



SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY



LESSON 5 / WEEK OF FEBRUARY 4, 2007

Key Scriptures: John 17:18-26; Mark 6:7-13; Mark 6:30-44

Memory Verse: "As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world." John 17:18

COMMENTARY / This portion of the lesson is for the leader's personal study.

Review

For the past four weeks, we have been studying what it means to follow Christ and be His disciple. We have seen in Scripture that everything Christ did during His ministry on earth was for the benefit of the twelve men God gave Him out of the world. Christ manifested God to these men by sharing, showing and teaching the Word to them. This week, we are going to study another component of disciple-making. We are going to see how Jesus trained His disciples to serve the world.

Sent Into the World

The accompanying message in the worship service this week is from John 17:18-26. This passage is the end of Jesus' prayer to the Father on behalf of His disciples. In verse 18, Jesus says that just as God sent Him into the world, now He has sent His disciples into the world. Jesus says that it is for the sake of His disciples that He has sanctified Himself, so that they may be truly sanctified (verse 19). Last week we learned that "sanctified" means to be set apart, or made holy.

One In Christ

Jesus goes on to pray for all those who will believe in Him through the message of the disciples. His prayer is that they will all be one through Christ so that the world may believe that God sent Him. In verse 22, Jesus says that He has given the disciples the glory that God gave Him so that they may be one. How will they be one? Verse 23 says Christ will be in the disciples and God is in Christ. Therefore, they are one.





Why is it so important to Jesus that they have complete unity? Verse 21 says, “So that the world may believe that You have sent Me.” Verse 23 says, “To let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them (disciples) even as You have loved Me.” In verse 25 He says, “Though the world does not know You (God), I know You, and they (disciples) know that You have sent Me.”

Jesus Reveals the Father

Throughout John 17 Jesus says that He has revealed God to the disciples. Christ has given them the Word and they have accepted His message. Now, as Jesus ends His prayer, we see a shift in His focus. He is still praying for the disciples, but He is not talking as much about what He has done for them now, but about what He wants to do through them. It is here that Jesus begins to connect the blessing of their salvation with the purpose of their salvation.

Jesus has sanctified Himself for them. Because of Him, they can now be truly sanctified (verse 19). But for what purpose? For whose sake? In verse 20, Jesus begins to pray for those who will believe in Him through their message. The disciples believed in God through Jesus’ message (John 17:8). Now, others will believe in Christ through their message. In John 17:6, Jesus says God gave Him the disciples out of the world. Jesus states in verse 25 that the world does not know God. But He also says in this same verse that the disciples do. So how will the world believe in Christ? Who will reveal God to the world after Christ leaves the earth?

Identical Purpose

The disciples’ purpose is identical to the purpose of Christ. Christ revealed God to them. Now they will reveal Him to others whom God will give them out of the world. They will not only be disciples; they will make disciples. The accomplishment of Jesus’ purpose in the world was dependent on the faithfulness of His disciples to this task.

What does this mean for us today? As disciples of Christ, our purpose is also the same. The accomplishment of Christ’s purpose in the world today depends on our faithfulness to this mission to reveal God to those He gives us out of the world. Christ sanctified Himself so that we may truly be sanctified. We are sanctified for the sake of the world – so that they may believe in Christ. Sadly, most Christians have no more world impact for Christ after years of believing in Him than they did the day before they were saved. We have been given the glory of Christ (John 17:22), and we are commissioned to serve the world in order to reveal His glory.

Modeled and Empowered

Jesus not only modeled and taught how to serve others; He empowered His disciples to serve with Him. He trained them to serve the world. This component of disciple-making involves intentional planning and selection of opportunities; which will allow disciples to apply the lessons they’ve learned. The world becomes the classroom as disciples are given the opportunity to model Christ in unique situations. As we accomplish the mission of Christ together, we experience the full joy of disciple-making.

Jesus has spent more than three years with His disciples, preparing them to be sent into the world. As we have seen, Jesus taught His disciples both verbally and physically. He taught His disciples as He showed the Word to others. Today, we are going to see how Jesus trained His disciples to serve the world. We will look at two examples from the Gospel of Mark that show how Jesus provided opportunities for His disciples to apply His teachings through “on-the-job training.”

■ Mark 6:7-13

In this passage, Jesus commissions the twelve disciples and sends them out to serve the world. Verse 7 says that He gave them authority over evil spirits. Matthew 10 is a different account of the same event. We will be using some verses out of Matthew 10 to help us in our study. Matthew 10:1 adds that Jesus also gave them authority to heal every disease and sickness.

