

This Message Won't Self-Destruct

Matthew 28:16-20

Small Group Discussion Guide

OPENING QUESTIONS (get everyone involved in discussion):

- Who was the best “on-the-job” teacher you ever had? (In other words, someone outside the classroom who helped you grow in your work as you went along).

TRANSITION: We’re starting a new sermon series today, called, “This is Us.” We spent the last 7 weeks looking at our individual identity—who are we, in Christ, when everything else is stripped away? Now we’re shifting gears for the next five weeks to talk about **who are we communally**, as the people of Jesus. Today we see what the one great charge is that we have, our briefing, our seemingly impossible mission, under which everything else we do as the people of Jesus falls, the mission that is full of danger and adventure but destined to succeed.

BACKGROUND: We’re dropping in at the end of Matthew’s Gospel. Jesus has already been crucified, buried, and resurrected. Jesus’ disciples (minus Judas) have met him one last time on the hills of Galilee for a final instruction. They have spent the last three years traveling with and learning from him, but were slow to grasp that Jesus’ mission was his death and resurrection for our sins. However, once you’ve seen Jesus predict his own death and resurrection, and pull it off, as you come up to the mountain, Jesus has your full attention!

READ MATTHEW 28:16-17.

- Put yourself in the place of one of these disciples. What are all the emotions you might be feeling?
- Look what Matthew says, in **v. 17**: “they worshiped him, but some doubted.” *Why do you think they doubted, even AFTER seeing Jesus resurrected?*
- How do you react knowing that some of Jesus’ closest followers doubted? Curious? Comforted? Surprised? Outraged? Discuss.
- In verses 18-20, Jesus invited ALL the disciples to join his mission.
 - Why do you think he even invited the doubters?
 - What reaction do you have that Jesus invites you to join him in the midst of your doubts and limited faith?

READ MATTHEW 28:18, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. “

- What does this statement say about Jesus?
- What does this statement say about the mission he gives his disciples (and us, by extension)?
- How does this understanding of Jesus’ authority impact you personally?

READ MATTHEW 28:19-20

- Know that only one verb in these verses is an imperative (a command), and it is underlined and bold below. Jesus’ command literally reads, “Going, **make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”**
- So, what is it that Jesus commissions us to do?
- What does it mean to **be** a disciple? Describe.

- What does it mean to **make** a disciple? What is involved? Describe.
- Have you ever been a disciple, mentee, or apprentice of another? Describe your favorite experience.
- Have you ever disciplined, mentored, or trained/taught another? Describe your most rewarding experience.
- There are three participles that describe how we make disciples: Going, baptizing, and teaching.
 - **Going**. Pastor Josh talked about how the commission to make disciples always takes place “as you go,” and sometimes requires us to go out of our way (such as overseas). What is the difference? In what context are you being most moved to make disciples currently?
 - **Baptism**. Why is it significant that baptism is an initiation ceremony, rather than a graduation ceremony? Are we encouraging disciples to take this first step of obedience?
 - **Teaching** them to obey everything I have commanded you.
 - “Everything” can seem overwhelming, but Jesus summarized all God’s commands two different times:
 - John 13:34, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”
 - Matt 22:37-40, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.... Love your neighbor as yourself.... All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”
 - What is your reaction reading these two summaries? Discuss.

APPLICATION – Pastor Josh stated that Discipleship is primarily a relational journey, rather than a class, program, or event. Think of Jesus. Describe situations where Jesus was relational, where the disciples were learning from him by just being **with** him.

- Does our church’s structure encourage these types of relationships?¹ Why or why not?
- Are you living as a disciple? Are you teachable? Do you need to be mentored spiritually? What is the next step of your own discipleship?
- Are we disciple-makers? Are you currently doing life-on-life discipleship with anyone?
- If not, where do you see yourself nurturing one or more disciples of Jesus? With your children?
- Do you look for opportunities to make disciples?

PRAYER: Share with one another some of your current needs, and pray for one another.

- Among our prayer requests, let us pray that we would be involved relationally as disciple-making disciples.

¹ Leader: Alpha, Beta, small groups, discussion oriented classes, subgroups such as 631, Women’s Ministry, College Luncheon, Men’s Saturday morning and weekend meetings, etc.