The Work of Discipleship

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[0:00] Today, as we open God's Word, go and turn in your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians 2.

! So far, what we've seen on our journey through this epistle is that we have seen the cost that these believers at Thessalonica have paid for their faith.
We have learned about the abuse that was heaped on Paul as he sought to make disciples and share the gospel in this town. And while in Acts, you know, the book of Acts doesn't really give us just a ton of detail about his time at Thessalonica.
In the letter to Thessalonians that Paul wrote, though, we get to see a lot of his heart towards the people of Thessalonica. And that's really what our text is going to be centered on today was Paul's heart for ministry, his heart for discipleship, the genuine love that he had for the people that he was ministering to.
And if there's one thing that I think we can know about Paul and just looking at all the different journeys that he has been on, the different letters that he has written through the New Testament, it's that he wasn't just concerned with making converts.
[1:30] He didn't see a confession of faith as the finish line. Paul was interested in making an investment. He wanted to make disciples of the people that he was preaching to.

So the effect that Paul had on these believers lives wasn't just limited to convincing them to make a profession of faith. And in a lot of our churches today, I really think that's where we miss the mark with a lot of the people that we bring in.
We think, well, if we can just convince them to make a profession of faith, if we can get them to come down the aisle and make a profession, then we've reached some sort of finish line with these people.
Now, while many people can point to a place in a time when they actually did make a profession of faith, I think that's important. Well, they can point back to a time when that happened.
That is not the sum of being a Christian. That is not the sum of the Christian life. Christian life is about discipleship. Now, that is a word that we're going to hear a lot today in our sermon and through our text.
[2:34] So I think it's good to have a working definition of that. This is the first time you've heard that word or maybe you've heard it and you really don't know what it means. A disciple of Jesus is this. This is the definition we're going to go off of is someone who is pursuing the likeness of Jesus in their lives every day.

Someone that is pursuing the likeness of Jesus in their lives every day. This is a daily process that could otherwise be called sanctification. It's a process that only ends when we are face to face with Jesus one day in glory and we are finally made like him.
In 1 John 3, 2, John writes this to his church, beloved, we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is.
So there is a finish line for our faith one day. And that's when we finally get to stand face to face with Jesus, when we finally get to behold him as he is and we are remade completely in his image. But until that day, we live with that goal in mind. Now, on the other hand, kind of what we're going to be talking about today is the process of disciple making, making disciples of Jesus.
[3:55] And a disciple maker is somebody that aids another believer in their sanctification process, in their journey to becoming more like Christ. Now, there's lots of different ways that we do that in the church.

We do it through encouragement, exhortation. We do it through studying God's word together. Obviously, being part of a local body of believers, that is definitely a part of the sanctification

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process of becoming more like Christ is taking part in his bride.
Also, living life together is another element of discipleship. It's hard to wrap discipleship up into one singular element. But we can define discipleship with one goal.
And again, that is becoming more like Christ. If that is not the goal, then it is not discipleship. In our text today, what we really get a feel for is Paul's ministry in Thessalonica is his heart for these people.
We see the measures that he took to remain above reproach. We see his devotion towards those he was discipling. But above all, we see an earnest desire in his heart not to taint the gospel that he was proclaiming.
[5:10] So that it wouldn't handicap those that were hearing the message. While Jesus likeness is the goal in everything that we do as a church, the gospel is always going to be the foundation that we spring from for making disciples.

So with these things in mind, let's read our text today. 1 Thessalonians 2, verses 1-12. If you all would, let's stand in honor of the reading of God's word.
Starting in verse 1. For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.
For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive. But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please men, but to please God who tests our hearts.
For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed. God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.
[6:29] But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own selves, because you would become very dear to us.

For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil. We worked night and day that we might not be a burden to any of you while we proclaim to you the gospel of God.
You are witnesses in God also. How holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. For you know how like a father with his children, we exhorted each of you or each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.
This is the word of the Lord. You all may have a seat. So immediately in our text, Paul starts off by reminding them of the success that their ministry saw while he was in Thessalonica.
Many came to Christ. They continued in Christ. And now in this letter, what we're seeing is Paul is writing to a healthy, thriving church, a church under persecution, albeit, but it is still a church that is growing and being an example to other churches in surrounding city states.
[7:57] He also briefly reminds him of the treatment that he received in Philippi. This was the city that he went to before Thessalonica, where again, there was success. There were new converts, new disciples made for Christ.

