

DISCIPLESHIP: PASS IT ON
May 15, 2016 morning service
II Timothy 2:1-2

You're in your Bible this morning and we're in this series continuing "Making Disciples." That's what this middle school project is all about. We're going to be making disciples right there in that building. We're in II Timothy chapter 2 and verses 1 and 2 this morning. You know, group gatherings, small group gatherings are vital to the life of the church. Listen. Jesus most often worked with small groups of people. He rarely did one on one discipleship. It's in the gathering of a small group. You find that with our Lord as He walked with those disciples. Oftentimes there would be three with Him: Peter, James, and John. You see others in small groups. Small groups are important. If you are not in a small group, if you are not in a Connection Group, I can't challenge you enough to help you get into a Connection Group because it's there that a part of discipleship happens.

Outside of that Connection Group, what we call Sunday School, there are other small groups to get involved in, D-groups, discipleship groups on Wednesday night. And then those informal groups that you'll meet together at a third space like Starbucks or you'll meet at Panera Bread or somewhere that you go and fellowship just around the word of God. I see it all over Pensacola when I walk in. Men, women, young people, they'll be there gathered three or four with their Bibles open and talking about the word of God and encouraging one another. It's how you make disciples. It's the Jesus way in those small groups that you pass it on to others.

That's exactly what Paul did with Timothy and we see it in II Timothy 2, verses 1 and 2. Listen to this. *You therefore, my son* [He's talking to Timothy. He says, "My son." It's not his son biologically. It's his son spiritually. Therefore, my son], *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses* [Notice that it's Paul and others together with Timothy. They're in a small group], *entrust these* [these things you've heard] *to faithful men* [plural, in that small group] *who will be able to teach others* [plural] *also*.¹

You see four generations, Paul and those with him, teaching Timothy. Timothy is giving it to faithful men and those faithful men are passing it to others also. Person to person, generation to generation, group to group as we make disciples. I've made no bones about it. I've not hidden it. I'm looking for 250 men in the next three years that we'd raise them up beginning in a small group of three or four and they'd teach others and they'd teach others until we've got a minimum of 250 men that love nothing more than they love God and they hate nothing more than they hate sin and I'm telling you, we'll attack this city and make Pensacola a different place if you'll give me 250 men that are disciples of Christ. If I've got 250 men I'll have a thousand ladies and march

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forward we'll go. Not only will we make a difference in this church, make a difference in the community, we'll touch the world.

One of those girls on this video today, Grace Croley, she's a Christian, dynamic student in New York City now going to King's College. This summer she's going to be over making disciples in Georgia before she goes back for her last year up at King's in New York City. That young girl came right through our middle school ministry. At 11:00 today we're going to identify over 50 seniors that have come through our ministry here.

I've just been pressed this morning. I remember sweet Melanie Morris passed away from that cancer. She walked right through this ministry right here. I was conversing back with her daddy last night. He sent these words to me. Doc, there's not many more greater than that guy in this church. He said, "Pastor, thank you for what you've invested in my daughter and our church has invested in my daughter." It's kingdom work. We ought to put our best down there with those kids, those middle schoolers, high schoolers.

Paul gives to Timothy and Timothy to his group and one group to another. We pass it on. It's how we make disciples. Well this morning I want you to get in this second chapter with me. In these next weeks I'm walking through II Timothy. Next week we're going to look at the word endurance. You'll never be a disciple if you don't know endurance. You've got to press through sometimes.

This morning I gave all the staff a Popsicle. We started the day with a sugar high. One of them asked, "Is it sugar free?" I said, "Oh no. Not on Sunday morning." It wasn't the store brand either. It was Popsicle brand. I gave them one. We all had a Popsicle at early staff this morning. I said, "Now the key is not what you're eating. The key is what you're keeping." I said, "Take that stick and I've come to tell you, as your pastor, I'm going to stick with it and I'm going to stick with you. I want you to put that on your desk somewhere that you'll see it and when you get down and out and some of those crazy Baptists get onto you, then I want you to stick with it. I want you to stick together." We're going to look at that next week with endurance.

This morning we come to this text and I want you to see the process, the process of making a disciple and then the pictures of making a disciple. I've already jumped into the process just a little bit when we saw Paul with many witnesses giving then to Timothy, Timothy to faithful men, faithful men teaching others. You see that right here in our text. From Paul to Timothy to faithful men, to teaching others. In the year 2025 the children that are seven and eight years old right now will walk across this stage as high school graduates in 2025. The question is this. Will they be disciples when they walk across here? Many will have made a profession of faith and been baptized but will they know the process of someone teaching them the basics and growing them up beyond the basics with the fundamentals? Will we pass it on? It's a process. One gives to a group, to others. You look out there and you see them.

