

DISCIPLING THE NATIONS IS EVERYONE'S MISSION

(Acts 20:1-12)

In the book of Acts, we read how Paul has taken the gospel, made disciples and planted churches in key cities from Turkey to Greece. Those churches in turn have sent people out who did the same in all the surrounding areas. In Acts 20, the apostle returns to encourage these churches, knowing that he may never see them again. We can learn five principles from Paul that we can apply in our lives as we fulfill the mission God has given each one of us: discipling the nations.

1. *S* _____ *and follow God's direction.*

Acts 20:1-3 details how Paul went through the different cities and places where God called him to minister to. From the beginning, God had a clear plan for Paul's life. We see this in Acts 9:15-16 when God instructed Ananias to visit Paul, "*But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."*" Paul was called to pioneer, to take the gospel where people had never heard it (Romans 15:20). By the end of the 2nd century, almost all of the Roman Empire had heard the gospel because of the faithfulness of Paul to the challenge and mission God had given him. What has God called you to do individually and as a church? Are you faithful in seeking and following His direction? Your mission is what God has called you to do as a church and it is something worth living and dying for.

2. *T* _____ *along with you.*

Acts 20:4-6 mentions name of people who accompanied Paul in parts of his third missionary journey. These were people from different places and they were all volunteers who helped Paul in his church-planting missions. Throughout the book of Acts, we see various people walking and working with Paul in his three missionary journeys. No one can be a lone ranger Christian! We also cannot leave the discipleship and church-planting mission to our pastors and leaders alone. Take part and volunteer!

3. *E* _____ *discipleship.*

The volunteers mentioned in Acts 20:4-6 were disciples of Paul, representing different churches. We usually think of discipleship as a weekly meeting where we study the Bible, fellowship, and eat a lot of food. But for Paul, discipleship was much more than this. He travelled with these people for days and weeks and months – he knew their family issues, weaknesses, strengths, and how to develop them. Paul made disciples by spending time with people through life on life discipleship.

The great need of Christianity today is to rediscover our disciple-making mission to become True Disciplers.

Sadly, many Christians are not disciplers. A discipler is a follower of Christ who makes disciples intentionally by sharing the gospel (*Salvation*) and modeling obedience to all (*Transformation*) to their family and friends, resulting in transformation unto Christ-like maturity (*Character*) that ushers in God's presence (*Filled with the Holy Spirit*) and therefore, spiritual multiplication (*Credibility*) for the glory of God.
Will you heed the call to be a discipler?

4. *P* _____ *to overcome obstacles.*

The journey of Paul was not easy – he needed to overcome a lot of challenges. Because of the gospel, he was driven out by the Jews in Pisidian Antioch, faced a plot to stone him in Iconium, stoned and left for dead in Lystra, beaten and jailed in Philippi, driven out of Thessalonica and Berea, attacked in Corinth, and escaped from a riot in Ephesus! Yet he went back to these very places where he was mistreated so he can encourage the believers there and build them up in the faith. Another obstacle Paul had to overcome was the incident involving Eutychus in Acts 20:7-12. Similar to past events, Paul saw this as an opportunity to demonstrate God's power to work in and through Paul in overcoming obstacles instead of wilting under the pressure of ministry difficulties.

Like Paul, we also have to overcome challenges in order to do what God has called us to do. Be assured that we have a big and powerful God who still make miracles in and through us.

5. *S* _____ *the Great Commission.*

Matthew 28:18-20 commands us to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey God's commands. The promise of God is that His abiding presence will be with us as we make disciples until the end of age. There are many excuses why one does not obey this Great Commission but this is a command of God that we should immediately follow for us to impact the world for God. What is stopping you?

Discipling the nations is everyone's mission. This means to disciple people from all cultures, of various family backgrounds. God has called us to do something incredible – to expand His Kingdom. He takes very ordinary people like us to be able to make an eternal impact for Him around the world. This is a privilege that we don't ever want to miss. So take part in the challenge to make disciples of all the nations!