There was a church established, but he was arrested. There was a riot. He was beaten and imprisoned without a trial, which if you were in a Roman colony, that is extremely illegal.
That is extremely shameful to treat a Roman citizen like that, which Paul was a Roman citizen. So after being shamefully treated, they tried to sneak him out of prison when they found out that he was a Roman citizen and get him to leave the city quietly so no retribution would fall on the city officials.
It's a very insulting treatment for a Roman citizen. But as we see from Paul's life, he was not going to be deterred from his goal to make disciples, to make much of the name of Jesus Christ.
It just fueled his fire. Discipleship and disciple making should be the heartbeat of every believer. We rejoice when we see others growing in their faith.
[9:04] And it should excite us that God is using us to be part of that process. It's not just an event that we attend once a week. It's not something that we pay somebody else to do. Discipleship is a lifestyle.

And that's the main point of our text today. Discipleship is a lifestyle. And there are two natures that we see Paul highlight in our text today as far as discipleship goes.

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There's two natures of discipleship that we should emulate as believers in our own lives and in our own efforts. The first is this. The pure nature of discipleship.
The pure nature of discipleship. There is a reason that Paul is trying to convince these people of the purity of his ministry. Pure intentions are what distinguished him from other false teachers.
Notice the words that he starts out with trying to dissuade false accusations. He uses words like error, impurity, deceit. Paul wants these Thessalonians to know that there is something different about him from the other religions and the other false teachers that were coming in behind him.
[10:15] And we see several elements of what pure discipleship looks like. The first is this. In verse 3, it highlights a need for a solid foundation to work from.

For discipleship to have any measure of eternal value, your motives, your methods, your message, all needs to be built on the truth.
Error, impurity, deceit. These were gimmicks that the pagans would use in these cities. But the gospel, it doesn't need gimmicks. It doesn't need human cunning.
The gospel is all sufficient. It is without error. It is complete in its revelation. And all we need to do is just be obedient to proclaim it.
You don't need to attach a social justice cause to it to make it relevant to the times. You don't need to take away from it to make it less offensive to the world today. And it doesn't need to be harmonized with any scientific textbook.
[11:19] It stands on its own. It affirms itself. The only need is ours to be obedient to it and proclaim it in the lives of those we are seeking to influence. I've seen too many pastors that fall into the trap of trying to make the Bible interesting.

They want to attach their own philosophical prowess to it. Maybe insert some pop psychology here and there. But the Bible is already about an eternal God whose ways are beyond ours.
I mean, how much more interesting do you need to make the Bible than that? The point is this. You can't trick someone into being a disciple of Christ. You can't trick them into it.
You can't intellectualize the gospel enough to win people over. Being a disciple of Christ starts with a draw from the Father. That is John 6, 44.
It is driven by a love that comes from the spirit of adoption that is placed within us. Romans 8, 15.
And we are continually nourished by the all-sufficient word of God.
[12:22] Psalm 19. Anything other than the gospel that we would try to use to win a conversion would be an error. Because it's not founded on the truth.

It would be impure. Because inserting our motives into it is to taint it with human sinfulness. And it would be deceit. Because to try and insert anything into the gospel or to take away from it would mean taking away from the truth that God has given us.
Now the next element of pure discipleship is God's approval. We're not seeking man's approval. We are seeking God's approval. When doing the work of an evangelist or making an investment in the lives of believers, we are not seeking the approval of man but of God.
So we should never approach the gospel with the aim of pleasing people but with the aim of obedience out of love for God. Because again, it's not about winning the approval of man.
If you fall into that trap, you're on a road to deception. We shouldn't live for the possibility of love for men when we already have a sovereign God that has proclaimed his love over us in Christ.
[13:41] What more love do we need when doing his work? So in doing the work of disciple making, how do we live as one approved by God?

In verse 4, Paul uses that phrase as one approved by God. Well, what does that mean? How do we know if we are working as one that has been approved by God? Timothy was one of Paul's disciples.
Someone that Paul invested in heavily and used in his ministry. I think we've talked about him several times as we've been going through Thessalonians. And Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, 2 Timothy 2 verse 15.
It says, Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.
So the measure of our success is going to be seen in how we handle the word of truth. When you are presented with an opportunity to speak truth to an unbeliever or maybe to a wayward Christian, will you speak the truth with boldness?

