**Jesus and the Eleven**

**The Word**

Read together Matthew 28:16-20

**The Big Idea**

The heart of the Great Commission is the call to make disciples

**Questions for Discussion**

1. How did Sunday’s sermon compare/contrast with your previous understanding of the great commission?

2. Consider the definition of making disciples given on Sunday: “To make disciples means working with people to help them become a convinced follow of Jesus, adhering to Him, understanding His teaching, and proficient in the application of His teaching.” As you consider that definition, how are you doing in becoming a disciple yourself? How are you doing in making disciples?

3. As you consider what making disciples entails, how could Grace Fellowship grow in being more faithful to that call as a church?

4. Sunday’s sermon concluded by contrasting churches that only focus on saving lost people with churches that only focus on helping believers grow. Do you think every church should be focused on making disciples in the holistic sense, or is there room for churches to “specialize” in one stage of the discipleship path?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. Sometimes treasure is closer than we realize, sometimes even right “under our own pillow”

B. The Great Commission is like that. When we think of this passage, we often think of evangelism, conversions, soul winning, church planting, etc. but there is something else there right under our pillow.

II. The Grammar of the Great Commission

A. We often read these words as four commands: go, make, teach, baptize. But the original Greek grammar actually only gives us one command/imperative: “make disciples.” So making disciples is the focus.

B. So there is one command with three participles associated with that command: going, baptizing, and teaching.

III. The command to make disciples

A. There are two other times in Matthew where this idea of making disciples is discussed

1. Matthew 13:52: *He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed (that’s the same word as “make disciples”) about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."*

a. Consider how different translations translate this differently: “become a disciple” (NAS), “instructed” (NIV, NKJ), “been trained” (RSV)

b. Disciple - one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another

c. Instruct - to give knowledge to [teach](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/teach), [train](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/train); to provide with authoritative information or advice

d. Trained - to form by instruction, discipline, or drill *b* : to teach so as to make fit, qualified, or proficient; to make prepared (as by [exercise](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/train##))

2. Matthew 27:57: *As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus*.

B. So to “make disciples” means working with people to help them become a convinced follow of Jesus, adhering to Him, understanding His teaching, and proficient in the application of His teaching. Making disciples means helping someone go from not knowing about Jesus to living daily with the goal of becoming more and more like Him.

IV. Three Steps to Make Disciples

A. Going

1. The “going” of Matthew 28:19 is to Gentiles, heathens and pagans, to those outside of a relationship with God from every nation and people group, to those who have adopted other false religions and to those who have no belief at all; those who do not know about Jesus Christ as LORD and Savior of the world.

B. Baptizing

1. Baptism was viewed early on (cf. Matthew 3) as identification with the movement of God. This was the case for John the Baptist’s ministry and for the early Church. God was working powerfully and baptism was a means by which someone identified with God’s movement.

2. Baptism signified the “washing away of sin” and, as such, was symbolic of the forgiveness of sins and the new life that Christ gave a new follower. (cf. Romans 6:4)

3. Baptism was a rite by which a new Christ-follower entered into the fellowship of believers or the Church. (cf. Acts 2:38 ff.)

C. Teaching

The teaching mentioned in Matthew is that which leads the disciples to “obey everything I have commanded you.” From Jesus’ early teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) and throughout the Gospel, it is not difficult to understand how “teaching” is referenced by Jesus’ words in Matthew 28:20. The disciples were to pass onto new disciples the teachings Jesus had given them, not simply head knowledge but teaching that led to life transformation.

V. Conclusion

A. For many the “Great Commission” is only about evangelism; getting nonbelievers—again, of whatever age—to say the Sinner’s Prayer and then reassuring them that they will get to heaven. This focus reduces Christianity to God’s rescue system, and this, too, is a misguided priority.

 B. We sometimes create a false dichotomy

 1. Churches that only focus on evangelism and winning lost souls

 2. Churches that only focus on helping believers grow more in their faith

C. The grand and glorious vision of Matthew 28:16-20 is making disciples of the nations. This morning we can respond to that vision in our own commitment to discipleship and joining God in helping others know Christ and become His disciple.