jeremiah 16 and you will find that the promise of redemption comes with hunters and fishers. And afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks. As with so many of Jesus metaphors and parables, Jesus is picking up Old Testament imagery and applying it to the new covenant he will establish with his death and resurrection. Jesus is restoring the kingdom to Israel and making a way for the nations to come to God. Just like Jeremiah 16 says, Yahweh will call for fishers of men to gather in his redeemed see also Matthew Accordingly, we too must learn to keep the vision of Christ and his kingdom in view. What he has in mind is the time in worship for announcements. Instead of leading disciples to see service to Christ as a blessed gift; they will treat it as a necessary duty: With the threat of burnout always looming, there is the opposite problem—we fail to consider how serving in the church, even with all of its difficulties, is a blessed gift from God. Jesus set the standard for discipleship high and did not motivate with ease or guilt. Finally, because Jesus was seeking disciples and not gap-fillers, he kept the standards of discipleship as high as the kingdom he was seeking. Just listen to his words in Luke 9: But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. He is calling for discipleship. And thus in this passage and its corollary Luke Just the reverse, those who are secured in the kingdom have every reason to suffer so that the good news of the kingdom reaches the ears, hearts, and lives of others. When we guilt people into giving or comfort them into serving, we actually threaten the very nature of cross-centered, Christian discipleship. If making disciples is

our aim, then it must carry over to the way we make announcements, recruit leaders, and talk about ministry. Indeed, to see service as a means of helping people on the fringe get plugged in, while well-intended, actually dilutes the culture of discipleship. Better to lift up a gracious gospel and a glorious Christ, so that true disciples lay down their nets to follow him. If we recruit leaders the way Jesus did, we will keep the standards high and trust God to give leaders to the church—just as Ephesians 4: Trust the Process This process of recruiting leaders may grate against modern, consumeristic tendencies. But like so many have come to learn, abiding trust in a good process produces better, long-lasting results. Indeed, in the church following Jesus approach to leadership development will require and create a thicker disciple-making culture. It will also call for greater prayer and dependence on the head. In fact, in Matthew 9: If we are going to see Christ formed in our churches, we must pray for God to give us laborers. Ultimately, this is how the church is built. While we can refine our processes, we must learn to trust his. And this comes only through prayer and commitment to his gospel. Therefore, let us be unswerving in our fidelity to the gospel and ever-mindful of the way Jesus made disciples. Let us steer clear of the foghorn announcement and passive approaches to leadership development. Soli Deo Gloria, ds.

Chapter 3 : Lessons for Anchored Discipleship | Union Church of La Harpe IL

So here, we learn that Jesus' words cast a vision for his disciples. Jesus is restoring the kingdom to Israel and making a way for the nations to come to God. Just like Jeremiah 16 says, Yahweh will call for fishers of men to gather in his redeemed (see also Matthew).

