



“An introduction to Discipleship”
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Courage Church, Detroit, MI.
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We are talking about discipleship today.

I titled today's message “An Introduction to Discipleship” because there is so much to discipleship, and it is so incredibly important... We believe that every good church, every healthy church functioning biblically, should be built

around two things that Jesus said... the great commandment, and the great commission. The Great Commandment is found in Matthew 22:37-40 and it says “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, this is the first and greatest command, and the second is like it... you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.

And the Great Commission is the last thing that Jesus left us with after his resurrection, before his ascension into heaven when he said (Matthew 28:18-20) “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Discipleship is an incredibly big deal to Jesus, so we have every intention of making it a priority here.

So today we are just going to look at a few key moments in the life and teachings of Jesus that relate to discipleship. If you have your bibles, we are mostly going to be in the gospel of Luke today, starting first with Luke 6:40.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but when he is fully trained, he will be like him.”

So, some good news... you will be happy to know that I got some new pants this week.

We were in New York last weekend... before any of the transition stuff happened here at Courage, before we had any idea that we were coming to be pastors here this Spring, we had these contracts signed to film these weddings. We would do that occasionally when we were in New York to make a little extra money to balance the enormous cost of living there. Well, we had these contracts signed for like a year so when Pastor Chilly talked to us about do this, it was one of the first things that we told him, that there were a couple of weeks this summer that we had situations like that. But the company that hired us to shoot one of these weddings sent me an email a couple days before the wedding reminding me to “dress appropriately” and then proceeded to in all capital letters say “NO JEANS.”

I was already there, and only had jeans. I forgot about the whole “formal” thing, so we went to H&M and to get a pair of dress pants and there were all these really great prices so I stocked up on like four new pairs of pants, I figured if he didn’t like the first pair, I could show him another and another and one was bound to be wedding appropriate.

These were not the pants I wore to the wedding. I should have, he would have definitely made me change.

Filming a wedding is the most stressful job, ever. You only get one shot. You just cant mess up, its the most important day of someones life, and they are paying you to record it, there are no re-dos. But this wedding, it was the most amazing thing I have ever seen. Originally, I had planned to maybe take Dawn to a Broadway show or something while we were in the city, but that didn’t end up working out... but that is ok, because the second wedding we filmed ended up being for two Broadway actors, he was one of the leads in the musical “Motown” and she had been in a lot of shows as well. The wedding was on Monday because that is the only day Broadway is dark, and all of their guests were also Broadway actors. It was the most incredible wedding I have ever seen. I thought I had an awesome wedding, it didn’t touch this. They had an incredible live band, and the whole time these Broadway actors would join the band, would do songs together... would improv... everyone would constantly break out into song and dance

over and over again at a level that the rest of the world only sees in the movies... The band played one of the songs from "Jersey Boys," and three of the leads in Jersey Boys got up and sang it. It was incredible.

For these people, this is just who they are. They were so versed in it. They were all so talented, any single one of them at any moment could take the mic, or take the dance floor, and blow everybody away. When it came time for us to take our break and go eat dinner, we just wanted to keep working, because where else can you see the leads from all of these huge shows all performing together, playing off of each other... and it went on for hours...

If you get people who are likeminded in a room together, amazing things can happen. If you get people who have mastered a certain craft all out of similar training, you can do something far more incredible... far more out of the ordinary.

These people are the best in the world at what they do.

And that was the best wedding that I had ever been too. It was the best wedding my wife has ever been too, it was the best wedding that the people who hired us have ever been to.

In the first century, if you were going to be a rabbi's disciple, it meant you had to be the best at what you do. It likely meant leaving everything. It required total commitment... you had to be the very best to even get to that level.

Students of the scriptures, they would begin by learning the entire Torah... The Torah is the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They would have to memorize them all, Word for word. All of the Levitical law... all of the creation story, every word of the Exodus from Egypt, the events on Mt. Sinai, the ten commandments... the weird stories that are only appropriate because they are in the bible (according to Austin). And after that... if you were to continue in your training (which only a few students would go farther than this), the next level of training was called "beit talmud" (pronounced bait talmood) they would have to memorize the rest of the scriptures... what we now know as the old testament.. Genesis all of the way through Malachi.

This is the first century... there were no chapters and verses, the old testament wasn't broken up into Chapter and verse until 1445... there were no fancy reference points for remembering... you had to just know the whole entire thing, by heart.

