

# ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

J.D. Greear | Sermon Transcript

We're taking the first two weeks of our year here together, and we're asking the question: When you strip everything else away, what's at the core of who we are and what we do and where we're going as a church? You got your Bible this weekend? I hope that you do. If you do so, take it out and open it to Matthew chapter four. Matthew is the first gospel in the New Testament, and we'll be in the fourth chapter. We'll start in verse 18 here in a few minutes. As you are turning there, I want to begin today with just a very simple question. The question is this: What comes to your mind when I say the word Christian?

All right, what comes to mind, that's what, I mean, we would consider ourselves here, right, we're a bunch of Christians—that's how people would describe a church. But what comes to your mind when I say the word Christian? All right, let's play a little word association game. I'll kind of prime the pump a little bit with you. What's the first thing that pops into your mind when I say Bernie Sanders supporter? What's the image that pops in your ... don't answer anything out loud, but what's the first image that pops in your mind? What's the first image that comes into your mind when I say Trump supporter? How about when I say vegan, what's the first image that pops in your mind? How about cross-fitter, what comes to your mind? When I say Duke fan, what's the first thing that pops into your mind when I say Duke fan?

How about when I say NASCAR fan, what pops into your mind, is this the image that? When I say Star Wars, is it the new era that pops into your mind, or is it kind of the old good stuff when I say Star Wars that pops into your mind? How about this one? When I say acting genius what pops into your mind? Everybody knows it going be ...

There we got it, right there, that's what pops into our minds at the Summit Church. Now, with the prime pumped, what comes into your mind when I say the word Christian? A Bible teacher in Atlanta named Andy Stanley says if you asked 10 different people you're probably going to get at least nine different answers—at least here in America. If you stop people on the street and you ask them, "Are you a Christian?" You're going to get some people who say, "Well, yes." Some are going to say, "What do you mean?" Some will say, "Yes, but." Some will say, "No, but." Some will say, "Well yes, but I'm not like ..."

Some of you would say that at some point you became Christian, right, if that's how some of you would answer it, there was a point in your life where you prayed a prayer, walked an aisle, got baptized, maybe went to a confirmation class. Maybe that was your tradition. Others of you would say that you've always been a Christian, since you were born you've been a Christian.

There are some of you, and in fact maybe some of you listening to me right now, that would say, "No, I'm definitely not a Christian." If you were asked to define what comes into your mind when you say Christian, it would be something like a definition that I heard one guy use recently, "Christians are judgmental, homophobic moralists who think that they are the only ones going to heaven and secretly relish the fact that everybody else is going to hell." Now, please don't say amen to that, but there are some of you that when I ask you what comes into your mind when I say Christian, that is what you think of.

Here is a strange and interesting fact. The very first followers of Jesus did not call themselves Christian. That was not a name they chose for themselves. The term was actually, Christian was actually a derogatory term that was used by people outside of the Jewish community. That's what Acts 11 tells us. Acts 11:26, the descent in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians. It was passive. It was a derogatory term that meant like little Christ, you just want to be little Jesuses walking around. It was a derogatory term. You say, "Well, if they didn't call themselves Christians, what did they call themselves?" Well, you see the answer right there in verse 26. The disciples. They referred to themselves as disciples of Jesus.

Consider this. The word Christian is only used three times in the entire Bible. The word disciple by contrast is used 281 times in the New Testament alone. You say, "Well, so what?" Here's what, Andy Stanley says this, and I agree with him, "I want to suggest to you that in changing the primary word that we use to describe ourselves, we lost the clarity that the word disciple conveyed about what a follower of Jesus actually is." Now, in case you're wondering where all this is headed, and you're starting to feel yourself tense up a little bit because you're like, "Okay, he's going to at the end of this message say after 15 years at the Summit Church that we're no longer going to call ourselves Christians, and from now I want you to go to work and tell people you're not a Christian, that you're a disciple."

You're like, "I just feel like that's weird, and I'm not going to do that." That's not where this is all headed, but what I want to show you is that our use of the term Christian today obscures the fact that a lot of people who call themselves Christians are not actually disciples. You see, disciple, the term is much clearer. Terrifyingly clear in fact about what you actually become when you choose to believe in Jesus. I want to go back and try to get into what a disciple actually was, and in Matthew chapter four we have the calling of the first disciples, and in that you'll get a glimpse of what a disciple was and how Christians saw themselves. Okay.

Matthew chapter four, let's begin in verse 18. "While walking by the sea of Galilee Jesus saw two brothers, Simon, who's called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen." Verse 19, "And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.'" Verse 20, immediately, immediate obedience, they left their nets, and they followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee and John, his brother, in the boat with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets. He called them. Immediately they left their boat and their father, and they followed Him.