Chris Christian Community , Discipleship , Growing in Community , Learning , Relationship , Testimony As many of you may know, seminaries in America are not what people think of when they picture dynamic places of preaching and worship that bring the presence of God rushing into a place causing revival to break out. Instead, seminaries are envisioned as boring, dreary, ivory towers where old white men talk about theological nonsense that means nothing to nobody and has nothing to do with the local church. However, this was not my experience. There is much, much more to the Christian life and the life of the Church than just learning biblical facts and gaining knowledge about God. The Christian life is primarily about relationship: First between us and God, and second, between us and others. We are first reconciled to God, making available reconciliation with each other Josh talked about this yesterday. However, learning is an integral part of any relationship. We must learn about the other person if we are going to build a genuine relationship with them. The same is true when we approach our relationship with God. When we learn about God, a couple of things happen. We are compelled to give God glory for how awesome and great He is. We want to learn more about God. We find ourselves spending more time with him through prayer, fasting, meditation, and other spiritual disciplines which are the purest form of doing theology! We discover new significance to truths that we have known for a long time; so much so, that we wonder if we really knew them at all in the first place. We have a deep desire to share what God has revealed to us through his Spirit and through Scripture. Seminary and higher learning has taught me to be a better disciple of Jesus Christ. I understand its significance on a completely different level than I did before. This transformation has been so radical in my life that I look back on my life and wonder how I was even saved with my limited understanding. Obviously I am not really questioning my salvation. I praise God for this experience! This is the Spirit of God doing his work in me, to make me a more faithful disciple of Jesus and fellow son of the Father. I hope this process never stops! I hope in 10 years from now, I can look back at this time in my life and, again, wonder how I could have been saved with my limited knowledge and understanding. The Christian life is a grand adventure for those willing to seek and follow God. We do not have to be the boring, dry, and dusty people the world or even others in the church imagine us to be. Instead, I choose to be the best disciple I can be, to go on this grand adventure that the Bible talks about: Because when this happens, I will be able to make disciples better. Discipleship is primarily relational. Disciples must spend time with their mentors in order to become like that them. Like all relationships, discipleship is a messy process involving disagreements, patience, discipline, and love. Discipleship is a lifelong endeavor. Learning from another more mature believer does not happen overnight, and our process as disciples of Jesus is never complete. Faith and knowledge must translate into action. A person would not be a buddhist if they did not meditate. Likewise, a person cannot be a Christian if they do not follow Christ by engaging in discipleship with the church. We are all disciples, so we should continue to search for answers in Scripture and debate theological issues in the church. We pray and worship God together, making him the focus of our affection and allowing that purpose to bind us together as sons and daughters of the Father. We do not live this Christian life alone. We strive to be more faithful followers of Christ so that we can make more faithful followers of Christ. What about you guys? How do you engage in discipleship with your church community? What have been some significant moments for you on your journey? Chris Chris Lamberth is a founding member of Theology in Progress. He and his wife and two daughters live in Springfield, MO. Along with talking way too much, Chris enjoys biohacking his health and fitness, hiking, and reading. Chris has an M.

Chapter 4 : How do you learn to trust God, when you have major trust issues? | Questions & Answers

How do series work? To create a series or add a work to it, go to a "work" page. The "Common Knowledge" section now includes a "Series" field. Enter the name of the series to add the book to it.

It should have been two separate books so he could go deeper in both healing psychological trauma and growing the spirit. This book came across my path by way of synchronicity really, a gift from my parents who knew I liked Richo as an author. What I found in Richo in this book was as expected, a lot of validation of my own intuitive sense as well as crisp definitions which make personal contemplation much easier. For instance, I liked how he defined safety and security early on. Safety being able to trust that you can express yourself and be received in your feelings etc. And security being able to trust that someone will be there for you which evokes Bowlby for me, which he references later. What reading this did for me was help guide and validate my needs for trust and the delicate process of building it, losing it and seeking to rebuild it. So not only are we wise to appropriately discern our felt level of trust in someone else, which also must examine our own personal history with trust itself. In the ways his ideas repeated from prior books, I read it more as poetry, a kind of more koan-like meditative reading on the principles and words, to further digest them. And I feel his approach, of Jungian style psychology and Buddhist principles, is very intuitive and similar to my own, which perhaps made this style of reading more towards the end of the book possible. Bottom line, if you are new to Richo and interested in particular in this topic then I think you could benefit a lot from it. Those already familiar with Richo may take away less from reading. I left with many tools for taking responsibility and evaluating my trust in myself and others. The last third of the book steered away from trust in others and ourselves and more into Buddhist philosophy. Richo This is a practical and meaningful book on how to trust ourselves and others in relationships and in life in general. Richo is not a promulgator: He presents secular Buddhism as an option, which I am biased toward, but he also leaves room for other interpretations. I just really enjoy the journey he takes you and the suggestions he asks you to consider. Really solid, helpful, and meaty read. Sep 03, Brenna rated it liked it There are some great points and take aways in this book. However, I found it extremely dull, repetitive, and some sections seemed to drag on. The writing style lost me and I almost gave up on reading this.

Chapter 5 : How to Trust in the Lord With All Your Heart - 7 Daily Steps

Daring to Trust. Selected Passages. Series: Daring Discipleship. August 27, Morning Service. Introduction. William Penn, the founder of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, was well liked by the Indians.

