

“I am FBC Diana”

Gospel-centered Multiplication

Intro: The Christian Church in America has become quite lazy when it comes to evangelism. Very few professing Christians ever share the Gospel with another person in hopes that they too would believe and be saved. This humiliating, heartbreaking, and infuriating reality is amplified when one considers the additional neglect of discipleship among professing Christians. Many claim to have love for Christ and love for others, but simply reject Christ’s commission to all who would claim love for Him. Evangelism and Discipleship are not optional for the genuine believer, and Christians may participate individually and corporately. Gospel-centered Multiplication is the philosophy and practice of these among the congregation of FBC Diana.

Matthew 28:18-20 – “**18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me** (As God, the Son always enjoyed a position of cosmic authority, but as the God-man He earned His authoritative position by His righteous life). **19 Go therefore** (because this is true, I am able to command the obedience of all and commission those who follow Me) **and make disciples** (followers of Jesus Christ) **of all nations** (ethnos / people groups), **baptizing them** (as a sign of their inclusion in the *local* and *universal* body of Christ) **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit** (based upon the authority and grace of the triune God), **20 teaching them** (catechizing them) **to observe all that I have commanded you** (all the truth about God’s redeeming work in Christ / the whole Bible). **And behold** (look carefully to see / listen closely and know), **I am with you always** (Jesus Himself, in the presence of His Spirit), **to the end of the age** (throughout all days until the last great Day when all are raised, either to punishment or reward).”

Evangelism & Discipleship are distinct, but never separate. (3 points)

1. The term “Disciple” is synonymous with the term “Christian.”

- A. The title “disciple” is not reserved only for the 12 men who followed Jesus during His earthly ministry.
 - i. Christians, in the Bible, are generally referred to as “disciple.”
 - Timothy (Acts 16:1), Ananias (Acts 9:10), Tabitha (Acts 9:36), a man from Cyprus named Mnason (Acts 21:16), a

rich man from Arimathea named Joseph (Matthew 27:57), all the Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26), and the Christians in Caesarea (Acts 21:16)

B. Jesus' commission in Matt. 28 is to "make *disciples*."

- i. There is no sense in which Christians are commissioned or encouraged to go about indiscriminately inviting people to pray a prayer or say some words that will magically transform them into Christians.
- ii. To my knowledge, there is no biblical example of anyone becoming a Christian in isolation from Gospel-centered Community (The Ethiopian official might be an exception to this statement, but it may be argued that he would have been instructed by Philip to "make disciples" as he went back home. Thus, a Christian Community would have been the inevitable, though not necessarily immediate, result.).
 1. Therefore, it seems warranted that all efforts towards inviting people into Christianity should necessarily include invitations into Christian Community.

2. *Discipleship is necessarily linked to Evangelism*

A. Evangelism is the beginning or basis for discipleship.

- i. The Gospel message demands a response.
 1. One may reject the Good News
 2. One may receive the message and submit to the object or focus of the Good News
 3. However, one may not believe the message and still remain unmoved by it. Such a dichotomy would prove the claim of belief a meaningless or misleading declaration.
- ii. One necessarily becomes a disciple after he/she has heard and believed the Gospel.
 1. Jesus Christ's constant call was to "Follow Me."
 - a. Jesus called Peter and Andrew by saying, "Follow Me" (Matt 4:19).
 - b. Jesus tells an unnamed disciple, "Follow me," and leave your dead father unburied (Matt 8:22).

- i. While this statement may seem harsh, it is reminiscent of Jesus other demand that His disciples love Him so deeply that their love for earthy family would seem as hatred by comparison (Luke 14:26).
 - c. Jesus demands that all who would follow Him “deny” themselves and “take up his cross” [in other words, reject one’s own desires even unto death] (Matt 16:24).
- 2. All those who responded positively to the Evangel/Gospel in the biblical record also became followers/disciples.

The most explicit transition of a group of people from non-Christian to Christian is what we find in the record of what happened immediately after Peter evangelized the crowd at Pentecost.

- a. Acts 2:37-47 – “37 Now when they heard this [the Gospel proclaimed by Peter] they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit... 41 So those who **received his word** were baptized, and **there were added** [‘added’ indicates joining the Christian Community] **that day about three thousand souls.** 42 And they [the Christian Community, including the newly added bunch who remained in Jerusalem] **devoted themselves** to the (1) **apostles’ teaching** and the (2) **fellowship**, to the (3) **breaking of bread** and the (4) **prayers**... 44 And **all who believed were together** and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, **attending the temple together** and **breaking bread in their homes**, they received their food with **glad and generous hearts**, 47 **praising God** and having **favor with all the people.** And **the Lord added to their number** day by day **those who were being saved** [those who were being saved by God were also being

added to the Gospel-centered Community – they were being disciplined].”

