

Sermon: Discipleship Pathway (Matthew 28:18-19)

Series: Distinct

Speaker: Kevin White

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Picture this: Scarborough. 1990's.

I'm in high school and the church youth group is having a sleepover. The guys are sleeping over at my place and the girls are sleeping over at another place 5 minutes away.

In the night, we snuck out and went for a walk - except that we were going to try to go to the girls house. Made no sense because:

- a. We didn't have cell phones or anything so the girls didn't know we were coming
- b. I don't think any of the girls liked us and so they probably didn't care or want us to come
- c. I don't even think we knew for sure where the house was.

I don't remember whether we got there or not. Actually the only thing I remember was that one of the guys, Cliff Ford, was all dressed in black. So we're all outside late at night in the dark, and then we get to this walkway in between houses and then Cliff does like a somersault on the ground! I'm like ewww! The ground's dirty!

But Cliff was focused. He had a mission in mind. He liked a girl and he wanted to see her. And so he was DEDICATED.

What are you dedicated to?

Whatever it is, it usually shows.

If I wanted to make fun of pastor Andrew, I would say he's dedicated to chips. He's always talking about them and somehow he manages to always be eating some.

If I wanted to be serious about Andrew, I would say he's dedicated to the vision and mission of Cornerstone. I can't tell you the details because it's not my story to tell, but shortly after I came to Cornerstone, Andrew was presented with the opportunity of a lifetime. It wasn't another church or anything and it was something that he could have done at the same time as pastoring the church. It was worldwide. But he turned it down. When I asked him why, he said because we're building a building. I thought he was crazy. But I learned something that day. I learned how humble Andrew is and how dedicated to the mission and vision of Cornerstone he is.

What are you dedicated to?

Whatever it is, it usually shows.

These days, we're in a series called "Distinct." It's all about the values and practices that make our church community the kind that truly makes space for Jesus.

Today I'm talking about discipleship.

That's what we want to be dedicated to. Discipleship to Jesus.

Here are some definitions of discipleship:

Discipleship is BEING with Jesus to LEARN from Jesus how to BECOME like Jesus.

A disciple is someone who follows Jesus as master.

Pastor Steve in one of his sermons said, "discipleship is the lifelong process of living in daily intimate relationship with Jesus and becoming like him in character."

He also said that it's not for so-called super Christians. It's for everyone. Everyone who is a follower of Jesus is called to be a disciple. It's not an optional upgrade package; it's the only package. If you are a Christian, you are a disciple.

Disciples are distinct because a disciple truly makes space for Jesus.

A disciple is distinct because a disciple is dedicated.

What are you dedicated to?

Our number one job as a church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Cornerstone's mission statement is "making space for Jesus to shape people together in God's love."

That's another way to say that we're here to make disciples.

Have you ever considered what your life would look like if you got serious about putting Jesus' words into practice?

I'm so honoured to be a part of this church because I see examples of this all the time.

Last week, Pastor Steve preached about hospitality. Showing love to the stranger. We watched a video about a refugee from Cameroon named Jonas who found his way into our church. A couple from Cornerstone showed him biblical hospitality by taking him out to lunch, buying him groceries and a jacket and letting him move in with them.

So far, we've raised close to \$20, 000! That's enough to bring his family here! I think that deserves some praise to God!

If you'd like more information on how to support Jonas or to watch the incredible story, click the links below.

Click [HERE](#) to support Jonas.

Click [HERE](#) to listen to his story.

This was an older white couple taking in a younger black man. That's distinct. I don't have to talk about what's happening in the States with black people and white people do I?

So Cornerstone IS distinct. We are disciples. We are dedicated.

But why is being a dedicated disciple to Jesus so important?

Because Jesus commanded it.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me .

It's like Jesus is saying, "what I'm about to say is super important, so pay attention."

Go and make disciples of all nations.

First of all, it's really important that we see that "all nations" is right there. So that's why it's such a big deal to us to be multicultural. It's not just a cool thing to do. It's the Jesus way.

A disciple is someone who follows Jesus as master.

If you look up the Greek for the word "go" in this passage, it is a present participle - which means it should be translated "going." As you're going...

Going where? Going along being a disciple of Jesus. As you are going along being a dedicated disciple of Jesus, make disciples of all nations...

We're called to make others what we are ourselves. Disciples. Disciples who make disciples who make disciples.

What are dedicated to?

Whatever you're dedicated to shows.

Today we're going to focus on the going part. But remember that it's 'SO THAT...'

Here at Cornerstone, we feel we are here 'so that' we can be a blessing to others, whether it's next door or another country. Whether it's your own family or someone downtown.

One of the study Bibles I read said that disciple was the most popular term for early believers. When we think of disciples today I think we imagine it more like attendance. Like we show up to a lot of things. Like we come to church a lot or small group or whatever. And those things are great. And necessary.

But image wise it's like when I was in university. I went to York where some of my classes had hundreds of students. I had no relationship with the professor at all. I went to classes, scribbled down everything they said, studied like crazy for the test, took the test, and then deleted all the files from my mind immediately to free up space for the next class.

Instead, the image should be more like an apprentice. Where you do hands-on learning and at the end, you have a skill, you've learned a trade. You have a relationship with the teacher. You identify with them, learn from them and you do life with them.

With Jesus, he spent 3 years doing live daily with his disciples. Even today, if you want to become an electrician, sushi chef or mechanic, you'd have to spend years doing hands on training under an expert. You'd have to be an apprentice. That's what we're talking about here.

