

# Series: Oikos – Changing Your World

Week 2 of 3

CDOBC – beginning on 5/29/11

Title: “The Practice of Changing Your World”

June 5, 2011

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**OBJECTIVE:** To help believers to obey the Great Commission and make it a daily practice to “make disciples”.

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## Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- OIKOS is coming! Attend one of our adult S.S. classes for the month of June
- VBS Registration for kids
- Women of Faith – Michelle Racioppo
- Oikos group on Sunday afternoons?

## Opening Prayer

Last week I talked about the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) that Jesus gave His followers, and we noted the simplicity of His command in light of our tendency to make things more complicated. Jesus commanded us to make disciples, to baptize those who put their faith in Christ, and teach all of His commands.

Share Christ, baptize believers, and teach the truth. Not a complicated mission for us – a mission that every Bible-believing church should embrace. In that light we took a quick look at our church’s mission statement which is taken from Jesus’ command in the Great Commission – *Helping people become mature followers in Christ*

We also looked at two parables that Jesus taught in Matthew 13, the parable of the ‘*Hidden Treasure*’ and the parable of the ‘*Pearl of Great Price*’. Both of these parables teach the

incredible value of salvation. There is nothing we own that can compare to the wealth...the treasure of our salvation. All of those ‘pieces’ helped us to focus on this: that sharing Christ must be the highest priority for us – both personally and corporately.

Last week’s sermon was the first of three sermons to help us launch into the Oikos series which begins today in our adult Sunday School classes. God has given each of us our own little niche of humanity. Everyone has been given, on the average, anywhere from eight to fifteen people - individuals whom God has supernaturally and strategically placed in our relational world. The Greeks called that circle of influence your oikos- and throughout this series, we are trying to encourage and equip you of the call of God on your life to bring the Gospel to those who make up *your* world – your oikos. Those people are on God’s radar screen. And I believe He wants to reach out to them through the one element they all seem to have in common – you!

Changing the world may not be what God has called you to – or even equipped you for. But He has called you and equipped you to reach *your world* – and by His grace change *your world* with His love and forgiveness. It is in this sense that you can be a ‘world-changer’!

*Definition* - A world-changer is someone who actively encourages people in their relational world (their oikos) to become Christ-followers.

Last week’s message was titled “**The Priority of Changing Your World**”. Today’s title is “**The Practice of Changing**

**Your World”**. Now today is the *Ascension Sunday* – a day that many branches of Christianity celebrate the Ascension of Christ. For many believers today, Jesus’ ascension into heaven is a source of joy and inspiration as they look forward to the promise of spending eternity in heaven with Jesus.

When we look in Scripture at the ascension of Christ, we see the disciples in a state of awe and wonder at what they just witnessed, but they were also in a state of confusion and uncertainty!

Turn to Acts 1 (*Read vs. 9-11*)

This is a humorous passage when you understand the picture it paints – the disciples standing there in disbelief of what they just saw – and they kept staring up into the sky, as if Jesus would come back! They didn’t know what to do...and it’s the same feeling that many believers have today when their pastor speaks to them about Jesus’ command to “go, make disciples”!

We walk out of church – get home – we go to work or school on Monday and stare into the sky wondering; “*Now what am I supposed to do – and how am I supposed to do it?*” “*Make disciples?*” “*Are you kidding me?*”

Context of Acts 1 = the Great Commission – Jesus had just told His disciples to “make disciples of all nations...baptize them...teach them truth” Then He leaves them...ascends to Heaven – and they are left wondering not only where Jesus has gone...but how in the world can we do what He just commanded us to do? In this first chapter of Acts, we see:

## **Four things that are essential for us to obey Jesus' command to "make disciples".**

### Rely on the *Holy Spirit*

This is spiritual work...therefore; it requires the Holy Spirit to be active in our labor. The disciples waited for the Holy Spirit...and only through the power of the Holy Spirit do we share the Gospel with effectiveness.

Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

We don't "make disciples" through debates and 'selling' people in our oikos on the merits of the Christian faith. Yes, debating the truths of Christ may be one of the things the Holy Spirit uses to take away the scales on someone's eyes and heart – but our intellectual prowess in matters of theology, philosophy, morality, and any other 'ology' that pertains – is not more important than the Holy Spirit's involvement in your efforts.

