

LifeGroups 3.1—Compelled by Love Matthew 28:16-20

Introduction

- I want to begin this morning with a video I first saw back in January at the District Youth Conference in Green Bay. It's a video blog by the magician [Penn Jillette](#) of the act Penn & Teller. Penn is an atheist. Listen to what he says about his encounter with a Christian believer. [[Video](#)]
- As an outsider Penn's interpretation of what are about—it's a bit misguided. But he's clearly captivated by something, isn't he? What's he captivated by? He wasn't captivated by the gift—the bible. He seemed to be captivated by the authenticity and sincerity of this guy. “He looked me right in the eyes.” Twice Penn mentions that.
- I think more than anything else Penn sensed this guy loved him. More than anything else this guy who came up to him after the show genuinely loved him enough to say and do what he did. Penn's words “how much do you have to hate someone to not tell them about what you believe.” Coming from an atheist, those words are haunting, aren't they?
- [[Slide #1](#)] [2 Corinthians 5:14](#). *For Christ's love compels us.* The love God has shown us through Christ compels us to live differently. We are compelled to see people differently. We are compelled to go and share the message of God's love. The byproduct, the result of God's love in your life is motion, action, mission—not silence and stagnation. The love God has for us is the pin in the bubble that traps the church in isolation. God's love compels us to go, to no longer live for ourselves but to live instead for him who died for us and was raised again. The world will sit up and take notice of a man or woman compelled by the love of Christ.
- Author [Ed Stetzer](#) says this and this is what I want us to end on when we think of the mission Jesus launched and being compelled by love. He writes, “We have seen that love is the very heart of God. Love does not govern God for that would make Him subject to something else. Rather, He has divinely chosen love as an expression of His character. In response to His love, what is the church supposed to do? The answer is to make disciples.”¹
- The culmination of all that we've talked about in this series, all of what it means to be compelled by love, to be on the mission Jesus launched is the command given by Jesus in [Matthew 28](#). [[Slide #2](#)]

Proposition

- **Being on the mission Jesus launched means making disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples...**
- Turn to [Matthew 28](#). Author [Bob Roberts](#) says about this passage, “Generations of Christians before us have well noted that this passage is not known as the ‘OK

¹ Ed Stetzer and Philip Nation, *Compelled by Love*, New Hope Publishers: Birmingham, Alabama, 2008, p. 99.

Suggestion' or the 'Afterthought of Jesus.'" It's the Great Commission. This is Jesus' summary of the mission he launched. **Matthew 28:16-20**.

- Listen to what Matthew records following the resurrection. *Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 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.*
- Following the resurrection Jesus tells his disciples to go to Galilee. Why? Where did most of Jesus' mission take place? In and around the region called Galilee. The fact that he asks his followers to go to Galilee before he gives them this command is not coincidental. That's not accidental. The command to make disciples is linked with Jesus' place of mission so that it's very clear for Jesus' followers. Carrying on Jesus' mission when he's gone means making disciples. **Being on the mission Jesus launched means making disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples.**

Main Points

- Look at the text. *Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 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.*
- See, worship of Jesus is great. *When they saw him, they worshiped him.* But worship is not the mission. Jesus didn't commend the disciples for their worship—as right and true as that was. He commands them to continue his mission by making disciples.
- The command of **verse 19**, *therefore go and make disciples*, is because of what Jesus says in **verses 18**. *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.* Post-resurrection Jesus has all authority to say what he says, to command what he commands. In other words, because Jesus now has this authority that comes from rising from the grave, from defeating death, from definitively proving he speaks on behalf of God the Father, because of this authority, *therefore* his disciples are to go and make disciples.
- Think of what Jesus could have said or commanded here. Jesus didn't say proselytize, like what Penn in the video thinks Christians are to do. He didn't say make converts or teach people to pray a particular prayer. Or sit in pews and give money. Jesus didn't say go and be the great neighbors. Go and be moral upstanding citizens. Go and get a good education. Go and raise nice children. He said go and make disciples. "You and I are to participate in the work of multiplying the number

of surrendered learners and followers of Christ.”² **Being on the mission Jesus launched means making disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples.**