Let me ask a question. I'll be a little transparent with you right at the beginning. When I heard that story as a kid, it never really made sense to me. I learned the story on flannelgraph like I learned most of the Bible stories and in the b-grade Christian movies that we used to watch back then. It was basically this image where you got a bunch of people who were out doing their jobs, and suddenly, a guy that they've never met shows up in a white bathrobe with a blue Miss America sash, and his blonde long, you know, Rick Flare blonde hair flapping in the breeze, and he flashes them a blue-steel look, and he says, "Follow me." This tractor beam I guess comes out of his eyes and they're like, "Yes, master, we will follow you."

It just didn't really make much sense. Like why? Was it a Jedi mind trick? How did He just convince these guys to come and follow Him? I just assumed it was His special powers or something. But when you understand the history behind what's happening here it actually makes a lot more sense. This is one of those moments where being a history nerd actually helps you and doesn't like annoy everybody. I'm going to take just a couple of minutes and try to fill in some of the things happening historically around this. That will make that passage of Scripture make a lot more sense. All right, here we go. You ready? You ready for our nerd moment? All Hebrew boys in those days went to what they called Torah school. Torah was just learning the first five books of the Old Testament, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. You started at age 5. It started with a ceremony where they would bring all the 5-year-old boys in, and they would take a drop of honey, and they would put it on their tongue. Now, for most of these boys they were poor, and so it was the first time they'd ever tasted sweetness. And so this sensation of sweetness just flooded into them for the first time, and at the same time they're reading to them the first chapters of Genesis. The image is, this Word is going to be sweet to you. For the next five years they'd memorize large sections of the Torah.

Well, by age 10 they had kind of a weeding out. They only took like the very best students, say the upper 20 percent or so, and then the rest of them who didn't make the cut went back home to their fathers, and they would begin to pursue being apprentices in the family business. The boys who remained in a Torah school, would study on till about age 17 where they would learn the rest of what we now call the Old Testament. Joshua through Malachi, and so they would learn that for the next seven years. Well, when they got to 17, there was kind of another cut, and if you wanted to go on with your religious studies after that, then you had to find yourself a rabbi—a rabbi that you admired—and apply to become that rabbi's talmid. Rabbi just means teacher. Talmid means disciple. It's the Hebrew word for disciple. When you found your rabbi, you would go and sit at their feet. That was your request to learn from that rabbi, and the rabbis would examine you with a series of questions and put you through a series of tests to see if you were worthy to be their disciples.

You see, the rabbis were able to be really selective because in those days, becoming a religious ruler was the best of all possible jobs, and so almost every Hebrew boy dreamed of becoming a religious expert one day. They didn't dream about becoming basketball players or rock stars, 'cause they didn't have that back then. They dreamed of becoming religious experts so, therefore, the rabbis could choose only the smartest, most talented boys to be their talmidim. That's the plural for disciples that ... They're talmidim. Another reason the rabbis were so picky is that when they chose a disciple, they were choosing somebody that they believed had the capacity to become just like them. Not just to know what they knew and to hear their teaching, but to do what they did. And for several years these talmidim would follow around their rabbis, imitating them in every way.

They would learn their mannerisms. They would learn how they answered certain questions. They would learn how to respond in situations. Supposedly the highest compliment you could pay a talmid in those days was to say to them, the dust of your rabbi is all over you. That wasn't like saying, hey man, you need a shower. That was saying that whatever your rabbi stepped in sprayed up on you. That's how closely you followed him. Everything that your rabbi does, you do. You got covered with it. Now, one more thing here. In Jesus's day, there was a really rare form of rabbi who possessed a characteristic that the Jewish people called—this

has gotta be my favorite Hebrew word of all time—called smicha. That's right. Smicha. Smicha just translates as authority, but I think it sounds so much cooler in Hebrew, doesn't it? Smicha. You wanna say it? It's kind of fun. Say it. Smicha.

Smicha. All right. Smicha. All right. Smicha means authority. Authority. They were very rare, these kinds of rabbis. We only know of a dozen or so that were recognized as smicha rabbis in the first century, and they all had names that if you know anything about Jewish history, you recognize names like Hillel or Gamaliel. These guys were first of all, masters of the Torah. They were mystical, and they had this spiritual authority where they could give interpretations of texts ... They were thought to be so close to God that they could give new, unheard of insights into Scripture. You know, for Jewish people they weren't into new stuff. They ... Everything that they needed to know, they'd always known—they assumed. So new stuff is frowned upon. But these rabbis were smicha. Now, they had the ability to say, you didn't understand this, but I'm gonna explain it to you.

Couple other things here. To be regarded as a rabbi with smicha, there had to be evidence that you had done miracles, credible evidence. Finally, if you were regarded as one with smicha, it had to be officially conferred upon you by two other rabbis with smicha. All that to say this was a really exclusive club that was pretty hard to get into.

