

Hanging Out with Jesus

Why Knowing We Should Make Disciples Isn't Enough

Unedited Transcript

Luke 24:44-53, Mark 16:19-20, Acts 1:3-12, 1 Corinthians 15:7

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Good morning, men. My wife and I took her parents ... Too loud, too loud. My wife and I took her parents ... Still too loud. My wife and I took her parents to lunch on Sunday and had a delightful time. As we were driving them back to their retirement community, she is eighty-nine, he is ninety, we were at a traffic light and her mother who was sitting in the back seat says, "You know, I don't think I'm long for this world." Patsy goes, "Mom, why are you talking like that?" She said, "I'm just going to go home and take a nap." She said it in a way that Patsy and I both thought that she was predicting her demise or that she was checking out or something. She was just trying to say she was tired, that she was going to take a nap.

Today we come to the story of Jesus in which he really is not long for this world. He really is going away. Open your Bibles to, if you would, Luke, Chapter Twenty-Four, Verse Forty-Four. We're going to do a shout-out today. Today it goes to a group called Crash, part of First Assembly of God in Terrell, Texas. That's because they're a bunch of guys, I guess who have crashed and are trying to figure out how to put it together. They also call themselves a Bunch of Rhinos. Guys, I haven't figured out what that one means yet, but they're forty men and they've been meeting for several years every month at the church using the study with us. Grant Denny is their leader and by the way, we're looking for somebody in Terrell, Texas, so if one of you men would like to be part of the staff, either paid or volunteer, at Man in the Mirror, let us know. I wonder if you would join me in giving the group Crash a rousing Man in the Mirror welcome. One, two, three. Hooah. Welcome, guys. We are really glad to have you here.

Today is the two hundred and third and final message in the series, "Hanging out with Jesus." We've been looking at stories about Jesus from the Gospels and today's message, "Why knowing we're to make disciples, isn't enough". Remember last week we talked about the last, part of the last words, the near last words of Jesus, that he gives us this commission, this command if you would, to go and make disciples. This most impactful speech that's ever been given in the history of the world. Today we want to talk about what Jesus added to those words, and we're going to do that by looking at Luke Chapter Twenty-Four, Verse Forty-Four, and following.

This is the final piece of Jesus's master plan for total global conquest which is what he's after. I'm going to begin here with a little question. How many disciples do you think would have been made if it was up to you? How many disciples do you think would have been made if it was up to the twelve? How many disciples do you think there would be in the world today if Jesus had told us to go and make disciples and then left it up to us? I suspect that Christianity would have died out a long time ago, and so to this

command, to make disciples, Jesus took out an insurance policy. He adds a secret sauce, and we're going to look at that. In fact, that's the first thing we're going to talk about.

What's the secret sauce? Verse Forty-Four. He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms." It's just interesting to note here, a little sidebar, Jesus is affirming the scriptures. He is affirming Moses, the writings of Moses, the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. He is affirming the prophets and he is affirming the psalms as scripture. Jesus authenticates Moses, the prophets and the psalms as being scripture. Just an interesting little side note there. "Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures." It's interesting.

You don't have to understand the scriptures to be a Christian. You realize this, right, because there are many things in the Bible which are mysterious, difficult, opaque, hard to understand, different levels of intellect, different levels of experience. If you had to understand the Bible, none of us would be Christians, but there is a lot in the Bible which is extremely clear and crystal-clear and the Plan of Salvation is extremely clear and there is no dispute about what's involved in that. Even though you have thousands of denominations, they all agree that the Plan of Salvation, I should say there are a few cults that don't, but all the Orthodox denominations agree on the Plan of Salvation. It's very clear in the Bible how we come to this place of salvation. I guess that's another sidebar.

Reading on. Verse Forty-Six. "He told them, 'This is what is written, that Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem.'" Now watch this. "You are witnesses of these things." This is another way of saying, "Go and make disciples," you see. Then he goes on to say this. "I am going to send you what my Father has promised but stay in the city until you've been clothed, with power, with dunamis, from on high." The power of God from on high, and this is the Holy Spirit. We've talked about it previously. We'll talk about it here again in a moment.