I don't go many places that somebody doesn't say to me, "I'm a product," because they know where I am. They'll say, "Pastor, I'm a product of Olive Baptist Church." We send a lot of people out of here. People are always coming and going in this mobile society. I've jokingly said for years, "I'm grateful to God for all of these Navy guys and ladies that the Lord brings here. If we win them and disciple them, then we can send them out around the world as missionaries and make America pay for it." Amen.

I was driving out to Barrancas to a funeral. As I started in the gate Dr. Lewis was sitting next to me and I said, "Brother Stan, how much money do you think America has invested in NAS Pensacola since it started?" My soul. Just gas for planes alone. You can't even have a funeral out there without somebody flying over. Training, discipling. We've got to reach that military group and send them around the world. We've got to reach the students of the campuses, junior college, but especially the University of West Florida. They're going to have a football team out there next year. The place is going to explode. I'm telling you, it's going to grow and the world is going to come. We must be ready to teach them and pass it on from Paul to Timothy to faithful men to others.

Well how do you do it? Well Paul gives us some pictures here and it's what I want you to see with me this morning. I want you to see five of them. It's only the last one that I have time to deal with today because you only give me so many minutes. So here we go. Look at the first four. I've written them down for you. Paul uses these pictures. In verse 3 he talks about a soldier. He said: *Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.* There's hardship. He's enlisted. He goes into combat. You see, Paul says you're to be a soldier of the cross and the word of God is your marching orders. We're in a battle. We're in a war. We've always been in a war but in America we see the war coming at us harder and harder. We must be soldiers of the cross. We don't have time to deal with that one this morning.

Look in verse number 5. He says: *Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.* As an athlete he competes. He trains. Somebody teaches him and he competes according to the rules but he runs to win the prize. That's what we've got to do. We've got to train up. We've got to coach. I don't have time to deal with that one this morning. Thirdly he says we're like a farmer. Verse number 6. *The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.* A farmer. If anybody knows about faith, a farmer knows about faith. He takes what he's got and puts it in the ground and then he waits and he waits. Will the rain come just right? Will the sun come just right? Will it come up? He's put his money in the ground. Once it comes up he tills the ground and works for the harvest and then he reaps the harvest. Oh we as disciples are like soldiers. We're like athletes. We're like farmers.

Verses 8 and 9 says we're like criminals. Like criminals. You say, "Preacher, what are you talking about?" Well look at it in verses 8 and 9. *Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.*

You can put me in jail but you can't put the word of God in jail because the Bible goes forth. Isaiah 55 says that the word of God when it goes forth it will do that that it's intended to do and will not come back empty or void. The criminal. There's a cost for standing. Sometimes you're just criminalized in the minds of others. Sometimes you're criminalized by the criticism of others.

Let me just say a word about criticism here. Let me just move away from that sermon for a minute. If you've got a critical spirit I rebuke you in Jesus' name and I plead with you to run to that altar and ask God to change your mind and tongue. Nowhere in the world do they build statues for critics. There's no place in the church for a critical spirit. A discerning spirit, a word of wisdom, a hard word yes but just to be critical all the time. Some people will criminalize you with their criticism. Some will literally go to jail.

In the early 1500's that's what happened to our Anabaptist brothers during the great reformation when Luther and Zwingli and Calvin were coming out of the Catholic church and they called the Catholic church a non-church and said it was dead and gone away from God and the mass was a mess. It really was not the gospel and they had seven ordinances and they said those ordinances were not biblical and they came to the Bible and the Bible alone but even then they would not come to believer's baptism. Conrad Grebel, our forefather as an Anabaptist went to jail for being baptized.

Everybody that's in here that's a Baptist, you owe your history to Conrad and you didn't even know who he was. None of history very much knows who he is. He was a godless, mean-spirited, drunk, womanizing college student in Paris and Jesus gloriously saved him. God changed his life and when you read his letters, he begins to talk about the glory of the gospel and he said to Zwingli, "You're not right with God if you're not baptized the way Jesus was baptized." They threw him out and he wound up going to jail because then they believed in the church and the state being together. That was part of what America was all about, keeping the state out of the church's business. You dare not forget that. They were criminalized.

