

Session 1

THE LAST PLACE YOU LOOK

Luke 24:13-35

Memory Verse

Together they were discussing everything that had taken place. ¹⁵ And while they were discussing and arguing, Jesus himself came near and began to walk along with them.

– LUKE 24:14-15, CSB



The Last Place You Look

THEOLOGICAL THEME: The primary thrust of this passage is the joyous reality of the resurrection of Christ.

? What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “making disciples”?

? Who in the Bible was a disciple maker? What did that person do to make disciples?

? Are you the disciple of anyone? Do you disciple anyone? Tell a bit about that.

“Making disciples” is often discussed and encouraged in evangelical churches. This stems from a genuine desire to expand the kingdom of God through biblical evangelism and missions. Yet, this may be one of the least carried out commands of Jesus, at least in the Western church. It is much easier to talk about evangelism and missions than to actually do it. Jason Hayes believes that three key hindrances to making disciples are a lack of time, lack of trust, and lack of connection.¹ Others, like Spence Shelton, say that things like unrepentant sin and fear are the underlying hindrances to disciple making.²

You may find in your own life that other sorts of obstacles keep you from making disciples. Oftentimes, Christians are hindered from sharing the good news of Jesus with people because they simply aren't sure what to do. They don't have a plan, and without a plan they feel helpless, paralyzed, and anxious.

In our passage today, we will see that the way Jesus helped the two disciples on the road to Emmaus is a simple plan that any follower of Christ can follow in order to share the good news with others.

Session Summary

Christians have been given a commission to go and make disciples of all nations. This certainly means that some Christians ought to pack up their things, move to a foreign land, and share the gospel there faithfully. But Christians who stay in their own culture are also commanded to be witnesses. They should share the gospel just as faithfully, frequently, and fervently as vocational missionaries.

Christians must keep in mind that it is Jesus who has sent them to fulfill the Great Commission. It wasn't their idea. This fact makes a huge difference. For some, it may feel constrictive and binding. For others, it is comforting. This can especially be difficult for those who are more prone to striking out on their own and paving their own way. The fact is this: the mission of every Christian has already been laid out for them. There is no guesswork as to what it is that they are supposed to be about as followers of Jesus.

Christians should work to let this be a comfort and joy to them. If they feel too hemmed in by the calling that has been placed on their lives to make disciples, then it may be an indication of a heart that is not fully submitted to God's will for their lives as it is revealed by the Scriptures.

Before we get started, let's make sure that we understand exactly what this commission is. Matthew 28 clearly lays it out. Christians are commissioned to make disciples of all nations. Jesus gave two directives in Matthew's commission that help us understand what it means to make disciples. First, Christians must share the gospel with those around them. Second, they must help others grow up into their salvation. Acts 1:8 puts it this way, "You will be my witnesses." Our focus today will be to glean practical help in the first part of that equation. How should Christians share the gospel with others?

1. Come Near (Luke 24:13-16)

This was a unique time in history. Jesus, the Son of God in flesh, had completed His mission on earth to redeem sinners from death and condemnation. He had lived a perfectly obedient life and then died a sinner's death. In this way, He was able to both take away sin and give righteousness.

Now that this mission was complete, a new mission was taking center stage and Jesus, in this passage, set the example for its completion.



What does the text say that Jesus did first? Why does that matter? How is this connected to the practice of evangelism?

Luke wrote that as the two disciples made their way down the road to Emmaus, Jesus Himself drew near to them. Jesus evidently saw them from a distance. He knew who they were and He moved close to them.

This may seem a small thing, but it is actually quite profound and life altering for Christians who are serious about the task of being witnesses of Jesus Christ. The fact of the matter is this: a Christian cannot obey the Great Commission if they are unwilling to interact with the lost in meaningful ways. Yes, it is possible to engage meaningfully through social media platforms. Christians should utilize every tool at their disposal for Kingdom purposes. However, they must also recognize the role and value of each tool. While it may be more comfortable and less stressful to share biblical truth via social media channels, it is also less meaningful and effective than person-to-person, direct contact. A post sent out to no one in particular usually hits its target. It may be easier to move dirt around in your field with a spoon, but its effect is pitiful compared to the use of a plow and team of horses. Yes, the work behind the plow is backbreaking, but the fruit is tremendous.



How do we see God drawing near to people throughout the Bible?

God set the example for this practice. God came to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and many more in person, directly engaging them. The paramount example of this is Jesus Christ coming in flesh. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).



Application: With whom could you meet this week in order to share the gospel face to face?

2. Listen (Luke 24:17-24)



What practice can we learn about evangelism from the way Jesus interacted with the men in this passage?

It’s true that Jesus asked them questions, but what He modeled here most was listening. The only reason He spoke at first was to get them to reveal their thoughts. Of course, He knew what they were thinking, but He wanted them to know what they were thinking also. Once they had verbalized the concerns of their hearts, Christ addressed those concerns by explaining the gospel to them.



What does this mean for how Christians can and should share the gospel today?

There are many different ways to share the gospel. The context of the situation often determines the means by which the good news is shared. But what Jesus modeled here is a useful and effective tool. Jesus knew the concerns of their hearts because He was God. Christians today don't have the ability to know someone's mind as Christ did, but Christians today do know the truth about all humans.

