

# Build my house

*Pastor Wyley Jenkins, Jr.*

Have you ever climbed a mountain? I have not. I climbed a volcano once, but it was only 2,000 meters high. I recently learned how people climb the tallest mountain in the world. Mount Everest is 8,848 meters tall, making it the tallest mountain in the world. Besides preparing to be a climber and a hiker, they must do it in extreme conditions. It is very cold; at the starting point in warm weather it is 4 degrees Celsius as a high, while at the top it is -20 or more at night. As you climb the mountain, the air gets less and less with oxygen, until it is only 35% as much oxygen as we have here in this room. The climbers must carry oxygen bottles. All along the route, there is danger from ice, snow, cold and bad weather. No one would have ever climbed Mount Everest if it were not for the Sherpas.

The Sherpas are the ethnic group who are guides up the different mountains in the Himalayas. Do you know who Tenzing Norgay is? As a child, I was taught that it was Sir Edmund Hillary who was the first to reach the top of Mount Everest, but that is not exactly true. As a matter of fact, Hillary and Tenzing Norgay took the last step together. They reached at the same time. You see, Hillary would have never made it alone. He needed a Sherpa guide; he needed Tenzing Norgay. Sherpas, like Tenzing, not only repeatedly climb Everest, but they created a system to help others get up and down the mountain. At the bottom of Mount Everest is base camp. It is 5,270 meters high or 17,290 feet high. From the base camp, there is a series of four more camps to reach the summit at 8,848 meters or 29,035 feet. I don't exactly know how they do it, but I know it is normal to take on average about 45 days to climb the mountain and 15 to go back down.



Climbing up Mount Everest is a great example of the Christian life. At the top is the perfection of Jesus. Jesus is totally good, totally loving, totally honest, totally holy, and totally merciful. He cares for the poor, heals the sick, saves the lost, and loves God above everything. He is the top of the mountain of perfection, and no person on earth will ever reach that perfection. But all along the way, there are markers. There are camps. I am going to give you the starting place and at least four big general camps that are along the way up the mountain to be like Jesus. We all are born in sin. We are born off the map in the **City of Destruction**. When we make it to the mountain it is to the first camp and it is called the **Come and See Jesus Camp**. This is where the person is seeking and asking questions. This is where many children are. This is the base of the mountain. If people move up, it will be to the second camp, called the **Believe Camp**. In the Believe Camp a person makes a decision that Christ is their personal Savior and places their faith in him. They begin to turn away from any way of life that does not make God happy. They will get baptized, joining the church. The next camp is the **Follow Me Camp**. In it, people learn to seek Jesus and to obey the things he says to do. This is an exciting place, and there are many challenges to following Christ and many joys as well. Finally, there is the **Multiplier Camp**, where people spend their energy trying to influence, encourage and lead people to focus on the entire process from top to bottom. These camps represent the process of becoming like Jesus. So, here is the secret of this story. That is what it means to be a disciple and to make disciples. We are at the exact same moment climbing the mountain AND helping others to climb it.

And we can learn several things from this story:

1. Every Christian is somewhere on the mountain. (Where are you?) **Location**.
2. Every Christian is being called up the mountain. (Where is God calling you to?) **Calling**.
3. Every Christian has the duty to help people along the path. (Who can you help?) **A field**.
4. Every Christian can freely help people to the highest camp they have made it to. (What do you have that you can bless others with?) **Contributions**. Talents, passions, and areas of service.

This process is what I mean by Disciple-Making. I believe this is what Jesus had in mind in Matthew 28:18-20. I want to speak about this passage, but I wanted you to have this image in mind. Let's read it, and I will briefly explain it.

***<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."***

This is called the Great Commission. I see it simply like this:

1. The Authority of Jesus (v18).
2. The Command of Jesus (v19-20a).
3. The Promise of Jesus (v20b).

## 1. The Authority of Jesus

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

Jesus is the King. They called him the King of the Jews. They hung that above his head on the cross in three languages. They tried to mock him. He kept saying to them over and over that he was the promised King, but they crucified him. Though that seems like a failure, it was actually the exact plan of God. As Jesus rose in a new body, an indestructible body, he reclaimed the authority that Adam had and lost. He reclaimed the authority over all creation. He was the new Man, and the Authority that once belonged to men, sin, death and the devil, now belonged to him. This is a very important fact to understand, since it is the foundation of the command. All authority belongs to him. This will be a great relief as his people carry the gospel forward. Though it seems like evil men and crooked governments rule, they do not. Though it seems like people's hearts are impossible to reach, they are not. All authority really belongs to Jesus. That is what it means. In a very confusing time where Buddha, Mohammad and Jesus are held as equals, Jesus reminds us that that is not the case. All authority belongs to the King of Israel, and all who oppose him will lose. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.

