

**D-Up: A Series on Discipleship**  
**A Disciple's Desire for Unbelievers**  
**Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8**

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**Text Introduction:** This morning I am continuing a preaching series on discipleship. We are calling this series of messages "D-Up!" The "D" stands for discipleship.

We have focused on our initial decision to follow Christ, on baptism and the importance of the church to help us grow as disciples. In more recent weeks, we have focused on daily reading of the Word, prayer, and stewardship. Today, I want to talk about something that scares many believers. I want to focus our attention on what we might call personal evangelism or witnessing.

**Text:** <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <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 everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

**Introduction:** These two selections of Scripture are very familiar to the church. The Matthew text is often referred to as the Great Commission. Here is the church's commission from Jesus before He ascends to Heaven. We might say here are the marching orders of the church from Jesus until He returns. That is reiterated in Acts.

This is really then a simple concept in our ongoing discussion about disciples. Disciples desperately want others to become disciples of Jesus.

**Disciples possess the passion to be witnesses.**

Beginning with the first disciples that Jesus ever invited to follow Him, we see a passion from those disciples to invite others to follow Jesus with them. Andrew heard John the Baptist say about Jesus, "Look, the lamb of God." Andrew told his brother, Simon Peter. Simon Peter began to follow Jesus. Then Jesus met Philip and told him, "Follow me." Philip did. Philip went to his friend Nathanael. (All of this in John 1)

It is as one so famously said, "Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." Our passion should come from at least two things.

Out of Command—Our text today in Matthew tells us that this is a command.

Out of Conviction—Our conviction is rooted in the reality of Heaven and Hell and the exclusivity of Christ being the only answer.

- Acts 4:13
- Acts 4:19-20
- Acts 5:29-32

The world tried to shut the early disciples up, but they could not be shut up because of the command that they had been given by their Lord and the conviction that what they believed about Him was true.

### **Disciples possess the power to be witnesses.**

In both texts, Matthew 28 and Acts 1, we are promised a power. But, let us notice the point of the power. The power is not for what we want, the power is for what He wants from us. The specific resource of power is to be witnesses.

People have always struggled with their inadequacies. Moses did. Joshua did. The prophet Jeremiah did. In each case, God's message was the same. I will be with you. You may feel inadequate to share the good news of Jesus with someone else. He promised that He would be with us and give us the power.

Think about this. God wants all to be saved. God wants those who are saved to be involved in sharing with those who are not saved. Here is a promise—He will be with you. He will empower you for the task.

### **A Picture of these Two Principles**

Philip, the Deacon, provides a picture of these two principles.

We read his story in Acts 8:4-8, 26-40.

Sharing Jesus was the passion of Philip's life. We only encounter the name Philip one more time in the Bible. The only other statement made about Philip is in Acts 21:8. **8** On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. The phrase evangelist does not seem to refer to him as a title, but rather a description of his life.

Philip's witness was empowered by the Holy Spirit. The work of the Spirit of God is evident throughout this passage. First, the Spirit of God *scattered* the Church throughout the region. Then, the Spirit of God *spoke* to the heart of Philip and *sent* him to a specific location to intercept the Ethiopian. Then, God *set up* the Ethiopian riding in the chariot by having him read from the prophet Isaiah. The point is that the Spirit of God is continually at work. We can be certain that God is at work drawing people to Himself. This fact ought to give us great enthusiasm and great confidence as we seek to reach the world one person at a time.

### **So What?**

We are accustomed to this question, "So what?" The "So what" for me is that way for us to take a particular text of Scripture and make immediate application. We are going to make that most immediate this morning.

If the Holy Spirit is our power, than prayer is our greatest resource.