Learning to Make Disciples of Jesus: Vice President of Ministry C. Lewis Institute ave you ever been disciplined by another believer? That is, did anyone help you in the process of coming to faith? After you came to Christ, did anyone help you grow more like Jesus, either informally or in some organized fashion? Or, from the other side, have you ever been in the discipling role, helping someone come to faith in Christ or grow as His disciple? If you answered yes, you already have some level of experience with disciple making. If you answered no, fear not, for help is at hand. Why do I need help? I am not called to a ministry of disciple making. If this is your reaction, you have lots of company. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples, told them that universal authority had been conferred on Him, and commissioned them to a universal mission: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 Matt. Simply put, they were to reproduce themselves by taking their disciples through the same basic teaching and training that Jesus had given them in their apprenticeship with Him. First, making disciples is the great mission Jesus gave His followers before He returned to heaven. This mission, which has been passed down from generation to generation by the faithful, now rests upon you and me. He is counting on us to fulfill our assignment, and there is no Plan B. Third, making disciples has been neglected for so long that there is now a crisis of discipleship in the American church. Few professing Christians are living as disciples of Jesus, and fewer still are making disciples. This failure to be salt and light in our decaying society has contributed greatly to the undermining of the church, robbing us of credibility in the eyes of the world and accelerating the spiritual and moral decline in society. A fourth reason is that at the final exam of life, Judgment Day, Jesus will ask, among other things, whether we obeyed His command to go and make disciples. As you look into His searching, all-knowing eyes, what will you say? What Is a Disciple? To make disciples, we first need to know what a disciple is. Many people today are confused about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, and this is the root of serious problems in the church. Some think a disciple is a person in full-time vocational ministry—such as a pastor, priest, or missionary—but not an ordinary believer. Still others think a disciple is a Christian who has made an optional, higher level of commitment to Christ than the average believer. The real question, however, is what the Bible says a disciple is. Based on a comprehensive analysis of the word in the Gospels, Professor Michael Wilkins says: Some people may think the definition given above far exceeds the definition of a basic Christian and that a disciple is after all a Christian who has made a higher level of commitment to Christ. However, in the Acts of the Apostles, believers in Jesus are typically referred to as disciples, twenty-eight times, in fact. But the two words were clearly synonyms. To be a true Christian is, by definition, to be a disciple. Following Jesus as a disciple or true Christian is a process of learning to become more and more like Jesus Himself. The heart of this process is learning and obeying the teachings of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Things like denial of self, wholehearted love for God, sacrificial love for neighbors, forgiveness of enemies, humility, servanthood, sexual purity, the fullness of the Holy Spirit, mission, and obedience; these are some of the major themes. They are basic, foundational things that every disciple should learn about and begin to practice as early as possible in his or her Christian life. What Is Discipleship and Discipling? Being a disciple of Jesus and growing in Christlikeness is a wonderfully blessed but very challenging journey through life. Paul uses the equivalent idea of being conformed to the image of Christ [Rom. Whatever language we use to describe it, we must reckon with the fact that growing in Christlikeness takes time and will have difficulties along the way. With our American tendency toward individualism, we must also remember that it cannot be completed alone. What Are the Qualifications of a Disciple Maker? To make disciples, you must be a disciple yourself. You should have been a disciple for a while and be reasonably well grounded in Scripture and established in your spiritual life. How Do We Make Disciples? Jesus gave us

