

# A Life With Consequences

DISCIPLESHIP: PART 1 • MATTHEW 10:24-25

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Madison, Wisconsin  
October 6, 2019



A few moments ago, Stuart read for us what we commonly refer to as the “Great Commission,” some of the last words spoken by Jesus to his disciples after the resurrection and before his ascension back into heaven. I’m putting it on the wall up here again so that we notice the emphasis. In English, it might seem that the primary command is to **“go,”** to go from one place to another, that we need to move from here to there to obey what the Lord is telling us to do here. And yet in the original language, as I understand it, the primary command is actually to **“make disciples.”** We do this by **“baptizing”** and by **“teaching.”** And so, the message of the Great Commission might be more accurately communicated with the idea, **“Having gone, or as you are going, make disciples, and you do this by baptizing and teaching.”** This was their commission, and this is our commission as well. This is the main thing we need to be doing. Our goal as individual Christians and as a congregation is to **“make disciples.”** And we don’t necessarily need to move from one place to another to do this. But, having gone into the world, this is what we do. This is what our King has commanded. Our mission is to make disciples. It is important, then, that we know what a “disciple” actually is!

As best as I can tell, various forms of this word are found well over 200 times in the New Testament, and I have put the Greek word and its English transliteration on the wall up here. And just by looking at the word, most of us probably see something a bit familiar. The word that we translate as “disciple” is also the basis of the English word “math.” And the most basic definition goes back to the idea of “instruction” or “learning.” And to me, it’s interesting that the word “math” really doesn’t refer to numbers! I had always assumed that “math” referred to numbers. In reality, though, math, literally speaking, refers to a system of learning, a system of instruction. As we think about

how Jesus uses this word in the Great Commission, then, we find that Jesus is telling us to make people students. We are to make people learners of Jesus. This is our mission, and as Jesus goes on to explain, we make people learners of Jesus or followers of Jesus by 1.) Baptizing them, and by 2.) Continuing to teach them. And this is a lifelong process. This is our mission. This is why we exist as a congregation. We want to be disciples, and we also want to make disciples.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying,  
“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Go therefore and

**MAKE DISCIPLES** →

μαθητής  
mathētēs

“to learn”

of all the nations,

**BAPTIZING THEM**

in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

**TEACHING THEM**

to observe all that I commanded you;

and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

So, the question for us is: How do we do this? What do we need to know about discipleship? How can we personally be the kind of disciples Jesus wants us to be? We are here to learn about Jesus. We are learners of Jesus. We are disciples of Christ. And so, over the next several weeks, I want us to look at several passages in the gospel accounts, passages where Jesus himself explains what it means to be disciples. As I said, the word **“disciple”** is used well over 200 times in the New Testament, but I would like for us to focus in on just five of these over the next few weeks.

And today, we start in Matthew 10. In our pew Bibles, Matthew 10 starts on p. 1516. And as we make our way to Matthew 10, we’ll notice at the beginning of the chapter that Jesus is sending his twelve disciples out on a mission. This is something of a test or a preview of the big one that’s coming in Matthew 28. Your Bible might have a heading that refers to this being a “Limited Commission,” and that’s what this is. This is something of a local mission, before the “Great Commission” that comes a bit later. But, here in Matthew 10, the twelve are named (in verses 2-4), and then Jesus sends them out to teach and preach. He gives them instructions on how to do what he is telling them to do. Starting in verse 16, he tells them what to expect as he explains that this mission will not be easy. And this brings us to verse 24, where Jesus explains some of the consequences of living as a disciple. When you live as a disciple, you are living a life with certain consequences, and that is what we plan on looking at this morning. As Jesus sends them out, he does not hide the consequences, he doesn’t downplay what they are getting into, but he is honest: This is what you need to expect. Notice, please, Matthew 10:24-25, where Jesus says this,

***A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!***

Again, this morning we are looking at what it means to live as disciples. What are we getting ourselves into here? We are living a life of discipleship, and living this life comes along with certain consequences.

