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In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:16-20

These are the last words Jesus spoke to his disciples
before he returned to heaven.

They are the words Matthew uses to make
the last impression on his readers.

And notice what Jesus says about himself,
and what the bible teaches.

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

Our president has authority in the USA.

Our mayor has authority in Arcadia.

Our governor has authority in CA.

They are all commanders in chief in their region.

They make the rules and set the agenda,
people look to them to lead.

Notice, however, that these authorities

although they have great power, this power is only
effective in their own districts and in their own country.

President Bush cannot tell the Canadians or
the Mexicans what to do.

He can only tell Americans.

He is our commander in chief.

People honor him, soldiers salute him,

business people support him.

Politicians and judges listen to him.

The president of the USA is one of most influential
people in the country, but his authority is limited.

After his death and resurrection,

God gave Jesus All authority,
not just in Israel, or in the church, or
in our personal lives,

God gave Jesus all authority in heaven and on earth.

Every square inch of the universe belongs to him.

Every life and ever human activity Jesus has a say over.

Jesus is our supreme commander in chief, no matter
what nation we come from.

He is the most influential person in the world.

The one with all the power.

He is Lord. King of kings and Lord of Lords.

The Almighty. The son of God.

And when he speaks we listen and obey.

And this is what Jesus as Lord says to us,
“Because I am Lord of all,
Go and make disciples of all nations.”
That’s the business of the church,
that is the business of our congregation,
that is the business of all Christians.”
We are not in the business of making converts, or
church members, or good people, or believers.
But the great commission is making Disciples.
Extending the Lordship of Jesus over all.

We who follow Jesus and worship him are
disciples and we in turn make disciples.
Our mission statement as a congregation is
Disciples making disciples.

But what is a disciple?
Disciples are students in the school of Jesus.
Jesus is the teacher, the curriculum, and the goal.
Dallas Willard calls disciples apprentices.
I like that word.
Our task, our great commission is
helping people to be apprentices of Jesus.

My Father when he was alive was a mechanic,
a Volkswagen specialist mechanic.
He owned a garage and repaired cars.
On a regular basis my Father would take on an apprentice,
someone who was in a college program
to learn how to become a mechanic.
Learning to be a mechanic requires more than studying
the books in a classroom.
It takes practical experience in the work of repairing
cars under the watchful eye of a master.
My father would show his students what tools to use,
how to listen for sounds in a motor,
how to take motors apart and put them back together,
how to make dune buggies out of VW bugs.
It sometimes took an apprentice five years of
practical teaching by a master mechanic to learn the
trade and pass the exams for certification.

I remember, one time our family was going on vacation,
and I had to remain behind to do summer school.
I had failed English and French in ninth grade.

My father asked one of his apprentices to take over the business of the garage for three weeks and also to have me over his place and baby sit me.

I was not happy, but that is what happened.

Apprentices can be asked to do all kinds of things. But in the end they can function on their own and can start their own garage and have their own apprentices.

Although my father passed away over 16 years ago and retired as a mechanic 25 years ago,

there are still garages in operation in Canada today because of my father made disciples who in turn made disciples.

He invested time in some people, and even entrusted his children to them.

So how do we make disciples?

Jesus says: By baptizing them and teaching them.

We all understand that it takes teaching and learning and practicing - this is the apprenticeship program.

And that is all part of our life of discipleship.

It is a life of studying the teachings of Jesus and putting them into practice.

Confessing that Jesus is Lord in my life means continually reading the scriptures, discovering what God is saying to us right now, studying the word with fellow disciples, letting others teach us in the basics of the Christian life, and together putting those teachings into practice.

We go to school with Jesus the master and apprentice under him.

That's making disciples through teaching.

But what does this phrase making disciples by baptizing them into the name of mean?

We make disciples by baptizing people of all nations, our neighbors and acquaintances into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

What does that mean?

Let's look at the baptism of Jesus for moment.

What happened at his baptism?

What did his baptism point to and reveal?

Read Mt 3:16-17.

At baptism heaven opens, something about God is revealed, and we see things from God's perspective.

Jesus saw at his baptism a reality,
the truth of his life uncovered,
He saw a reality that made all the difference in his life.
Nothing was the same since that moment.
He saw the Spirit of God come down on him and
heard a voice, the voice of the father saying from
heaven;
You are my son, whom I love, I am delighted in you.”

At the baptism of Jesus
we see a profound Trinitarian relationship in God.
A relationship like that of a Father and a son bound
together in love, having the same spirit.
Being one; delighting in each other.
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
A divine community of love, of koinonia,
and intimate fellowship.

And through out Jesus' life
he lived in this Trinitarian relationship.
His Father always with him, the Holy Spirit always in him.
He enjoyed being alone with his Father in the quiet place.
He always wanted to find out his father's will and do it.
Jesus lived, the bible tells us, he lived in the bosom,
in the love, in the heart, of his Father in heaven.
They had the most profound and deep
relationship known to humanity.

When we are baptized we are baptized into the name,
into the relationship, into the reality of
the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
We are invited into that Holy Communion,
into that divine fellowship between
Jesus and his father and the spirit.

Dallas Willard in his book
The Renovation of the Heart says:
If anyone actually believes that Matthew 28:19 is
only a command to get willing people wet while
saying the words “I baptize you in the name of the
Father Son and Holy Spirit”
we can only ask them to ponder the matter some more.
The name, in the biblical world, is never just words,
but involves the thing named.
Baptism should be a special moment that reveals our
entry into the reality of that Triune relationship.

“Into the name of” comes from the world of banking and means added to the account of or to come into possession of.

When Jesus was baptized his name took on the same power as the name of God.
God the Father and Jesus the son became one.

Now to make disciples means to baptize,
to invite and welcome people into this relationship.
To add them to the account of God.

The father and the son and the Holy Spirit form one company, one small group, one fellowship.

When we are baptized we become part of their company,
part of their small group, their fellowship,
their triune relationship.

When we are baptized our lives come under new management.

We become members of God’s new company,
his family business.

When we are baptized we can see for a moment into heaven, we see God the father saying I love you,
you are my beloved child and God himself
comes upon us with the Holy Spirit and lives in us.

And like Jesus we are welcomed and empowered
to live as sons or daughters in the love of the Father,
and in the grace and truth of the son, and
in the power of the Holy Spirit.

When the disciples came to the mountain and saw Jesus,
it says in verse 17, they worshipped him;
but some doubted. But some doubted.

To doubt means an inability to trust.

An inability to surrender. An inability to enjoy.

Many people today live lives of doubt, of uncertainty,
and confusion. Maybe you too are filled with doubt.

Maybe you too feel no connection with God, and
you wonder about the love of Jesus for you and
the power of the Holy Spirit
who is supposed to work in your life.

And you too may doubt that Jesus is with you.

Then come and be baptized, or
remember you baptism and
take up your apprenticeship program again.

Come, says Jesus, to all those who doubt and
I will give you rest, and joy, and trust, and faith.
And surely I will be with you to the end of the age.

We are made for fellowshiping and worshipping
in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and
to do everything Jesus has taught us.
And in that reality there is joy.

As Christians we sing a song about this:
Joyful, joyful we adore thee, God of glory Lord of love,
Hearts unfold like flower before thee,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of eternal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

Do you want to be filled with light and gladness?
Do you want the clouds of sin and sadness to melt away?
Do you want to be joyful and
have your heart opened to the God of love, and
the lord of life?
Do you want the darkness of your doubt to be driven away?

Then come worship with your brothers and sisters
in the name of the father, Son and Holy Spirit and
be apprentices of Jesus together.

Shall we pray?