Gal. 5:16 – "Live by the Spirit..."

### Rely on *prayer*

This is spiritual work...therefore; it requires spiritual weapons, spiritual power, and spiritual assistance. As we have learned in our Ephesians study, we know that God has chosen those who will believe. As the disciples waited on the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised (1:8), they

committed themselves to prayer during the time this  
'delay' gave them ('delay' = the time from Jesus' ascension to Pentecost).

Acts 1:14

"They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women  
and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."

Prayer is the way we partner with God – and ask Him to soften the hearts of those in our oikos. Through prayer we ask God to help us apply the wisdom He gave us upon our salvation (Eph. 1:8 – "...He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding."). Prayer is a necessary ingredient if we hope to see God work in and through us. You are God's 'link' or 'conduit' to reach those in your oikos with the message of the cross – but the goal is to help them give their life to Christ – to realize their state of sinfulness before God – to realize that Jesus has paid the price for their sins through His death on the cross - and to realize that He is risen which defeated death and sin, and brings real hope for our own eternity in heaven. This is a calling that needs to be soaked with prayer.

Rely on one another

This is spiritual work...therefore; it requires the Body of Christ to help, encourage, and pray for one another as we "make disciples" of those in our oikos. Notice that the disciples were not trying to do this work alone – but they understood that they needed each other.

Acts 1:4 – "...He was eating with them..."

Acts 1:12 – "Then they returned to Jerusalem..."

Acts 1:13 – “When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.”

God has not designed us to do ‘kingdom work’ by ourselves – but within the community of saints – within the context, encouragement, teaching, and oversight of the local church.

### Rely on God’s Word

This is spiritual work – and we need to trust on God’s Holy Word that when He directs us to “make disciples”, we can trust His command.

This is where Nike’s famous slogan applies... “Just Do it”! If God has commanded us to do something, we don’t need to understand all of the details and we don’t need to know how it will turn out...or if it will turn out at all...we just need to do it!

This point is not specifically stated in our passage today (Acts 1). It is taken from the whole of Scripture...from the insight we have into those whom God used in significant ways.

We are not ‘qualified’ to minister on behalf of Christ – but through His grace and mercy He has chosen to use us to be His representatives – His ambassadors to those who don’t believe yet. The challenge in sharing Christ is that we never know how it will turn out and God doesn’t tell us all the details of what will follow. He asks us to trust Him – to obey Him - and to go where He leads!

Examples of:

**Noah** – a flood is coming? What is a flood? Nothing like that had ever occurred before that time in history. God’s command to Noah sounded crazy...that is *before* the rain started to fall.

**Abraham** – God told him to leave Ur – the place he has lived for all his life...the place where his family and all of his relationships were? God didn’t even tell Abraham where he was going – he just told him to leave!

**Joshua** – the battle of Jericho...excuse me Lord...you want me to do what? March around the city each day...and on the seventh day make seven laps around – then yell? This is what you say will bring us victory?

**Jeremiah** – God says he knew Jeremiah before he was even formed in his mother’s womb! Then he tells Jeremiah that he must “...go to everyone I send you to say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.” (Jeremiah 1:7-8) Do you think Jeremiah ever wondered what he would need to be rescued from?

**Isaiah** – Standing in the throne room of God aware of his sinfulness and the sinfulness of his people – God asks; “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” What would you say if you were the only human being standing in the room!

**David** – a young boy angry at the giant’s heresy against God and his derogatory, deriding statements about the people of God – Goliath was a trained and accomplished

warrior – David was a shepherd. Goliath lost his head because David obeyed God’s call.

**Gideon** – a coward turned general. God told him to cut his army down to three hundred! Gideon obeyed and the Philistines were defeated.

Time and time again...all throughout Scripture...we see great things accomplished not by great men or women...but by obedient men and women. God wants you to obey – and He will do the rest. God wants you to obey – and trust Him for the results. God wants you to obey – and He will accomplish great things through us!

## **Application**

**Illus.** God Came Near, by Max Lucado, “Light of the...Storage Closet?” – p. 97 ff.

Matthew 5:14-16

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house (*oikos*). In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

May this be our practice...and may this change our world!

Close in prayer / transition to communion