Then it says, "When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and while he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into the heavens. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and they stayed continually at the temple praising God." From where does the ability to actually make disciples come from? We see it stated here that God has promised the Holy Spirit, that we will be clothed with power from on high, the power of the Holy Spirit. Now I'm going to show you something that I just saw for the first time today, this week, in this lesson, I'm going to show it to you today, that blows my mind, because in the Bible, this is the only place where I'm aware that this happens.

You can correct me if I'm wrong on this, but I was with a guy this week and he said, "The Bible seems pretty repetitive." There is a sense in which it is repetitive. God keeps saying the same things over and over and over again because we're slow, but that's another story. These four gospels are what he was referring to, and he was talking about how repetitive the Gospels are. When I tell you a story, I tell it to you from my perspective. I'm looking at you from this direction. I have my experience, I have my perspective on the world, but when someone else is telling you the same story, they were standing over here when they saw the story so they're seeing you from a different angle. They're seeing it from a different perspective. They're seeing different things. They have a different personality. They have a different temperament.

They have a different world view that they're bringing to the story. They have a different purpose for telling the story and by the way, when I'm over here and I tell that story here, if I tell that same story to somebody else, I'm likely to change some of the details. Why? Because I might have a different reason for telling them that story and by the way, if a year goes by, I might tell the story in an even different way because I've had some more time to reflect on it, and the same thing's happening with the other person. You have these four Gospels where there are four different accounts given of the same period of time, and some of the authors include details that other authors leave out and sometimes you'll see a story repeated only once. Sometimes two Gospel writers, sometimes three, sometimes things are in all four of the Gospels and we've seen that as we've looked at these stories about the life of Jesus.

Today, we're going to see something that I've never seen before. We have two accounts of the same event by the same person. Turn with me, if you would, keep your finger here and turn with me to Acts Chapter One. The most amazing thing here. Luke who is the author of obviously the Gospel of Luke is also the author of the Book of Acts, and lo and behold, he describes what he just described in Acts, in Luke Chapter Twenty-Four, he describes, he tells the same story again, in Acts Chapter One, Verses Three through Twelve, but he gives a different perspective. Time has passed. He has a different purpose. It's fascinating to look at this. You're going to love this.

Verse Three. "After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive." In the Luke Twenty-Four passage, he was recounting about the scriptures and so forth and that he would be crucified and raised from the dead, so perhaps, perhaps the Luke twenty-four is simply an expansion of this one little statement here. He gave many convincing proofs that he was alive but that's not the purpose of Luke in this passage. Then it goes on, "He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command. Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my father has promised." That's the same gift that he was talking about in the Luke twenty-four parallel passage which you have heard me speak about.

"For John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." Now the Holy Spirit had not been given yet. Now when we become a Christian, part of becoming a Christian is receiving the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion but back then this was the inauguration of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. When they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" It's very interesting. Jesus makes it very clear that it's none of our business. We don't have to worry about that. In fact, he goes on here and he says, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority." You don't need to worry, in other words, about what's going to happen when you witness.

You don't need to worry about any of that future stuff. He says this, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses here, there and everywhere, in Jerusalem, all of Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." Then after he said that, he's taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid him from their sight. That's a detail that in Luke, the Gospel of Luke, Luke is giving an account of the Ascension, but in Acts, Luke gives an account, a second account of the same story but he gives more detail there for whatever reason. I don't think the reason is that important to me. It's just very interesting.

That is the exact same story told in two different ways and it goes on there, by the way, that a couple of guys showed up, I guess they were angels, huh, and said this, "Jesus has been taken up into heaven and will come back in the same way you've seen him go up into heaven." This actual physical disappearance

of Jesus into the clouds, how mysterious is that. By the way, we think that, "Okay, here we are," and N. T. Wright makes his point, he says about the Resurrection but it applies to the Ascension as well. We think that, oh, because of modern science, that anything before 1750 is medieval and arcane and not scientific and so the Resurrection and the Ascension seems so strange to us.