- B. Discipleship is tantamount to deepening and applying one’s understanding of the *Evangel* (the person and work of Christ).
- i. Jesus Christ Himself said “knowing God = life”
 1. [John 17:3](#) – In the midst of His high priestly prayer, He said, “This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”
 - ii. To know Jesus Christ is to know God.
 1. [John 1:18](#) – “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.”
 - iii. Jesus Christ testified of the truth of God.
 1. [John 3:32-34](#) – “32 He [Christ, who is ‘from above’ and ‘above all’ (v31)] bears witness to what he has seen and heard... 34 For he whom God has sent utters the words of God...”
 - iv. Jesus Christ reveals the glory and nature of God through His person and work in redemption.
 1. [Hebrews 1:1-3](#) – “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...”
 - v. The implications and results of the person and work of Christ are revealed on earth through the reconciled body of believers – the Church.
 1. [Ephesians 2:19-22](#) – “19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of **the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**”

3. Emphasis on either one over the other will result in error

A. Evangelism without Discipleship

- i. We will make everything about what YOU did & when YOU did it.
 1. *When did you say the Sinner's prayer?*
 2. *When did you make a Decision for Christ?*
 3. *When did you ask Jesus into your heart?*
 4. *When were you Baptized?*
 5. *When did you join a church?*
- ii. We will measure our success by the number of people "saved" without much ado about who they are, where they are coming from, where they are going, or what their needs, questions, struggles and objections might be
- iii. We will falsely assume that everything you and I need to know is what we knew when we were first saved

B. Discipleship without Evangelism

- i. We will make everything about what YOU DO
 1. Do you speak as a Christian should?
 2. Do you avoid the social taboos?
 3. Do you dress respectfully and act appropriately?
 4. Do you reasonably participate in church activities?
 5. Do you show significant interest in the same social, political, and economic concerns of most other church people around you?
- ii. We will measure our success by the number of "good" people who attend our church services, without much care about how they are actually doing or what they are actually struggling with.
- iii. We will falsely assume that "good Christians" are only those who are as "straight-laced" and "put-together" as we are.

Let's get Practical – Multiplication is both Evangelism & Discipleship (2 Points)

1. Multiplication on the Individual level

Acts 2:42 – “*And they* [the Christian Community, including the newly added bunch who remained in Jerusalem] *devoted themselves to the* (1) *apostles’ teaching and the* (2) *fellowship, to the* (3) *breaking of bread and the* (4) *prayers*

A. Teaching

- i. We should devote ourselves personally to the teaching of the apostles, and that of the prophets – the whole Bible.
 1. Read it
 2. Learn to read it more appropriately
 3. Read what others (smarter and more mature than ourselves) have understood about it
 4. Meditate on it / Ponder it
 5. Learn to apply it well
- ii. We should devote time to investing such teaching in the lives of others.
 1. Encourage / Challenge others to Read it
 2. Help others learn to read it more appropriately
 3. Discuss what others have understood about it with friends and family
 4. Ask probing questions of others in your Christian Community – questions stemming from meditation upon a passage or truth.
 5. Help others apply it well – encourage, rebuke, instruct, etc

B. Fellowship

- i. We should get to know one another – to really know one another
 1. Fellowship is companionship, partnership, communion, mutuality, and friendship
 - a. There are numerous ways this can be done, but short cuts and programs that will not suffice.

- ii. We should play a familial role in each other's lives so that we are able to share the benefits of each other's life experiences and wisdom.
 - 1. Each one is bound to have a number of strengths and weaknesses, but the Gospel-centered group may overcome weaknesses together.

C. Breaking of Bread

- i. The idea here may include Lord's Supper / Communion
 - 1. We should recognize and embrace our unity in Christ
 - 2. We should communally enjoy what Christ has done and who He is
- ii. The idea here most certainly includes sharing our tables with one another.
 - 1. We should share meals together
 - a. Inviting one another into our homes and to our dining room tables
 - b. Sharing our resources, so that no one goes without
 - 2. This also connotes deep intimacy

D. Prayer

- i. We should pray for one another
 - 1. Spiritual growth/health
 - 2. Mental growth/health
 - 3. Emotional growth/health
 - 4. Relational growth/health
 - 5. Physical growth/health

2. Multiplication on the Corporate or Community level

A. Teaching

- i. FBC Diana should cooperate and partner with other Gospel-centered Communities who also devote themselves to the "teaching of the apostles"
 - 1. We may not only feel free to join with other Gospel-centered churches, but we should seek to do so.

- ii. Those churches who are devoted to the essential truths of the Faith are partners in Gospel ministry, but those institutions or groups that depart from or oppose those essential truths are enemies and not friends.

1. The term 'enemies' may seem harsh, but it is justified.

- a. Philippians 3:17-19 – “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For **many**, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, **walk as enemies of the cross of Christ**. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame...”
- b. When Sergius Paulus wanted to hear the word of God taught by the Apostle Paul and Barnabas, a man named Elymas opposed their teaching. He tried to turn people away from the Faith, and Paul said to Elymas, “**You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?**” (Acts 13:10). The Holy Spirit even motivated Paul to say such things (Acts 13:9).
- c. James says that those who desire earthly treasures and temporal happiness more than intimacy with Christ “**makes themselves an enemy of God**” (James 4:4).

B. Fellowship

- i. We should get to know the body of believers with whom we are partnering for the sake of the Gospel
- ii. We should seek to lend our own strengths and gain from theirs

C. Breaking of Bread

- i. We should share our tables one with another
 - 1. This may include Lord's Supper / Communion
 - 2. This most certainly includes our resources

D. Prayer

- i. We should pray for one another
 - 1. Spiritual, Relational, Leadership, and Financial growth / health

My Prayers for FBC Diana

1. May God make us an evangelistic body of believers – individually and collectively
2. May God make us a disciple-making body of believers – individually and collectively
3. May God grant us His presence, just as He promised, as we carry out the task He has commissioned us to do