- All of what we've talked about with LifeGroups 2 or 3 point whatever, all that's meaningless if in the end disciples we aren't multiplying disciples. The goal, the command, the mission is to make disciples. And a genuine disciple makes more disciples who makes disciples who makes disciples. Making disciples is Jesus' passion. That's what He cares about. All of which begs two questions. What is a disciple? And what does it mean to make a disciple?
- Simply put, a disciple is a learner. The word disciple means learner. We have a great picture of what it means to be a disciple in **Luke 10:38**. *As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.* That picture of Mary sitting at Jesus' feet listening to him—that's a picture of discipleship. A good disciple is one who listens, understands, and obeys Jesus' instructions. First and foremost, a disciple is a learner. If you want to learn from Jesus, and listen to what he says and obey his instructions then you are his disciple.
- Making disciples simply involves bringing other people into relationship with Jesus as pupils to teacher. Making disciples means bringing people to Jesus the Teacher so that they accept His instruction and His words as being authoritative for their life. Making disciples means bringing people to the Teacher who will in turn bring people to the Teacher who will in turn bring people to the Teacher.
- Think about that for a second. We're not told to convince people of anything. Thank God, right? Can you help someone become a learner, like yourself? Then you can make disciples. Can you introduce other people to your Teacher so that they might learn from him? Then you can make disciples. That's not hard. We can do that.
- What if you had a small group of people committed to doing that with you? What if this small group committed to being a learning community—to learn and listen to Jesus? What if you then invited others into this community so that they could learn from your Teacher? That's LifeGroups. Making disciples is a lot easier and way less threatening than what we often think of as disciple making.
- I don't believe we are that far away from a culture here at Grace, a culture of reproducing, multiplying disciples. I really believe that. But in order for that to happen you are going to have to see yourself as an integral part of Jesus' mission, which you are. And you are going to have to become a learner, if you're not already. And you are going to have to so fall in love with your Teacher Jesus that you will, compelled by love, help others learn from him.
- Recently I've been reading a book by **Bob Roberts** called *The Multiplying Church*. Roberts writes this, “The highest demonstration of maturity for a local church is when it multiplies. Only something that is alive can reproduce, and it will do so only if it is healthy.” What's true in life when we think about reproducing organisms is true

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when it relates to our life with Christ. “Only something that is alive can reproduce, and it will do so only if it is healthy.”

- Here’s what I’d love to see us do. We already have LifeGroups going. That’s great. Let’s keep that going. Let’s continue to cultivate within LifeGroups an environment of gathering to learn from Jesus. And let’s continue to invite others to be a part of that.
- What I’d like to see us work on is the multiplying part. What we need is a simple, easily reproducible way for us to multiply learners. And it might happen like this. Whether you are in a LifeGroup or not, I don’t care. You can do this. Find one other person and begin reading Jesus’ words together. Doesn’t have to be much. A couple of chapters a week. The key thing is that together the two of you are reading the same words of Jesus—together you’re learning from Jesus. Then a couple times a month or even every week meet face to face at your place of work or a game or McDonalds or Culvers or the library or wherever life happens for the two of you and briefly share what you are learning from Jesus. Doesn’t have to be a huge commitment of time. We’re talking 30 minutes tops.
- And as the two of you continue to meet, look to add a third person. And when the group grows to three learners look to add a fourth. When it grows to four, multiply into two groups of two and do the same thing over again. **Being on the mission Jesus launched means making disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples.**
- None of us are exempt from this command to make disciples. You know that right? No matter how you slice it this command is binding on all Jesus' disciples to make others what they themselves are—disciples of Jesus Christ. I don’t say this to make you feel guilty. I think we all have had enough guilt heaped upon us when it comes to our failure to make disciples. I say this because that what’s Jesus expects of us as disciples.
- What I want you to take away this morning is that this is doable. This is not beyond you. A good disciple is one who listens, understands, and obeys Jesus' instructions. You can do that. If you want to learn from Jesus and help others to learn from him then you can make disciples.
- There is so much more to say about this passage. There’s the scope of what Jesus commands. **Verse 19. Go and make disciples of all nations.** The aim of Jesus' disciples is to make disciples of all men and women everywhere, without distinction. Jesus’ mission is global. It’s a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-national mission.
- Then there’s the baptism and teaching components. *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.*
- “For believers, baptism is a public acknowledgement of surrendering our lives to a relationship with God through identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of

Christ.”³ If you consider yourself a learner, a disciple of Jesus and you haven’t been baptized you need to do that. I’ll help you with that. I’ll walk you through that. Talk to me.

- And teaching. Teaching is an integral part of the Great Commission. What the church needs is not less, but more good teaching that helps people obey all that Jesus’ commands. Failure to teach is a failure of discipleship and disobedience to Jesus. Let me just say that both baptism and teaching are not the *means* of making disciples, but they characterize it. In other words, the response of discipleship is baptism—a public confession of and a desire for ongoing instruction.
- There’s so much more we could say about both of those things.

Conclusion

- What I want to end with before we celebrate communion is this. Look at the promise at the end of [verse 20](#). Matthew’s Gospel ends, not with command, but with the promise of Jesus’ comforting presence. *And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.* The One who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth has promised to be with us when we join him on his mission. The promise of Jesus’ presence is tied to the mission. Even now Jesus is where his mission is and continues and he will be with those who are compelled by love to be on that mission with him.

³ Ed Stetzer and Philip Nation, *Compelled by Love*, New Hope Publishers: Birmingham, Alabama, 2008, p. 108.