Most people never finished this level... by this time they had began learning a different craft, a different way to make money, learning from their parents, to do what they do.

And the few that actually did that, and actually wanted to continue their training, they would then seek out a rabbi and apply to become one of his disciples... But for a rabbi, their life was intense, many of them were traveling a lot, they were spreading their yoke (which was their interpretation of the scriptures) everywhere that they go... and they didn't have time for people who were not the very very best... they didn't have time for the students who they were not completely convinced that "this guy can do this... this guy can spread my yoke... this guy has it." So the process was brutal and most students would not make the cut... even after memorizing every scripture from Genesis-Malachi, many of them would still be then sent home to learn the family business... become a craftsman, a carpenter or a fisherman...

but there were those few that the Rabbis would agree, "this one would be worth pouring my life into." and the rabbi would then say to the potential disciple "Come. Follow Me" and he would begin discipling this student... and the student would then leave everything... he would leave his father and his mother... he would leave his home, he would travel with his rabbi, he would sit with his rabbi he would take in everything that his rabbi would do... the disciples main objective was not just to learn from the rabbi, but was to become LIKE the rabbi. Which was why the rabbi's were so particular in who they would select. The big question, after school had already distinguished which of these students were the "best" which of these students had the capacity for this type of leadership... the big question now was:

"Can this disciple be like me?"

"Will they be able to spread my yoke?"

and the students that the rabbi had chosen, the ones who he was allowing to follow him, are the ones that he believed the answer to be “yes” about.

But that wasn't most people. Most people were not the best. Most people were not the leads in “Motown,” and the leads in “Jersey Boys,” - most people would end their training and step into something a bit more... normal.

Peter, his brother Andrew, James and his brother John, all would have fallen into this category. Normal. Not exceptional. That's why they were out fishing when Jesus called them... they had come to the conclusion that for them, the reality of being the disciple of a rabbi was an illusion. We talked about the miracle of the catch when I was visiting you guys in March... about what made the whole thing so miraculous. Jesus came to these fishermen who had not caught any fish all night long (Luke 5:1-11), and their shift had just ended, it was morning, they are tired and weary and are ready to go home... and they had just spent hours cleaning these enormous nets that had to be cleaned after each use or else they would rot... and then here comes this rabbi... Rabbi Jesus, who wants to use their boat as a pulpit... and he preaches to them, then makes them get those giant nets back out again and throw them out into the water... into the deep... in the morning. and they did it, knowing that they would now have to clean the nets all over again... knowing that they had fished there all night and caught nothing... knowing that it was now day, and their nets were visible so the chances of catching fish went down to basically 0...

but yet they did it anyway, because a Rabbi asked them too. They inconvenienced themselves heavily... because suddenly there was a Rabbi that took interest in them.

And then when they caught the biggest catch of their lives... and their boats were sinking, all Peter could do was throw himself at the mercy of Rabbi Jesus and ask him to depart from him... because Peter knew he was sinful, and he knew that this man was not like the other Rabbis. Jesus had more than just knowledge. He had more than just wisdom. He had just done the impossible. But then what does Jesus say to Peter? He says “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”

Matthew records it this way (Matthew 4:18) - "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." I will MAKE YOU. I will work on you. I will invest in you. I will lead you and teach you how to catch so much more than fish... When you disciple someone... the overarching goal is the gospel.. it is preparing them to be more effective for Jesus... more effective in their own lives, but the teachers job is to "make" the disciple. Its to pour into that person... its to help lead them on a journey from where they are, to where they should be... to where they could be. That is what Jesus was saying he would do for them. But he starts by saying "Come. Follow me." Come. Come. If you want to be different... if you want to have a different life... if you want things to be different than they are right now, you have to take that step. You have to step out. Jesus is saying "Don't just stay where you are... Come and follow me somewhere new!"

"And they left everything and followed him." (Luke 5:11)

Ordinary men, who did not have what it takes to follow any other Rabbi, and here comes the greatest rabbi in the history of the world and he says to them "I believe that you DO have what it takes. What it takes is you follow me. Follow me, and I will MAKE YOU. Follow me... Can you do that?"

and these uneducated men... these men that would have never had the opportunity to study under a Rabbi, became the disciples of Jesus Christ in that moment.

And so it went with all of his disciples. Jesus saw Philip and what did he say? "Come, follow me." - Be my disciple. I think you are good enough. It doesn't matter where you came from. It doesn't matter what you've done...

