



## DEXTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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### **The End of the Script**

**February 14, 2010**

**By Dr. Matt Hook**

**Matthew 28**

(For our scripture reading, we got volunteers from the congregation to act out the entire chapter, from Mary and the other Mary, to the high priest, to the angel, to the stone. Everyone had to simply act out what the text said, verbatim.)

I love spontaneous melodramas! As a kid in youth group I loved them. (You never knew what would happen!) The narrator says it, and you found some way to act it out. And you never knew what you'd have to do. Sort of like the game we used to play when we were kids called "Follow the Leader." The leader flaps his wings and so you flap your wings. The leader hops on one foot so you hop on one foot. (Has this come out for Xbox yet, or just for the wii? Can you download this app?)

You do what the narrator said. You do what the leader did. But in the church we've been playing this different game. It's like "Follow Jesus" is different. You don't *really* have to flap your wings. You can just sit there and do it "in your heart." Seriously! When we read the Scripture, we must walk like Jesus walked, do what He did. But what some of us are doing doesn't make sense. We distort things because of what WE want.

Like Simon Says. That was easy. Simon says "Pat your head" and you pat your head. But playing "Jesus Says" is a totally different game. When Jesus says something, you just have to memorize it. If Jesus says, you just have to study it. To be really "spiritual" you just have to be able to quote it in the Greek. It has nothing to do with "Hey, Jesus says *do this!*" When I ask my daughter to say "Go clean your room," she knows better than to come back a few hours later and say "Dad, y'know I memorized what you said. I can say it in Greek! And some of my friends are going to come over and we're going to do a little class on what it would look like to clean my room." It's not making sense to me... And we in the church like the motif of "*Go and make disciples*" but we don't actually have to do it... (Example from Francis Chan—Church Leadership Development Kit)

Listen: Had those disciples not taken Jesus' words to heart, we wouldn't be here. It didn't just happen, you know. Someone, somewhere, got outside their comfort zone. Scripture agrees with history: some of them went to the rest of Judea. Then Samaria. Some went to Africa. Some went to Asia, and some to Europe. And generations later, some of those disciples went to North America. And here we are. They began sharing the message of Jesus' resurrection and that it wasn't just for Jesus, but for each of us. Why? Because they couldn't help it! They surrendered to Jesus and He changed them! And they changed the world!

Why? Because God called them. Maybe they heard these final words of Jesus and couldn't ignore them. Maybe they saw the lostness of their friends. Maybe they saw the difference Jesus made in their own lives; and it was SO GOOD it was contagious. Why would God want to send out missionaries?

- First: Because the spiritual condition of humanity. Ephesians 2:1-3 says it: "*And you were once dead in your trespasses and sins... We walk in nothing but lusts of our flesh and lusts of our minds, disobedience, deserving wrath.*" (You'll read it that Aug. 27<sup>th</sup> if you're following the church-wide New Testament Reading Plan). It doesn't take long to realize how dead the world is in our sin. It's a pretty apt description for the mess of our world.

- Second: Because it is the spiritual answer God has provided. God has made it possible for all people to be saved, freed to live the lives God created for them to live! God has not made it difficult; he has taken care of every need you and I have. Romans 10:9 says *“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved”* (June 29<sup>th</sup>). God loves us so much, that he seeks after people! God has made it possible for all people to be reached, and made new.
- Third: Because it was Jesus’ Vision and Plan. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 24:14 *“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.”* Every nation, every people group will be given the opportunity to respond to the amazing love of God.

It’s always a joke to me, when you hear a church or an annual conference say “This year, our priority theme is missions and evangelism!” I want to say “Well, what in the world has it *been?*!” No wonder the church in North America is in such a mess. Without the edgy message of the kingdom of God and the transformational shift that takes place in people’s lives, without people willing to go beyond their comfort zones for the sake of the Gospel message and the sake of the people who need to hear it, some churches haven’t seen the power of God for decades! The saving relationship with Jesus Christ brings you joy, gives you a purpose, fills your emptiness, and offers you hope. Because *that’s* who God is.

Making disciples is not a “program” of the church. It’s the other way around:  
The Church itself is God’s program for making disciples!  
Worshippers, missionaries, workers who carry the Gospel with them to all the nations.

Look at Jesus’ final words in Matthew 28:18 – *“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”*

*19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.”*

In the Greek, the only imperative verb is *matheteusate*: “*make disciples.*” The rest of the commands are subordinate to that imperative. So according to Jesus, the thrust of what we are to do is “Make disciples of all nations...as you go, as you baptize, as you teach.”

It says “Make disciples,” not converts. That’s our big problem: Converts flap their wings “in their hearts” and study it. Disciples flap their wings, if that’s what it takes. Disciples play the accordion if that’s what it takes! (All of you are now saying “I’m so glad that’s not what it takes!” – Joke from last week’s message). It’s not just “belief.” It’s living like the Master. It’s imitating the Master, and so having others imitate you. Discipleship is like teaching a kid to tie a shoe, or drive a car without using your hands or doing it with them. You can verbalize it all you want, (try explaining it over the phone), but what you really want them to do is imitate *you*. That’s what discipleship is. You do it, they watch, you do it together, you do it, have somebody else watch, they do it, and have somebody else watch. Discipleship is not a product. It’s a process. That’s why we’ve got to get this right.

