

Union United Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Called to Bear Fruit in the Divine Purpose & Vision of Christ,** **Part 3: Making & Nurturing Disciples**

June 4th, 2023. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Acts 2:-21**

1. **Recall: The Divine Purpose & Vision of Christ.**

- **Salvation for All in Christ - the Four ALLs.**

- ALL need to be saved - Romans 3:23
- ALL may be saved - 1 Timothy 2:4
- ALL may know they are saved - John 1:12, Romans 8:16
- ALL may be saved to the utmost (completely) - 1 Thessalonians 5:22-24

- **Divine Reconciliation for All - Our Collective Ministry**

God has called all of us Christians to help other people to become reconciled to God. Paul calls this our ministry of reconciliation, and we are called Ambassadors of Christ: 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 NRSV

- **We are Called to Bear Fruit:** John 15:1-10

- **Without Christ and His Anointing, We Cannot Bear Fruit** - John 15:3-5

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 NRSV

- **Inside us, the Holy Spirit helps us**

Isaiah 11:1-2 describes the Holy Spirit as:

- The spirit of the Lord - God's spirit
- The spirit of wisdom
- The spirit of understanding
- The spirit of knowledge and might (energy, strength, power, ...)
- The spirit of counsel (guidance), and the fear of the Lord (reverence)

- **Comes Upon us,** to empowers us to be effective witnesses for Christ.

Jesus said, the Holy Spirit **"will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment."** John 16:8 NIV

2. The Great Commission & It's Fulfilment

- The Great Commission

After the resurrection of Jesus, and before he returned to Heaven, he gave a charge to his disciples - some of which we read in the gospels:

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 NIV

It is worth meditating on this scripture and examining it in detail:

- **The Risen Jesus, the Anointed One (Christ, Messiah) now has all authority and power** - everything we need is in Him.
- **THEREFORE**, he has commanded us to:
 - Make disciples of Christ
 - Baptize the disciples in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - Teach the disciples to obey His word

This is the commission.

In John's gospel, it is stated this way: "Jesus said to them again, "**Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.**"

John 20:21 NRSV

Remember: Christ is also called the Prince of Peace.

Shalom/Shelem in the Hebrew denotes wholeness, completeness.

Note that in Matthew 28, the Great Commission is sandwiched between two great statements of assurance:

- Divine Ability and Power
- We're not alone - Divine help is available to us ALWAYS.

- **The Risen Christ is with us ALWAYS, and will always be.**

In other words, we are not alone. We are not doing this work alone.

- **Empowerment for the Mission: The Holy Spirit.**

The Gospel of John also tells us that Jesus didn't just give the commission but immediately breathed on them the Holy Spirit who would empower them to do the work.

21 Jesus said to them again,

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

22 When he had said this, **he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.** 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

3. Making & Nurturing Disciples

The great commission involves:

- Making disciples
- Baptizing them
- Nurturing them.

In Acts 2, we see the making and nurturing of disciples being carried out by the apostles and first disciples.

- **Making Disciples**

This involves preaching the word.

It also involves inviting people to receive and believe in Christ.

In other words, we have to explain the gospel to people. We see Peter doing this on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He addressed the gathered crowd and explained who Jesus truly was. He also explained the fact that what they were

witnessing was a fulfilment of God's promise for the last days. He concluded with this:

2:36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

The people responded to this preaching and he then walked through the steps of salvation:

2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "**Brothers, what shall we do?**"

38 Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**"

This is a great summary of what we are to do to make disciples:

- Preach
- Watch out for the response.
- Explain the steps required and lead people to receive Christ and the gift of the Holy spirit.

Preaching is NOT optional.

As Paul tells Timothy:

1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, **I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage— with great patience and careful instruction.**"

2 Timothy 4:1-2 NIV

- **Nurturing Disciples**

In Acts 2, we see what happened next:

41 **Those who accepted his message were baptized**, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Note these four important things: teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer

This is the essence of nurturing disciples.

What was the result?

43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Acts 2:41-47 NRSV

This is the scriptural pattern the Lord has given us for making and nurturing disciples. This is the proven method by which the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has grown for centuries. This is what we are called to do in our day.