In Matthew 9:9-10 Jesus approaches a man named Matthew... he is a tax collector. Now, there is an obvious hatred for tax collectors among the people of Israel, and here is why. It wasn't just that Matthew worked for the government, and he went around collecting what was due to the government from the people... no. Matthew was a Jew, working for the Roman government, taxing the Jewish people who were under the rule of Rome. Not only that, but he was a publican who had actually purchased "a tax collecting franchise" from the Roman government. So Matthew saved up his money, went to the Roman government and purchased the right to

tax his own people, and as part of that purchase, he was able to tax them any amount that he wanted OVER what Rome required, and he was legally allowed to keep the difference.

So he would have been considered a thief, as well as a traitor to the Jewish people. He was the worst of the worst. He had no loyalty to his own people, in fact he exploited them for his own gain.

The text says it says that Matthew was sitting in a tax booth when Jesus approached him, and what does Jesus say? "Come. Follow me." and Matthew rose and followed him. It did not matter to Jesus that Matthew was the lowest of the lows in that society. He says to him, "you can put all of that behind you RIGHT NOW." and then what happens? This is amazing.

He calls Matthew, then they go to dinner, essentially, Matthew throws a party for Jesus and all of his tax collector and sinner friends show up to dinner. Because obviously Matthew was a man of influence, and now he used that influence to get all of his friends around his new Rabbi. The Rabbi who will meet you exactly where you are.

And immediately the Pharisees, they start whispering things about Jesus... they even asked the disciples... "wait a minute, he is supposed to be a Rabbi. Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" And I love how with the Pharisees, they always ask the question about him, but not to him... yet he responds to it, to them. So they asked Jesus disciples this question, and Jesus looks at them and responds "Those who are well do not need a doctor, but those who are sick. I didn't come to call the righteous... I came to call the sinners."

And these sinners that he called became his disciples!

But then there is another group of people who did not respond so well to Jesus, and this is where I want to park for a while.

Luke 9:57-62 says:

"⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and

birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”⁵⁹ To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”⁶⁰ And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”⁶¹ Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.”⁶² Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Do you notice a pattern here?

The first one comes so enthusiastically... He wants to follow Jesus, he is excited and he overcommits right from the beginning. He says “I will follow you wherever you will go! And Jesus right away, he senses something is not right, and he basically says to the man, “Do you understand what you are saying? If you follow me, you will have to give up everything. It will cost you everything. Foxes have holes. Birds have nests. As of now... I have nowhere to lay my head. Holes and nests, they are much more than just a place to call home or a place to sleep...right? Think of a birds nest, and what is the first thing you think of? Eggs. Its where birds lay eggs. These are places that foxes and birds have children... where they nurture their offspring, where reproduction happens... but Jesus is saying, I don't have that. I have nowhere to reproduce myself yet. The church hadn't been established yet. The birds... they can reproduce. The foxes, they can reproduce... But the church... as of now that hasn't come yet... and that is what I am looking for. I am looking for a body. I am looking for a body to lay my head onto. A body, who will let me be their head. I am looking for people who will let me lead them somewhere new... who will let me give myself to them so that they can go on and do even greater things... and I just am not feeling like that is you.

It sounds so harsh, because this first man wanted to follow Jesus, but Jesus basically told him “you like the idea of following me.. but there is no way you could handle it. You don't understand what I am looking for.”

Jesus says to the next one “Follow me.” - imagine that. A rabbi, asking YOU to follow him. He just got done basically telling the guy who wanted to follow him “NO”... Then he asks the next one to, and look at the response of the second one. Yes Jesus, of course Jesus, I totally am down for that...

but first, i need to bury my father. Seems reasonable, right? Yet look at how Jesus responds... "Let the dead bury their own dead... you should be proclaiming the kingdom of God.

another responds "I will follow you! But FIRST... let me say goodbye to my family. and what does Jesus say... no. You are not fit to be my disciple. None of you are.

Why?

It wasn't because Jesus was saying that the man shouldn't give his father a funeral. It wasn't because it is wrong to say goodbye to your family before you cover yourself in the dust of your rabbi for the rest of your life... look at how specific this wording is...

I will follow you... But first.
But first. But first. But first.

How often do we do this? We say we want to follow Jesus. But we don't put him first.

Jesus is saying, if you are going to be my disciple, I have to be first. He said the same thing to these men that he did to his disciples... he said "follow me" the only difference is that the men recorded here in Luke chapter 9 didn't put Jesus first. They put something else first.