I don't have time to deal with that but number five he uses in verses 21 and 22. He says not only are disciples like soldiers and athletes and farmers and criminals, they're like vessels. Now I want to sit down here for just a minute because I've got a few minutes here to deal with vessels. Look at it. He says: *Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, [and pursue it] with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

Hallelujah. Vessels. What kind of vessel are you? He says in this text that we have vessels of gold and silver. We have vessels of clay and earthenware. We have all kinds of vessels. You have them in your house. I have them in mine. We have vessels of plastic. We have vessels of China. We have vessels at our house that you have to be somebody evidently to eat off of them because I never do unless somebody

comes. When somebody shows up I get to eat off the good stuff but most of the time I don't eat off the good stuff. I eat off the everyday stuff. It's a vessel. It's a bowl. It's a plate. The cat, she eats out of plastic. Not silver, plastic.

You see, everybody in here's a vessel but what makes the vessel honorable is not what the vessel is made out of, gold or silver or earthenware or clay, what makes the vessel honorable is what the vessel contains. It's what's in you. Let me tell you, if Jesus is in you and if He's Lord in you, you are an honorable vessel but if you're void of Jesus today and you do not honor Christ and you do not live for Jesus, you are a dishonorable vessel. You're a vessel but you just contain the flesh and what comes through you and out of you is flesh. It's dishonoring, not honoring unto the Lord. So Paul begins to deal with Timothy and says, "Timothy, you've got to be a vessel."

Now if you're a vessel for honor and Jesus is in you, he says three things will be about you. Number one, you'll be sanctified. Number two, you'll be useful to the Master. Number three, you'll be prepared for every good work. Look at it. You'll be sanctified. If Jesus is in you and you're full of the Holy Spirit, number one, you're holy. You're holy. The vessel of honor is an honorable person filled with the Holy Spirit of God, sanctified, getting sin out of your life and living for the Lord. Then he says that you will be useful, useful to the Master. Is God using you today? Let me tell you, if you're an honorable vessel, God uses you. You become His hands, His feet, His mouth, His eyes, His touch. Try praying this prayer. I prayed it last night. "Lord, I'm not concerned about being blessed. I ask You to make me a blessing."

So last night I went to the Wahoos game. What a game. Won it in 10. I'm waiting on a friend of mine to come join me and I'm standing in the street waiting to go up to the gate just sitting on an air conditioning unit in the cool shade. Scores of people walk by and I said, "Lord, I've got about 15 minutes here," because I was running a little early. I said, "Tonight would You just not worry about blessing me and get that out of me. Make me a blessing." People come by, "Hey, pastor, how are you doing? I see you on television, hear you on the radio." They were blessing me and then I saw him. He was looking at me. He waited until it kind of cleared out and he walks over. He tells me – and I know him. He tells me his story and I know his story. We'd been separated for a great while but we've known each other out of a tragedy in days gone by in their family life.

He asked me, he said, "Pastor, would you please pray for me?" I said, "Sure." So standing at the corner of Spring and Cedar, I said, "Can we just pray now?" He said, "Well, I guess." I said, "Sure it's legal. We're not in Russia or nothing. You know, the Shiites are not coming to get us." So I just put my arm around him and I prayed. I just asked the favor of God right there at a ballgame to be on him. Amen.

Why did God do that? I think because I asked for it. I said, "Lord, just use me today. I don't want anybody to bless me." What would happen if 3,000 people that gather for worship today went out of here and said, "God, don't worry about blessing me. Make me a blessing." You see, honorable vessels are useful. They don't use

people. They are useful people. What kind of vessel are you? That's what we are to disciple and build up. Useful vessels. Sanctified vessels.

The he says, "Prepare." Oh here's our word. Look at it. Prepared for every good work. There's got to be preparation. We're going to have a great lunch at our house today if my wife prepared it. If I prepared it, not so much, but I can. Not too good but I can prepare. If you're going to have lunch, somebody's got to fix it, prepare it. If you're going to have disciples, somebody has to prepare it. Every vessel that's honorable is prepared for the Master's use. How in the world do we get prepared? Well he exhorts us right here in the preparation. He says in verse 22, "There's some things you have to do."

