

The Founders Day Keynote message by P. Moses Yoon (Oct. 4, 2019)

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

Matthew 28:19, 20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

After the Resurrection, the eleven disciples went to the mountain and there, they met the risen Jesus. Jesus gave them his last and the greatest commission. “Therefore go 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 obey everything I have commanded you.” If we read this verse carefully we will find that this is just one sentence with two verbs: “go” and “make. We should “go” in order to “make” disciples. So, the key words of Jesus' command are “make disciples. Jesus did not command them just to raise many converts. He commanded them to make disciples.

The word “make” is a strong word. A sculptor cuts and trims a marble block to make a great work of art. Michelangelo is called the master of sculpture. If a rough marble block came into his hands, it became a beautiful piece. To make disciples means to teach, train, and discipline. No one can become a disciple by himself just as a rough stone cannot make itself into a great piece. However, people do not like to be told what to do. They do not like to be made. They think that discipline is a kind of a violation of human rights. Yet spiritual discipline is essential to making disciples.

How can we make disciples? In verses 19b-20a, Jesus tells us two specific ways. First, we should baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. What is baptism? Baptism is a ceremony where someone publicly declares his faith. So what is important in this command is to teach the gospel until one comes to know Jesus very personally. Then one can be baptized. So, we should first teach our students about Jesus and his gospel until they become able to confess Jesus as their Savior. Second, we should teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded. Not only being saved by faith alone but also the decision to give our lives for Jesus and his gospel.

In giving his world mission command, why didn't Jesus just tell his disciples, “Reach out to as many people as possible and evangelize them” ? Instead he said, “go and make disciples of all nations.” This is because disciple-making is the most effective way, in the long term, in reaching out to all people of the world. Disciple-making appears slow, unproductive, and time-consuming. Yet we must believe that the best way to reach out to the whole world in time is to make one disciple at a time.

Making disciples is not a slogan of UBF. It is Jesus' supreme command. Even though we may obey Jesus' other commands, if we do not obey making disciples we cannot please Jesus. All our lives, our activities have meaning when they are lived or done for Jesus' greatest command, that is, making disciples. May God help us not to lose our focus but keep on making disciples. In particular, we received a special calling from God to make disciples among teenagers and college students of all nations. In the light of Christian history over the last 2,000 years, our ministry seems to be a unique community with the focus of campus mission for all of its members - whether you are a child or a college student, or a senior citizen. Our prayer is that we would maintain this direction until our Lord Jesus comes again.

My testimony on the disciple making in London, U.K.

In 1993, I and my wife Sarah were sent to London. While working for my company, during the evenings and weekends, I served London UBF. Raising a disciple among the UK nationals was never an easy task.

However, Dr. Samuel C. Lee and Dr. John Jun, and many co-workers prayed a lot for the UK pioneering work, encouraging me to have faith in God. In 1995, God sent us a UCL art student, Ian, who became the first native leader in our ministry. I taught him the Bible, and my wife served him with delicious food and prayers. When he was raised as a disciple of Jesus, through him, God sent us Paul, Darren, James and others. The native leaders in England were raised through deep Bible study, sharing lives, and through shepherd training.

First, deep Bible study. Here, deep Bible study does not mean just writing about a passage. It means to apply the word to our practical lives. The focus is struggling to really obey Jesus' commands. In today's passage, Jesus also said that the way to make disciples is through teaching. University College London (UCL) is one of the best universities in the U.K. UCL students are very intellectual. Unless the Bible study is truthful and biblical, they never accept our teaching. In order to serve them, I had to dig the word deeply. Refreshing and challenging Bible study, sincere writing and sharing of weekly reflection was the foundation of disciple-making.

17 years have passed since I left England. However, for all those years, through Skype, I have been teaching the Bible to senior native leaders, Ian and Paul. They, in turn, teach other coworkers what they studied with me. So the native leaders and missionaries faithfully study the word of God and share their reflections still today. We find that the Apostle Paul, in his farewell message to the elders of Ephesus, committed them to the word of God (Ac 20:32). Making disciples is not a skill. It is to plant the word of God in the hearts of disciples. No disciple can be raised without him accepting the word of God in his heart.

Second, common life. In Mark 3:14, Jesus reveals his purpose of calling the Twelve. "He appointed twelve-- designating them apostles-- that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach." Jesus' purpose of calling the disciples was firstly "that they might be with him", that is, to have them be with him. Jesus wanted to spend time with them 24/7 so that they might learn from Jesus in every aspect of life. Of course, it is not easy for us to live together with our disciples because we have families and jobs. But we should try to spend time together as much as possible. Most of all, the disciple-maker needs to be growing in Christ-like character, and that the point of life together can be building a deep love relationship in Christ with the disciple

When I was teaching Ian, we met almost every day to study or to talk. After Ian married, he invited his student Darren to his apartment, and lived with him. After Darren married, Ian invited James to his home and lived together. Paul lived with Msn David's family, and Louise with Msn Joshua/Beth. In this way, through living together, the students were protected from secular influence and they learned many things from their shepherds.

In particular, all the native leaders gathered together for early morning prayer meeting at the Bible center. They shared daily bread, had personal prayer, and then had breakfast together before they went to school or to work. Still today, they gather for daily bread meetings. Through this routine, they are encouraged to live a counter-cultural life of faith. Disciple-making is not possible by just meeting someone once a week. We need to meet as often as possible for word and prayer. The principle Jesus used is the same still today in making disciples.

Third, shepherd training. Jesus did not only have them be with him, but also sent them out to preach. In accordance to this principle, after the native leaders had grown, they were appointed as SWS messengers to get trained as servants of God's word. For the last 15~20 years, four native leaders have regularly delivered SWS messages. As they prepared and preached the message, they made remarkable growth as shepherds. They also met Bible students and through teaching them, they grew into good shepherds. In particular, through the support of Dr. John Jun, God established beautiful house churches for all the native leaders and made a solid spiritual foundation in England.

Lastly, about my children. Like other missionaries, I and my wife were too busy for God's mission and did not spend enough time with my two daughters. Yet God was gracious and blessed my first daughters to establish house churches in 2015 and 2018. When I think about them, a few things come up in my mind.

First, God granted them faithful Bible teachers. Several excellent Bible teachers in London, and in Korea helped them to write sincere testimonies. Second, we spent time for talking with them. When they were college students, I used to have coffee at a nearby cafe with each of them, once or twice a week. We became close friends and were able to talk about all things. After the first one got married, I took my second one to a cafe regularly and talked with her as I had done with the first one. In this way, I could be their shepherd and mentor. Even though we do not have much time, spending time with each of our children on their level with spiritual mentoring seems the key to raising children as our spiritual successors.

In conclusion, the disciple making in England was done through deep Bible study, sharing lives, and shepherd training. However, even with our best disciple-making program mentioned as above, without God's work, which is done ultimately by his grace, through the Holy Spirit, no one can really be changed and transformed. In all things, we must pray for his grace and mercy. I just give glory to God for what he has done through us in England. May God continue to grant us his grace so that our native leaders and missionaries in England, may grow and pray for the nation once again to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Amen!