## 2. The Command of Jesus

***<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.”***

This command is 1 “what” and 3 “how”. What is the command? The command is to make disciples. How do we make disciples? We go, we baptize them into a community, and we teach them to observe everything Jesus commanded. Remember, I have in mind the image of Mount Everest. Each camp is another stop on the way to being like Jesus, and we are all called to climb and help others up. What does it mean to make disciples? When people think of missions they get confused. They think of doing good and noble things. They think of helping orphans, feeding the poor, or healing the sick. Others think of translating the Bible into some language where it does not exist. But if we feed the poor, but they never have a relationship with God, we left them with the biggest hunger man has ever had. If we help the orphans, but never lead them to the eternal father who loves them beyond their imagination, we did not help them. If we translate the Bible into some language, but never tell them that God loves them, we did not give the only message that matters. As a Christian, we should work hard to eliminate all kinds of suffering, but the suffering that should keep us awake at night is eternal suffering.

So I challenge you to not only have a loving heart, but have the same goal as Jesus. Be a mountain guide. Lead people closer to God. Help them see their need. Use every opportunity to share Christ with believers and non-believers. And in the same way, we should not settle for seeing people come to faith and never growing up from the “Believe camp”. How many of you want to have a baby but never see him grow? In the same way, seeing people get saved and not trying to lead them up the mountain is not the goal. The goal is to make disciples, and every person here can do that.

How are we to make disciples? The first pillar is **Going**. I call it *Intentional disciple-making*. When Jesus told the 11 Apostles to go and make disciples, he knew what that meant. They would need to plan for this. It would need to be intentional. No one gets a doctorate in mechanical engineering accidentally. No one moves to another country accidentally. To reach any goal, it takes intentionality. Intentionality means we did it on purpose. Jesus says to all his people, "GO and make disciples". Do it on purpose. Do you have a person or way in which you are, on purpose, making disciples? Maybe it is helping your children to know Christ. Go and take them up the mountain. Help them to learn. Listen to them. Learn their struggles. Maybe it is helping a fellow student. Maybe it is offering a course to those around you to make friends and using those opportunities to introduce people to Christ. Maybe it is serving at church to help people, to welcome people. Maybe it is to give financially to all of these things. But please do not let it be accidental. Do it for Jesus; do it on purpose.

The next "how" is **Baptizing** them. This is an interesting and partially misunderstood piece of this passage. I believe that this stands for conversion into a community. In the times of Jesus, baptism always meant joining a community. It was the final step in fully becoming one with that group. With Christians, it goes one step farther. It is becoming one with Jesus and one with his people. Making disciples again is about the journey up the mountain, not just saying we converted someone. It is about bringing people into the family. We are a community of disciples who make disciples. We all use our different gifts to bring people closer to Jesus; to bring them up the mountain. Therefore, we GO, and we Baptize, bringing them into the community.

But we must also **Teach them to Observe**. Teaching is one thing. Teaching is education. It means classes and curriculum and diplomas. But Jesus did not just say teach them all I have commanded. He said, teach them to observe all that I have commanded. Observing is like obeying, but observing is a figure of speech. To observe something is to fix our eyes on it. It is to check on it frequently. To observe requires ongoing action. Many of our churches have failed because they have become like a show. We have a nice show band. We preach a nice show sermon. People come to hear Jesus, and they leave, and we have no idea whether or not they observe what he says. But if we are living our lives with others, if I am intentionally trying to help others to get up the mountain, then I need them to help me observe, and they need me to help them observe. This activity cannot be done on a Sunday morning. It is important to come to church, but coming to church is not the same thing as teaching people to observe. Teaching to observe is transformational.