clear, practical instructions. If we follow them, we will find success. What we have here is a main verb, make disciples, as an imperative that is amplified by three subordinate participles that share some of its force: Making disciples learners, pupils, adherents of Jesus is the focal point and begins with our going out to help nonbelievers learn more about who Jesus is, what He did on the cross, and how that applies to their lives, with the goal of helping them come to saving faith. It is characterized by encouraging and assisting those who repent and believe the gospel to be baptized and then teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded His disciples to do. Failure to do the last part has had disastrous consequences for the church. Going Going is the initial stage in making disciples. It is a command, not a suggestion. On a practical level, this means that we must take initiative, that we must be intentional about going out to make disciples. We may go nearby or we may go to the ends of the earth, but we must go. To whom do we go? Because the mission of Jesus and the kingdom is no longer focused exclusively on Israel Matt. Since the first step in becoming a disciple is to repent of sin and to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, we need to understand the gospel message and learn how to share it with others. Many people find this idea unsettling, if not terrifying; but it need not be so if we are properly prepared. What exactly is the gospel message? Sometimes people confuse sharing the gospel with sharing their personal testimony. But the two are very different. Is it hard to share the gospel? We need to resist this, ask God for increased courage, and step out in faith and obedience, trusting Him to teach, guide, and empower us. At some point, when the time seems right, you could share the gospel very naturally by weaving something like this into a conversation: Then He gave proof that Jesus was the divine Savior of the world by raising Him from the dead. As noted, building a relationship is normally the first step. In each stage, it is vital to have the guidance and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, for He is the agent of conversion and will give us wisdom. Jesus was able to love and accept sinners without compromising truth or righteousness, and He is our model. We aim to exhibit humility, gentleness, and respect and resist any tendency toward arrogance, cockiness, or having all the answers. Patience is also important; normally the process will take time, as we listen to questions and concerns, gently answer and address them, and share our own stories and experiences where appropriate. The process of helping someone become a disciple of Jesus moves quickly with some people and takes longer with others. I have read that people who come to salvation have had some twenty-six exposures to the gospel before finally praying to receive Christ. Each encounter can be seen as a step that moves someone closer to Christ and salvation. That should be our goal. We should help people take as many steps as they are ready and willing to take. We may never see the final outcome, but that does not mean our efforts have been in vain. Our responsibility is simply to share the message as clearly and lovingly as we can in the power of the Holy Spirit, asking the Spirit to apply it in His own way and time. In our desire to see a response, we may become impatient for results. But we are ill-advised to use pressure tactics or manipulation, no matter how well intended. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to open the heart and mind of a person; He alone can do it. Where do we start? See the recommendations at the end of this article. Then pray and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you. Conversation is often easier with people you already know—especially friends, neighbors, and work colleagues—than with total strangers; this may well be where the Spirit directs your first efforts. But you never know how God will work, so be open. Having gained some experience, you will then be in a better position to reach out beyond the bounds of comfort and familiarity. You may discover a need to make more friends among nonbelievers. Research has shown that within eighteen months of conversion, most people have lost contact with their nonbelieving friends. Baptizing Once individuals have come to saving faith in Christ, the next step is to be baptized. In baptism they are publicly forsaking the world and declaring their allegiance to Jesus and submission to His lordship and entrance into His kingdom. In the New Testament, baptism was considered so important that converts were baptized immediately—even in the middle of the night, as with the Philippian jailer. An unbaptized disciple would have been unthinkable to the early church. Yet today it is not uncommon to find people who have prayed to receive Christ and even attend church but have not been baptized. This brief, one-time event is the doorway into the fellowship of the church. We should do all we can to encourage converts to be baptized as soon as practically possible.

Chapter 6 : Daring To Trust Sermon by David DeWitt, Proverbs - calendrierdelascience.com

Making disciples (learners, pupils, adherents) of Jesus is the focal point and begins with our going out to help nonbelievers learn more about who Jesus is, what He did on the cross, and how that applies to their lives, with the goal of helping them come to saving faith.