It's a journey that takes time, discipline and dedication.

Here at Cornerstone we have created a resource that helps you become an apprentice of Jesus. It helps you identify with him, learn from him and do life with him. It helps to kick start your discipleship or reignite it. I'll tell you more about it in a bit.

Continuing on with our passage...

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

So first of all, baptism. That is a huge part of discipleship. If you are a dedicated follower of Jesus, baptism is a part of that...

If you are thinking of being baptized, click [HERE](#) for more information and to fill out the inquiry form.

Secondly, we see the Trinity expressed there. There is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Trinity. One God, 3 expressions. We don't talk about that a lot but it's what we believe. The Trinity isn't an add-on, it's a fundamental belief of a disciple of Jesus. Jesus is God.

“Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

This wasn't just for the disciples of Jesus' day. This is for us now. Jesus started that mission, and now we as his disciples continue it.

So what about you? What are you doing to intentionally follow Jesus? Do you have a plan? What are you going to dedicate yourself to? And how?

My prayer is that you would be dedicated to Jesus. Because that's what discipleship is.

Discipleship is being dedicated to being with Jesus - so let's start there. If we start there, like an apprentice, then the 'SO THAT' part can flow after.

So like I was saying before, we've developed a 5 part framework called the discipleship pathway. That's what shapes how we do all our ministry.

Check out this video, to give you an introduction to it.

https://youtu.be/FsN_WdrriA8

The 5 E's are deeply rooted in Scripture. Each “E” is a key part of your development as a disciple of Jesus. All five of these interact throughout your lifetime as you become more and more like Jesus in character. Remember, becoming like Jesus is the goal of Christian discipleship, as the diagram illustrates.

Let's do a quick rundown of each E.

ESTABLISH Identity in Jesus: These are spaces for Jesus to shape our sense of who we are in him. As disciples, the most important thing about us is who we are in Jesus.

EMBODY the Jesus Way of Life: These are spaces for learning how to put the commands of Jesus into practice in daily life. Like we've been saying today, Jesus clearly intends for us to be and to make disciples who put his commands into actual practice—to embody the way of life he modeled and taught, through his empowering presence with us.

EXPLORE Jesus' Call to Life Mission: These are spaces for discovering Jesus' unique callings on our lives. As followers of Jesus, we exist for the sake of God's world-restoring mission in Christ. And God uniquely gifts and calls each of us to be agents of his mission.

EXTEND Jesus' Love in Life Mission: These are spaces for joining God's world-restoring mission in Jesus. The more we are shaped in the likeness of Jesus, the more we will reflect and extend his sacrificial love in every aspect of our lives. Having explored our callings, we can truly and fully engage in our unique roles as agents of God's mission.

EXPERIENCE Jesus' Care & Healing: These are spaces for Jesus to make the broken and needy whole. We all know too well that life has its highs and its lows. There are times in life when each of us will need special care and healing from Jesus and his people in order to be able to get moving forward again in the journey of discipleship.

So this is our main framework for making disciples at Cornerstone. Just about every ministry we do at Cornerstone relates back to this Discipleship Pathway in some way.

I imagine for many of you this is totally new. That's okay. It's a great resource to get you going in terms of a specific plan of discipleship.

There are some of you who might be saying, "I took the assessment already. I've even done some stuff. What should I do now?"

We're suggesting you take it again. It's not a linear process. It's not like you finish one E and then go on to the next. It's not like you go through everything and then you're done. There's always room to grow as a disciple of Jesus. You may even need to go back over something you've done before.

At different seasons of your life, a different E might be what you need. Perhaps in this season you need to Experience Jesus Care and Healing. Start there.

For me, I've been in Establish Identity in Jesus for a while now. There's a Spotify playlist that I listened to, some videos I've watched and I'm on my 3rd book.

So our APPLICATION is to take the discipleship pathway assessment for the first time or again and find your next step.

<https://cornerstonechurch.ca/discipleship-assessment-tool/>

But remember, this isn't something to do just so you can check it off your list to say you're a good Christian. The goal is to be with Jesus.

That's what our dedication to this discipline of the discipleship pathway is for. To be with Jesus. Everything else flows out of that.

What are you dedicated to? My prayer is that you would be dedicated to being a disciple of Jesus.

As we wind down, the end of our passage says this, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Even if your name is not Shirley, God is still with you :)

A book I was reading said why do we need to remember? Because we're forgetful. That's why we need practice. It takes practice to remember that you're not alone. It takes practice to remember that God is present and available to us and to those around us (Contemplative Youth Ministry).

We can't be dedicated disciples to Jesus alone. But the good news is that we don't have to. Through his Spirit. Jesus is with us always. Giving us the strength to pursue him more and more.

The good news is that even though there is so much pain in this world, there is Hope. There is hope in Jesus. No matter how dark our story is, there is light at the end as followers of Jesus. We want to hear that good news. We want to sit in that good news. And we want to share that good news.

Worship team

BENEDICTION:

From Martin Luther King Jr. (The Lion Book of Famous Prayers)

"And now unto him who is able to keep us from falling
And lift us from the dark valley of despair to the bright Mountain of hope,
From the midnight of desperation to the daybreak of joy; to him be power and authority, forever.

Amen.

Send off:

Thanks for being part of our worship experience today.

For those of you who are with us online, thanks for being here and have a great week!

(PAUSE)

For those of you here in person, feel free to stick around and connect with each other in the café.

Have a good week everyone!