Guess what? It felt very strange to the disciples too. They had never seen a Resurrection either. It was just as baffling to them as it is to us. Don't think of them as being some sort of medieval superstitious people. They were just like us. They were completely wrecked by the Resurrection. They were wrecked by this Ascension. Why did the Holy Spirit preserve this text? He did it because he wanted to clarify where we would get our power from.

I, as most of you know, my wife and I have taken up camping because it's something we can do together and enjoy. When we were first getting started, we actually decided to rent a few campers, a, to see if we actually did like it in actuality. We knew we liked it potentially, but do we like it actually? We rented some campers and there's quite a learning curve. There are twenty different systems that you have to learn. The second trip out was the ... I went by myself the first time just to ... Then the second time, Patsy went with me. I go to turn on the power. There is none. I check every fuse box. I look under every bed.

I look behind every panel I possibly can in this thing and I'm completely baffled because there's no power and how can you ... You can't turn on the air conditioning, you can't turn on this, and ... I called the magic number on the rental agreement and he said, "Have you checked the breaker box?" I said, "I plugged the power in to the little panel at the camp ground." He said, "Yeah, but did you turn the breaker on? Did you check the breaker?" I said, "I didn't know I was supposed to check any breaker. You didn't tell me that when I rented it." I went out and I flipped the switch and, everything came on. It was awesome. It was awesome.

It's the same way as we go and try to fulfill our responsibility, this command, this privilege that we have of sharing Jesus with other people, witnessing with other people, making disciples, all different ways of saying the same thing. We need to have a source of external power or not much is going to happen. Not much is going to happen, and so **The Big Idea** today is this: **The more consciously you witness in the power of the Holy Spirit, the more consistently you will see lives change.** The more consciously you witness in the power of the Holy Spirit, you make sure the breaker is on, then the more consistently you will actually see lives change. Jesus didn't leave it, he did not leave it up to you to change lives. Instead, he infuses us with power so that we can effectively communicate the message of his Gospel. How many of you have ever been given a job to do but not been given the power to do it? You know what I'm talking about? It's like the Israelite slaves in Egypt in the time of Moses. Moses said, "Go and let my people go," and you remember what happened is that the Pharaoh instructed the slave drivers to demand that the people still do their job of making bricks but then they had to find their own straw. They were given a job to do but they didn't have the power to do it. It was just physically impossible to do it. They couldn't keep up. All of us have been given a job to do without being given the power to do it. This job of making witnesses is a job we've been given but we've also been given the power to do it. We've been given the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now that's all the Bible's part of it, okay, well, not all the Bible part of it, but the main. Why do some of us make disciples while others don't? Why is that? Why do some of us make disciples while others don't? I want us to turn now to, and we're done in the Gospels, turn to First Corinthians, Chapter Two, Verse Four and I want you to see something here. It's something that I actually pray two times, well, I

probably prayed more than that, every week when I'm preparing a message here. Each week, I pray as I begin, I repent of any self-sufficiency to either prepare or deliver this message. Then the last thing that I try to do is to once again, before I walk in here, usually on the way over here, I again, "Lord, I repent."

I've done all this work. I could go in there and rely on all this great work that I've done, and I've tried to be clever. I've tried to come up with interesting ways to explain things, hopefully something in a di-, a way you haven't heard it before and I'm trying to figure out how to be persuasive and inspiring and challenging and all those things, but the bottom line is that I repent of all that before I come in, of any self-sufficiency to prepare, or now to go and deliver. Instead I ask God to fill me with the Holy Spirit so that I can be uninhibited in talking to you, and the place that I get that idea from is this text. First Corinthians, Chapter Two, Verse Four, and I think it explains why some of us are making disciples, while others of us are not making disciples.

This is why Paul was able to make disciples. This is why Paul was able to make disciples. First Corinthians, Chapter Two, Verse Four. Awesome, awesome. "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the spirit's power so that men's faith might rest not on man's wisdom but on God's power." The idea is here the more consciously we're depending on the Holy Spirit when we go out to make disciples, the more consistently we're going to see lives change because it is the power of God through us. We're just the messenger. We're the oracle, but it's God speaking through us that changes lives. We don't change lives.