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[14:49] Or will you shy away for fear of rebuttal from the people that you are rebuking or speaking the truth to? One of the reasons that the gospel has lost its influence in so many churches is that the Bible has become a tool to promote other agendas rather than to exalt Christ.

Only by rightly handling the word of truth will it have its proper effect on those that we are speaking to, those that we are seeking to reach. And I believe only those approved by God will handle it properly.
I know that there are a lot of unapproved people who claim to represent God and you will be able to tell who they are by what they do with God's word. So you as believers, show yourself as one approved by God to those around you by how you rightly handle the word of truth.
You're not perfect. No one is ever going to be perfect. But the word that God has given us to proclaim is perfect. It is a great task that he has called us to.
And the last element of pure discipleship is this, an investment in others. When you're seeking to make disciples, we need to remember that God's word is what we minister with, but people are who we minister to.
[16:12] It's one of the things that my dad drove into me when I was preparing for ministry. He said, people are your ministry, but you have to minister to them with the word of God. Now, what does that mean exactly?

We shouldn't approach those we disciple with the aim of taking from them, but investing in them.
Verse five, Paul says that there was no pretext for greed.
Verse six says that there was no glory from people that he was seeking. Disciple making is not a pursuit of collecting and receiving. It's not meant to be glamorous.
It is investing and equipping, and it is never ending. I think we can look at Paul's ministry and see the cost that it exacted from him. Towards the end of Paul's life, again, going back to second Timothy, Paul wrote this in chapter four, verses six through eight.
So Paul knew that he was about to face his end on this earthly life.
[17:16] He says, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day.

And not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing. Now, Paul's describing his life as a drink offering. In Leviticus and in the old law, the sacrificial system, a drink offering was part of the sacrifices that the Jews would make.
When they were atoning for their sins, when they were making a fellowship offering to the Lord, what they would do is they would take wine and they would pour it on the offering. That wine would go into the fire.
It would be consumed. Smoke would go up. And then what would happen is, as Leviticus describes, there would be a pleasing aroma to the Lord. So a drink offering was part of the sacrificial system that would, I guess, bring favor to God in their sacrifices.
Jesus in Luke 22 also used this image when he instituted the new covenant, saying this wine that is being poured out, this is my blood of the new covenant. Going back to what Paul is doing, Paul is considering his life a drink offering to the pursuit of making disciples towards this great task that God has called him to.
[18:41] His life was being poured out as a sacrifice to the Lord, a pleasing aroma with every disciple that he would make. Making disciples will demand much of you.

It gets messy. I'll just be honest with you. You're going to deal with the brokenness of people firsthand. You're going to have to confront them on sin. You're going to have to teach them what it means to repent.
In every area of their life that you are walking them through, you are teaching them, this is how you exalt Christ as you are going through this trial in your life.
But as Paul says, even though this is an investment that will demand your life, it is an investment that is worth making because a crown of righteousness is waiting for all those who have loved the Lord's appearing.
So my call to you, as far as this part of this nature of discipleship goes, is don't grow weary. Don't grow weary in making disciples. When it seems like your counsel might be falling on deaf ears, which it does sometimes, when you get phone calls at inconvenient times, when you need to make an impromptu extra place at the dinner table, or maybe when you're called away to a tragedy, God

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is placing these people and these opportunities in your life for you to rightly handle the word of truth, to make an eternal investment in someone who is seeking to grow in their faith.
[20:16] So don't grow weary of disciple making. As we talk about the next nature of disciple making, we see Paul shift his language.

Paul begins to use paternal language. He is showing the sort of affection that he had for this church. You know, another important backdrop that I think we need to realize about Paul's ministry is that whenever he would plant these churches, he would either move on to a new city to start the disciple making process to plant more churches, or he would be ran out of cities by people that were seeking to persecute him.
But inevitably, when he would leave these cities, false teachers would come in behind him, try to distort his message by defaming his character.
We see Paul address this head on in Corinthians. We see him address it in Galatians. Paul is trying to defend his ministry from these people that are seeking to discredit him because he knows if he is discredited, the message that he has proclaimed could be discredited as well.
So his reputation was very important. Now, one of the distinguishing marks between a true disciple maker and a false teacher is going to be the genuine love and care that they have for their people or lack thereof if you are a false teacher.
[21:46] While false teachers would only care about what they could gain from their followers, Paul's genuine love could be seen by what he was willing to invest in his disciples.