Number one, he says flee youthful lusts. If you're going to be prepared to be used, you've got to get rid of being a kid. You've got to grow up. Now youthful lusts are not sexual. Youthful lusts are impatience and self-assertion and arrogance. It's ill-regulated passions. It's all about me. That can dance over into the sexual area but it's about self-assertion. It's about me, me, me, me. If you're going to be prepared as a useful vessel, you've got to get over you. As a matter of fact, the rest of us are tired of hearing about you from you.

I'm just telling you, when you become a disciple it turns you inside out. You begin to be other-focused, not self-centered. That's a youthful lust. "Oh, somebody just brag on me." You know those kids that we have that are going to be out here in this middle school building. They have so many needs of self-affirmation and encouragement and now the idiotic federal government is putting something in for us to have to deal with them about this bathroom deal. It's just lunacy. It's idiocy. It's absolute stupidity because they already are so struggling. Now they're going to make us talk to them about it.

Out here in the new middle school building there'll be only two kinds of bathrooms. Amen. And if middle schoolers who struggle with their sexual identity come in, we will minister to them. We'll help them. We'll try to talk them through and encourage them to know who they are and what they are. Then we'll show them where they have a bathroom they can use. It's like we took common sense. We didn't just throw it out the window. We took it to the mountains and we buried it in the deepest valley we can find. That, my friends, is why people are so upset with all of this election stuff. They're just looking for somebody. They don't give a rip who they are or what they are. If they think there's an ounce of some kind of sense that is common to where they live, I'm here to tell you, they're pulling the lever. We must flee youthful lusts. We've got to help these kids. That's why we're building this building. A building won't build these kids but the people in it will build those kids. They've got to flee youthful lusts.

Secondly, he says you've got to pursue spiritual disciplines. They're right here in verse 22 and those disciplines are righteousness, faith, love, and peace. Amen? Righteousness, that's how you get right with God. You confess your sin. It's faith.

That's how you believe God. You begin to believe Him. I want to ask you right now, "Hey, what are you believing God for right now?" If you don't have an answer, you're not believing Him for nothing. I'm telling you, if you can't answer that immediately – Manley Beasley used to ask me that question all the time. He'd look me right in the face. He'd point that old, bony finger. Manley should have been dead 20 years ago and he nearly died five times and he didn't care. He absolutely didn't give a rip what you thought.

"Hey, Brother Ted." I said, "Yes, sir?" He'd say, "What are you believing God for?" I said, "Well." He said, "You ain't believing God for nothing." He'd come back the next year for the revival. I'd see him in a meeting. He'd say, "Hey, Brother Ted. What are you believing God for?" I'd say, "Well, you know." "You ain't believing God for nothing." That's the way he'd do it. I mean he'd just scream at me. Well I'm not the sharpest guy in the world but I thought, here comes Manley, I'm fixin' to be believing God for something. I wrote me down the name of the lostest guy I know. He said, "What are you believing God for?" I said, "Bob Jones." He said, "You don't even know who he is, do you?" I said, "No, sir. I'm sorry."

It's faith. I want to ask you, what are you believing God for right now? Are you believing God for anything? It's the spiritual discipline of believing God. It's faith. We don't walk by sight. We walk by – why do we keep looking around? Look up. Look up. The spiritual discipline is righteousness, get right with God. Faith, it's believing God. Love. Love. Hallelujah. This is the relationship side. You've got to have the spiritual discipline and loving one another. Then peace. That is you just settle down and you trust God in the midst of a storm. I mean when all hell breaks loose, you let heaven set the agenda. It's the peace of God that passes all worldly understanding.

You remember that story? Moses is fighting the Amalekites and he goes up on the mountain and he sends Joshua down in the valley and he's going to do the fighting. The Bible says as long as Moses kept the rod of God – remember the story? As long as you keep the rod lifted up we win but when it came down. There are three disciplines at work here. Number one, there's the spiritual discipline. He's got to keep the rod of God up. That's our prayer life. That's our discipline of knowing God. That's faith. But it took Joshua fighting in the valley. There's some things you've got to do. You see, friend, you didn't do anything to accomplish your salvation but you do a lot to expose your salvation. You work out your salvation. While somebody's lifting their hand on the mountain there's another guy down in the valley and he's fighting the war.

There's a third deal. It's the relational side and that's when Aaron and Hur came and held up the hands. You see, you've got to have the spiritual life, you've got to have the work life, you've got to have the relational life of someone coming alongside of you and when you get all three of those things the Amalekites are toast. But if you don't have that things working in triple tandem, the Amalekites will defeat you.

