

This Sunday's a bit of a momentous occasion. Can anyone guess why today's special?

January last year, we kicked off Bush Disciples. And I have a practice of preaching my way through whole books of the bible – that way we don't miss anything, and that way we get a pretty balanced diet of God's word – We cover stuff just as often as what God brings it up.

And so January last year, I searched through the Bible, praying, and looking for the book that would give us some really good teaching on Discipleship, and I just couldn't go past Matthew. And so January last year, we began our journey through the Gospel of Matthew.

And today, 60 sermons later, we've come to the end. And Wow, what a journey it's been, and what a finish. Matthew continues to teach about Christ, and what it means to be a disciple of Christ, right through to the end.

But you know what??? Matthew 28, isn't the end. As we read Jesus' parting words to His disciples, they're not words of finishing up – they're words of starting out... - it's not the end – it's just the beginning.

So let's begin.

*In 1985 (some of you young ones probably think, “Wow, that’s a long time ago.” – but it’s not that long ago.) 1985 was when I, (at a tender 15 years of age), packed into my suitcase:*

- *5 sets of work dress*
- *2 sets of town dress*
- *work boots*
- *good boots*
- *work hat*
- *good hat*
- *pencil case, notebook, pen*
- *camera*
- *a bit of leatherwork gear*
- *writing paper (so I could write home) (no such things as emails or mobile phones then)*
- *a few coins so I could use the pay phone to ring home once a week*

*And my parents dropped me off at the Dalby Ag College, to begin my training in Agricultural Production. I was a bit tentative, because I was the second or third youngest one there, but I did alright, and 2 years later, I graduated.*

*I left Ag College, and I went back home to work on the farm – We’d been taught how to do a whole bunch of stuff – taught how to do things properly, and I went farming for a few years.*

*To cut a long story short, Mum & Dad eventually sold the farm, and January 1992, I went back to the Dalby Ag College. Only this time, I wasn't there as a student (Although I would still be doing a lot of learning). This time I went back as an instructor.*

*I was 22 years old – the youngest instructor they'd ever had. And I felt really inadequate. One of the students was actually around the same age as me...*

*But my teachers had taught me well, and of course, I'd put it into practice for a number of years. And I'd continued to learn – keeping my skills up-to-date, and adding to them...*

*and of course, once I began as an instructor, there was a lot of **additional** learning I had to do... (things like how to share what I'd learned, with those I was now trying to teach; and one of the biggest things I had to learn, was (because I was teaching practical stuff) some of the toughest stuff, was to get beyond me doing it for the students to see, and getting the students to actually start doing it themselves – to get them to the stage where they have the skills and the confidence to do what I'd been taught to do.*

*Alright, somebody had done it for me – they'd taught me – they bore with me, through all of my mistakes and imperfections and feeble attempts, until I got it right..... and now it was my turn, to do it for somebody else*

## *The Student became the instructor.*

The Great Commission (that's what we call the bible passage), is where the disciple, becomes the discipler...

For around 3 years, the disciples have been following Jesus:

- They've been watching what Jesus is doing.
- They've been listening to His teaching, and they've been learning from Him.

And not only this – He's actually had them doing stuff. The disciples have been baptising. The disciples have been casting out demons. The disciples had been healing the sick and feeding people. They'd been sent out on little missions, and they come back and report, and Jesus gives them a bit more teaching about what they'd experienced.....

They were a part of what Jesus was doing... You see, Jesus didn't just do it for them to watch – He engaged them in it... That, my friends, is discipleship. It's far more like an apprenticeship, than like a university course.

*Do you know what I mean by that? Do you understand the difference between an apprenticeship and a university course?*

*In a university course, you might sit in a lecture theatre with 300-400 people, and be fed a whole heap of information...*

*Where as an apprenticeship, is **very** hands on. You're actually working one on one with the tradesman. And the tradesman gets the apprentice doing stuff, as early as they can. And they keep teaching additional skills, and keep building the apprentice up, until they're fully qualified, and are right to go out on their own...*

And that's what discipleship should look like.

You know, too often, we seem to think that discipleship should look more like a never-ending university course... where we all sit down together in the lecture theatre and we receive the teaching from the lecturer.... And week after week; year after year; decade after decade..., we keep coming to church, we sit down, sing a few songs, learn more about Jesus, and think, "Wow, wasn't that incredibly enlightening"... We go home, do what we've always done, and come back next week for more of the same...

Disciples are not spectators of the ministry of God.  
Disciples are participants in the ministry of God. God doesn't want us, to just watch **other** Christians doing

stuff – God wants us to engage **ourselves**, in what He’s doing.