What he was willing to do to make sure there was no barrier for the gospel. And I can't think of a better relationship that shows giving and investment than what Paul is doing right here, which is the relationship between a parent and a child.
I want to read this section to you again, starting in verse seven. Paul says this, that we were gentle among you like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.
So being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.
For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil. We worked night and day that we might not be a burden to any of you while we proclaim to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses.
[22:57] And God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct towards you. So there he is again, trying to defend his character. For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

The first picture of a parent that we see here is the tenderness of a mother. The language that he uses here, gentle, nursing mother, affectionately desirous, very dear.
That's why the second nature that we see here is the parental nature of discipleship. This is clearly what Paul was doing here. Paul is expressing his love for his people by trying to paint the best picture of earthly love that we can see with our own eyes, which is the love of a mother for her child.
And I haven't seen a better example of what sacrificial love looks like in my life than the love that my wife, Nicole, has for our children. She is patient with our children.
In times when I would sooner snap at them to try to get them to cease whatever quarrel they're fighting about, she's patient with them. She puts off purchasing new things for herself to make sure that our children have the best of what we can afford.
[24:33] When it's late at night and our children decide they want to become philosophers, ask us all the tough questions, she's patient with them. She hears their questions.

She talks through it with them no matter how late it is at night, no matter how much I want to go to sleep. She wants to hear their deep thoughts. She also had aspirations of being a special education teacher and she was for a short time and she was very good at it.
But she put all that aside to stay at home, to educate our children and to make sure they had full access sacrifice to her love at all times.
I'm grateful for the sacrifice that she has made for all of us and I'm also grateful for the sacrifice that my mother has made in similar ways for my brother and I. That's why Paul is using this language to describe his love for his disciples.
He even refers to Timothy as his child in the faith. Moses, when he was leading Israel and he was talking to God, he used a similar reference personifying himself as a nursing mother for Israel.

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[25:42] Spiritual care and discipleship takes on a lot of parental characteristics and the first one is this, nourishment. Going on with this motherhood metaphor, this idea of a nursing mother talks about how nourishment is required for growth, for spiritual growth.

Peter, in his message to the Christians that he was writing to that were in a similar situation, they were also being persecuted for their faith but Peter also knew that there were new believers that were going to be reading his letters.
So in 1 Peter 2, verse 2, he says, like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation.
Paul, in his letter to Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 3, verse 2, says, I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it.
Has anyone ever tried to feed a newborn solid food before? They reject it. They don't know what to do with it. Thankfully, that is a mistake that I have not made more than once.
[26:57] Just kidding. But if you are a disciple maker, you are going to encounter people who aren't ready for the deeper things yet of theology. Maybe they're not ready for certain areas of ministerial service.

You have to work up to it with them. You're going to have to start with the basics. Answer questions like, who is Jesus? What is sin? What do the little numbers in the Bible mean as opposed to the big numbers in the Bible?
One of the things I love about being a pastor is I love getting to teach the basics to new Christians. There is nothing more rewarding than that. It's exciting to see them make those discoveries.
It's exciting to see them gain these tools to where they can begin to pursue Christ on their own. It's amazing to watch that process and to see them mature in their faith.
And that's the next part of this. They don't always stay on spiritual milk. They don't always stay on the basics. They will be ready to move on to ministry, to move on to service, to move on to the deeper things of God.
[28:00] In Hebrews 5, verses 12 through 13, the author says this, and this is him critiquing these Christians that he is writing to. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God.

You need milk, not solid food. For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is a child. So there is a growth and a maturation process that needs to take place in your journey of sanctification.
You can't stay on the basics forever. You're expected to grow. Now the next parental characteristic that we see Paul talk about is being gentle. You're going to need to be patient with those you are discipling.
You will need to be willing to answer their questions. You need to be willing to bear with them in their struggles. The new self is a remaking process.
When you are made new in Christ, that starts off the process of becoming more like Jesus. But the old self still has remnants in your life. And it takes a while for those to start disappearing and fading once you have committed to following Christ.
[29:16] And Paul was committed to leading these people. And just keep in mind that these were people who had been steeped in idol worship and paganism for years. Some of these people worshipped the emperor of Rome.