Getting prepared calls for fleeing youthful lusts. It calls for pursuing discipline. Thirdly, it calls for hanging out with godly friends. It says in verse 22 that you pursue

righteousness, faith, love, peace with, with, hang out with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. That's why somebody in this church ought to join a church today. You ought to hang with righteous people. That's why some of you ought to get in a small group. You ought to hang out with people. You ought to rub shoulders with people. That's why I keep tickets to the Blue Wahoos game. I go with different people. I go a lot with Buddy's son, my son-in-law. Last night I went with a preacher who needed to be encouraged. We encourage one another. A few weeks ago I went with a man that had lost his wife. We enjoy the game. It's a lot of fun but one of the great things about baseball, there's so much time to talk. There really is. Those guys talk on the field. I mean they have time to talk so we have time to talk.

You see, it's hanging out. In church, in a small group, but a social setting is when you talk about the things of God. You see, disciples are vessels of honor when you show reverence or value. That's what it means to honor. Who is it that we're to honor? Well let me tell you this, number one, the Bible says you're supposed to honor the Lord, to give reverence to the Lord. You're to honor the Lord. In everything you do, you're to honor Him. Number two, you ought to honor your church elders, the Bible says. You ought to honor your pastor, your teachers, ministers, elders, deacons. You honor them, the Bible says. As a matter of fact, one place says we're to double honor. You're to honor widows, the Bible says. You're to honor them. You reverence. The Bible says you're to honor your parents. Amen. Give honor unto that mother and that father. Honor the Lord. Honor the elders. Honor the widows. Honor the parents. The Bible says you ought to honor your spouse if you're married. Give honor, reverence. Honor.

How's your vessel? Any old vessel will do. Big ones, little ones, tall ones, skinny ones. It's my favorite vessel story. I buried a man a few years ago. His wife that always struggled with weight said to me, "Pastor, when I die, I want you to have them cremate me." I said, "Ok." She said, "I want you to put me in a tall, skinny urn." She said, "If all the ashes won't go in there just throw them out on the ground. I want to be tall and skinny one time in my life." Any old vessel will do. You're a vessel. Are you an honorable or a dishonorable vessel?

Let me tell you, if you're an honorable vessel, someone helped you get there. They disciplined you, they passed it on, you saw it, they taught it, they spoke of it. There's one more picture in that text and you're already looking at me like I don't have time to deal with it because when it gets past verse 23 he begins to talk about the bondservant of the Lord in the end of the chapter, that we're a bondservant. You see it right there. We're the bondservants of Christ. That's how we become those honorable vessels. We become the servant of the Lord. Amen.

So today you need to hang with the right people. Come join this church. If you don't have Christ in you like Conrad Grebel that I talked about – he was a wicked college kid. He went to his grave with sexual disease in his body even though he had been forgiven and saved. He'd sown seed that came up physically and he never was healed of it. If you've never trusted Jesus Christ I'm telling you, He will save you today.

The gospel is that Jesus came and lived and died and rose again. Are you an honorable vessel? Are you full of Jesus today? Are you hanging with others like you and need a church? You saw this sweet lady baptized. Have you ever taken that step of obedience as an honorable vessel?

Then I want to ask you this and then I want us to sing, Brother Jon. Are you in a group anywhere that someone is passing it on to you? If you're not, you can be and if you're not, you're missing a vital element of growing up in the Lord. You say, "How do I do that?" Find two friends and go get coffee is one way to do it. Take a Bible. You say, "Well I'm not smart enough." Well John is. Just open it up and read it. You'll be amazed if you'll open that book at Starbucks and read it out loud, two things will happen. Number one, lots of college kids will move away from you so it'll be quiet where you are. Number two, there'll be those that God's dealing with that'll be drawn to you like a magnet that you can talk to about the things of faith. You say, "I wouldn't be smart enough." You don't have to be smart. You've got to be a usable vessel. I mean God talked through a jackass one time. He can use you. I just went a little King James on you there, I'm sorry. He can use you because you'll be His vessel. If He's in you, He'll flow through you.

If you need Christ, come. Looking for a church, come. You say, "Pastor, I need to bring my vessel and be filled." Then come.

Lord Jesus, have Your way across this service, in this congregation. Lord, we just say, "Here's our heart. Here's our heart. Fill it, flood it. Here's our heart." Make us vessels that pass it on. Thank you for those that are coming. Grow Your family today, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

We're on our feet all over this room. We're standing. God's calling. The Spirit of God's wooing you. Then you come. You come this day.