Authority

The word “authority” in both Mark 6:7 and Matthew 10:1 are the same Greek word *exousia*. It means, “power of choice; liberty to do as one pleases; influence; power.” Jesus was giving His disciples the power and freedom to do as they pleased when it came to the demons and the sicknesses they would encounter as they served the world. It is important to note that even though the disciples were performing the miracles, it was Christ who gave them the authority to do so. Their power came from Him. They could do nothing apart from Him. His authority is at work through their lives.

Instructions for the Mission

Mark 6:8-11 contains Jesus’ instructions to His disciples for their mission. He tells them to take nothing with them except a staff. This is significant because throughout the Old Testament, the staff was a symbol of God’s power. We see this illustrated most clearly in the life of Moses as he leads the children of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 7:8-20; Exodus 8:16-17; Exodus 17:3-7). Jesus was telling His disciples that they would be successful as long as they had His authority and power.

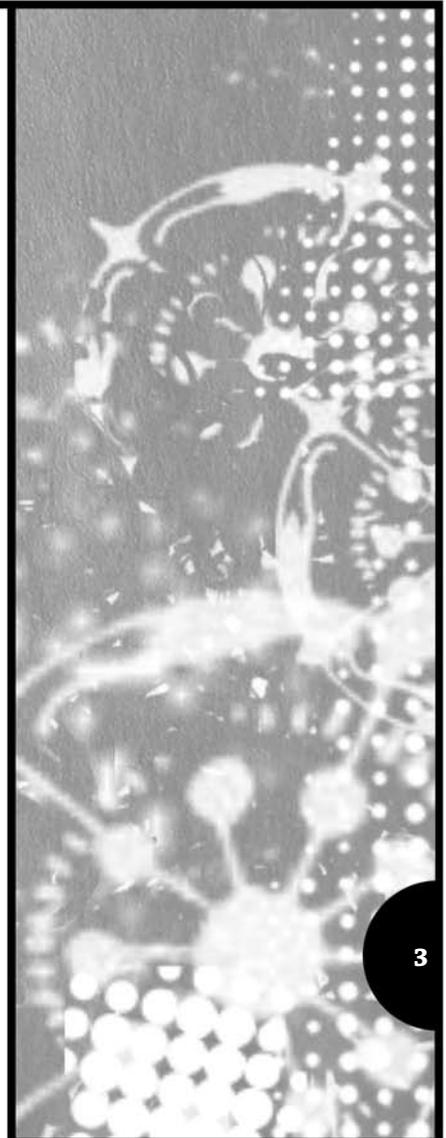
He had given them His authority, and that is all they will need. His instructions in verse 11 tell us that there would be places that they would not be welcomed. Matthew 10:7-8 gives us another look at Jesus’ instructions. He tells them to share and show the Word. Isn’t that interesting? This is what He has been doing for them. Now He is giving them the opportunity while He is still on earth to go out and “practice” what they have learned.

Preaching the Message

They will preach the message that He has been preaching. In Matthew 4:17 Jesus preached, “Repent! For the kingdom of heaven is near.” Now in Matthew 10:7 He gives His disciples the chance to do the same as He instructs them saying, “As you go, preach this message, ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’” In Matthew 4:23, “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.” Now, in Matthew 10:8, He gives His disciples the chance to do the same as He says, “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”

Mark 6:12-13 says that the disciples went out and preached, drove out many demons, and healed many people. Not only did Christ teach and show them how to serve the world, He also empowered them to do the same. He intentionally gave them an opportunity to apply what they were learning from Him. And He did this while He was still physically with them on earth.

This provided them the opportunity to come back to Him and share their experiences with Him. They would be able to ask questions and receive further instruction from Him. It also provided the opportunity for Christ to share in their joy. It wasn’t only Christ serving others as the disciples watched nearby. Now, they were serving together with their Lord and participating in His ministry.





■ Mark 6:30-44

In this passage, we again see Jesus giving His disciples an opportunity to serve the world with Him. Verse 31 says that so many people were coming and going that they didn't even have a chance to eat. Jesus calls His disciples to a quiet place so they can get some rest. But the crowd followed them. Verse 34 says that Jesus had compassion on the crowd and began to teach them. As it grows later in the day, the disciples express concern for the people to Jesus. They are in a remote place and it's getting late. The disciples tell Jesus in verse 36 to send the people away so they can go buy something to eat.