Many of these people worshipped gods that demanded acts of sexual debauchery to worship them. These were not things that just disappeared overnight.
But Paul was willing to be gentle, patient with them, correct them as they pursued sanctification. That's the way all discipline should be.
Discipline should not be condemning. It should be corrective. Not driven by anger or disappointment, but driven by the truth.
This next phrase that Paul uses is one that has always stuck out to me. He says that he was affectionately desirous for these people. Paul wanted to see spiritual growth in these new believers.
[30:20] And that desire was only enhanced even more by the love, the genuine love that he had for them. Now as parents, why do we want our children to grow into maturity?

Why do we teach them the right thing to do? It's because we love them. And even more important than just basic life decisions, I believe that a parent's love is best seen in their aching desire and the deepest part of their soul for their children to know and love the Lord.

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The discipleship of our children should be the most important goal in our time raising our children. There's no greater act of love that we can show our children than to point them to Christ on a regular basis.
Not just bringing them to church but you yourselves speaking the truth into their lives. And I can tell you something, as a pastor, there is nothing that I find more joy in than speaking to children, answering their questions.
99.99% of the time, unless someone is dying and I'm right there with them, I will stop what I'm doing to talk to a child about the questions they have about the Bible. But one of the greater joys that I also see in a church is when I see children who don't need to come to me because their parents have made that investment in their lives.
[31:47] They see their father and their mother as their shepherds to lovingly care for them and share with them the gospel. And it should be the same way in our lives with the other relationships that we are pursuing.

If there are people in our life that we truly love, we should desire to see them come to know Christ, to love him, to grow to be more like him. We will desire their sanctification above anything else. And even more than that, we will want to be part of that process. Paul talks a lot about integrity in verses 9 through 10. We talked about Paul's desire to defend his character because again, if the messenger is disqualified, a lot of times his message will be too.
people won't trust what they're saying. There is nothing more damaging to a church than the moral failure of its leadership. One person that I used to be extremely fond of and admired, he had a major moral failing that really revealed a pattern in his life, not just a one-time occurrence, but a pattern in his life.
That person had a successful ministry, he had a great podcast, he had numerous books, he was the head and head positions at two different seminaries, and he was also a church leader, but all of a sudden when this moral failing came to light, he just disappeared into ambiguity.
[33:13] Haven't heard from him since. Meanwhile, people like me and others that were familiar with his work were left wondering, how did we not see this coming? Any impact that he could have had in his future is gone now.

If your integrity is in question, then so will everything that you say and do as a disciple maker. That's why in Proverbs 21.1, it says, a good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.
So if you are going to make disciples, then you need to make sure that you are pursuing Christ yourself, that your discipleship is in order. You cannot lead someone where you have never been yourself, and you cannot replicate something that you are not.
Kevin DeYoung was quoted saying this, the one indispensable requirement for producing godly mature Christians is godly mature Christians. A.W. Tozer said, only a disciple can make a disciple. So the path to being a disciple maker, it needs to start with you being a faithful disciple yourself first. Again, you're not going to be perfect. This isn't a call that you'd have no flaws, but what this is a call for is that you need to have a steadfast pursuit in your own life of the one who is perfect, and that you are being constantly made more into his image.
[34:39] Paul's desire in his ministry efforts was that nothing would call his motives, his character, or his message into question. So he removed everything possible that might do that.

So a challenge for you all is to examine yourself. Is there anything in your life that could lead someone to question your character, to question your motives, that calls your testimony into question?
And if there is, what steps are you going to make to remove that, to correct your pursuit of Christ? Christ? Now Paul goes into this image of a fatherly correction as well.
In verses 11 through 12, he starts talking about how as a father, he is exhorting his followers or encouraging them. He's comforting them.
He's charging him. Those are the four words that he used to describe his fatherly influence. And as their spiritual father in the faith, he took this responsibility very seriously as we should of those that we are discipling.
[35:44] There was an aim that he was shooting for and that was to live lives worthy of God, was what he said. As a father, there are times that we should be encouraging to our kids, exhort them, when our kids make the right choices.

