



Mount Olive Church Ministries

The Christian Mandate: Making Disciples

Theme Scripture

Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV)

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Rev. Dr. Victor Thomas – Senior Pastor

SERIES INTRODUCTION

The Historical Significance of the Great Commission

The Great Commission was not simply a church slogan or ministry idea—it was the final command of Jesus Christ before ascending back to heaven.

These words carried divine authority and kingdom urgency. Jesus understood that His earthly ministry would continue through committed disciples who would carry the gospel into the world.

The early church understood this assignment clearly. Christianity spread throughout cities, regions, and nations because disciples reproduced spiritually mature believers.

The problem today is that much of the modern church has drifted from discipleship to entertainment, from spiritual formation to crowd attraction, and from biblical depth to emotional convenience.

Jesus never commanded the church to entertain crowds. He commanded the church to make disciples.

Why the Church Has No Other Focus Beyond Making Disciples

The church has many assignments:

- Worship - Fellowship – Outreach – Prayer – Service – Preaching – Missions - Ministry

But all those assignments ultimately support one central mission:

Making disciples of Jesus Christ.

The church does not exist merely to gather crowds, host events, maintain traditions, entertain people, or build religious organizations. The church exists to develop people into mature followers of Jesus Christ who reflect His character, obey His Word, and continue His mission in the earth.

It Was Jesus' Final Command

Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV)

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...”

Jesus did not leave multiple competing missions for the church. His final instruction was clear:

Make disciples.

Everything the church does should support that mandate.

- Preaching should make disciples
- Worship should strengthen disciples
- Bible study should mature disciples
- Outreach should reach future disciples
- Fellowship should encourage disciples
- Leadership should equip disciples

If ministry activities are not producing spiritually mature believers, then the church has drifted away from its biblical purpose.

JESUS' MODEL OF DISCIPLESHIP

1. Jesus Called People Personally

Matthew 4:19 (KJV)

“And he saith unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Jesus intentionally called ordinary people into kingdom purpose. He did not search for the wealthy, educated, or influential first. He called willing people.

Significance

Discipleship begins with surrender and relationship. Jesus saw potential where others saw limitations.

2. Jesus Spent Time with His Disciples

Mark 3:14 (KJV)

“And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,”

Jesus understood that discipleship required relationship, observation, teaching, and spiritual development.

Significance

People are transformed not only by sermons but by consistent spiritual influence and example.

3. Jesus Taught Through Everyday Life

Luke 8:1 (KJV)

“And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,”

Jesus used daily life experiences to teach kingdom principles.

Significance

Discipleship extends beyond church services into daily living.

4. Jesus Corrected and Challenged His Disciples

Matthew 16:23 (KJV)

“But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

Luke 9:55 (KJV)

“But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.”

Jesus corrected wrong attitudes, pride, fear, and misunderstanding.

Significance

Real discipleship includes correction, accountability, and growth.

5. Jesus Sent His Disciples Out

Luke 10:1 (KJV)

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.”

Jesus trained disciples to continue the mission.

Significance

Discipleship is incomplete until disciples become disciple-makers.

WHY THE MODERN CHURCH MUST REFOCUS

Entertainment Over Transformation

2 Timothy 4:3-4 (KJV)

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

Many churches have become more concerned with keeping people entertained than spiritually transformed.

Crowds Over Commitment

John 6:26-27 (KJV)

“Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life...”

Large crowds followed Jesus for benefits, but true disciples followed Him for transformation.

Platforms Over People

Mark 10:42-45 (KJV)

“But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them... But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister...”

Jesus taught servant leadership, not celebrity culture.

Emotionalism Over Doctrine

Hosea 4:6 (KJV)

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...”

Many believers are emotionally inspired but spiritually uninformed.

WHAT THE CHURCH MUST DO TO CORRECT IT

1. Return to Biblical Teaching

2 Timothy 4:2 (KJV)

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

Acts 2:42 (KJV)

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

The early church prioritized doctrine and spiritual growth.

2. Develop Intentional Discipleship

Ephesians 4:11-13 (KJV)

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith...”

Church leadership exists to mature believers spiritually.