Now, back to Matthew, chapter four. Here comes Jesus who knows the Torah so well that we find him at age 12 in the temple correcting the religious rulers. All right? He frequently says things when He's teaching like, "You have heard it said, but I say to you." There's this new interpretation authority throughout the New Testament. We see that His hearers are constantly amazed at His authority. Just a couple of chapters after Matthew four, He says this, Matthew chapter seven, "They were amazed, 'cause He taught them as one with ..." In Hebrew, they would've said, "One with smicha."

They taught him as one with smicha, not like the other scribes. You just repeated what everybody else said. You see, throughout Jesus' career, Luke 20, they're saying things like, "Where'd you get smicha? Where did you get your smicha? Who conferred it upon you? We need to know. He does miracles."

Matthew 4:23, the verse right after the ones that we read, said that right after this passage He goes to, throughout the region, healing every disease and sickness among the people. Oh, and this is probably the best part. Right before this account in Matthew four, Jesus goes out into the wilderness where John the Baptist, John the Baptist, the camel-skin-wearing, locusts-and-honey-eating prophet preaching in the wilderness, who was a teacher dripping with smicha sauce if there ever was one.

He tells everybody that's listening, "Hey, there's somebody in this crowd," points to Jesus. "He is so much greater than I am that I'm not even worthy to untie his shoe laces."

And then at the same moment, God the Father speaks from heaven and says, "This is My beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased." Now, at that point, the little smicha light on your dashboard is going all smicha, smicha, smicha, smicha. Jesus has got smicha. It's very, very obvious to everybody. Now, get this. Matthew chapter four. Jesus, this new rabbi just oozing with smicha, chooses Simon Peter and Andrew, who are fishermen. The fact that they were fishermen, what does that show you? They hadn't made the cut. They were part of the B team. Ladies and gentlemen, before we go on any further, could you just make sure you stop and get your mind around this? When Jesus assembled His force by His choice to transform the world, He chose the B team.

He skipped over all the A players and went straight for the B ones. So, the point is, of course they wanted to follow Him. Of course, they wanted to follow this rabbi with all this smicha who had chosen them, guys without much potential or personal power that He chose them to follow Him, become like Him, to know God like He knew God, to do what He did and be filled with His power.

Few things that we notice ... A few things we notice about being a disciple right there from Matthew chapter four, if you're taking notes. Number one, He doesn't choose the best. He chooses the willing. He doesn't choose the best. He chooses the willing. Another Bible teacher named John MacArthur explains it this way: In choosing His disciples, Jesus skipped all the why's of the day. The great scholars were in Egypt. The great library was in Alexandria.

The great philosophers were in Athens. The powerful were in Rome. He passed over Herodotus, the historian. And Socrates, the great thinker. And Julius Caesar, the great ruler. He chose men to be His disciples so ordinary it was comical. Not a single rabbi. No teachers, no religious experts, not even a synagogue ruler. Half of them were fishermen. One was essentially an IRS agent and one of them was a former terrorist. He chose the B team because His work in the world would not come from their abilities

for Him. It would come from what He would do through them and ... see people with a lot of talent and ability would only get in the way because they would never really learn to lean into His power. You see, Jesus taught that His power in the weakest vessel was infinitely greater than the greatest talent apart from Him.

I love how Jesus reinforces, brought this home to His disciples. Just a few chapters after Matthew four, Matthew 11:9-11 says that Jesus is talking to His disciples, and He says, of all those ever born to women—which means everybody—the one that is greatest, the one who is greatest in the world ... I've told you this before. According to Jesus, who was the greatest preacher ever to live? Very good. Starts with J, rhymes with -ohn the Baptist. John the Baptist. Very good guess. John the Baptist was Jesus' favorite all-time preacher of all of history. I mean, on Jesus' iPod was a bunch of John the Baptist sermons. He loved him some John the Baptist, and he said to His disciples, John the Baptist greatest preacher hands down, ever lived, but I'm gonna tell you the truth. The one who is least in My kingdom is greater than John the Baptist. I mean, just imagine the impact of that, right?

I mean, least in the kingdom of heaven means you know the least about the Bible. It means you have the least talent. It means you are the least eloquent. It means you have the least amount of spiritual gifts. Somebody at one of the nine campuses that I'm talking to right now, somebody in this room, in one of these rooms is the least of the kingdom of God in the Summit Church, right? And I'm not being mean, but mathematically that has to be true. One of you has the least talent, you're the least capable, you're the least eloquent, you know the least about the Bible. Right now you're thinking, I think he might be talking about me, and God in heaven is like, "Yep, it's you." You're at the bottom of the pile. Even if that's accurate, even if that's accurate, you, whoever you are, have more potential for power in ministry than John the Baptist.