Applying Jesus' Teaching

Verses 37-44 show us how Jesus again gives His disciples an opportunity to apply the principles that they are learning from Him. In verse 37 He says, "You give them something to eat." And then Jesus performs the famous miracle of feeding the five thousand with only five loaves of bread and two fish. Instead of focusing only on what Christ does in this passage, we are going to see what Christ instructs His disciples to do. Notice how He intentionally involves them in this work. Think about it. Jesus has the power to speak fish and loaves into existence. After all, He created the world. But what does He do instead?

First, in verse 38 He instructs the disciples to "go and see" how many loaves they have. Then, in verse 39, Jesus has the disciples organize the crowd. He doesn't do it Himself, but gives them instructions and sends them to carry out the task. In verse 41, Jesus blesses the food and then gives it to His disciples to serve the hungry crowds. Then after everyone has eaten and is satisfied, the disciples clean up the extras in verse 43.

Again in this example, it is Christ who does the work through His disciples. He performs the miracle of multiplying the food, but His disciples participate in His ministry under His authority. In Matthew 25:34-40 Jesus taught that when you serve the "least of these" by feeding the hungry, it is as if you serve Christ Himself. Here we see Christ give His disciples a chance to apply this principle in their lives.

"I Am Sending You"

In John 20:21, Jesus appears to His disciples after His resurrection and says, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you." The implication of this statement in our lives today is incredible. The word "as" carries with it a mission to show the world the glory of God. Jesus says, "as the Father sent Me." That means "in the same way," or "for the same purpose." Why did God send Jesus? We have seen in John 17 that Jesus' mission was to reveal God to His twelve disciples – the ones God gave Him out of the world. The Father sent Him into the world to do this. Now, Jesus says, "I am sending you."

The glory of God has been revealed to us as well. The Spirit of God lives in us and empowers us to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. It is through this component of disciple-making that we will connect the blessing of our salvation with the purpose of our salvation. The world does not know Christ, but we do. They can come to know Him through our lives as we serve the world.

Like the examples we've studied, it is Christ who does the work through us. We are under His authority and it is His power that is at work in our lives. And like Christ, we must be intentional to provide opportunities for those we disciple to participate in our ministry to the world.

Internships

A great example of this concept is college internships. In order to earn many types of degrees today, college students are required to do an internship for one semester. The internship involves going to work in the field that the degree is in. The students work under the instruction of an experienced professional who can help them to apply what they've learned in the classroom. In many foreign language degrees going and living for one semester in the country where the language is spoken counts as class credit.

The experience of living in an environment where one is forced to apply what he has learned is viewed as being just as valuable, if not more so, than sitting in a college classroom learning to speak the language from a book. Why? Because book knowledge can only take someone so far. It is in applying the learned principles that students begin to truly understand all that they have studied.

So why do we expect Christians to “know how” to reach the world for Christ just because they've been taught from a pulpit or in a small group? Maybe this is why we aren't reaching the world for Christ. Many have been attending Bible-teaching churches for years but have never led anyone to faith in Christ, much less disciplined anyone.

What would happen in the church if we began to surrender our lives to building relationships through disciple-making? What if we began to live out all of the principles we've been taught? What difference would it make in your life if one person took the time to invest what they know in you? What if they were intentional to provide opportunities for you to apply what you are learning? What if you begin to invest in just one other person to help them learn and grow as a disciple of Christ? What if you provided opportunities for them to apply what they learn from you? What if we began to serve the world together? As we accomplish the mission of Christ together, we too will experience the full joy of making disciples of all nations.

TEACHING / This portion of the lesson is for the entire class.