**I. And the first thing I hope we notice in these two verses is that living as disciples of Jesus involves SUBMISSION.**

And I say this because of the picture Jesus paints for us here, because of the examples he gives. When we come to Jesus, we come to him as students arranging ourselves under a teacher for the purpose of learning. We come to him as slaves serving a master. We come to him as members of his household, with him leading the family. So, just as students learn from a teacher, so also we learn from the Lord in his word. Just as slaves are subject to their masters, so also we submit ourselves to the Lord. Just as children listen to their parents, so also we respect God as our Father. We don’t just hear a few words about Jesus and decide that we might like to be Christians, but we submit to his leadership, we arrange ourselves under his authority. We are subjects in His kingdom, and He is the King. To be a disciple, then, is to willingly put ourselves under Jesus as our Lord and Master. We come to him to learn what we need to know. I have often said that I absolutely hate taking a class that wastes my time - especially if I am paying good money for the class. If I don’t see the point of it, if I don’t see the value of it, if the information isn’t useful, I don’t want to be there. Jesus, in a sense, gives us a reason to show up to the class. He is the teacher; he is a leader worthy of following. And so we arrange ourselves under his leadership. We become disciples of Jesus Christ. We are his followers. We submit. Submission, then, is a key characteristic of a disciple.

II. As we go back to our text, we also find that IMITATION is an important part of being a disciple.

We submit and learn, and then we imitate. Notice how Jesus says, ***“It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master.”*** The goal of learning, then, the natural result of being a disciple, is that the disciple will become like his teacher. This doesn’t necessarily mean that the student will ever be equal to the teacher, it doesn’t mean that it’s wrong for a student to go beyond his teacher in terms of accomplishments and academic success, but the point here is: The goal of discipleship is that the disciple ultimately become ***“like his teacher.”*** And the same goes for the master-slave relationship. When it works well, the servant gets to the point where he knows what his master appreciates. I know we might find it awkward to talk about masters and servants these days, but don’t we sometimes have servants today? I don’t hear them described as waiters and waitresses too much anymore, but I do hear references to “servers.” When we go to a fancy schmancy-pants establishment like Cottage Café, we have a “server.” And when she sees my car pull in, I often see her putting coffee where I sit, and a cup of water, and two butters, and so on. We understand each other! And that’s the goal in a relationship like that. We don’t need to be barking orders at people, but over time, as we learn and grow, we get to know what the other person appreciates. Sometimes we are on the receiving end, and sometimes we are the ones doing the serving. We understand this.

And when it comes to being a disciple of Jesus, what he wants is for us to imitate him. We know him so well we become like him. In Luke 6:40, Jesus was speaking on another occasion and said, ***“A pupil [disciple] is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.”*** The goal of teaching is to impart knowledge and to motivate, to the point where the student takes on the qualities of the teacher. And that is our goal with Jesus. We want to be like him. As we sometimes say, our goal is to “be Jesus” to the best of our ability. In Romans 8:29, Paul referred to that fact that God predestined us ***“to become conformed to the image of His Son.”*** In 1 John 2:5-6, John said, ***“By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”*** If we say that we are disciples, then we had better be behaving like Jesus did.

This is why the early disciples were sometimes referred to as being ***“Christians.”*** “Christian” is the word “Christ” with the suffix “ian.” It goes back to Latin, but the “ian” means “of, relating to, or resembling.” A “musician” is someone who spends his or her life relating to music. An “Olympian” is someone whose life is perhaps dedicated to or identified with the Olympics. A “politician” is someone devoted to politics. An “electrician” is someone whose career relates to electricity. In the same way, a “Christian” is someone who identifies with Jesus Christ. A Christian is someone who is “of, relating to, or resembling” the Son of God. And if we imitate Jesus, Jesus himself suggests that this is ***“enough.”*** If we are like him, we are good with that. This is our goal. This is our mission in life. This is our reason for living.