Why? Because you got something John didn't have, and that is the Holy Spirit inside of you, and Jesus said, from that point on, it was no longer gonna be about your abilities for Jesus, it was about your ability to be available to Him, because He didn't choose you 'cause you could be a great dad. He didn't choose you 'cause you could be a great witness. He didn't choose you 'cause you could be a great preacher. He chose you because He knew that you could be a willing vessel that He could work through, and the Holy Spirit in the mouth of one believer is more powerful than an army of the most eloquent orators in the world. You understand that?

I saw a really good example of this when I was in college. We started a real small little Bible study that was just designed to introduce some of our friends that we were meeting to Jesus, and it kind of puttered along for a few months, and there was 12 of us or something.

Well, we decided that we were gonna have one night where we invited all of our friends that we could get to come to one kind of place where we would kind of explain the gospel and tell them about Jesus. And so, we planned for this thing. We planned for about a month, and we passed out flyers and the day before we were gonna do the thing, it was gonna be on a Tuesday night, we were ... Our little core team was meeting at lunch in the dining hall, and there was one member of our team, her name was Amy if I remember correctly, she was one of the shyest girls that I'd ever met. The kind that it's just it just, it seems like it's painful when she's trying to talk with people, and I think she prayed a lot, which I don't know, whatever, but she was pretty awesome but she just didn't talk a lot. So, she was over here to my left, and I'm talking to somebody over here to my right, and all of a sudden I hear this commotion beside me, and I look up and she's standing on top of the dining room table just looking out over the entire dining hall.

And then she stamps her foot, and I think she has lost her mind. I'm looking to see if somebody poured Jack Daniels into her apple juice or whatever. Like, what is happening to this girl? So, she stands, she gets the entire place quiet and in a very small, kind of as loud as she could project, her mousy voice, she says, "Hey, I know most of you don't know me, and you probably think I'm crazy, but I consider all of you my friends and tomorrow night, some friends of mine and I, we're gonna explain what the greatest thing is in our life, how Jesus Christ has changed our lives, and we believe He can change yours, and I really think all of you should come.

And then she sat back down, and I looked at her, I said, "What just happened Amy? I'm not really sure."

And she said, "I don't know. I just really felt like the Holy Spirit told me to do that." And ... Now, listen I'm not saying when you listen to the Holy Spirit, you hear voices all the time or that you're gonna start doing wacky things continually, but I will tell you the next night we had 700 people show up. And in large part it's because of people like her that were listening to the Holy Spirit and doing what He told them to do, because the Holy Spirit in the mouth of one available believer is more powerful than the most

eloquent army of believers in the world. You understand that when you face the things that God has told you to face. He didn't choose you because you were awesome. He wanted to make you awesome because He chose you. Your awesomeness was not gonna come from your abilities.

Your awesomeness was gonna come from His power in you. So, the question is not, "how able are you?" The question is, "how available are you?" Have you surrendered yourself to Him to say, "God, I'm gonna stop making excuses, and I'm gonna quit looking into my family, into my marriage, into my ministry, into my workplace and asking, what can J.D. do?" I'm gonna start asking, what can Jesus do? Number one, He chose ... Didn't choose the best, He chose the willing.

Number two, God chose us, not we Him. We see from there that He chose us, not we Him. Like I explained the normal way all of this went down is that if you were in the best of your class, then you applied to a rabbi, and if he liked what he saw, He choose you back. Now, what we know is that that became a great source of confidence to these talmidim, because when everything else was going against them, they kind of were like, yeah, but my rabbi, who I respect, he chose me.

He must've seen something in me. I mean, it'd be like today if Roy Williams or coach Krzyzewski, he came up to you and said, "Man you got real talent." If everybody else was making fun of you, you'd be like, but that man saw a lot in me. Well, Jesus starts the process even further back. He chose them when they weren't even looking for Him. He came seeking them when they didn't really have any idea that they could be His disciples. Do you understand what kind of confidence that was supposed to give to them? One of the things you notice if you read the New Testament is how many times and how often Jesus and the apostles bring up this concept that He chose us as a means of instilling confidence.

You'll see this in a couple of weeks when we start our study of the book of Ephesians. This is the book of the Bible we'll be in next. You're gonna see how Paul is gonna develop this theme that you didn't choose God; He chose you. And Paul is not just ... He's not trying to unravel the mysteries of predestination to you. What he's trying to say to the Ephesians and to you is in the midst of a world where you feel overwhelmed by opposition, you can be confident that if God chose you, God's gonna see it through, and it doesn't matter what the size of the obstacles are in front of you, it matters the size of the God behind you and that God is greater than those. Greater is He that is in you, so stop worrying about the obstacles and start focusing on God. That's the whole point of choosing. Now, watch, watch, watch.