And then he says this:

(Luke 9:62) "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

In that day, a farmer who was plowing rocky soil, he had to keep all of his attention on the plow in order to plow it evenly, and in order to make sure that he didn't plow over a big rock... the rocks would break the plows, so the farmers had to keep their eyes completely on what they were doing. It would be like today, us saying "keep your eye on the road." When you are driving, we have laws against texting while we drive, why? Because it is distracting... and too much is at stake. Your life... the life of everyone else

on the road, is at stake. When we are driving, we should be focused, solely, on driving. If these farmers were not focused entirely on the plow... on what was ahead of them, on what they were plowing, they would mess it up.

Jesus is saying, if you look back... if you take your eyes off that plow, you are not focused on me. And how could you be focused on me if you are putting other things first? Jesus wants disciples who are focused fully on him.

Only a few verses before this, in (Luke 9:23) Jesus says "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."

For the Rabbi's in that day, they were concerned with whether or not their disciple was the best. "Could they be like me?" "Do they have what it takes?" "Will they carry on my legacy?"

But Jesus, he was looking for something different.

He was looking for people who were all in. Who were willing to deny themselves. He wasn't looking for the most educated, or the most versed of them, yet his result was the same... he reproduced himself in them.

Which actually made his results better... Jesus made stronger, more influential disciples out of his cast of misfits and failures, than any Rabbi had done with the best of the best. It was the disciples of Jesus who changed the course of human history as we know it... it was followers of Jesus that were spoken of in (Acts 17:6) when it says "These men, who have turned the world upside down, have come here also." It was the disciples of Jesus who were known world over for being able to go into city after city after city, and bring them to their knees for Jesus Christ... for the gospel... for love... for hope. They were the ones who would eventually lead the church that Jesus was referring to when he said "as of now, the son of man has no-where to lay his head."

Because a disciple, when he is fully trained, will be like his teacher. And when Jesus died and rose again and gave his followers the great commission, he was giving it to men who were fully trained... men who were like him.

While I was in New York last weekend, between the two weddings we filmed, I got to spend some time with Pastor Brad Reed. He has been my pastor for the last seven years. Even when we first thought we were going to plant a church in Detroit, I thought I was going to plant it completely under his leadership... and even though we ended up joining forces with you all and Pastor Kevin and Pastor Chilly, Pastor Brad is one of those people, if he tells me to do something, I will do it. If he recommends I do something, I do it. If he recommends I read something, I read it. If you watch enough of his teachings, you will definitely hear things that you have heard from me, and its not because he took it from me. I learn more from him than just about anybody... and I hope that I can be an example of Luke 6:40, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but when he is fully trained, he will be like him." - I remember sending him a text message right before I started the Intentions series, asking him about a couple of parts that I had learned from him and asking for permission to teach those things... to share the same perspective... I said "Ill give you the credit" and he responded by saying "Anything I have ever said you can use and don't you dare give me credit. You sat under the teaching here for years and years... and most of what I have learned someone else has taught me." I was spreading his yoke and yet it will never get back to him on his own request. Because to my teacher its all about Jesus. And every time I spend time with him, I leave wanting to be a better Christian... to be a better pastor, to be a better father, a better husband, a better friend to people.

A disciple.. when he is fully trained... should be like this teacher... and thats a man who, if I could grab ahold of even a quarter of his wisdom, I feel like I would be at a different level. But I am who I am as a pastor because I sat under him. I listened so closely to every word that he said... I paid attention. When I had time with him, I asked him questions, I did whatever I could to get him to talk because when he talked it meant that I was learning.

A follower of Jesus is someone who is all in for Jesus. Every chance they get to spend with Jesus, they take it. They are all in for the gospel. It's someone who realizes, "This news is so good, I can't help but let it change everything about me. It has to change me. I can't help but change every part of my life." It gives you a whole new identity. You used to be Saul, but now you are Paul. You identify yourself by who you are in Christ... you default to the things of Christ... you are merciful when you used to be judgmental. You are gracious when you used to be unforgiving. And if you are all of those things... if Jesus has taken hold of your life in that way, then the natural outpouring of your existence will be discipleship. It will pour out on the people who are around you. It will pour out into your friends... into your kids... into those you work with. And before long, they will start being more and more like you, why?

