

SLIDE 1

Now This Changes Everything – Part 2

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Introduction

My I share with you my greatest fear as a Pastor?

That I will be a pastor of a church that knows a lot ABOUT the Bible, but nothing happens as a result. That we, you and me would be content to be hearers of the word and not doers.

I wonder if this was the discouragement that Jesus had as he spent his last days on earth?

He has chosen 12 rather ordinary guys to be his followers. He has given his all to them over three years, and in the end, they abandoned him, denied him, and left him all alone at his moment of greatest need.

They had been hearers of the Word but not doers.

Then something happened that changed everything. He rose from the dead. They saw him risen from the dead.

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And suddenly that changed everything. Suddenly timid men, rose up with backbones of spiritual steel. In fact the Scripture tells us that in just a very short time they have turned the world upsidedown.

Acts 17:6 (ESV)

⁶ And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,

What changed these guys in to world changers? What changed them from the timid twelve, what changed Paul, is they saw Jesus risen from the dead. That changed everything for them.

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But I ponder “What will it take for you and me to get this kind of spiritual backbone?”

What will it take to transition us from hearers of the word to doers? From Observers to participators? What will it take for us to be remembered as men and women who turned the world upside down because of the passion for their faith.

For the 12 and the women who followed Jesus, it was seeing him alive, after they had seen him killed on the cross.

Is that what we should expect? Not according to Jesus. He would say to doubting Thomas, a hearer, but not yet a doer, these words:

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John 20:29 (ESV)

²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

We have not seen and believed, but what else will it take for us?

Jesus says it is going to take a response. An action. A loyalty. A commitment.

A loyalty to what? A commitment to what? A commitment to the last thing Jesus said. Because the last thing he said, in addition to showing himself alive to his disciples, he gave them a purpose, a life mission, we call it his great commission. And this was it.

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Matthew 28:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ 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,

This is a verse many of us know so well we can recite it from memory.

But how has a verse so familiar to us become so distant, so disjointed, so foreign from our action. How have we left this on the page, read but not done?

I have heard in the military that when you are given an order you follow it through until you have received another order.

Christ has not given us another order. This is it, this is what he has left us with. But have we done it? Have we followed through? Have we committed ourselves to this mission? This life purpose? I don't mean our missionaries that we send out, Jesus doesn't mean our missionaries, He means us!

The order begins "Go." It is a verb. If a parent says to a child "go" the parent doesn't expect the child to consider the meaning, parse the verb, think about it--the parent means go, depart, get on your way, these are all the ways this verb is used in the New Testament. These are all the ways this verb Jesus uses are translated into our language in the New Testament. See any pause in any one of these? See and sit and ponder? Any question?

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(1), am on my way(1), depart(1), departed(1), departure(1), following(3), go(69), go on their way(1), go away(1), goes(7), going(15), going away(2), gone(3), indulge(1), journey(1), journeying(2), leave(1), proceed(1), proceeded(2), pursued a course(1), sets(1), started(3), traveling(3), walking(1), way(6), went(22), went His way(1), went on their way(1), went their way(1).¹

You probably see, it never means, ponder, consider, hold a meeting, attend a conference, study the implications, evaluate the possibilities, let it sink in, or anything else. It means “You, get on with it. Get going.

So honestly how have you done? Not the person sitting next to you. Not the person in front of you. Not your pastors, not your church—but you?

This command is for you. For every believer!

So let me ask, “What are their names—the names of your disciples?” The persons you have discipled into believers and followers of Jesus Christ. That was Christ’s departing orders to you and me.

It can be very easy to kind of child the 12 disciples of Christ and say, “Wow, when Jesus needed you most, you abandoned him, you hid behind locked doors.”

It is easy to see the log in others eyes.

How many times on the mission committee have you evaluated our 30 missionaries, by asking, “What are the results, who have they discipled?” Good questions, but before we ask that of our missionaries, have we asked the question of ourselves? Who am I discipling? Who can I name right now?

Parents, take automatic credit for your children and grandchildren. But who else? Are your children to be your only interest? Wouldn’t have Jesus said that if it was? He didn’t say “Go, and if you are a parent just focus your attention on your children.” How will our children learn how to implement this command? How will your grand children learn to become disciplers if not by watching you disciple? Right? They will become doers of the word by watching you be a doer of the word.

That is what is Jesus asking us to do?

It is very clear.

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Matthew 28:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples

¹ Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : Updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

Now you might say, “Well that was easy for Jesus disciples, they had three years of training at Jesus side, they certainly knew what to do. I haven’t haven’t had Jesus at my side for three years.”

Well actually, for most of us in this room we have had three years of personal training by God, in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said to us, “If I go, I will send the comforter, the counselor, who will guide you into all truth.”

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John 16:7 (NIV)

⁷ But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

John 16:13 (NIV)

¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

And then Paul said, God has sealed each believer with the spirit.

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Ephesians 1:13–14 (ESV)

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

So actually, if you have been a believer in Jesus Christ for three years or more,

You have had exactly the same amount of personalized training by God as each of the disciples and each of the women that followed Jesus.

If we have been a believer 3 years, we have the same amount of direct, personalized, tutoring by God the Holy Spirit.