Disciples of Jesus Christ, become disciplers. .. Those who have been **getting** disciplined, begin to disciple others...

**Verse 16** Now the eleven disciples went to **Galilee**,

That’s where it all began. After Jesus was baptised, and tempted in the desert, He returned to Galilee, and that’s where He called **His** disciples, and that’s where the Disciples began following Jesus. And now here they are (back in Galilee), and Jesus is saying, “It’s time for you to start discipling other disciples.”

So they went to **Galilee**, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, “**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**”

Now, if you said that or if I said that, that would be a lie, and it would be incredibly arrogant of us. But Jesus **can** say it, because it’s the truth about Jesus. This is what sets Jesus apart from any other religious leader the

world has ever seen. **All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus.**

No other god – no other religious leader can ever claim that. None other, can come alongside Christ. And when Jesus returns, every knee will bow and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord. **All authority, is His.**

And the one who was crucified, but now lives – the one who has all authority, in heaven, and on Earth, turns to His disciples, and He gives them a command: **GO!!!!**

**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."**

In a nutshell, the command is this: You disciples, start discipling. Become disciplers.

It starts with worship, and then it is "Go". Make disciples. Baptise in the name of the Father and the Son and the Spirit. Teach. Teach **them to observe all that I have commanded you.**

*You know, when I went back to the Ag College as an instructor, and started teaching, where I had once been taught, that was a big thing. I was **so** nervous. I had all sorts of feelings like, “Who am I?” “Why would they listen to me?” “I don’t know enough. I’m not smart enough. I’m not skilled enough. I’m not good enough...”*

*But you know what? There was someone who had authority, and the principal of the Ag College said, “Go and do it”. And with the authority of the principle of the college, I began to teach.*

And as Christians, how much do we feel, “We’re not worthy to be teachers”. I’m not leadership material; I don’t feel adequate enough to lead worship; or to pray in front of others; or to help out at Sunday School. I’m not good enough to take an RE class at the school, or to lead someone to Christ.....

How daunting, does the thought of discipling somebody else, make you feel??? ... Well guess what??? Just like when that principal commissioned me as an instructor, Somebody in authority, has commissioned you (yes, you) to make disciples.

You guys, are disciples of Jesus Christ. Ministers, priests, Christian leaders, have been training each of us, in what it means to follow Christ. It’s now time, for

each of us, as disciples of Jesus, to make other disciples of Jesus.

You don't have to be the most schmiko polished bible teacher around, to be a discipler... All you need, is a love for God, and a love for people.

You don't have to teach them what you don't know. Just teach them what you **do** know. You don't have to demonstrate what you haven't been gifted to do – you just have to put to work, the gifts that God **has** given you, and demonstrate the way of Christ, that you've had demonstrated to you.

Do you know the greatest thing, that holds people back from the great commission??? Fear.

Every time, we have to take another step in obedience to God, there's a hurdle we have to jump, and it's usually "fear".

*You probably don't know this, but the first 4 or 5 times I preached, for a couple of weeks leading up to those events, I was physically sick. The fear and nervousness, gave me ditherer (for a whole 2 weeks before hand). By the time I'd preached 6 or 7 times, that'd come back to only 2 days beforehand....*

Now I still get a bit nervous, but it doesn't physically affect me like it used to.

The point I'm making is this, God mightn't have called you to be a preacher (maybe He has), but He most definitely **has** called you in to **some** kind of Christian ministry service. And when you take those first few tentative steps, there will be this hurdle of fear, to get over... But you know what??? Don't be afraid, because Christ is with you.

That, is not an empty promise. All authority has been given to Christ, and He has promised us this? **And (Look) behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

When the gospel of Matthew began, an Angel of The Lord came to speak to Joseph, and the angel said to Joseph, look Joseph, Mary's got a 'bun in the oven', but it's ok to marry her – it's from God.

**Matthew 1:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

And the closing words of Matthew, (Look), **I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

The Gospel begins by saying "They shall call Him 'God with us'", and it finishes by saying "I am with you".

Do you believe that? Do you believe Christ is with you?

Do you believe, the presence of Christ, gives you power, to conquer fear?

Do you believe, our fears are to be overcome, so we can participate in the ministry of God?

Christ is with us – that's what it means.

Disciples, have confidence to begin to take on more responsibility, because Christ is with us.

I want to now just open it up, for just general discussion, about how we as disciples, can begin to take those next steps.

## Matthew 28:16–20 (ESV)

### **The Great Commission**

<sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

<sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> 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, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."