Because when they look at who you are they see an imperfect person who love still flows through. Jesus says "everyone will know that you are my disciples by your love one for another" (John 13:35)... well they will see your love, and they will just know. They will see someone who may not be the lead in "Motown," but who Jesus chose anyway. Someone who, maybe you didn't memorize Genesis-Malachi, but Jesus still looked at and said "I believe that you can be like me."

But, if you are going to follow me, you have to be all in. If you want to be a disciple of Jesus, you **MUST** be all in... you must deny yourself, and take up your cross.

And I love that... because all it takes to be a disciple is having the heart for it. You can be in a room filled with misfits and outcasts and failures... and you would be in a room exactly like the ones that Jesus saw the most fruit come out of... because those misfits and outcasts and failures were all in.

I have been thinking a lot about discipleship... on what it looks like biblically, on what it looks like in the context of the church in general and in the context of our church specifically. And this I know for sure... we have been putting a huge emphasis on community this summer, and will continue doing so, because we believe with all of our hearts that true discipleship, it happens in the context of community. It happens when you are with people, rubbing off on people... As intentional as we will always try

to be with discipleship, and eventually plan to roll out a growth track and several more detailed plans to facilitate it, I also believe that it will happen naturally, for the people who are following Jesus. Its kind of like what we talked about a few weeks ago, how if we just love, serve, and repeat before long it will become natural... well, if his word is written on your heart like it says in Jeremiah 31:33 and in Hebrews 8:10... if its in you, it will naturally flow out of you. But if you are looking for a mentor, you are looking for someone to disciple you... know that the right person, they will make you more like Christ... Find someone who it is just in them, and let it flow into you... but the wrong one could devastate you. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says that "bad company ruins good morals." - you could have all the right ideas and belief system, but if you surround yourself with the wrong people all the time, the whole thing can easily fall apart. But we want to build a community of discipleship by creating environments where iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17). Where people are not afraid to ask the hard questions, and are not afraid to hear the hard answers. We want to create safe environments, where someone may ask a leader a question, and the answer may be "you know what, I don't know the answer to that question, but lets study this together... lets look into this together... lets walk through this together." - People tend to think that they themselves have to have arrived before they can lead anyone else anywhere, and I just don't see that in the bible... I don't see anyone "arriving" until they have finished their race. We are all a constant work in progress and so is discipleship.

We are also working on some strategic yet simple ways that we, as the church can equip you to go deeper in the things we are teaching... like on our website, when we post the sermons now we are including resources, so you can find a lot of the content we are studying and study it for yourself, you can buy the books we resourced if something connected with your heart and you want to go deeper on. And if that is not a possibility for you, we also are going to start a small library in the lobby, I have already ordered a few books for it.. We will buy the books that we recommend and will provide a couple of copies in the lobby for people to borrow, read, and then return. It may sound so simple... because it is, but we want to help you grow. We want to help you get where you want to be, but the reality is that discipleship is a process... its a journey, and you have to start somewhere, and most people just don't know where to start.

Tim Keller made an awesome observation that I want to share with you about the way that Luke's gospel lays out discipleship. He says "Discipleship is a journey..." and we know that, but then he goes on to explain this. A few verses earlier in this chapter, literally right before Jesus starts talking about the cost of discipleship... in (Luke 9:51) it says that when the days drew near for him to be taken up... for Jesus to die which he knew was coming, "he set his face to go to Jerusalem." He begins his approach to the cross... he is heading to Jerusalem, knowing what awaits him there. And it is on this journey that Jesus begins all of his teachings about discipleship. Its like Luke is saying, "Discipleship is a journey," I loved that thought.

And then as I pondered on that, I realized this: at the end of the journey, what happens? Jesus' earthly ministry comes to an end. And maybe in most of our cases, the end won't be so brutal, but for all of us its all leading to the same place. But when it finally is over, what will be left besides what you have poured out? What will be left besides what you have laid down? Besides what you have invested into those around you, and into the next generation?

Besides what you have been generous with, for the sake of moving the gospel forward. For the sake of someone else coming to the knowledge of the truth.

What else will be left, besides the ones who are still around, who now, by the grace of God, are like you? Because a disciple is not better than his teacher, but, when he is fully trained, he will be like him.