III. So, we SUBMIT our lives to Jesus with the goal of IMITATING him, and that leads us to the last big idea here: SUBMISSION and IMITATION will lead to PERSECUTION.

We don’t have time to read all of it, but if you have your Bibles open, notice previously in this chapter how ominously Jesus portrays the mission he’s sending these men out on. In verse 16, he is sending them out as sheep in the midst of wolves. That’s not good! In verses 17-18, he says that men will hand them over to the courts, that they will be scourged in the synagogues. He predicts that they will be brought up on charges before governors and kings. In verse 21, they will be betrayed and handed over by their own families - brother against brother, fathers against their children, children against their parents. In verse 22, Jesus says that his

disciples will be hated by all people. In verse 23, Jesus suggests that there might be some running involved. If we could try to put ourselves in their place, I think we might be a bit concerned! I don't know if this is a mission I need to be going out on! But that's where we joined in with verse 24, where Jesus explains that the disciple is not above his teacher and that a slave is not above his master. In other words, if we are truly following and imitating the Lord, who do we think we are to expect anything less than the kind of treatment he received? Or, to flip it around just a bit: If we submit to his will in everything, if we become like him in every possible way, the result is: The people around us will treat us just like they treated Jesus! We cannot imitate him and then expect to be treated differently. And certainly we cannot expect to be treated any better.

I am reminded of an embarrassing episode from our past. Years ago, back in Janesville, before we had children, Keola and I decided to get away for a few days, and we decided to go to Manitowoc. We wanted to get to know Wisconsin a little bit better. You need to go to Manitowoc! You need to tour the Natural Ovens bread factory to see how they make Brainy Bagels. You need to tour the submarine that was critically important to our victory on Iwo Jima during WWII. Anyway, right before we left to go to Manitowoc, we got a flyer in the mail inviting us to a series of lessons at the church up there, to be presented by one of my favorite professors at Freed-Hardeman, David Lipe. An amazing coincidence! We had already booked our hotel for the same week. Well, we get up there, and the hotel is getting renovated, and we are in the old section, and the room is disgusting. We get to church, everybody wants to know where we are staying, and we explain that we were at the Super 8, but it was pretty bad - disgusting bathroom, terrible condition, and so on, so we moved to the Lighthouse Inn just up the road in Two Rivers. It was about the same price, but now we have a beachfront room, it's in much better condition, and so on. We then ask brother Lipe where he is staying, "I'm at the Super 8!" The church had put him up in this hotel that we had just dissed in front of the whole congregation! He didn't have a car on that trip, and the church had nothing planned during the days, so we adopted our professor that week and took him with us on some of the tours. But on the first night of the meeting, as he was starting his lesson, he introduced us as his "former students who are too good to stay in the hotel he was staying at." So embarrassing! But I think you know why I've shared this: A student really has no right to expect any better treatment than his own teacher! This is a universal truth. Everybody knows this, in all cultures, in all places around the world. And that is what Jesus is saying here. Because of who he was and how he lived, Jesus would be betrayed, and cursed at, and spit at, and slapped, and lied about, and beaten, and ultimately crucified. And as his followers, as his disciples, we have no right to expect anything better. In fact, the worse it gets, the more honored we should be. Remember what Paul said in Philippians 3? He prayed, ***"...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."*** The ultimate honor to Paul would be for him to die just as Jesus died, to be ***"conformed to His death."*** In a sense, this would prove his discipleship.

In a sense, then, we might be able to gauge how we are doing as disciples based on how we are treated by the world. You might remember what Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:12, ***"Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."*** The question for us is: If we are not being persecuted, why is that? Is it perhaps that we are not living quite as godly as we think we are? Or to take it back to our text here in Matthew 10: Is it perhaps because we are not quite as obedient as we think we are, that we are not really imitating Jesus in the way that we should? The more like Christ we are, the more the world fights back. But the more like the world we are, they don't care at all.

