

## Thoughts from Richard April 2015

Some thoughts on the great commission and discipleship.

The great theme of the bible is God's grace in creation, redemption after the fall, and restoration through Jesus. In summary, *"Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" 1 John 5/12.*

God's desire to bring from death to Life through faith in Christ is the basis for mission and discipleship (teaching and demonstrating God's grace and how it applies to everyday life). Any Christian may disciple another and any Christian community should be a culture of support and encouragement in the truths of scripture and the love of God.

Mission and discipleship is our mandate as believers, given by Jesus himself. Matthew 28:

### *The Great Commission*

*16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.*

*17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.*

*18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*

*19 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,*

*20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Verse 17: Mission recognises the reality that some may doubt. Nevertheless, understanding that true and eternal change only comes from the one who is true and eternal, we long to show who Jesus is so people can see him for themselves. It is our hope that in seeing Jesus revealed in the living word of God, and in the lives of others, people may come to know and worship Jesus.

Verse 18: Mission and discipleship is possible because Jesus has all authority, is the King of kings and Lord of lords that all powers and authorities are under him and must submit to him. We understand from 1 John 3/8 that *"the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil"*, and expect the bondage of slavery to sin to be broken, and that men and women will become free in Christ.

We submit ourselves to his word above any other source of information or 'revelation'. Agreeing with the apostle Paul, *"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed."* Galatians 1/8, we are able to demonstrate and encourage total reliance on scripture as our completely sufficient light and guide for life. *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work", 2 Tim 3/16*  
*Gods word is sufficient to meet every need of the human soul, Psalm 19/7*

Verse 19: Since Jesus has all authority, it is with confidence that we obey him in sharing his message of hope and life, with a full expectation that through the power of his 'good news', men may be saved from death and enter a full and abundant life through him. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."* 2 Cor 5/17

When a man or woman has confessed belief in the Lord, and has begun to demonstrate obedience to him by obeying his word, we encourage them to be baptised.

In bible times, someone's name gave information about them, describing who they were. The name Jesus means 'the LORD saves', or "Yahweh is salvation". Immanuel means 'God with us', etc. Thus an additional meaning of being baptised into the 'name' of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is to be immersed in His triune character and being, who his is. This command is immensely rich in meaning.

Verse 20: Discipleship is teaching and demonstrating obedience to everything he has revealed in his word, including confession and repentance. Those given responsibility to disciple must be submitted to his authority in scripture, and not be persisting without repentance in deliberate sin. Demonstrating confession and repentance as a way of life is an essential part of effective discipleship, as we all sin continually.

Jesus instruction in the great commission includes teaching 'all' that he has commanded, hence the necessity of studying the bible. In it he gives us everything we need for life and Godliness. 2 Pet 1/3

Here are some guiding scriptures as we consider the life of discipleship.

*Matt 7/1-5 Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.*

*And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.*

*2 Cor 4/5,6 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.*

*John 15/8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

*Luke 14/33 those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.*

*2 Cor 5/15 And Jesus died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

*Jude 17-25 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.*

*Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

Your servant in Him  
Richard