3. Restore Prayer and Spiritual Discipline

Acts 6:4 (KJV)

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”

Luke 18:1 (KJV)

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;”

Prayer must remain central to church life.

4. Equip Believers for Ministry

2 Timothy 2:2 (KJV)

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

Discipleship involves multiplication.

5. Prioritize Soul-Winning and Outreach

Mark 16:15 (KJV)

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Acts 1:8 (KJV)

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...”

The church must move beyond its walls into the world.

The Christian Mandate: Making Disciples

Overall Series Purpose

This study is designed to call the church back to its original assignment. In many places, the modern church has become more focused on attracting crowds than developing committed disciples.

Churches have mastered production, branding, and presentation, yet many believers remain spiritually immature, biblically illiterate, and disconnected from authentic kingdom living.

Jesus never commanded the church to build audiences. He commanded the church to make disciples.

The danger of entertainment-centered ministry is that people can become emotionally moved without being spiritually transformed.

Crowds may gather around charisma, music, trends, or personalities, but true disciples gather around truth, obedience, sacrifice, and spiritual growth.

This study challenges both the church and individual believers to return to the Great Commission as the primary mission of the church.

WEEK 1 — THE CALL TO MAKE DISCIPLES

Title: “Go Ye Therefore”

Theme Scripture

Matthew 28:19-20

Supporting Scriptures

- Mark 16:15
 - Acts 1:8
 - Matthew 9:37-38
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Introduction

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He left His followers with one final command—not a suggestion, not an option, but a mandate. He told them to go and make disciples.

The modern church has often measured success by attendance, finances, buildings, social media engagement, and popularity. Yet heaven measures success differently. Heaven measures transformed lives.

Many churches today are filled with people who know church language but do not know kingdom responsibility.

They know worship songs but not scripture. They know church traditions but have never been disciplined into spiritual maturity.

The early church grew because believers were committed to discipleship, prayer, teaching, fellowship, and evangelism. Today, some churches focus more on entertaining people than equipping people.

Entertainment may attract people temporarily, but only discipleship produces lasting transformation.

Scripture Explanation & Life Application

Matthew 28:19 — “Go ye therefore...”

Jesus gave His followers a mission that required movement. The church was never designed to stay confined inside four walls. The gospel must move beyond Sunday services into homes, communities, workplaces, schools, and everyday life.

The word “teach” in this scripture means to train, mentor, and develop followers of Christ. Discipleship is not simply preaching sermons; it is intentionally helping people grow spiritually.

Where the Church Has Drifted

Many churches have shifted from producing disciples to producing consumers. Instead of asking:

- “How can we grow spiritually?”
church culture often asks:
- “How can we keep people comfortable?”
- “How can we entertain people enough to stay?”
- “How can we compete with culture?”

As a result:

- Conviction has been replaced with comfort
- Holiness has been replaced with hype
- Spiritual maturity has been replaced with emotional excitement
- Biblical teaching has been shortened for entertainment value

Jesus never promised comfort. He promised transformation.

Modern-Day Application

True discipleship today looks like:

- Teaching believers how to pray
- Helping families build godly homes
- Mentoring young believers
- Developing biblical literacy
- Training believers to share their faith

A disciple should not remain spiritually immature after years in church.

Example

A church may have thousands attending worship services, yet very few actively studying scripture, serving others, or evangelizing. Large crowds do not always equal spiritual health.

Meanwhile, a smaller church committed to discipleship may produce spiritually mature believers who impact entire communities.

Church Responsibilities

The church must return to:

- Sound biblical teaching
- Prayer gatherings
- Mentorship programs
- Small group discipleship
- Leadership development
- Evangelism training

The church must stop prioritizing performance over spiritual formation.

Churches should ask:

- Are we producing disciples or spectators?
- Are people growing spiritually?
- Are believers equipped to live for Christ outside church?

Programs cannot replace discipleship.

Individual Responsibilities

Believers must:

- Take ownership of spiritual growth
- Study scripture consistently
- Pursue accountability
- Share their faith
- Live differently from the world

Every believer has a responsibility to help someone else grow spiritually.

