

Text: Mt 28.19-20

The reason for my trip the last two weeks was to attend the Annual Fellowship meeting of the FBFI. This is the national meeting, we held a regional meeting back in April.

The theme of the National meeting was, “The World at Our Doorstep: International Ministry in the Local Church.”

We are still in Hebrews 11, but since we are already in a break and Rory is going to preach for us the next three Sundays, I’ll hold off on Hebrews for now. Instead, I’d like to speak on the FBFI Annual Fellowship theme. I’ve given our message this title:

Make Disciples of All Nations

This, of course, comes from Matthew 28.19-20, the Great Commission:

Matt. 28.19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

This passage should be quite familiar to you. Many have it memorized, it is the “mission statement” of the Christian Church.

Before we start surveying the Bible on this topic, let’s take a few moments to consider key points in our opening text.

1. A disciple is “one who engages in learning through instruction from another, *pupil, apprentice*”¹ (specialized: “disciple of John,” “disciple of Jesus.”)
2. The verb “disciplize” (Gk) can mean “be a disciple” or “make a disciple.”
3. The only imperative (command) in the passage is “make disciples” and is plural: “you all make disciples”
4. The rest of the action is how you go about doing the job of “disciplizing:”
 - a. Going – you must be on purpose
 - b. Baptizing – disciple-making begins with conversion

¹ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

- c. Teaching - disciple-making is an ongoing process; a task that never ends in this life

It is important for us to grasp these truths. This is our responsibility as Christians.

Proposition: God's plan of disciple making from all the nations is God's plan for all God's people.

I. God's plan always included the nations

A. The fact of nations is a manifestation of judgement

1. Genesis 11.1, 6-9:

Gen. 11.1 ¶ Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.

Gen. 11.6-9 The LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.⁷ "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech."⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

2. Genesis 10.5

Gen. 10.5 From these [Shem, Ham, and Japheth] the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.

B. The choice of Abraham is how God planned to give grace to the nations (Gen 12.3)

Gen. 12.3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And **in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.**"

C. The work of God will end in the nations worshipping God (Isa 2.1-4)

2.1 The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Now it will come about that
 In the last days
 The mountain of the house of the Lord
 Will be established as the chief of the mountains,
 And will be raised above the hills;
 And all the nations will stream to it.

3 And many peoples will come and say,
 “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
 To the house of the God of Jacob;
 That He may teach us concerning His ways
 And that we may walk in His paths.”
 For the law will go forth from Zion
 And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4 And He will judge between the nations,
 And will render decisions for many peoples;
 And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and
 their spears into pruning hooks.
 Nation will not lift up sword against nation,
 And never again will they learn war.

There are more passages that are relevant, but God never intended to cast off all the nations forever. God’s plan always included the nations.

II. God’s apostles opened the door to the nations

A. The Great Commission included the nations (Mt 28.19-20)

Matt. 28.19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

B. The apostles had to be led to the nations (Acts 8-11)

We only have time for highlights

1. The gospel came to the Samaritans (!!!) (Ac 8)
 - a. Those scattered (by Saul!) went preaching the word (4)
 - b. Philip went down to Samaria (5)
 - c. The apostles sent Peter and John to confirm the work among the Samaritans (14)

Recall the antipathy between Jews and Samaritans – this is a “half-step” towards the nations

2. A “side-bar:” God appoints Paul as apostle to the Gentiles [nations] (9.15)
3. The gospel comes to Cornelius (Ac 10)
 - a. Cornelius was a Roman centurion, but “devout” — *i.e.* a God-fearer (1-2)
 - b. God prepared Peter for his mission to Cornelius (9-16) [the vision of unclean food — but note where Peter was, in the house of a *tanner*]
 - c. Peter didn’t immediately understand God’s message (17-19)
 - d. When Peter entered Cornelius’ house, he came to new insight (28-29)
 - e. When Peter saw the Gentiles respond to the preaching, and receive the Holy Spirit, he was convinced (44-47)
 - f. When the Jerusalem Christians heard about the Holy Spirit, they were convinced (Ac 11.2-3, 15-18)
4. The church had to be convinced that the Law was no longer required (Ac 15.7-11)
 - a. This is the third account of God’s work among the Gentiles
 - b. The conclusion of the Council was that the Gentiles were included and the Law was not required

C. The end of the story involves the presence of the nations among the people of God in Heaven

Rev. 5.9-10 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and

purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.¹⁰ “You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

III. God’s providence has brought the nations to us

A. Migration is part of history, but since the “Great Century of Missions” (1800s), the work of the English speaking church took the gospel around the world

1. Pioneers: William Carey, Adoniram Judson et al

2. Around the world

- a. India
- b. Burma
- c. Africa
- d. China
- e. Asia

3. Modern missions takes the gospel to the secular world

Our missionaries to Europe, and elsewhere in Canada, are examples

B. Now, the nations are increasingly coming to the western nations

1. We have in our church many examples of this already

- a. Sudan
- b. Nigeria
- c. Mali
- d. Ghana
- e. Korea
- f. China
- g. Hungary
- h. Have I missed any?

2. In our city, how many nations are represented, who attend no church at all, who profess no faith at all?

3. What are we doing about the Great Commission?

Proposition: God’s plan of disciple making from all the nations is God’s plan for all God’s people.

C. How to practice God's plan

1. Some don't witness because they "don't know what to say"
2. You can learn how to present the gospel (various methods, and not a bad thing to learn)
3. But more importantly, some insights from *The Trellis & the Vine*

"Christian ministry is not very complicated. It is simply the making and nurturing of genuine followers of the Lord Jesus Christ through prayerful, Spirit-backed proclamation of the word of God."²

"The lesson here is that although we all have different gifts and abilities, the most important factor is how much we love the message of God, and how much we love the people all around us who need to hear it. You may not be the person who is going to preach to crowds, or lead Bible study groups, but if you really long to see other people become disciples of Jesus, then you will find ways of doing that within the gifts God has given you."³

4. More important than human insight: God's revelation (Acts 8.4)

Acts 8.4 ¶ Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

Conclusion:

Proposition: God's plan of disciple making from all the nations is God's plan for all God's people.

Love God's word, especially the message of salvation, and talk about it to people. Tell people what you know.

Especially, tell people in your own "cultural frame of reference" what you know.

² Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything* (S.l.: Matthias Media, 2024), 151.

³ Marshall and Payne, 170.