

The CORE TEACHINGS of JESUS

Christianity is Not Multi-Level Marketing

Rough Transcript

Brett Clemmer

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Hey guys, Brett Clemmer here. Welcome to the talk, **Christianity is Not About Multi-level Marketing**. I have great conversations with a lot of friends that shape my thinking. And one of those guys is a guy named Matt Heard. A lot of the thoughts that you're going to hear in this talk today come from Matt. And I mentioned Matt in the talk, but I just wanted to make sure that it was clear that Matt has shaped a lot of my thinking in this area, and especially this idea of Christianity not being about multi-level marketing. That's a phrase I think I got out of a conversation with him. It's so important that we as brothers give credit to the guys that are shaping our lives. And nobody's had quite an impact as Matt has, along with some other of my friends. So enjoy this talk and enjoy Matt's book, *Life with a Capital L*.

Brett Clemmer:

Well, good morning guys. Thank you. Thank you. Hey, it's great to see you. Glad to be back and glad to be doing part 12 of this series *The Core Teachings of Jesus*. If you've got a Bible turn to Matthew 28, and we're going to talk about The Great Commission today, but we're going to talk about it I think maybe a little bit different.

Teaching on Matthew 28:18 to 20 is like teaching on John 3:16. Everybody in this room has probably heard multiple sermons, multiple Bible studies on this passage. So we're going to look at it and sort of look at the content of it. But then I want to sort of take maybe a little bit different view of it for us as Christian men. What does it really mean for us? How does it really impact our lives and what doesn't it mean that I think sometimes people kind of try to make it mean something that I don't think it really means.

And so either I'm right or a heretic. We'll figure that out together. All right. So let me pray for us and then we're going to jump in this morning.

Father, thank you so much for giving us your word, for giving us in writing across the span of a thousand plus years all of these authors who've told the same story over and over again, the story of a God who loves us, the story of a God who redeems us, the story of a God who gives us a purpose and an identity.

And Lord, as we look at this passage this morning, we pray Father that your Holy Spirit would be in every room, every place that somebody is listening to this or watching this Lord that you would through the power of your Holy Spirit, bring understanding, Lord that you would speak. That we would not look for the wisdom of man Lord, but the wisdom of a holy God. And we lift this time up to you in Jesus name. Amen.

All right. Well, today we're talking about Matthew 28 and the title this morning is: **Christianity is Not Multi-level Marketing**. So why do I say that? Let me say. When we're looking at Matthew 28:18, we're talking about making disciples. Now, where is this passage?

It's at the end of Matthew. So this is the very last three verses that Matthew gives us. Matthew has made a very intentional decision through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to give this as Jesus' last words that he records.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

All right. So I was thinking about famous last words. And so I was wondering, I wonder what some famous last words are that are out there.

So Elvis said, "I'm going to the bathroom to read." Those were his lines. That's pretty sad. Huh? "I'm bored with it all," said Winston Churchill. That was his last words. Nostradamus said, "Tomorrow at sunrise, I shall no longer be here." And he was right. It's Nostradamus.

My favorite one though, is this. Confederate General John Sedgwick said, "Boys, they couldn't hit an elephant at this distance," right before a Yankee sniper took him out. So be careful what you say. And those guys are going to be remembered for those words. So what will we be remembered? What will be the last thing? If you could choose your last words. That's actually the first discussion question with this study today is if you could choose your last words, what would they be?

But these are Jesus' last words. So let's look at this passage. Matthew 28, verse 18. And Jesus came and said to them all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and behold, I am with you always to the very end of the age.

So this speech is probably, I would guess maybe the best known speech in history. I mean more things have happened based on Jesus saying at the end of Matthew, go and make disciples, and that's what we've done. That's what the church has done. We've gone and made disciples. Let's me just sort of break down the passage for you really quick, just sort of from a scriptural perspective.

So, Jesus says verse 19, "Go." Okay. So what he actually says here is not the word go, but he says, "As you are going." As you are going, make disciples. So I want you to understand the nuance difference in that. So this is not like a, "Hey. Love your mom, don't murder anyone. Don't covet your neighbor's wife, go make disciples." It's not like a one of the things. It's the thing.

As you are going. In every area of your life that you're engaged in that it's possible, be making disciples. It's an identity much more than it is an action. And so what does it look like then? Jesus sort of gives three parts of this. The first thing he says is, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and the Holy Spirit."

So why would he say that? Well, it's an incredibly complex theological statement. You're baptizing them. So what does baptism do? It's the sign of the covenant. So who gets the sign of the covenant? People that believe. So, in other words, when you're baptizing somebody, this person is saying publicly, "I believe. I'm part of the family." Baptism replaces circumcision.

Circumcision was the sign of the covenant in the Old Testament. Baptism is the sign of the covenant in the New Testament. So this is people coming to faith and believing. And then Jesus uses this great example that sort of comprises everything. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

So right here, the Trinity becomes the very basis for belief. That there's a father who loves us, who is, who is the sovereign Lord over everything, the son, Jesus, who came and walked among us and redeems us and the Spirit who lives in our hearts today, giving us counsel and wisdom and guidance and understanding.