Conclusion

The Great Commission is still the church's assignment. Until the church refocuses on discipleship, many believers will remain spiritually weak despite being religiously active.

Jesus did not say: "Build crowds."
He said: "Make disciples."

Closing Prayer

"Lord, forgive us for the times we have prioritized popularity over purpose. Restore the church back to the mandate of discipleship. Give us hearts that desire transformation more than entertainment. Teach us to make disciples who truly follow Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen."

EXAMINING THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

Modern culture often presents Christianity as convenient, comfortable, and self-serving. However, Jesus consistently taught that discipleship requires sacrifice, surrender, and commitment. Historically, the early disciples faced persecution, rejection, imprisonment, and even death because of their commitment to Christ.

The apostles understood that following Jesus meant denying self and embracing kingdom purpose above personal comfort. Many early believers lost relationships, possessions, status, and security because they chose obedience to Christ.

Today, many believers desire the benefits of Christianity without the responsibility of discipleship. Some want blessings without surrender, breakthrough without discipline, and favor without obedience.

Modern-day life application reveals this struggle clearly:

- Many believers prioritize careers over spiritual growth
- Social acceptance over biblical convictions
- Comfort over commitment
- Convenience over consistency
- Entertainment over prayer and scripture

The church has sometimes contributed to this problem by avoiding difficult truths about holiness, repentance, discipline, sacrifice, and accountability.

True discipleship costs something.

Following Jesus may require:

- Walking away from sinful habits
- Forgiving difficult people
- Standing for truth in hostile environments
- Remaining faithful during suffering
- Choosing holiness over popularity
- Prioritizing God over personal ambition

Discipleship is not seasonal commitment—it is daily surrender.

Title: “Following Jesus Beyond Convenience”

Theme Scriptures

Luke 9:23 (KJV)

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

Luke 14:27 (KJV)

“And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

Introduction

Modern culture often presents Christianity as convenient, comfortable, and self-serving. But Jesus taught that discipleship requires sacrifice.

Many people want the benefits of salvation without the responsibilities of discipleship. They want blessings without surrender, favor without obedience, and breakthrough without spiritual discipline.

The church has sometimes contributed to this by preaching a gospel focused only on prosperity, motivation, and personal success while avoiding messages about holiness, sacrifice, and commitment.

True discipleship will cost something. Jesus never hid the cost of discipleship. He did not build His ministry on emotional excitement alone.

He taught people that true discipleship required dying to self, surrendering personal desires, and fully committing to the will of God.

Many people today want the benefits of salvation without the responsibilities of discipleship.

They want blessings without surrender, favor without obedience, breakthrough without spiritual discipline, and promises without process.

Unfortunately, the modern church has sometimes contributed to this mindset by emphasizing:

- Prosperity without holiness
- Motivation without transformation
- Church attendance without spiritual maturity
- Emotional experiences without biblical commitment

Scripture Explanation & Life Application

Luke 9:23 — “Deny himself...”

Jesus teaches that discipleship begins with self-denial.

Following Christ means:

- Dying to pride
- Dying to selfish ambition
- Dying to sinful habits
- Dying to worldly compromise

The cross represents surrender, sacrifice, and obedience.

Where the Church Has Drifted

Some churches avoid difficult truths because they fear losing members or financial support. Messages about repentance, holiness, and accountability are often softened to maintain popularity.

As a result:

- Believers become spiritually shallow
- Sin is normalized
- Commitment decreases
- Conviction weakens

Discipleship requires correction, growth, and spiritual accountability.

Church Responsibilities

2 Timothy 4:2 (KJV)

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

The church must:

- Teach truth boldly
 - Restore biblical accountability
 - Encourage spiritual discipline
 - Teach believers how to endure hardship
 - Develop mature Christians
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Individual Responsibilities

Romans 12:1 (KJV)

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...”

Believers must:

- Surrender daily to Christ
- Pursue holiness
- Accept correction
- Remain faithful under pressure

Luke 14:27 (KJV)

“And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

What did Jesus Mean?

This is one of the strongest and most challenging statements Jesus made concerning discipleship. Jesus wanted the crowd following Him to understand that true discipleship required more than emotional excitement, public association, or temporary enthusiasm. It required total commitment.