One thing I love about teaching at Sewanee is the opportunity to meet and hear the stories of people who have done brave things. Recently, I have gotten to know Francis Walter, a priest who was active in the civil rights movement in Alabama. In , he returned to found the Selma Inter-Religious Project, an effort to maintain a clergy presence in Selma, Ala. Francis met Jonathan on the morning of Aug. But then Jonathan said something that made Francis change his mind. When he learned that Francis had only enough money to bail him and a few other demonstrators out, Jonathan responded, "Unless we all get out, none of us is going to get out. Prior to that meeting, he fervently believed that racial integration was a clear implication of the Christian gospel that could be spelled out with doctrinal precision. But in that encounter he received a new vision of the Gospel: Jonathan witnessed to the fact that the struggle for integration was not merely a political debate over public policy, or a theological debate over whether the kingdom of God Jesus inaugurates is primarily a present reality or a future promise. Rather, we misunderstand the Gospel itself if we fail to place the demand for racial reconciliation and justice at the center of the kingdom that Jesus inaugurates. To be a Christian is to live in solidarity with all whom Jesus loves. To be Christian is to witness even in the face of danger. To be Christian is to see each person as worthy of the profound love and respect owed to all the children of God. It is good news. Throughout our passage, we encounter disturbing images: Jesus describes the disciples as sheep among wolves and doves among serpents; he predicts that they will be betrayed by those dearest to them and dragged before worldly authorities; he promises that they will be hated by all and forced to flee from town to town as homeless refugees. And yet, alongside these disturbing images, Jesus promises that God will be with them always. Although they are like sheep and doves, they will be wise with the wisdom of God. Although they may be killed for the sake of the gospel, God counts the hairs on their heads and will protect their souls. Just as Jesus was dragged powerless before the authorities and killed for proclaiming the kingdom of God, so too are his disciples called to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. And just as Jesus was preserved by the Spirit throughout the difficulties of his passion and death until he was raised victorious on Easter Day, so too will his disciples be preserved by the power and wisdom of God, which the world does not know. Matthew relates these sayings of Jesus on discipleship, then, with a view towards what he later writes concerning the passion and resurrection of Christ. To be a disciple is to make a deliberate break with the world we know in order to live according to the new world that Jesus is bringing into being. This break with the old world inevitably involves conflict, even violence. Therefore, the decision to be a disciple is not something that happens organically or in the normal course of events. It is a moment in which we decide to stand with Jesus and for Jesus regardless of the outcome. Toward the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells the crowd to "enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it" 5: Jesus repeatedly tells his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" The disciples leave their families and their nets; Matthew leaves his profession as a tax collector and its ill-gotten privileges; Jesus tells his disciples that their love for him must be far greater than their love of father, mother, son, or daughter Without question, the motivations of these preachers are laudable, for the Gospel does require renunciation and surrender. Indeed, one reason the martyrdom of Jonathan Daniels inspires us is because people like him have become so rare that they appear radical. As such, we have become a church of grand gestures, but little discipleship. For as I mentioned earlier, what Francis found most remarkable about Jonathan Daniels was not his act of sacrifice but the freedom and joy that Jonathan experienced when he choose to remain in jail with the other demonstrators. What finally makes the call to sacrifice we encounter in the Gospel of Matthew comprehensible is that it is an expression of the unbelievable generosity that God has shown us in Jesus Christ. The beginnings of this generosity are evident

in the incarnation of Jesus himself, which is the fulfillment of the promise that God will send his Son who will be called Emmanuel, that is, God with us. This generosity is also evident in the new law and power to forgive that Jesus places at the heart of the Sermon on the Mount. It is evident in the reconciliation Jesus effects in the lives of his disciples, placing outcasts and sinners at the center of the kingdom of God. If we forget this generosity, we will neglect the very thing that makes discipleship possible. It provides an opportunity for us to remember that the difficult path of discipleship also leads us to abundant life.

Chapter 7 : "Learning" to Make Disciples? - Theology in Progress

Learning to trust God and take Him at His word is a difficult task for many people.