Review / 5 minutes

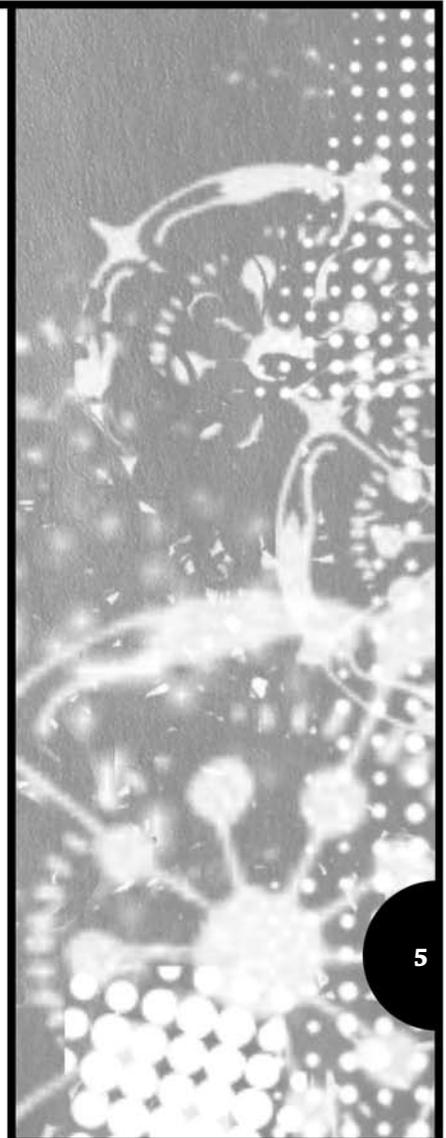
Before you begin today's lesson, spend a couple of minutes reviewing the components of disciple-making that we have studied so far. They are sharing the Word, showing the Word, and teaching the Word.

Opening Activity / 5-10 minutes

Bring two suitcases or duffle bags to class. Before your group arrives, place a Bible inside one, close it, and set it aside. Leave the other suitcase open and empty. Hand out blank strips of paper to each student.

Instruct your group to imagine they are going on a long trip out of America. Ask them to write on the strip of paper one or two things they would bring with them on their trip. Explain that they will not have access to stores while they are away.

Have the students place their strips of paper in the empty suitcase. Then, pull the strips out one by one and read them aloud. Then, explain to the group that in today's lesson we will see how Jesus sent His disciples out to serve the world. Open the other suitcase to reveal the Bible packed inside. Explain that the Bible represents God's authority in our lives, and we will see through our study today that His power and authority has been given to us, and it is all we need to serve the world.





Key Study / 35 minutes

As you begin your study time in God's Word, pray that God would make the entire class receptive to what He wants to reveal to the group today as you discuss His word. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide the class into all truth (John 16:13) so that He will be glorified through the discussion. Pray that each person's life will be changed as a result of the truths you learn today (James 1:22).

Sent Into the World...

Begin by using the commentary portion of the lesson to explain to your group that just as God sent Jesus into the world, now Jesus is sending His disciples into the world (John 17:18). Help them to understand that Christ sends us into the world in the same way. Be sure to explain how our purpose is identical to the purpose of Christ. That purpose is to reveal the glory of God to those that God gives us out of the world.

Serve the World

Share with the group that today we will be studying another component of disciple-making. We will see how Christ gave His disciples opportunities to *serve the world*.

Have your group open their Bibles to Mark 6:7-13. Have a student read the passage aloud. Using the lesson commentary, lead a discussion of this passage. Questions are listed below to help you guide the discussion. Matthew 10:1-8 may also be helpful.

- What did Christ give His disciples according to verse 7?

Using the commentary, share with the group the Greek definition of "authority" in this verse.

- What did He send them out to do?
- What were His instructions to His disciples?
- According to verse 12, what did they preach?
- How did they serve the world according to verse 13?
- How were they able to accomplish these works? From whom did the power come?

Explain how this is an example of Christ giving His disciples an opportunity to apply the principles He is teaching them.

Have the group turn to Matthew 4:17 and read it aloud. Now have someone read Matthew 4:23. Lead a discussion using the commentary and the following questions:

- What similarities do you see between Christ's ministry and the ministry of the disciples in this passage?
- Where had the disciples learned to preach this message?
- Where had the disciples seen miracles performed before Christ sent them out to serve the world?
- Why do you think Christ sent the disciples out with such detailed instructions?
- Why do you think Christ sent the disciples out on their own while He was still on earth?
- Do you think this experience helped the disciples to more fully understand their purpose? Why or why not?
- How do you think serving the world in this passage changed the disciples' own relationship with Christ? With one another? With the world?
- What do you think they might have come to understand during this experience that they never would have known without it?

Now have your group turn to Mark 6:30-44 and read the passage aloud. Using the commentary portion of the lesson and the following questions, lead your group in a discussion of these verses.

- What was Jesus' invitation to the disciples in verse 31?
- What happened when they attempted to go away and rest?
- What was Jesus' response to the crowd according to verse 34?
- What did the disciples ask Jesus to do in verse 35 and why?
- How did the disciples' concern for the crowd differ from Jesus' concern for them? How did this affect their heart to serve them?
- What did Jesus tell His disciples to do in verse 37 and what was the disciples' response?