If we have been a believer more than three years, we actually have more personalized training by the Holy Spirit than the disciples, and if less, well, if you have been a believer for say, 1 year, than you have already had 1 years of personalized tutoring by the Holy Spirit in living as a believer—so pass that on. You are already 1 year ahead of anyone you are discipling!

So what are you waiting for? It is time for you and I to personally get after the job of discipling without further delay. So what is holding you back?

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Well, who do I disciple?

Glad you asked.

Here is what I would like you to do.

I would like you to stand up. And move. Here's how.

If you are 38 or older, I would like to ask you to move over to this side of the room. And if you are 37 and younger, I would like to ask you to move over to this side of the room. IF you don't want anyone to know your exact age, if that is a carefully kept secret, then just go to the side of your secret age!

Now, consider this. If you are man, science tells us that a man in 2010 has an average expected life span of 76 years and a woman about 81.. That means if you are 38 an over, your days are numbered, you have fewer days here on earth than you have had on earth. That means that your focus should no longer primarily be on doing, but on giving. It doesn't matter if we know how to personally study the Bible, or pray, or preach or lead. After 38 our job is to train the next Generation—to give away the work of the ministry. To hand over the church.

If we don't do that what happens when you die? The ministry dies with you.

So really that means that if we are over 38 we should start to diminish in upfrontness, and those we are discipling should increase in upfrontness.

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Matthew 28:18 -- Go therefore and make disciples

So this side, we are the elders, the trainers, the disciplers, the encouragers. And the folks on this side, the men and women on this side they should start to be one the ones we start to see more and more and more of. And we get to then know, when we to heaven the work of the ministry would continue.

Perhaps some of you know that for the first 15 years of my ministry life I served in the Evangelical Covenant Church. It is just a small denomination of 130,000 Christians in America, about 700 churches and about 200,000 more believers in one thousand churches worldwide. You can see, we have given ourselves to world missions. The mission is bigger than the "mother church." But really we are pretty small in the whole scheme of things.

But we are dying. And here is how I know. I just had the privilege of being in Nome Alaska for our Evangelical Covenant Church of Alaska Conference. We have 17 churches in Alaska and about 1400 people in Alaska attend Covenant Churches on Sunday. But we are dying. And again here is how I know. At our conference, we had exactly one person 38 and under actually do anything in our conference. It was Curtis Ivanoff our missionary we support at Alaska Christian College. He was asked to give the closing prayer on Thursday's service.

Except for Was Mute's children who sang a special, that was the only involvement we had in the leading the meetings from anyone 38 and under. We are dying. We oldsters are still doing the ministry, serving communion, leading the meetings, filling the committees and sharing our old tired testimonies. And what is going to happen when we graduate to heaven? The ministry will disappear.

There is something wrong with that picture—somehow along the way we forgot the main thing we are here for to DISCIPLE. Or rather, let me take the log out of my own eye, in 12 years of being a Covenant Church Pastor in Wasilla, I preached a lot of sermons, lead a lot of meetings, served a lot of Communion, but I forgot to do the main thing—give myself to the one thing Jesus gave me as his final instruction—Disciple.

And you know the same thing is happening to us here at Lazy Mountain—yes we have increasing had more and more 38 and unders giving announcements, playing instruments, singing and leading us in worship—but we 38 and over are still in charge. We have not disciplined.

The same has happened at our wonderful interact mission. It also is dying. How do we know? There are not 38 and unders, or very very few.

So here is the challenge, we can continue to do church as we always have and we will continue to have the same results, or all of us on this side can look with love over to this side, and we can say will you forgive us. We have not invested in you. We have not given you ourselves. We have not disciple you, and that is going to change. I am going to follow and live Jesus last order to me. I am going to get about the job of discipling. And I am not going to stop.

I am going to invite you out to have a burger with me, and I am going to pay for it. I am going to invite you to go hunting with me, watch a basketball game. I am going to invite you to know me, and I want to know you. I am going to invite you to open the Bible with me. I am going to ask you to pray for me, and I want to pray for you. In short. I am going to pursue you.

What do you say?

If you do this, you will be numbered among those who...

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Life Change, now this changes everything.

Confession

Will you my brothers and sisters in Christ forgive me. I have not given myself to you as Jesus asked me to. I have not opened my life to you. I have not come alongside you. I have kept the ministry for myself and formed it the way I wanted it and liked it and kept it that way. I have not listened to you and asked you to share with me what god is teaching you, and how he is leading you. So I ask you to forgive me. I want to learn to share with you what I have learned about living for and following Jesus. And I want to

learn what God is teaching you. And I want to be your greatest cheerleading and supporter. In short if you will let me, I will disciple you.

And will you rise and say,

My elders in Christ. I do forgive you. And please forgive me. I have not come to you with earnestness and asked you to disciple me. In fact at times I have dismissed you as irrelevant. I have huddled with only folks of my own age and interest and have not availed myself of all that you have to offer me as I learn how to live out the Great Commission and become a discipler also. I want to learn what you have to teach me. I want to spend time with you, and get to know you. I honor you as my elders and Christ. Let us begin this great adventure together.

My friends, and will you please forgive me. I have been content to teach you Bible knowledge and have let you be content to just let it sit and soak in. Will you please forgive me. And I commit this day to begin to fast and pray for you this week as you begin this great adventure.