During biblical times, the cross was not viewed as jewelry or decoration—it was a symbol of suffering, sacrifice, humiliation, death, and surrender. When Jesus spoke about “bearing the cross,” His listeners immediately understood the seriousness of His words.

To bear the cross meant:

- Dying to self
- Surrendering personal desires
- Accepting sacrifice
- Enduring hardship for the sake of Christ
- Remaining faithful despite opposition

Jesus was teaching that discipleship is not about convenience—it is about commitment.

The phrase: “come after me” means to follow Jesus completely:

- Following His teachings
- Following His example
- Following His lifestyle
- Following His mission
- Following His character

Jesus makes it clear:

“Cannot be my disciple.”

This reveals that discipleship requires surrender. A person cannot truly follow Christ while refusing to surrender their will, priorities, lifestyle, and desires to Him.

Historical Significance

In the Roman world, carrying a cross was associated with criminals walking toward execution. Jesus used this imagery intentionally to show that discipleship involved dying to the old life.

The early disciples understood this deeply:

- Peter faced persecution
- Paul endured imprisonment and suffering
- Stephen was stoned
- Early believers were rejected socially and politically

Yet they continued following Christ because they understood that the kingdom of God was worth every sacrifice.

How Jesus Demonstrated This in His Earthly Ministry

Jesus never asked His disciples to do something He was unwilling to do Himself.

1. Jesus Bore His Own Cross

John 19:17 (KJV)

“And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull...”

Jesus literally carried the cross on His journey toward Calvary.

Significance

Jesus modeled sacrificial obedience even unto death.

2. Jesus Surrendered His Will to the Father

Luke 22:42 (KJV)

“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”

Jesus demonstrated complete surrender to God’s will even when facing suffering.

Significance

Discipleship requires obedience even when it is difficult.

3. Jesus Endured Rejection and Opposition

Isaiah 53:3 (KJV)

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...”

Jesus experienced betrayal, criticism, abandonment, and suffering.

Significance

Following Christ may involve rejection, misunderstanding, and spiritual warfare.

Modern-Day Life Application

Bearing the cross today may not involve physical crucifixion, but it still requires spiritual sacrifice and daily surrender.

Modern disciples must carry the cross by:

- Remaining faithful during hardship
- Standing for biblical truth in a compromised culture
- Choosing holiness over popularity
- Forgiving people who hurt them
- Loving difficult people
- Rejecting sinful habits
- Prioritizing God over personal ambition
- Remaining committed even when life becomes difficult

Many believers want resurrection power...But they do not want crucifixion discipline.
Many want public blessings...But avoid private surrender.

However, true discipleship requires dying to:

- Pride
- Selfish ambition
- Lust
- Bitterness
- Ego
- Worldliness
- Spiritual laziness

The cross represents surrender before glory.

Discussion Questions & Answers

1. What does “bearing the cross” mean for believers today?

Answer:

It means surrendering personal desires, remaining faithful during hardship, obeying God completely, and living sacrificially for Christ.

2. Why did Jesus use the cross as a symbol of discipleship?

Answer:

Because the cross represented sacrifice, suffering, surrender, and death to self. Jesus wanted people to understand the seriousness of following Him.

3. How did Jesus personally demonstrate cross-bearing?

Answer:

Jesus surrendered His will to the Father, endured rejection, served others humbly, and ultimately gave His life on the cross for humanity.

4. What are some modern-day crosses believers may have to bear?

Answer:

Standing for biblical truth, resisting temptation, sacrificing comfort, forgiving others, remaining faithful during trials, and living differently from worldly culture.

5. Why has the modern church struggled with teaching sacrificial discipleship?

Answer:

Because some churches fear losing people by preaching difficult truths about holiness, surrender, accountability, and sacrifice.

Conclusion

Discipleship is costly, but spiritual maturity only comes through surrender. The cross is not simply a symbol we wear...It is a life we live.

Closing Prayer

“Father, help us deny ourselves and follow Christ completely. Remove every distraction and compromise that pulls us away from Your will. Strengthen us to walk faithfully as true disciples. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