But again, back in Matthew 10, we find that Jesus gives the example, ***"If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!"*** This name is repeated with different spellings from time to time in scripture, but it's basically a pagan god (the Lord of the Flies or

the Lord of the Dung), but a pagan deity or demon who came to be associated with Satan somehow. And basically, on several occasions, Jesus would do something amazing, and they would attribute that power to Satan. They accused him of doing those things through the power of Beelzebul. If you are in Matthew 10, which I hope you are, just look back a few verses into the end of Matthew 9, and notice verse 34, where Jesus heals the demon-possessed man who couldn't speak, and the Jewish leaders responded by saying that Jesus ***"...casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."*** It happens again a few chapters later, in Matthew 12:24. So, we have these highly educated religious leaders, they come face to face with the absolutely perfect and all-powerful Son of God, and they accuse him of being a demon. They accuse him of being Satan. And the Lord's point here, when he talks with his disciples in private, is that if they obey and if they imitate, they will also be treated in the same way. But, they are not to take it personally, they are not to be discouraged, but they are to realize that they are being treated just like He was treated. It is an honor! And that is what we find in the book of Acts. In Acts 5:41-42, after Peter and John had been flogged by the Sanhedrin, the text says, ***"So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."***

So, the lesson and the encouragement for us is: As we make the decision to follow Jesus, we need to go into that decision knowing that we might face some intense pressure. We might be persecuted. If we follow him carefully, they will treat us just like they treated him. And as his students, as his disciples, we are not above that; but, we need to expect it. It is the promise Jesus made a bit later, in John 15:18-19, where he said, ***"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you."*** So, the more different we are from the world, the worse it gets. And I love the family analogy here. We are a part of his family. One author compared it to a barking dog. Our dog doesn't bark at us, because she knows us; she is a part of our family. But she does bark at strangers. She can hear the UPS truck coming from several blocks away, and she starts barking. She almost ate Scott Busse a few weeks ago! But the general principle is: Dogs bark at strangers; they do not bark at members of the family. In the same way, if the world is barking, we must be doing something right, because the world sees us as being different than they are! But if the world is not barking, if we are not being persecuted, and harassed, and made fun of, we need to be asking ourselves why that is. Do they know who we are and what we believe? I found it interesting that in our Bible class this morning we read that passage in Exodus 11 where the text explains that not even a dog barked at the Israelites on that last day in Egypt. Why is that? Because they were okay! Pharaoh had lost his mind. His own advisors knew the Israelites were in the right. The people of Egypt knew the Israelites were in the right (they gave them their gold and silver). And even the dogs knew they were in the right. But the point is: Dogs bark at strangers. If the world is barking at us, that is good!

As disciples, the natural response of the world to our obedience and imitation is persecution. The natural response is barking! We get talked about and excluded. We don't do the things they do, and they make fun of us. They think it ***"strange,"*** Peter says (in 1 Peter 4), that we no longer do the things they do and the things we used to do, the drinking parties, and so on, and we are persecuted for it.

### **Conclusion:**

As we close, there is a positive to all this, and that is: The closer we get to really imitating Jesus, the more attractive we are to open and honest hearts, as examples to follow. We let our light shine, we are honest and hard-working, we show up on time and don't whine and complain at work, we aren't burdened down by the

guilt of sin, we reach out to the poor, we treat people the way we would like to be treated, and on and on. There is something attractive about that. It is attractive to some and repulsive to others. How did you first come to hear about the Lord's church? Chances are, it wasn't a newspaper ad; instead, most of us saw the gospel lived out in somebody else. I saw it in my parents, and then I followed in their footsteps. So, if you see something appealing in the gospel, you need to know that there is a price to pay as well, but it is worth it. As we learned in the Great Commission, our goal is to make disciples. We do that by baptizing and by teaching. I hope we can continue looking at four more of the discipleship passages over the next few weeks. If you have any questions about becoming a disciple of Jesus, get in touch. The main idea today is that living as disciples comes along with certain consequences, and so if you are ready to accept those consequences, if you are ready to obey the gospel through repentance and baptism, we hope you will let us know as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...



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