Involved in Serving the World

Now, going verse by verse through verses 37-44, have your students list for you all of the ways that Christ involved the disciples in serving the crowd. As they name them, make a list on the board. When you have finished, ask the following questions.

- Why do you think Jesus asked His disciples to feed the people?
- By whose power was this miracle done?
- Through whose hands was the work carried out?
- How is this a picture of how Christ works through us today?

Have a student read Matthew 25:34-40.

- What principle contained in these verses was Jesus giving His disciples the opportunity to apply?
- How might this event have helped them to more fully understand this teaching?
- How did the disciples participate in Christ's ministry in Mark 6:30-44?

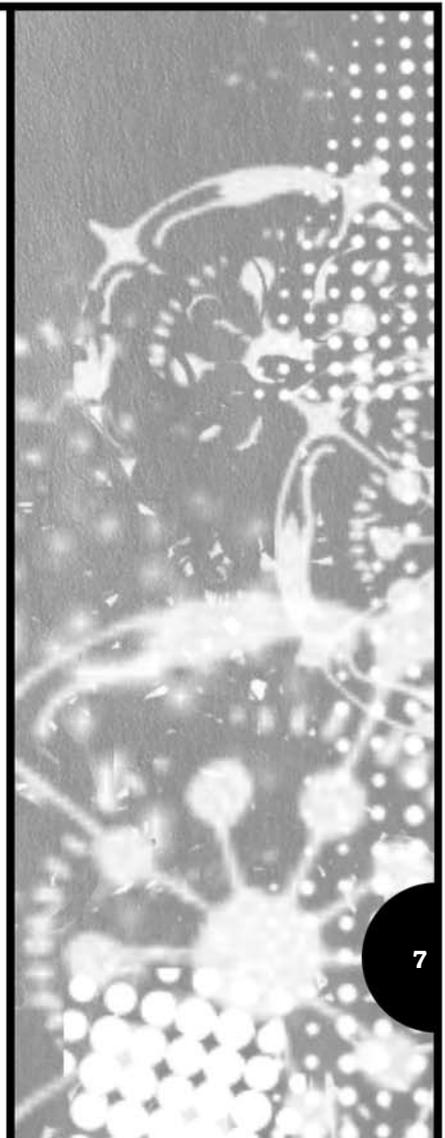
Application / How will this Truth change me?

Using the lesson commentary, lead your group in a discussion of practical examples of how "on-the-job training" is beneficial. Share the examples of internships, study abroad programs, etc. Allow group members to share any such experiences they have had and how the training they received benefited them. Then, ask the following questions.

- What difference would it make in your life as a Christ follower if someone provided opportunities for you to apply what you learn like Jesus provided for His disciples?
- How can you personally begin to make a difference in the life of someone else by applying what you've learned today?
- How will The Church at Brook Hills change if we began to serve the world together?
- How would the world change if The Church at Brook Hills began to live out the components of disciple-making that we have studied?
- What can our small group do to serve the world together?
- What can I do practically to serve the world with people God has given to me?

Have your students turn in their Bibles to John 20:21 and read it aloud to the group. Remind your group that our purpose is the same as Christ's purpose. We are sanctified for the sake of the world. It is our mission to reveal God's glory to those He gives us out of the world. As John 20:21 says, Christ has sent us to serve the world.

Close your time together by asking your group to think about how they are intentionally revealing God's glory to those God places in their lives. Challenge them to look for ways this week to give those they are discipling opportunities to apply what they are learning as they serve the world together.





MESSAGE MERGE / Putting the sermon and the Small Group study together.

Lead-in Questions / If your class meets *before* worship

- What have you learned today that is new to you?
- What have you learned today that you can pass on to others?
- How can you apply what you have learned tomorrow at home/work/school?
- How does today's lesson expand on what you learned last week?
- What will you be listening for today during the message?
- How can your classmates pray for you as you go into worship?

Post-teaching Questions / If your class meets *after* worship

- How can you apply what you have learned tomorrow at home/work/school?
- What portion of the message was most impacting for you?
- Were any areas of the message unclear or confusing? Which and why?
- What have you learned today that you can pass on to others?
- What Scripture is the most important for you today?
- What did you learn in Small Group that added to what you heard during the worship message?