- They’ve got to see it, because it happens informally. You just do life together. Discipleship is a mutual thing. (Have your kids caught you reading the Bible yet this year?)
- And then Jesus says *“Go make disciples of all nations”* that word *“all nations”* means every tribe, or ethic group, or every people group. Everybody ought to know, who Jesus is. And every follower of Christ is called to do it.
- There are 3 helpful discipleship questions you should be asking others around you to help them on their path of discipleship: (REPEAT AFTER ME)
  - **How’s your life?** (You ask that of everybody, whether they’re in a personal relationship with Christ or not, because what their answer is may open up a door to share the good news.) And for those who do know Christ, you ask:
  - **How’s your walk?** (with Christ). Are you walking with Him, or are you walking your own way? And if you two are close, you ask:
  - **How’s your ministry?** Because God did just call a few. He called all of us. Your

Let me ask you: **Who's your people group?** Where are you going to make disciples? The Lion's Club? Knights of Columbus? Fellow teachers? Your high school class of 2011? The basketball team? Your dance studio? Your fellow gardeners or Card-collectors or Sports fans or Coaches? Other business people? Other young moms? Your family?

Some people never know the amazing love of God because they never met someone who believes this stuff. In other words, they never met someone like *them*. But maybe *you're* like them...at least someone they can relate to. In their eyes, you're someone legitimate. So people who say "You can't be a scientist and a Christ-follower" might see you and say "Ohhh...so that's what it looks like!" Or an athlete and a Christian. Or a young mom and a faithful follower. There are people who would never listen to me because I don't ride a motorcycle or build buildings. But they will listen to you, because you know how to do that. There are medical doctors who would never listen to me, who will listen to you. That's your people group! YOU be the one to show them! (In the business world, or the scientific world, or the political world).

Who takes *you* seriously? *That's* where you seek to make disciplers.

I want you to experience the thrill of Great Commission. It's on of the most powerful challenges in the world. It's destiny over dollars. It's big fish over little. It's costly.

Don't live just for the lesser dream.

The challenge of competing for money is fun.

The challenge of competing for fame is fun.

The challenge of going after significance is better.

But think of going after people! After all, God treasures His kids most!

God's up to something big here, but we don't want to be a program-driven church. We don't want to be a personality-driven church. We want a healthy core. We want a good bone structure as the body of Christ, where people are supporting one another. So, for us to get a handle on that, I invite you to take your 3x5 card out of the bulletin...please write down:

- Your Name & Contact Info
- Who's discipling you?
- Who are you in mutual discipleship with?
- Who are you discipling?

And the end of our script this morning, this spontaneous melodrama is not over...but you're a part of the production. May it grip you from now on. Not just "in your heart," but in your life, for the rest of your life! Amen!

## STUDY GUIDE

### Mark 3—7

#### A STUDY TIP

*Think of this daily study time not so much as building your information, but for building your relationship with God.*

**Mark—The Gospel of Christ in Action.** *While Matthew wrote for a more Jewish audience, Mark's picture of Jesus is shaped for the Roman mind. Mark is the earliest of the 4 Gospels, typically dated 50s A.D. Mark's author was likely John Mark, who translated for Peter on his way to Rome. (Read our sermon from last summer: Heroes: John Mark Picture it from Peter's perspective. Mark uses "And immediately" throughout to move the reader forward.*

**Monday: Read Mark 3—** Healing (1-6). Jesus' ministry has begun in full swing: healing the man with the withered hand in front of the Pharisees. What is the "shriveled hand" that Jesus is healing in your life now? Crowds & the 12 Apostles Follow (7-19). Do you like crowds? What motivates you to come to Jesus now? Jesus & Beelzebub, Jesus' Family (20-35) So many people have misunderstandings about Jesus. How can you tell if someone is just clueless or if their heart is hardened? As you read the many responses to Jesus, which best describes you (v.6, 8, 21-22, 34-35)?

**Tuesday: Read Mark 4**—The Parable of the Sower (1-20). What “dirt” are you these days? A Lamp on a Stand (21-25). Parables of Seeds (26-34). Does knowing that the growth of the Kingdom is ultimately in God’s hands cause you to rest or work harder? Why? Jesus Calms the Storm (35-41). How do you react when Jesus seems to be asleep in your life?

**Ash Wednesday: Read Mark 5**—(Remember our service tonight at 7pm). Healing a Demon-possessed Man (1-20). What “dead places” have you been haunting these days? When have you felt torn by conflicting voices and emotions? A Dead Girl & a Sick Woman (21-43). What are you desperate about right now? Are you desperate enough to take it to Jesus?

**Thursday: Read Mark 6**— A Prophet without Honor & Sending out the 12 (1-13) How has familiarity with Jesus blocked you from really seeing who He is? Where is God sending you to tell about the Kingdom? John the Baptist Beheaded (14-29). What does this story say to someone facing persecution, then & now? Have you felt like Herod—attracted to the truth but afraid to follow through with it? Jesus Feeds 5,000 (30-44). How has Jesus “fed” you lately? When you sense that spiritual hunger, do you look for Him, or try other food for awhile first? Jesus Walks on Water (45-56). In area of your life what would Jesus say to you “Take courage, it is I!” (50)?

**Friday: Read Mark 7**— Clean & Unclean (1-23). What are some old ways of thinking that you need to let go of? How has your view of “spirituality” changed in the last 5 years? (20-23) How’s your heart? Faith of a Syrophenician Woman (24-30). If Jesus came to your community, who are the “unclean” he would care for? Healing a Deaf & Mute Man (31-37). How has your grasp of Jesus changed? How can you show friendship this weekend to someone who is alone?