

Nahum

The Importance of Discipleship

Nahum 1:1-13

- We ended the book of Jonah with God saying: *"So may I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which has more than a hundred twenty thousand people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left, as well as many animals?"* (Jonah 4:11 CSB).
 - Exodus 34:5-7 (CSB): *⁵ The Lord came down in a cloud, stood with him there, and proclaimed his name, "the Lord."* *⁶ The Lord passed in front of him and proclaimed: The Lord—the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, ⁷ maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.*
- Yes, God is love as stated in 1 John 4:8. And the temptation will be to only see God as love and not as hating sin and those that do evil.
 - Proverbs 6:16-19; 1:2-3 & Romans 9:13; Leviticus 20:23; Psalm 5:4-6; Hosea 9:15; Zechariah 8:16-17; Malachi 2:16
- In reality...our phrase "hate the sin but love the sinner" ...while true...has unfortunately caused us to forget that God's wrath is against the sinner. Sin will not be cast into the lake of fire...it is not sin that is burning in hell at this moment. It is the sinner.
 - Romans 3:10 (CSB): *as it is written: **There is no one righteous, not even one.***
 - Romans 3:23 (CSB): *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

We may be tempted to think...how could they squander such an amazing movement of God? How could they not tell of the mighty grace of God? Well, that's easy to say for us to think as we sit in our temperature-controlled sanctuary and Bibles laying all over our homes.

Look at a small sample from the book of Judges: Judges 3:7; Judges 3:12; Judges 4:1; Judges 6:1.

We see a constant battle from generation to generation to keep passing on the faith: making disciples. This is why Jesus commanded us to make disciples. Faith is not something that is inherited. It doesn't naturally pass from generation to generation.

Matthew 28:18-21 (CSB): *¹⁸ Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 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 everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

In light of Matthew 28:18-21...let's be reminded of the facts concerning making disciples:

- Making disciples is not optional...it is commanded.
- Making disciples is not the job of the pastors/staff...it is the responsibility of all believers.
- Making disciples is an intentional act...it does not happen accidentally.
- Making disciples is an ongoing lifelong endeavor. Meaning...we don't just read the Bible once and then we are done. Our sanctification is a lifelong journey.
- Making disciples is the heartbeat of the church...not modern amenities.
- Making disciples isn't simply just "getting people saved"...it is also teaching them all that Christ has commanded.

There is also an emphasis in Scripture on the older generation teaching the younger generation.

Titus 2:1-8 (CSB): *But you are to proclaim things consistent with sound teaching. ² Older men are to be self-controlled, worthy of respect, sensible, and sound in faith, love, and endurance. ³ In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, ⁴ so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God's word will not be slandered. ⁶ In the same way, encourage the young men to be self-controlled ⁷ in everything. Make yourself an example of good works with integrity and dignity in your teaching. ⁸ Your message is to be sound beyond reproach, so that any opponent will be ashamed, because he doesn't have anything bad to say about us.*

Discipleship is not something to be taken lightly. We have far too many examples in Scripture of the devastation a lack of discipleship creates with the next generation.

Nahum 1:14-15

The people of Nineveh went from one generation experiencing the grace and redemptive work of God to a generation experiencing the wrath of God.

We cannot be a people that are so concerned about our preferences that we forget our mission. Our mission is to make disciples of all people. Not just to try and make converts...but disciples.

Look at the church at Ephesus – within a span of 50ish years they left their first love.

- Revelation 2:2-5 (CSB): *² I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be liars. ³ I know that you have persevered and endured hardships for the sake of my name, and you have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have this against you: You have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵ Remember then how far you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.*
- Our works are not an indication that we are healthy. Look...food trucks, VBS, Christmas plays, mowing people's yards, etc. These things within themselves are not an indication that we, as a church, are healthy. Our love for God and others is the indicator.
 - John 15:9-12 (CSB): *⁹ "As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ "I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. ¹² "This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you.*

Obedience to God by making disciples is one of the ways we love God well. Pointing people to Jesus. Over and over again and again. We are told to use our spiritual gifts to build up the body (1 Cor 12), we are told to bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2), we are told to love one another (John 13:35), we are told to speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19). Basically, we are called to live life together...making one another disciples of Christ.

So, how do we know that we are making disciples as God has called us? Some of the simple indicators will be people who have:

- A deep and growing love for God (Mark 12:30).
- A deep and growing love for others (Mark 12:31).
- A growing obedience to the Word of God (John 15:10).
- Actions and attitudes that are marked by the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).