Here's what Jesus says, I'll give you His words. Here's what He says to His disciples. You didn't choose Me. I chose you. I appointed you that you might go and bear fruit. Bear fruit means you're gonna win other people to Jesus, and your fruit will last. It's not just gonna be a temporary thing. It's gonna be permanent, for real fruit, eternal fruit, so that whatever you ask in My name the Father will give you. When Jesus says, you didn't choose Me, but I chose you, His main point is not, "Hey guys, I'm a Calvinist. "His main point in saying that is, "I chose you, and what I have planned for you and purpose for you, I'm gonna pursue in you, and I'm not gonna let it drop. And so when you lack confidence in yourself, you should put confidence in My purposes in you, because even if you falter, they will never fail."

You see, here's where our confidence fails, is it not? A lot of times we talk about we lost our confidence in Jesus, but it's really not our confidence in Jesus that we lost. What we lost was our confidence that Jesus would do through us what He said He would do, isn't that right? A good example of this, Matthew 14, just a few chapters after this, you got Peter who is ... They're in the midst of the storm, and they think they're gonna sink, and here comes Jesus walking on the water, and Peter is like, "Hey Jesus, is that you? If it's you, why don't you invite me to come out and join you on the water?"

And Jesus says, "It is I, so come on out." So, Peter hops out of the boat. Boom, he's walking on water. Everything's awesome. Peter takes a few stabs, looks at the waves of random and, remember what he does?

He panics. He starts to sink, and we always say, oh, see? He lost confidence in Jesus. Is that really true? Nope. He's still fully confident in Jesus, 'cause Jesus is doing just fine up there on the water. What he lost confidence in was not Jesus's ability to walk on the water. He lost confidence in Jesus' ability to make him walk on the water, right? You see the difference? Where your confidence usually falters is not in the character of Jesus. It's in the promise of Jesus to do through you what Jesus said He would do. You're fully convinced that if Jesus was married to your spouse, He'd be doing an awesome job, right? But, what you're not confident of is that Jesus can use you to become the kind of husband and wife that you're supposed to be. You're confident that if Jesus were raising your kids, He'd be doing a great job.



That's not what He promised. He promised He'd do it through you. You're confident that if Jesus were at your workplace, He'd be doing a great job being a witness. That's not what He promised, but what He did promise is that He would do these things through you, and when your confidence falters, when life smacks you down, when you fail, when you feel like you are up against insurmountable obstacles in your marriage, with your kids, in your career, in your ministry, what you need to remember is faithful is He who called you, who also will do it. That He that began a good work, Philippians 1:6, in you will continue it and never let it go all the way till He finishes it in the day of Jesus Christ. That greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. That what God has purposed, He will bring to pass.

I am convinced, Paul says, I know who I have believed in, and I'm persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed to Him against that day. When I am faithless, He will be faithful. He cannot deny himself. When I am unable, He is able. Isaiah 46:11, what I have said, Jesus says, that I will bring about. What I have planned, that I will do. When Jesus chose you, He had a plan. He had a plan for your marriage. He had a plan for your family. He had a plan to use you to bring forth fruit and not a bit of a dependent on the amount of ability you brought to the conversation. What it depended on was His ability to do it through you, and you've gotta put your confidence in that.

Whenever I have somebody at the church come up to me at the end of a service, and this happens a good amount 'cause of the nature of our church, that tells me that they're having to move away for a job, and they had this look of fear in their eyes 'cause they're like, "This church has meant so much to me, and God's done so much in my life. My job is transferring me and I don't know what church should go to, and I don't have my support group, and my friends and I just ..."

I invariably, every single time, I quote to them Ephesians 2:10. Ephesians 2:10 says that God has preordained, predestined good works for you to go and walk in. Which means that God went ahead like He was your travel secretary, and He went ahead to the place that you were going, and He preordained good works for you to walk in. In other words, He set the support group you needed. He picked out the friends. He made sure that everything you needed to overcome temptation and to grow with Him, He made sure it was already in place. Your job is not to go there and try to figure out what those things are. Your job is to go there and look to the Lord Jesus Christ to lead you into the things He has already purposed and planned for you. He said it. He's gonna do it. You can trust in Him. Right? So, that was the second.

Here's the third thing. Our primary call we see is to follow, excuse me, is to be with Him. Notice exactly what He said. Follow Me. Follow Me. I just, I love that. He didn't tell them. He didn't tell them where they're going. He didn't tell them what assignment He had for them, because His primary call on you is not to do something, it is to become like Him and to become like Him, you gotta know Him. And to know Him, you gotta spend time with Him. And to spend time with Him means that you soak in every single word that comes out of His mouth.