Many of the stories overlap. Sometimes the authors, led by the Spirit of God, tell the same story for different reasons. I think such is the case this morning. Today we are going to look at two of the most familiar stories in the Bible: I believe Matthew is not only telling us what happened, he is also giving us an idea of why it happened as it did. I believe Matthew is showing us how Jesus was training his disciples. Just before this account we are told the story of how John the Baptist was killed. Keep that in mind as we re-read Matthew. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. The Feeding of the is the only miracle in all four gospels showing it must have had great significance. As I said, Matthew wants us to see the power and authority of Jesus but he also is teaching us as he was teaching the disciples. I have a theory which means it could very well be wrong. Jesus heard about the death of John the Baptist and was reminded that time was short. It was time to give the disciples some advanced classes. It was time to make sure the disciples were ready for the giant task that was ahead of them. In these miracles Jesus teaches his followers things that are just as important for us to remember. First, compassion is seldom convenient; it must take priority over comfort. Jesus seems to have intended to take His disciples on a little retreat. Perhaps he even wanted to spend some time mourning his cousin and faithful forerunner, John the Baptist. I know what mine would have been. Jesus saw them differently. He saw them as hurting people who were crying out for help. He saw them as the people He had come to save. James Montgomery Boice wrote, The first clear lesson of this story, therefore, is that Jesus cares for you, even though most of the other people in the world, especially the great and powerful people, do not. Most people who have power, prestige, or money do not care about others at all, even though they may pretend to, unless they have been saved and changed by Jesus himself. Sometimes it will break your heart. Let me add a caution here. There are some people who will drain the life out of you. Some just enjoy beating people up. That would be foolish. Sometimes you need to erect barriers, block people on your phone or Facebook, and refer people to others. However, when there are truly people in need, that is the time to roll up your sleeves and do what you can to help. Jesus healed people and then He taught them from early in the morning until later in the day. Jesus told them to feed the people. Have you ever been asked to do something for which you had no idea how to get the job done? I imagine the disciples standing in front of Jesus completely stupefied. I suspect they looked at each other, shrugged, and waited for Jesus to tell them that He was joking. When they concluded He was serious they set out to see if they could figure out a way to do what He said. They returned to Jesus with the five loaves and two fish. At the feeding of the the disciples were learning this by example. Once again, let me quote Boice, What seems to have stuck out most clearly in the minds of Matthew, Mark, and Luke is that Jesus told the disciples to do something to improve the situation. The emphasis does not come across as forcefully in the English translation as it does in Greek. In Greek there is the added and usually unnecessary pronoun you. The commands of God were NOT designed to get us to try harder. They are designed to show us how much we need Him! God is showing us what He wants to build in and through us! We move toward holiness, purity, compassion, love, and grace, when God fills our heart with more and more of Him. Third, God works most of the time through people. Jesus could have fed these people all on His own but He chose to work through the disciples. When you are working on a project and you encourage or let your child help you, why do you do that? You have them help you so they can learn and grow and benefit from your knowledge and abilities. Jesus was teaching the disciples how to handle these kinds of situations without panicking. He wants to teach us the same thing. God calls us to be involved in His work. Be ready and available. Bring Him what you have and then watch to see what He does. God wants us to trust Him, but that trust should take an active form. We should be ready to go wherever He sends us. Night fell while he was there alone. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. I

believe Jesus was still training His disciples. If you remember the whole point of coming to the area was to get some rest and some time to recharge. Jesus sent the disciples on ahead so He could spend time in quiet with the Father. The trip across the lake should not have taken a long time. The storm kept them at a standstill. Jesus saw they were in trouble and it appears He waited to go rescue them! It was another teachable moment. When Jesus came to them walking on the water He was giving a powerful demonstration of His deity and His authority over nature itself. The disciples, finding it hard to process what was going on, concluded they must be seeing a ghost. Peter, the ever impulsive disciple, asked Jesus to call for him. Notice some important things here: Peter was fine as long as he stayed focused on Jesus. When he looked at the waves, he lost his courage and began to sink. The whole incident had a profound effect on the disciples. Their faith was deepening. Their commitment was strengthening. They were going to need that faith in the weeks ahead. First, Jesus is present and aware of your circumstances. The disciples felt alone but they were not. Do you feel all alone? Do you feel God has forgotten you or is out to get you because of the circumstances you face? He has not forgotten you! If He is delaying in meeting your need it is a purposeful delay. There is something He is doing or teaching through this situation. Second, Jesus is greater than anything or anyone that comes against you. He is bigger than the storm that terrified experienced fishermen. He is bigger than cancer, leukemia, loneliness, debt, persecution, and death. He is bigger than the critics who attack your character. He is bigger than those who condemn you because you have failed. These things do not hinder Him! As He walked on the water, He showed how He is superior to nature. Third, the only way you will walk on water is if you are willing to get out of the boat. Author John Ortberg has changed the way I view this passage forever. He points out that we tend to criticize Peter because he started to sink. Ortberg observed that by the same token, Peter was the only one who ever got to walk on water. Because He had the faith to get out of the boat.