Could you imagine being one of the disciples of Jesus... being there, following him... Watching miracle after miracle after miracle. Watching healing after healing, and then watching him be betrayed by one of his closest friends, arrested, unfairly tried, and then hung on a tree knowing all along that you were supposed to be like this guy? All the questions in your mind in that moment...

and then three days later, when suddenly all of your disappointment turns into a new Hope, as you realized that Jesus really is the fulfillment of all of the prophecies throughout the scripture... that he really did do exactly what

he said he would do, that none of this was a fluke... but then, could you imagine being there, after all of that, and have him give you the great commission. Hear Jesus basically say to them, “all that you just witnessed... yeah, go be like that.”

Do you think that the disciples felt overwhelmed by the fact that now it was time to become the ones doing the discipling? I know I would have been... Jesus just changed the world... how do you live up to that? But Jesus had been rubbing off on these guys for the last couple of years. They sat at his feet. They followed him. And all of the things that Jesus was, the disciples were slowly becoming... So when Jesus finally said “Go, and make disciples...” he said it to a group of people who had just spent three years being disciplined. He modeled it for them his entire ministry... Its almost like he was saying “Oh, by the way, I have been teaching you all of this, all along... you do have what it takes... you are fully trained... because a disciple is not greater than his teacher...

But when he is fully trained...

He Will be like his teacher.

Do you think they felt overwhelmed, when he said “go into all the world?”

Jesus? How are we supposed to do that? All we have are our legs. All we have are our donkeys and 5 miles per hour on a good day. Yet it was enough. They were enough. They still managed to turn the world upside down.

They were the ones who gave up everything. They were the ones who gave up the money that tax collectors make... They were the ones who dropped their nets... who left their boats, their nets, and the biggest catch that they had ever caught... there was no “first.” It wasn’t... “First, let me sell all of these fish that I just caught.” they left it all.

I used this verse two weeks ago but its so crucial here, there is a moment when Jesus tells his disciples, you will do greater things than me! (John 14:12-13)... in fact, he says to them “anyone who believes in me will be able to do the works that I do, and even more.” Jesus had a reputation of

being a man who went about doing good (Acts 10:38)... but the greater than any of those specific miracles that he performed was the way that he disciplined the twelve. The way that he set them up to go on to do even more. And the multitude of people that came into a relationship with Jesus Christ in the book of Acts... and the way that the church grew in those days after Jesus... it was multiplication compared to what had happened through Jesus' ministry.

I love the example Jerome gives in his "Get Rooted" book... I want to bring Jerome out to speak at the end of the summer, because he is planting a new church in downtown Lansing, and the two of us have worked together on many many projects over the years and I hope that our churches can partner in many ways, but this is a guy who just gets discipleship. But in the "Get Rooted" book, he uses the example of an acorn. And he says this, "In this acorn lies a mighty tree, and inside that mighty tree are many more acorns that can produce many more trees that eventually can build a forest. This is similar to our lives. God saves us, and as we impact others, they begin to impact others, too, creating a forest of believers in Christ. For the rest of our lives, let's change our perspectives: where we once saw acorns, let us now see "forests!"

Jesus ministry is still alive and well today because of discipleship. The Gospel of Jesus Christ will never go away no matter how hard society comes at it. No matter how many governments have tried to silence it, it has always lived. It survived Rome. It will survive Isis. It will survive America. It will always survive because it is truth... it is the truth the bleeds out of the martyrs who are willing to die to keep spreading it. It is the only truth that brings life even where there is death. It is the only truth that has truly conquered death.

It is the one thing, that if nothing else can ever be said of what we do here, it still must be... that we are a people who made disciples. Who taught people what it means to follow Jesus. What it means to share Jesus, what it means to live Jesus. It is our one call... our one responsibility. Make disciples. Teach people these truths. Teach people to teach people these truths. This is discipleship 101. It starts by denying yourself, and taking up your cross. It starts with finding someone who acts like Jesus, and then deciding, "I want to be like that person." Paul says it this way, (1

Corinthians 11:1) “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.” - Well there it is, that is the model for discipleship. It starts by finding someone who needs you, and coming alongside of them and showing them what it means to live out this gospel... and we have every advantage. We are living in the first generation in history in which any one person at any time could literally go into all the world. Our donkeys can travel much faster than theirs did... and our airplanes can circle the globe in a day. Technology has thrust us so far forward, that we can put a sermon on our website in Detroit, MI and in a moments time someone on the other side of the world could be listening to the gospel being preached.

We live in a world filled with more distractions, yet less excuses, than anyone in human history. May we utilize our resources for the glory of God, and may we pour our lives out into one another because that is the great commission.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

-Matthew 28:19-20.