I don't have a long time to spend on this one, but I will just tell you at the Summit Church we offer so many outlets for you to take advantage of this. Weekly messages, small groups, special studies that we do. And all I'll say is if you're really serious about being His disciple, then you're gonna begin to take advantage of a lot of these, and I don't mean just coming to hear me teach once a week. You're gonna be getting into the Word every single day on your own. You're gonna be memorizing Scripture. You're gonna be reading books about the Bible. You're gonna be listening to sermons on podcasts or on the radio. By the way, 105.7, our church has a program on there between 10:00 and 10:30. You're gonna saturate yourself in the Word.

Do you want the dust of your Rabbi to be all over you? Then you're gonna have to have His Word saturating you, inside of you until it dominates all your thinking and all your behavior. Until you think it and you talk it and you quote it and, as we often say, when life cuts you, you just bleed God's Word. 'Cause listen. You cannot know Jesus any more than you know His Word. Do you want the dust of your Rabbi all over you? Then learn His Word. And you gotta be with Him.

Number four. To follow Him, we see you had to leave it all. Immediately, it says they left their boat and their father. Why do you think the author picked these two things and highlighted those? Well, because those represent the two most significant things in our lives, right? Boat would mean your career. It's what you depend on to take care of yourself. Your father, that would be your most significant relationship. And Jesus says, "To follow me I gotta take precedence over both of those things."

Now, let me be real with you. Most of you, for you to follow Jesus, you're not actually going to lose your father and mother. Some of you will. We have a girl in our church right now who a couple of years ago some missionaries from the Summit Church in the Middle East led her to faith in Christ. Baptized her in the Summit Church over there in the Middle East. It was in the Middle East

there. Her parents found out about it, demanded that she renounce her faith. She said, "I can't. I'm convinced that Jesus Christ is who He says He is."

They said, "If you don't renounce your faith, we're gonna renounce you." They locked her in her room.

She said ... She tells the story that she overheard them, her father and her brother talking that night about killing her. She knew that they were serious. This was not a joke. Well, that night in the middle of the night they had an emergency in their family. Her sister-in-law went into labor prematurely, so they all rushed down to the hospital, left her by herself locked in her room. She knew this was her moment. If she was gonna get out, this was gonna be it. So, she broke out and went to this missionary's house and said, "You gotta get me outta here 'cause they're gonna kill me."

Well, to make a long story short, over the period of a year or so, she made her way here. I met her for the first time last week here at our church where she is now taking up residence and applying as a refugee here in our community.

Now, listen. Most of you aren't gonna have that experience. For those of you that do, it's a bitter experience, but we know that Jesus is sweeter. Most of you aren't gonna be asked to leave your job to follow Jesus. Some of you. Jesus may lead you to transfer your job from here to one of these places we're planting a church. That may happen. A few of you may be asked to quit your job altogether to become a full-time missionary. That will happen with a few of you. But for many of you, it's not going to be that dramatic.

But you are going to have moments in your life where you have to decide what holds greater sway over your life. For example, college students. Your parent ... God's gonna lead you to take a summer and go overseas on mission or after you graduate to go live with one of our church plants, and you're gonna tell your parents, and their gonna say, "I forbid it." And you're gonna have to decide in that moment who has greater sway over your life—your mom and dad who gave birth to you or Jesus who created you and died for you.

High school students. You're gonna be the only one, some of you, who chooses to follow Jesus out of your set of friends. And you're gonna get labeled that religious chick or the virgin or something else like that. And you're gonna have to decide if you're gonna sit back and be intimidated or if Jesus has a larger presence in your life than those friends do.

Some of you in business. You're gonna face the temptation to cut some corners, which, I mean, everybody else in your field does. But you're gonna have to decide if you're gonna be patient and do things God's way. For some of you, it's simply what you do with your income. Scripture teaches in unequivocal terms that you give your first and your best back to Jesus when you're His follower, which usually for Christians starts with about 10 percent. That is the area where I see most Christian's demonstrate that they've never really become a disciple of Jesus, because they just want to obey God here. They don't let Jesus have greater sway over that than their boat does.

You see, to follow Jesus means you subject everything in your life to His lordship. You forsake all that He has forbidden, and you pursue all that He has prescribed unconditionally.

Number five. Last one. In here we see that He commands us to reproduce spiritually. We see that to be a disciple, He commands us to reproduce spiritually. Verse 19. Follow me. He says, "And I will make you a fisher of men," just like He had been a fisher of men. His followers, also, would become fishers of men. This is an essential part of being a disciple. It's not something that a few of us do. It is something, according to Jesus, that all of us do. In fact, Jesus says if this is not a part of what you do then you're not really my disciple.