Let me give you one example from Jesus. He tells a story about a wise man and a foolish man. They both want to build a house, but the wise man built his house upon a rock, and the foolish man on sand. When the storms came, the house on the sand could not handle it and collapsed, but the house built on the strong foundation did not fall. So how do we build our lives in such a way that they can stand the storms of life? Here is how. Matthew 7:24,26:

***"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock (...) <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand."***

Jesus wants to teach you to hear AND obey because that is for your good and his glory. Obedience will transform your life for the better.

### 3. The Promise of Jesus

***“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”***

This might be the most encouraging part of the great commission. When Jesus’ people believe Jesus’ authority and obey Jesus command, they receive a tremendous promise. “I will be with you always.” All throughout the Bible, there is a great truth. God not only wants to save and act, but he wants to use people to do it. God can work without us, but that is not the main plan. His main idea is to say, I will be with you as you are making disciples. If you ask me what part of missions I like the most, it is this one. Seeing God’s power at work is addictive. It makes you happy. It makes you want to be holy. It makes you want to believe every part and piece of the Bible.

One of the hard parts of working with the Tribal people is that some government officials did not want me to share with them, but I did. They threatened me that if I stepped foot on the territory of the tribe, they would arrest me. But one time I was invited to share in the biggest village, and I thought, “If I go and somebody gets saved, it will be worth risking everything.” I went and shared, and everything went well. As I was driving back home, the chief of the tribe asked if he and some of his family could ride to the town with me in my truck. It took 2 hours of driving through terrible muddy roads to get out of the reservation. As we were about half of the distance out of the village, I got a flat on my truck. I was already nervous about being driving inside the reservation, but all of a sudden I saw a truck coming from far away. As it got closer, I noticed that it was a police truck. I was worried. “Today I will surely go to jail.” As the police got close to the truck, I was in the mud changing the tire. I tried to avoid the police and focus on the tire, but I could hear them asking the men in the truck with me, “Who is he, what is he doing on the reservation?” The family of the chief began to defend me. “He is just a friend, and we asked him to visit us.” Then, the chief got out of the truck and came to the police. He said, “I am the chief of the reservation here, and he is my friend, so since you work for me, I want you to change his tire.” The police looked at each other. Then they walked over to me and told me to go get in the truck that they would change my tire. I not only got to preach in the village and not only did I not get arrested, the police changed my flat because the one who said “I will be with you always” was with me. That is his power and his glory. He laid a banquet in front of me in the presence of my enemies.

Why are you afraid? Just do your part. Help someone, somewhere, get up the mountain. Be intentional. Do your part to help the community. Believe the promise that he is with you. That is what it means to make disciples. One of my children got sick on the mission field. We could not figure it out. When we came home, our mission told us that we needed to wait a couple of years before returning. It was a strange time. I thought, “I will spend this time to do more theological education.” As we were facing this difficult decision, I was staying in a friend’s home. That morning, I began to read the biblical book of Haggai, and I read these words. Haggai 1:3:

***“Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, <sup>4</sup> ‘Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?’”***

The story is about how the house of God was not built, and the people only focused on themselves. Because our temple today is one of living stones, I knew that for us today, not building God’s temple is when we do not make disciples. When we focus on ourselves and do not make disciples, we are like those people. I sensed God calling to me and challenging me. I asked him, “Is that me? Am I not

a disciple maker? Surely Lord I am building your house? I will build your house Lord; just show me where and when.” I put the Bible down and about one hour later I got a knock on the door. It was the Pastor of a local church I had preached at. He came to me and asked if we could talk. He said, “We have had a Spanish speaking mission for twenty years and today it has seven people in it. We are about to give up on it, but we wanted to give it one more try. We would like to invite you to come on staff and take over this Hispanic church.” God is always in control. I do not understand how he works, but he is good. I took that job, and in one year we baptized eight adults. It grew to be about sixty people with children, and we added another Pastor to stay and take over after me. My wife and I left, and we still have contact with both the English and Spanish sides of the church. But the question that God asked me is the one I want to ask you. Are you building your perfect life on earth, or are you building his temple? What is God calling you to do today? What is he speaking to you?

### **Discussion questions:**

- 1.** How is being a disciple like climbing Mount Everest?
- 2.** How is making disciples like helping others to climb Mount Everest?
- 3.** What part of the journey up do you think God is calling you to? To Believe, to Follow him in some area where you are not currently following, or to Multiply?
- 4.** What part of Matthew 28:18-20 sticks out to you?
- 5.** Who can you intentionally encourage up the mountain today?