

## Make Disciples! (Part 7) The Conclusion of Discipleship (Acts 1:8)

**Introduction:** The Question is often asked: “Can I be a Christian without joining or being a part of the church?” The answer: Yes, it is possible. But the real answer is: *Why would you want to be a Christian if you don’t want to have anything to do with the church – the church, that is the bride and body of Christ?* Someone once said, “The most significant contribution we make in life, is the passing of our faith to the next generation.”—(Unknown) This is the work of discipleship, *and discipleship is the work of the church.* I want to remind us, in this sermon series, we have defined discipleship as (Let’s say it together...) ***“Discipleship is a lifelong relationship with Jesus that makes us like Jesus as we do what He tells us to do as we share our lives with others.”*** Christ’s command to every believer and the church is clear: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”* (Mt. 28:18-20) It is in the building of disciples - helping others embrace Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, mature in Him, then lead others to do the same, that we grow the kingdom of God. [And]... *When the kingdom grows, the church does too.* This is what Jesus has in mind just before He ascends back up to the Father and leaves these disciples and those to come after them, to complete His mission and carry out His great commission.

### I. The power of discipleship:

The disciples knew they would need spiritual power to pull this off...

#### A. **They were seeking a majestic or military power- (v.7)**

1. They shared the fervent hope of the nation, that the Messiah would come and set up His earthly kingdom.
2. After all Jesus had often taught prophetically about His future kingdom (Mt. 13:40-50; 24, 25; Lk. 12:36-40; 17:20-37; 21:5-36). Don’t forget the disciples on the Emmaus Road. (Lk. 24:21).
  - a. The disciples also knew that according to scriptures they had (Ezk. 36 and Joel 2) *the coming of the kingdom and the outpouring of the Spirit Jesus had told them about, were connected.*
  - b. Their expectations of a literal, earthly kingdom was not wrong. In fact, it was correct, all except for the timing of its coming.

So, while the disciples were concerned about a future power, a military and political power, Jesus is more concerned about their present power.

#### B. **Jesus was talking about a mission power –**

1. Jesus is talking about a power they will have to focus on and complete the work at hand and the kingdom work He started.
2. Jesus is talking about the power to bear witness of Him. (1 John 1:1-2)
  - a. A witness for Christ (as John said) *is simply someone who tells the truth about Jesus.*
  - b. As the apostle Peter points out - (2 Pe. 1:16)

This is the foremost purpose for which the power of the Holy Spirit is given. (Ac. 17:6)

c. **In a very real sense** – No Christian ever has to decide if they are willing to or will be a witness for Christ – *The fact is they already are.*

1. The only real question is *“How effective of a witness are they?”*
2. If the church is ever going to reach the lost world starting here in our own Jerusalem and expanding outward by the power of the Holy Spirit, with the good news of the gospel of Christ...
3. If believers are going to have to sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts.
  - *The apostle Peter writes (1 Pe. 3:15)*
  - *The apostle Paul writes in Titus 2- telling us that it is how a Christian lives their life, is what lays the foundation for their integrity and believability upon which our effective witness is built. We are to LIVE... (v.5, 8,10)*
  - *In other words – our witness is to be such as to make the saving gospel visible and attractive to all who see and encounter us. Jesus indicated...*

C. **It is a mighty power** – One capable of changing lives... You see there is no greater power, than the power of discipleship (which is the Holy Spirit working through us) to bring people to Jesus, change their lives and mature them in Christ. *Jesus has called and commissioned every believer to a life of discipleship, and He has given us the power of the Holy Spirit to do it!*

II. **The people of discipleship:** *As Jesus ascends back up into heaven, with a promise, (v.11) with that, these disciples return to Jerusalem...*

A. **What a variety of people made up that first assembly of believers!** (Ac. 1:12-15; Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3; Jn. 7:5; Acts 1:14).

B. **What a unity there was among the people** *The key phrase is "with one accord,"* a phrase that is found six times in Acts (1:14; 2:1,46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; and note also 2:44). There was among these believers a wonderful unity that bound them together in Christ (Ps 133; Gal 3:28), the kind of unity that Christians need today. *We all need the “continual (being filled) filling of the Holy Spirit to be who we are called to be and do what we are called to do. (Eph. 5:18; Gal.5:22-23)*

III. **The purpose of discipleship:** *The purpose of discipleship is to know God and to make God known.*

A. **How well do you know God?**

B. **How well do we know these men who know God?** We will see them again... but they will be changed and different. *What was the change?* Jesus told us, *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...”*

C. **How well have we been changed by knowing God?**

1. The way we know God today is through the witness of His disciples, the presence of His Word, and the power of His Spirit.
2. It is through those things we still work and witness the unseen Christ at work as through *discipleship, we come to know God and to make God known. (Which is the purpose of discipleship).*

This is the work of discipleship, *and discipleship is the work of the church.*