And you think, oh, I know you, pastor. You like to over-speak like that and say dramatic things. All right. I'll call your bluff. Here we go. John 15:8, "By this is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit." Watch this. "And so, prove to me, my disciples." How you gonna prove you're His disciple? You're gonna bear fruit spiritually. You're gonna reproduce spiritually, which means that if you are really His disciple, this is gonna be a part of your life, and if you're not reproducing spiritually, you have good reason to question whether or not you are actually a disciple at all.

Summit Church, the Great Commission that Jesus gave to us was this. Matthew 28:19 is the last thing He said before he ascended into heaven. "GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND MAKE DISCIPLES." There's a reason I put in all caps. I'll tell you in a minute. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you." All right? These three were ... You ready? Here's another. This is another nerd moment. Go baptize and teach in Greek are all participles. There's only one verb in that sentence, and it's make disciples, which means if you're reading it in Greek, that all these things kind of come from this thing, which means the center of all the going, the baptizing and the teaching ... The center is making disciples, which means that in everything else that we do as a church and everything we do as a Christian, the core of what we do is the one verb He gave us, which is to make disciples.

Yes, we have a lot of ministries at this church. We got a lot of ministries, but everything that we do in ministry grows out of the call to make disciples. All these ministries. This is the core of all of it. Yes, we love to show kindness and to meet needs wherever we see them. We want to help the homeless, the orphan, the underprivileged, the unwed mother. But the core of all that as we help them is teaching them about the salvation of Jesus.

Listen, some of you. Let me talk specifically to our college students. Some of you are moved by the needs of the world, and that's awesome. You're moved by the needs of people all around you. The greatest need in the world is the need for people to hear about the salvation of Jesus. Some of you are moved by suffering. You're moved by the suffering of the refugee and the plight of people all over the world, and that's awesome. The greatest of all suffering is eternal suffering, which people who are outside of Jesus experience. Which means, yes, give your life to meet needs. Give your life to relieve suffering. But as a disciple of Jesus, know that the greatest needs you can meet and the greatest suffering that you can relieve is the need of people to hear about Jesus and to experience the salvation of Jesus. So, in all that you do make sure the controlling verb is making disciples.

You see, Jesus summarized His ministry in Luke 19 by saying the Son of Man, Me, who have come to seek and save the lost. Doesn't that mean that if we are His disciples, that's how you would summarize our lives, too? J.D. is here to seek and save the lost? If the dust of my Rabbi is all over me, isn't that what my life will look like? This is the primary thing we do, and it involves every single believer. It's not just something we do in a few departments in the church. It's something that each of you, as followers of Jesus, do. He has called and appointed you! Individually, you. He's called you to go and bring forth fruit.

Robert Coleman, who wrote a book called *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, which is one of the most important books that I read. It was in college, and it's one of those books that's probably in the top five of those that formed how I understood ministry and following Jesus. I remember something he said there. When will the church learn this lesson? Preaching to the masses. What we do each weekend, right? Preaching to the masses, although necessary, will never suffice in the work of preparing leaders for evangelism. Just means telling other people about Jesus. Nor can occasional prayer meetings and training classes for Christian workers do this job. Individual women and men are God's method.

God's plan for the Great Commission for discipleship is not something. His plan for the triangle is not Christmas at DPAC. I hate to break it to you. His plan for the triangle is not this pulpit getting louder and louder. His plan for the triangle is not even our Easter service. His plan for the triangle are individual men and women. His plan is not something, it is someone. It's you. You are God's method. You are God's method.

We want to see you become, by God's grace, a reproducing Christian this year. And we want you this weekend to commit to it. Don't let this intimidate you. Disciple making is simply teaching somebody else to follow Jesus like you follow Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it means studying the Bible together, and we're gonna introduce to you a number of tools to do that. But even more than that, it's simply opening up your life to let other people in.

I love how our college ministry always says that 75 percent of discipleship is informal. It's just teaching people to follow Jesus like you follow Jesus. And Jesus has promised to help you do that. You say well what do I do? What are you asking me to do, exactly? I'll make this as practical as I can.

I'll give you a few things I'm asking you to do. First of all, you need to get engaged in the church. And the best means that we have to do that is through a small group. Small groups are the small organizing units of the Summit Church where we execute all the values and the mission of the church. It all happens on the small group level. And so, the moment that you move from spectator to disciple, for a lot of you, is gonna be the moment that you get involved in a small group 'cause that's where we're gonna begin to live this out and put it into practice. If you're not in a small group, we do things at every campus periodically called a group



link. A group link is an easy way to get into a small group. Some of our campuses are having them this week. A few of them had them last week. So, if you're one of those campuses you're like, oh, no, we missed my chance. Okay. That's fine. It's no problem because if you walk down for an afterwards there's somebody there called a campus pastor, and they will do whatever it takes to get you connected to a small group. And they don't mind me saying that. You can talk with them right after this service, all right? The other thing that you can do very periodically is come to this thing that we're having called member night at every campus. The member night, that's where we're going to introduce a number of training opportunities that we're gonna have this year that are gonna help you know how to share the gospel, know how to use your small group or your home evangelistically, know how to be involved in the mentoring programs that we're beginning here in our church. There's a lot of things you're gonna learn so you're gonna ... At member night you'll hear about training opportunities and you need to take advantage of those.