I understand what we mean when, "Yeah, I led this person to Christ." It's part of the inadequacy of the human language to say, "I led so-and-so to Christ." You know you didn't lead them to Christ. You know that, right? If you lose the consciousness that it's the Holy Spirit doing it, then you begin to rely on your wisdom, your persuasiveness, your cleverness and so forth. This is the way that Paul did it. By the way, Paul probably had more reason to depend on his ability to go out and make disciples than all of us put together in this room, okay? He is our theologian. Jesus is our savior but Paul is our theologian. God anointed him to give us all of this doctrine, if you will.

If you want to make disciples and we all do, I know we do, just remember it doesn't depend on how much desire we have, how much will, your self-discipline, your determination, how much training you have, your perseverance, your charisma, your cleverness, your wisdom. All of those things are good, but at the end, it's the power of the Holy Spirit that is going to change a man's life. The big idea again, the more consciously that we're aware of this, the more consciously that we're aware of this and witness in the power of the Holy Spirit, then the more consistently you will see lives change. I've spent a lot of time witnessing in my own strength. I have. I've had a lot of conversations where I've talked to people about Jesus without being conscious of the Holy Spirit.

I remember at this table right here and that chair right there, I basically ... (He sent me a nice email about this, an encouraging email about this, giving me a little grace), but I forced a guy to pray the prayer to receive Jesus. I intimidated him into praying the prayer to receive Jesus, right there in that chair. Now that's been a long time ago and I carry around the pain of that. I'm forgiven. I get it. I trust God has taken care of Jack but the bottom line is that I did that in my own strength. Why? Because I thought I could persuade him. I was clever. God, you are in such luck today. You had me doing this witnessing. Watch me, God, watch me do this. Wow, lucky God. How is it that we can consistently reach more men?

Okay, so number one, and this is principle number one. It was what the big idea was for last week. Our work for God will always be a reflection of our walk with God, so really, the way to consistent-, the best way to consistently reach other men is number one, is to walk with Jesus, to guard your walk. Now let's get more practical. Turn to John, Chapter Fourteen, Verse Twenty-Six. John, Chapter 14:26. Imitate Paul. Point number two. First guard your walk with God. Number two. Imitate Paul, who doesn't depend on clever and persuasive and wise speech but rather on a demonstration of the spirit's power so that faith, these people that we would like to reach, so that their faith doesn't rest on our wisdom but on God's power. Imitate Paul.

Here's how you do it. John Fourteen, Verse Twenty-Six. "But the counselor or the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and remind you of everything I've said." Jesus is telling us that the Father's going to send the Spirit and he's going to teach you and me all things and he's going to remind us of everything he said, so you don't have to be clever. You don't have to be persuasive. You're going to have the cleverness of the Holy Spirit, the persuasiveness of the Holy Spirit. Imitate Paul, number two. Get trained, okay? We're saying, don't rely on your training but it would be stupid not to have training. By all means, get trained.

Second Timothy, Chapter Two, Verse Two, Paul writes, "and the things that you have heard me say and the presence of reliable or faithful men in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful or reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." Get trained. Get trained on how to share your faith. It's back to the camper. Now I'm still by no means any kind of camping pro or anything, I guess, but I do know where the breaker switch is now. I do know how to access the power and I'm slowly beginning to learn how to use the different systems. Now I'm mechanically dyslexic so I have to read these manuals and re-read them and it's like reading Greek. It just doesn't make any sense, but slowly I'm starting to ...

You may not be the biggest natural witness in the world. That doesn't mean you can't be great at it. You can by consciously depending on the Holy Spirit, you see, and so twenty-five percent of secret service duty is repetitive training. Their motto is "Repetitive training overcomes the," something, the what, "the hesitation of self-sacrifice." That kind of thing. "Twenty-five percent of secret service duty is repetitive training to overcome the negatives of self-sacrifice." Do the repetitive training.