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"The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them." ~Ernest Hemingway. In love and in life, our vulnerability is one of our greatest strengths. We often believe that we risk too much by being vulnerable, but, in fact, the opposite is true.

Learning to Make Disciples of Jesus: Vice President of Ministry C. What Are the Qualifications of a Disciple Maker? To make disciples, you must be a disciple yourself. You should have been a disciple for a while and be reasonably well grounded in Scripture and established in your spiritual life. How Do We Make Disciples? Jesus gave us clear, practical instructions. If we follow them, we will find success. What we have here is a main verb, make disciples, as an imperative that is amplified by three subordinate participles that share some of its force: Making disciples learners, pupils, adherents of Jesus is the focal point and begins with our going out to help nonbelievers learn more about who Jesus is, what He did on the cross, and how that applies to their lives, with the goal of helping them come to saving faith. It is characterized by encouraging and assisting those who repent and believe the gospel to be baptized and then teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded His disciples to do. Failure to do the last part has had disastrous consequences for the church. Going Going is the initial stage in making disciples. It is a command, not a suggestion. On a practical level, this means that we must take initiative, that we must be intentional about going out to make disciples. We may go nearby or we may go to the ends of the earth, but we must go. To whom do we go? Because the mission of Jesus and the kingdom is no longer focused exclusively on Israel Matt. Since the first step in becoming a disciple is to repent of sin and to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, we need to understand the gospel message and learn how to share it with others. Many people find this idea unsettling, if not terrifying; but it need not be so if we are properly prepared. What exactly is the gospel message? Sometimes people confuse sharing the gospel with sharing their personal testimony. But the two are very different.

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The disciples also needed to learn to trust in Him in His absence. Jesus could have gone with His disciples, but He purposely stayed behind. They needed to find Him sufficient in His absence, for they would soon learn that He would not be with them (in His physical body) for long.

By Wayne Jackson In those gloomy hours preceding Calvary, Jesus reflected upon the dreaded appointment which, in the eternal scheme of things, he had with the cross—that instrument by which he would bear the penalty for human sin. However, as was often the case, in spite of his own ordeal his thoughts were riveted upon the welfare of others—particularly the disciples—who did not appreciate the difficulties that lay before them. That the disciples were disturbed in the upper room on that evening prior to the crucifixion is beyond doubt. The Problems What were their concerns? Several factors robbed the disciples of tranquility. First, the Lord had informed them on several occasions that he would be delivered up to the chief priests and elders of the Jewish community, and be put to death ultimately. They could not bring themselves to accept that. Surely the long-awaited Messiah would not die at the hands of his enemies. Peter had even rebuked the Lord for daring to suggest such a thing cf. Too, during the Passover supper that very evening, Christ had indicated that one of the apostolic band would betray him John How disheartening that must have been. Finally, to compound the matter, Jesus declared that Peter, a leading apostle, would deny him in the following, early morning hours John These circumstances were enough to shake the disciples to their very core. But the Lord understood that. He looked at them and loved them. He knew there was a remedy for their heartache. The King James Version gives the first clause a declarative rendition; the second, an imperative [command]. But what was the character of the faith he envisioned? Genuine faith—the kind that saves—consists of several components. First, it involves being exposed to the will of God and learning essential, sacred truths Romans Second, faith entails a soul disposition that trusts the Savior and commits to his care. Some in the first century were intellectually persuaded regarding the divine nature of Christ, but for various reasons they would not trust themselves to him cf. Third, true belief submits to the will of the Lord. He who believes on the Son has eternal life, but he who obeys not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him see John 3: Jesus is the author of eternal salvation only to such as obey him Hebrews 5: The noted Greek lexicographer, J. Admittedly, there are numerous occasions when our hearts are troubled. How are we to deal with such crises? Unquestionably, there are things we cannot change. We can, however, learn to survive by immersing ourselves in a deep and sustained biblical faith. May the Lord grant us the strength to pursue this remedy.