That's a pretty comprehensive view of what it means to follow God, to be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The next thing he says is teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. So this is the idea of spiritual growth. It's learning, but it's also living.

So he doesn't say, "Teach them what I have commanded you." He says, "Teach them to obey what I have commanded you." So this is learning, but it's also living. Living it out. And then finally he brackets it

at the beginning and the end by telling them by whose authority are they doing this? He says at the very beginning, "All authority has been given to me. All authority in heaven on earth has been given to me." And then at the end, he says, "And I am with you always."

So whose authority do you have? Your church's authority? No. The guy who led you to Christ's authority? No. Your spiritual guide's authority. No. The only authority that you have is the only authority you need. It's the authority of Jesus himself who where did Jesus get his authority? From the Father. So a little tangent here. Nobody takes authority. You're only given authority.

You might say, "Well, I own my business." Yeah, but if you don't have any customers, you don't have any authority. I mean, you just have a business card. Congratulations. I work at Man In The Mirror. My title says that I have authority, but I didn't have that authority. I got board members in the room that give me that authority. If they decide that they don't want to give me that authority anymore, they don't give it to me.

Okay. There's a lot of people walking around in churches today who have titles that think that have authority that is their authority. You don't have your own authority. You only have the authority that somebody gives you. And if you look at what's going on in the church today and some of these big flame outs among big name pastors, one of the first things that happens when you look at is they thought it was their authority they are operating under.

And eventually God said, "I don't think so, buddy." And we as leaders, I'm just going to say this, we as leaders, if we're in those positions, it's our responsibility if we're in a spot where we're giving authority, where you're an elder in a church, or you're on the board of a company or you have supervisors that work for you, the authority that those people exercise, it's our responsibility to make sure that they exert that authority correctly.

If we don't provide that oversight adequately and we just let people run rampant, that's our responsibility. As men, as leaders and as Christians. So, sorry, that's not in my notes, but it's a good thing to talk about with what's going on in society right now. So as you are going. So it's everything that you're doing. It's in every area that you have an opportunity. You're bringing people to salvation, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

You're teaching them, not just learning, but living. Teaching them to obey. And then the authority that you have as a Christian is the authority of Christ.

THE REAL MOTIVATION FOR MAKING DISCIPLES

So what then are we looking at as our motivation for making disciples? So I really want to tell you. I really have two things I want to say to you this morning.

The first one is this. The Great Commission is about making disciples who are disciples, not who make disciples. Let me say that again. The Great Commission is about making disciples who are disciples, not who make disciples. What's the difference?

Well, if you're making disciple makers versus making disciples who live as disciples, what you're saying is the most important thing about your life as a disciple is that you make other disciples. And Jesus didn't say that. He never said to his disciples, "The most important thing about you is that you make disciples."

Look, I want churches to grow. You want churches to grow, but church growth is not the purpose. Kingdom building. Building God's kingdom is the purpose. And God's kingdom is not built by numbers of people. It's built by depth of belief in his people. So we are not trying to make disciples just so that they go make disciples. They will.

I mean, well disciplined men make disciples. But that's not the point. When you say, and my friend Matt Heard, some of you know Matt. Matt's a great preacher, wrote a great book called *Life With A Capital L*.

I want a commission Matt. *Life With A Capital L*. And one of the things that I love about Matt's message that God has given him is that the gospel is about vibrancy. In fact, let me show you some Bible verses. Luke 19:10. Why did Jesus come? Jesus said, "I came to seek and save the lost. I came to seek and save the lost."

Think about that for a second. How many people in your life do you know feel lost? How many of you have felt lost? I've felt lost. Even as a believer I've felt lost. And the good news of the Gospel is that Jesus said his very purpose for coming was to find us and to save us and to show us the way. And so as a disciple maker, we to emulate Christ, our job is also to seek and help them find the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

John 10:10 says, "The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that you might have life and have it abundantly." Now notice in this verse, Jesus doesn't say, "The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that you might make disciples. I came that you might grow your church. I came that I might just have a big, huge band of people following after me." He actually says the opposite.

He says, "The way is narrow." So when we're focused just on getting more and more people versus getting God's people deeper and deeper in their faith, we're focusing on the wrong things. And what we create is shallow Christians who won't stand up to the heat. And the heat comes. The heat comes. It comes in all different kinds of ways, all throughout history.

We're not in a cultural moment that's any different, that's any worse than other cultural moments that have happened. Let me just say that. I mean, I wish it was. I wish Jesus would come back tomorrow. Amen. But I feel like just by saying that now he can't because he said we can't know. So everybody stop talking about when he's coming back. Maybe it'll get him here faster.

All right. So an abundant life. That's the life of a disciple is an abundant life. It's a vibrant life, as my friend Matt would say. Okay. And so then John 20:31. This is how John wraps up sort of his story, although he tells a little bit more of the story after in John 21, but he says this at the end of John 20, "These things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ. And in believing you may have life in his name." Not in believing, you may go create disciples.

So you got it? Our goal as disciple makers, The Great Commission's goal is not for us to go make disciples who make disciples. It's to go make disciples who are disciples. Because if your goal is to help men grow deeper in their faith, that's going to attract people to the gospel message. But guys, living shallow, sort of Luke warm, Revelation two, lukewarm faith is not something that Jesus really likes that much.