Now, beginning next week, we're going to go through a seven-week series in which we're going to train you. We're going to train you. The series is called, "Men reaching men," and it's going to be a Bible study but it's also going to be like a workshop too. Each week we're going to give you a small assignment to do in the following week and then we're going to ask some of you to share the results that you get from following through on that little small action. You're nervous about being a witness, you don't know how to make disciples or you want to be more effective at it because you're already making disciples and you want to make even more. Men reaching men. We're going to teach you how to actually do this work.

Your walk with God, or the second, imitate Paul. Third, get trained, and then fourth, turn with me to Mark, Chapter Thirteen, Verse Eleven. Mark, Chapter Thirteen, Verse Eleven, or just listen. The fourth point here is then trust your training. Trust your training. Once you have been trained, Mark Chapter Thirteen, Verse Eleven says this. "Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time for it is not you speaking," but whom? The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. I was talking to, there's another man here at the Bible Study. Him and I, we have a mutual friend. He's a better friend than me, but I've known this man for a long, long time. I saw him at the gym on Sunday, I guess it was, Sunday morning, and he came over. He asked me this question. He said, "How many times does the Bible say that I should forgive somebody?" Now

when somebody asks that question, you have to wonder, "I wonder what the deal is? What precipitated that question?" I just said, "The Bible says seventy times seven, but that's hyperbole for as many times as you're offended."

Then we talked a little bit more, and then he's the one who said, "The Bible seems pretty repetitive to me," referring to the Gospels, and then I just talked about how there were these four different accounts and so forth. Then he said, "You know, this is my second anniversary." Two years ago, he had a heart surgery and he said something to me. He said, "I've got up on the exercise bike. I got up to a hundred beats per minute today," which is nothing, but it's a pretty big deal for him. Then he said this. He said, "You know, there was a 50/50 chance that I would have died in the first two years and there's a still seventy percent chance that I will die in the first five years so I know I'm living on borrowed time."

When I'm talking to people, I am consciously doing the big idea. I am consciously aware of the power of the Holy Spirit, just because I've been doing it a long time. I had this overwhelming desire, overwhelming desire, and he and I have talked about the Lord and he's been reading bits and pieces of *The Man in the Mirror* for the last three years. Not a lot of progress, I guess. We have this book, *Is Christianity for You*, and he's slightly intellectual. Not slightly, he's intellectual. Was he a schoolteacher or something at one time? I think so. Something like that. He's a thinker.

I just was overwhelmed with this desire to go out to my car and get a copy of *Is Christianity for You*, and say, "Would you please read this and let's talk about it?" I also knew that I didn't have any copies of *Is Christianity for You* in the car because I had just cleaned out my car and hadn't put the books back in the car. It was interesting. I walked out of there and I said, "Holy Spirit, what was that about?" I realized that the Holy Spirit had restrained me. He had restrained me from making a move that was not in his timing. Do you see? You see even when you don't do something, it's still the Holy Spirit.

The more consciously, you see, we're aware of the power of the Holy Spirit, the more consistently that we will see changed lives. Will this man trust Christ with his life? I don't know. Who knows what's in his heart? Maybe he already has, but the point of it is is that when we're conscious of the power of the Holy Spirit and we're not relying on clever persuasiveness, our own ability, being self-reliant, being self-sufficient when we're not doing these things, then the more consistently we will see men's lives change. Let's pray.

Our dearest Father, thank you for this series on these Gospels. We praise you. We give you glory. We give you honor. We pledge our lives, our fortunes, all of these things to fulfill the commands that you've given us, to love you, to love one another, to build the kingdom, to tend the culture. We commit and pledge ourselves. Now, Father, I pray that you bless each of these men as they seek to figure out how to apply these mighty lessons in your Word to their lives on a daily basis, that you would bless them with a great abundance, in every area, their relationships with you, loved ones, the work they do, their health, their finances, educations, ministries. That you would find it pleasing, God, to bless them and all of the men who are joining us online as well, that you would bless them with a great abundance in every area of their lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.