They know that every human they come into contact with today was created by God and bears His image. They know that they are corrupted with sin. They also know that they are in need of a Savior. The problem is that many people with whom Christians come into contact do not have a clear picture of those truths or how to verbalize them. Wise questions from friendly Christians, however, can be an effective way to help a person understand their deep need for Jesus. When a Christian asks wise questions and listens carefully, they will often be given open doors to witness about Jesus Christ. For example, a Christian who is visiting with his neighbor in the yard as their kids play together might say something like this:

Christian: How are things going with you, Bob? Are you holding up in this crazy world?

Neighbor: I'm fine, I think. Can't complain. Though my wife is stressed because it looks like my mom will be coming to live with us. Her health has really declined. I really don't know how much longer she will be with us.

Christian: Wow. Well, let us know if we can help out in any way. You know, I used to be so afraid of death. My pastor really helped me to understand the purpose of this life and what happens in the next. What do you believe about life after death?

In this example, the Christian's question prompted the neighbor to reveal a concern of his heart that gave the Christian help in knowing how to begin a spiritual conversation with him. These conversations, however, can't happen if a Christian doesn't come near and listen carefully.




Application: Do you think you are a good listener? Are you able to discern the concerns of peoples' hearts? What are some questions a Christian might ask an unbeliever in order to start a spiritual conversation?

3. Speak (Luke 24:25-35)

 What practice of evangelism might we learn about from Jesus' interaction with the disciples in these verses?

There is only one gospel message, but there are many ways to share it. Jesus shared the gospel with these two disciples by taking them through the Old Testament. This was appropriate because they were Jews and knew the Old Testament well. They knew of the promises of the Messiah. They had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah. So, it made perfect sense for Christ to reason with them from those books. When a Christian comes near to another person and asks questions and listens, they will gain insight not only into the concerns of their hearts, but also to their background and context. It would do little good to reason with someone trying to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament if the person doesn't have any knowledge or respect for the Old Testament. Effective evangelists are both winsome and wise. They testify about Jesus Christ in a way that takes into account what the hearer already knows and believes.

 What is the Christian's role in evangelism? What is the measure of success?

Some Christians have misunderstood what evangelism is. More specifically, some Christians are confused about their role in the salvation of a soul. When we confuse our role with God's role, then evangelism becomes daunting, exhausting, and confusing. Christians can't bring a dead person to life. They can't justify a guilty sinner. So, what is their role? The answer is found in the means by which God has chosen to rescue people from their sins. Paul wrote that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). But how can someone believe the gospel if there is no one to preach it?

The part of the Christian in evangelism is to faithfully explain the biblical gospel. Note, a Christian must utter the true gospel. If a person preaches a false gospel, then they are of no use to the Father to save people. If they teach a gospel that is not the true gospel, then they make people twice the child of hell that they are (Matt. 23:15).

When Christians realize that they can't save anyone, then they are free and unburdened to simply be a witness about Jesus to the lost world. How others respond to the gospel is between them and God. When a Christian shares the gospel, they are successful because they are obeying the command of their Father and He is pleased.

? Application: Have you been faithful to share the gospel with people around you? With whom have you shared the gospel in the past week or month? If you haven't, what has prevented you from sharing it?

Conclusion

Christians are called to share the gospel with the world. Only the biblical gospel has the power to save sinners. If Christians give to others anything less than the true gospel of Jesus Christ, then they offer a message that may sound good but is ineffective. They may even assure their listeners of new life in Christ when they haven't actually understood the true gospel and remain lost in their sin.

In order to share the true gospel of Jesus Christ, Christians should look for opportunities to draw near to unbelievers, ask them questions and listen, and then share the gospel with them in ways that they can understand.

? How does a proper understanding of your role and God's role in evangelism change the way you practice evangelism?

? Have you ever heard someone attempt to share the gospel, but fail to share important aspects of it? What did they leave out? Have you ever done this?

? In what ways are you participating in the Great Commission? How has God challenged you in this area today?

CHRIST CONNECTION: In this passage not only are we reminded that Christ is truly the Messiah, but He also has called those who receive life in Him to participate in His mission by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those around them.

MISSIONAL APPLICATION: This passage includes a description of Jesus' evangelistic efforts from which His followers can glean principles as they seek to be faithful to complete the Great Commission.



FOR NEXT WEEK

The Next Thing You Know

Main Passages

- Luke 24:13-35 (Emphasis v. 25-27)

Session Outline

1. The Redemptive Story (Luke 24:13-26)
2. The Importance of Teachers (Luke 24:27)
3. The Scriptures Point to Christ (Luke 24:27-35)

Memorize

Together they were discussing everything that had taken place.¹⁵ And while they were discussing and arguing, Jesus himself came near and began to walk along with them.

- Luke 24:14-15, CSB

Daily Readings

- Monday - Luke 24:13:17
- Tuesday - Luke 24:18-24
- Wednesday - Luke 20:14-15
- Thursday - Luke 21:4
- Friday - 1 Peter 3:15
- Saturday - 2 Timothy 4:2

References

- ¹⁴“Connection Trust and Time Are Important to the Discipleship Process.” Connection Trust and Time Are Important to the Discipleship Process. January 1, 2014. Accessed January 29, 2021. <https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/obstacles-of-discipleship-and-how-to-tackle-them>.
- ²⁴“Two Obstacles Keeping Us From Making Disciples.” JD Greear Ministries. October 06, 2014. Accessed January 29, 2021. <https://jdgreear.com/two-obstacles-keeping-us-from-making-disciples/>.