Maybe most importantly, what I want you to walk away from here with is I want you to identify today your one. Your one. Who is your one? I'm gonna challenge you to have one person this year that with the help of God you're gonna introduce to faith in Jesus Christ. I know you can't control the outcome, so I'm not asking you to put it on you, but I'm saying, will you commit to God and say, "God, will you show me one person this year that I am supposed to reproduce myself in spiritually?"

Summit, listen. What would the effect be on the triangle if 10,000 people who call themselves Christians at our church took this seriously? And what if every single one of those 10,000 committed to bring one person to faith in Jesus Christ this year? What if every small group committed to reach at least one person this year that is outside the church? Every small group reached one? What if each one committed to reach one? What if each one believer, each one small group, committed to reach one? Can you imagine what the effect on the triangle would be?

Here's my question for you, all right? Here's my question. It's kind of got two-fold. First of all, are you a disciple? Maybe you've never understood this until now. But are you actually a disciple or are you just a Christian? Have you committed to follow Jesus? Do you understand Who it is that's called you? I mean, talk about a teacher with smicha, with authority. He didn't just give new insights. He spoke to the wind and the waves, and they obeyed. He commanded demons, and they fled. He spoke to diseases, and they were healed. He talked to people in graves, and they walk out of the graves. By Him, all things exist. By His blood, they were redeemed. For His glory, they were created. According to His purpose, they are progressing. He has no rival. He has no equal. If Jesus is who He says He is, then He deserves more than casual association and church attendance. He deserves total abandonment, and He deserves complete and utter adoration. Right? So, some of you need to cease being Christians, and you need to actually become a disciple. Maybe you've never understood that until today. Maybe this is clarity for the first time. You're gonna leave everything to follow Him.

Let me tell you the gospel. Here it is. The gospel is that you couldn't save yourself. Nothing you could do could save yourself, so Jesus came to die the death in your place that you've been condemned to die. He offered to save you, and He offers that freely as a free gift to whoever will receive it. But the one condition is that you become His disciple and that you surrender everything to Him. I don't care what kind of prayer you pray, I don't care what kind of family you grew up in. Have you become His disciple? Have you received Him and surrendered to Him? And the part B to that question is, are you engaging in the mission? Are you reproducing yourself? Because what I've been showing you is that if you're not, you're not actually a full disciple. The call to follow Jesus, and the call to make disciples are one and the same.

A couple weeks ago in the Snowmageddon. You know, whatever. I filmed this little video and some of you watched it, and in there are I talked about three different stages of Jesus' ministry. Real quick. Listen to this. Stage one was where Jesus told people "come and see." First recorded question of Jesus in the gospel is John 1. Where you going, Lord? Come and see. That's what many of you are doing. You're coming and seeing. You're learning. Then about halfway through His ministry, He sort of shifts the focus of what He says to the disciples, and He goes from "come and see" to "come and die," John chapter 12. Come and die means "be fully committed to Me." No restrictions. Right towards the end of His ministry, before He ascended into heaven, He changed one more time, and He said, "go and tell." Come and see, come and die, go and tell.

Some of you are stuck in stage one. You sort of stalled out there. I'm inviting you to stage two and three. I'm inviting you to get off the sidelines and to come and die, then go and tell because that's what a real disciple is. To identify your one this year and commit to it. Why don't you bow your heads with me, if you would. At all of our campuses, bow your heads.

Have you never become a disciple? Are you ready to become a disciple? If so, then you can pray something like this. Lord Jesus, I'm ready to follow and become Your disciple. Say it to Him from Your heart. I'm ready to become your disciple. Every single

part of my life, I surrender to You. All of it is yours unconditionally. I receive Your gift of forgiveness. If you've never received His forgiveness, then do it right now. I receive it. Right now. And now, we pray, all of you, we pray God, give me that one person this year that with Your help I can introduce to Jesus. Maybe you're thinking of them right now. Their face, their name. Why don't you pray that name to God? God, help me. Help me to reproduce myself spiritually in this person inside of people. God, I commit to it. I commit to be a part of it. Take advantage of the opportunities that the church gives to me.

Father, I pray that this year would be marked by seeing 10,000 people at the Summit Church, seeing an army of them become reproducing disciple makers in their community and their families and workplace. I pray, give us that help. We pray by the Holy Spirit in Jesus name. Amen.