He says in Revelation two, "You can be doing all the right things, living all the right ways, believing all the right things, but still lose your first love." We don't want to be men who lose our first love. We want to be men who love Jesus and exhibit that to the men around us. So then the next question is what does it take to make a disciple? What does it take to make a disciple?

WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE A DISCIPLE

And this brings us to our Big Idea and our **Big Idea** is this: **If you're not living like a follower of Christ, you can't disciple anybody.** If you're not living like a follower of Christ, you can't disciple anyone. Now, the first thing I want to say is this is not a get out of jail free card. Bible says, "Make disciples."

If you're a believer, if you're a Christian man, you're supposed to make disciples. So this is not going, Well, I'm not really living like a follower of Christ right now. So I guess I don't really have to make disciples." No, it's a call to live like a follower of Christ." Live like a follower of Christ so that you get to make disciples. Making disciples is a privilege.

Making disciples is a blast. When you have deep, intentional, spiritual friendships with other guys and you are in mutual submission to each other and you are growing in your faith, that's the best thing ever. Some of you have never experienced that. I feel terrible if you've been a believer and you've never

experienced the joy and the life that there is in having a guy or a few guys that you are just in it together.

You call each other out. You step on each other's toes when you need it. You laugh with each other. You cry with each other. That's why Psalm says, "There's a friend that's closer than a brother." And that friend that's closer than a biological brother is a brother in Christ. There's nothing closer than a brother in Christ when you guys are really getting into it.

So this idea of you can't disciple anyone if you're not living as a disciple, this should be motivating to us. Because we want the abundant life. We want a purpose. We want an identity. And so we want to live like disciples so that we can get that so that we can make disciples. So how do we do that? Well, let me give you four quick thoughts here.

How do you make a disciple? You make a disciple by having the heart of Jesus. You make a disciple by having the heart of Jesus. So let's look at how Jesus made disciples. First of all, it was a lifestyle. So it was time. Jesus spent ... The way rabbis worked back then is they walked from town to town and they would teach in the synagogues on the Sabbath. But in between the guys that were following them around, who were called disciples, they would literally sit around and talk about the scriptures.

They would talk about how to interpret different verses in the Bible. They hung out and talked about theology. It was fun. Because they wanted to learn how to live a godly life, but it takes time. The second thing is you've got to be a model. What did Jesus say to Peter and James and John and really to all the disciples? He said, "Come and follow me." John The Baptist disciples came to him and said, "Teacher, where are you staying?" And he said, "Come find out. Come hang out with me."

If you want to make a disciple, you got to be willing to model what it looks like to be a disciple. And you have to spend time together. The third thing you have to do is you have to be willing to sacrifice. Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow me."

To be a disciple maker, I'm just telling you, it requires you to sacrifice things. Because if you're going to have a lifestyle of disciple-making, and if you're going to devote a considerable amount of time to the guys that you're doing life with, then you're going to have to sacrifice some other things in your life.

It might be that really cool series on Netflix that you've been binge-watching or just spending every night, spending an hour in front of the TV. It may be a hobby that's sort of great for you, but it doesn't really put you in relationship with anybody. It may be time with people who'd really don't have a desire to grow in their faith or have a desire to even know Christ.

You may have to sacrifice some of those things. You may have to give up some habits that you have that are keeping you from being a disciple maker. What are you willing to sacrifice so that you can be a disciple so that in relationship you can make disciples? And then really this is all wrapped up in the idea of Love. So Jesus said, "How will they know that you're my disciples? Because you love one another."

That was not ooey, gooey, mushy like you give each other little cards of encouragement. That was when they look at you, they know that you will die for each other. When they look at you, they know that if I go after you, there's a gang of guys coming after you that's going to take care of you.

Honestly, this is why, thinking of gangs, this is why gangs work. Because in maybe not the most holy way in the world, they love each other. And they act like they love each other. And that's very attractive.

So why aren't we as the church, why aren't we as brothers exhibiting that same kind of love that we are in this thing together. We got each other's backs. We're going to protect each other. We're going to compel each other to live the fullest life that we can live as we follow Christ together. That's what The Great Commission is all about. Let's pray.

Well, Lord, we want to be disciples who make disciples. Lord not make disciples who then make other disciples, but just Lord we want to help men understand what the full and rich and abundant life is that is the life of a Christ follower.

Lord, we want to know in the depth of our hearts and the marrow of our bones what it means to have a father who loves us the way that you love us, Father to have a savior who would sacrifice for us the way that you sacrificed for us, Jesus. To have a spirit who would be consistently present in our lives and in our hearts consistently giving us guidance and wisdom. Lord, the way that you, Holy Spirit do that in our lives and hearts.

We want to experience those things to the absolute fullest so that it oozes out of us and gets on the people around us. Father, would you build in us hearts that are so devoted to you that it's easy to make sacrifices? It's easy to give up time. It's easy to love each other so that we can live the lifestyle of disciples and that as we live in relationship, we can make disciples together. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.