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When they succeed, we should celebrate them, we should encourage them. There are times when we should comfort our children, when they fail, when they mess up, they should be comforted knowing that our love for them has not been shaken, but all at the same time charging them to make better choices in the future through corrective discipline.
You'll find yourself doing the same thing in your journey of growing disciples. Praising them for their spiritual strides, comforting them in their failures, realizing that God's love for them does not cease, it does not change, but also urging them with the truth to continue the pursuit of obedience.
To live worthy of God does not mean that you'll be perfect, but the trajectory of your life will constantly point to Christ and his likeness. Our pursuits, our choices, will show the world around us that we are living for a higher purpose in mind.
And what are we looking for in the lives of these believers? What's the hope that we are pushing for? It's that one day they will continue the disciple making process.
[37:18] One day that they will take believers under their wings and make disciples. It says in Matthew 28 to go therefore and make disciples. A healthy faith will lead you to desire that same faith in others.

It will become an urging in your heart to serve in the kingdom effort to make the most of Christ by seeing him formed in others.
When Paul was writing to the Galatians, he said this in chapter 4 verse 19, he says, my little children, for who I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.
Is that your desire for those that you influence? Do you long to see Christ formed in them? There are many different aspects of disciple making.
But again, I just want to remind you that the one goal that should encompass all of your efforts is to see Christ formed in them. So we close today.
[38:23] The main application that if I could just have you take away anything from our text today, it's this. invest yourself in disciple making. Invest yourself in making the most of Christ in the lives of others.

There's no greater effort, there's no worthier cause for a believer to engage in than to make disciples. As the church, it's the lens that we should evaluate everything that we do through.
Is what we are engaging in, is what we are doing right now, is it making the most of Christ? Is it making disciples? Or is it promoting something else? we have the mandate in our lives to be involved with something of eternal significance and we should never settle for anything less as believers and as a church.
In Colossians 128, it says, Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.
So strive for this. long to live life that has an eternal impact on those that are around you. Now maybe you're here and you're a new believer.
[39:36] Maybe you're someone that's new to this whole Christianity thing. You've just been introduced to Jesus. You're still feeding on spiritual milk and that's okay. You have to start somewhere but my encouragement for you as your next step in faith is to find that person that can invest in your life.

Find a disciple maker that can pour into you. One of the biggest pitfalls of new believers where I see a lot of people struggle is that they still choose to invest in relationships that represent their own life rather than invest in relationships that help them pursue their new life in Christ.
So that's your next step of obedience is to find that person that can pour into you. Find that person that you can emulate. They can teach you. And as believers I encourage you to find that person.
If you are a mature believer find that person that you can invest in. And finally if you are here and you are an unbeliever discipleship starts with rebirth.
Christ can be formed in you by placing your faith in him by repenting of your sins and following Jesus. This lifestyle that we've talked about it seems like a lot.
[40:51] It seems like a huge commitment. If you're here and you're thinking that you're on the right train of thought because it is a huge commitment. It is a lifelong journey that ends in glory though when we finally get to see our savior face to face and spend eternal life with him.

Jesus might be making that call for you to follow him today. If that is a call that you feel in your heart that Jesus is calling you to repent to follow him I'll be down at the front as we sing our response song today and I want you to come and talk to me.

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Come and talk to one of our elders. If you're in a Sunday school class talk to your Sunday school teacher today. Don't leave today without having your questions answered because the more the longer you follow Jesus the more you are going to love him.
the more you love him the more you will want to be like him. And the more like him that you become the more you will desire to see others follow in that same path and one day you will be a disciple maker too but it has to start with that decision of obedience to follow Christ.
Let's pray. Father we thank you Lord for those that are believers here Lord that you have called us to be disciple makers Lord for trusting us with that solemn task Lord I also know that with that task you have given us your perfect word to fulfill that duty.
[42:32] So Lord I just pray for all the believers that are here today Lord that you would like that fire inside of them to make disciples. Lord that they would long to see Christ formed in those that are around them.

That they would long to reach out to those that might be wayward or to those that are lost. I pray that they would be disciple makers that they would rightly handle the word of truth so that they could show themselves as workers approved by you.
Lord for those that are lost here today that are unbelievers Lord I thank you that you have brought them to this church today. And Lord I just pray a special prayer over them.
Lord that they would hear that call to follow you. The word says that you were willing that none should perish and Lord I pray that today they would see Christ exalted.
That they would trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior of their life and that they would follow him and one day become disciple makers themselves. Lord we know that your word does not return void and Lord I just pray that over the message today over the songs that we are singing and I pray that whatever happens today Lord that you would be glorified.
[43:44] I pray for all these things in Jesus name. Amen.

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