



GO & MAKE DISCIPLES

Matthew 28:16-20

I want to share some thoughts that I read from a sermon by a long time mentor to me from back home Bishop Ken Clarke. He was sharing about Jesus' command for us to, "Go and make disciples." Here is what he said. The Lord told us to go to all the world, make disciples and baptize and teach. When people think of the church, do they think of God's promises and His commands or do they think of a dusty book? The Word of God tells us that Jesus wants us to be a church that is making disciples. Some people think it is ABC - attendance, buildings and cash. They see the church as a social club. But we are God's people. We are to be God's peculiar people and let's be honest some of us are more peculiar than others. When we become God's people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, then lives are changed. This is not a choice. This is a clear command of Jesus, "Go make disciples." So how important is making disciples to you and I today? Is your church a place that welcomes others? Today there is a massive opportunity in our society that is full of stress, depression, tension and loneliness for us to be a community of people who have good news of hope and of transformation. It is exciting to be in God's church. It is

exciting to be a disciple of Jesus. God knows the weaknesses we feel at times. He knows that we need help and that we can't do it on our own. Remember His promises "Do everything I command you and surely I am with you in this. You are not alone." Whoever we are, if are a disciple of Jesus, whatever we are facing, He is with us. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." You are not just ordinary, you have an extra ordinary God who is in you and with you.

The kingdom of God is built, one person at a time. Jesus focused on the individual, the Good Shepherd is willing to leave the 99 sheep for one that is lost. We have to be encouraged to know that Jesus is always by our side no matter what we are facing. I think the church is like a maternity ward and so our church has to be ready for new births in the church. Think about what happens when a baby comes into the family. Yes, there is joy but there is also messy, noisy and smelly to go with that joy. The question for the church is, are we ready for all that or will we say, "Oh we don't want 'them' in our church." We are to be a welcoming community! Is our church attractive and is it full of Christlike love? When people see a community of love, kindness and support they want to come in. Have we caught this vision? Are we outward looking and outward loving? The second command is to be filled with the Spirit. When we are filled with the Spirit of Jesus, people see Jesus in us. He commands us to be filled to overflowing. Jesus fills us with His power so that we share the fruit of the Holy Spirit wherever we are. God wants us filled all week not just on a Sunday. We see the devastation of wildfires sweeping across the country. But just imagine if we set our community on fire for God. Imagine His Spirit sweeping across our city and bringing transformation instead of devastation. We can be beacons of hope and light. Are we up for it? Are we ready to share the message and set peoples hearts of fire with the love of God? God commands us all to play a part and to make a difference. May we have the courage to boldly "Go!"

