

Have you ever noticed that as you are about to end a conversation with someone that you will not see for a long time, you end by saying what is most important to you?

We use this last opportunity to tell them what is most important and personal... what we want them to remember. Perhaps you tell them you love them or that you will call you soon. The words may differ but the principle is the same: we end with what is most important.

There's a true story of a man worked for the railroad. One night a train was backing up to hook up to some other cars and one man was not watching. He was in the way and the train made the connection right through his body. He did not die immediately, but he knew he had only a short time to live. He told other men there to tell his wife where she could find insurance papers, his will, some savings account books, and some other things. He realized that all his plans for the future would not come true. All that mattered now was that his wife be taken care of. Then, just before he died, he told the men to tell his wife, "I love you." Those were the last words he ever spoke. It was the most important thing and he used his last words for it.

Authors also know the value of last impressions. They often use the last paragraph of a chapter or last chapter of a book to summarize their main points.

Jesus' last words were very significant in Acts 1:8, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

This was not a new teaching of Jesus. It was not some new responsibility that Jesus was adding for his disciples and us to do. This had been the central teaching of His life. It was the reason for his coming, His life, His death. It was

the theme of His life ... SALVATION. In His own words, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost

Our passage today continues from there. It says "Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The command is to make disciples

A disciple is one who accepts a teaching not only in mind but in the way they live their life. They believe and they imitate.

A disciple of Jesus, talks like Jesus, walks like Jesus and acts like Jesus.

Jesus' mission, in his own words as he ate with Zachaeus in Luke 19:10,

"The son of man has come to seek and to save the lost."

Jesus did not come to reform the world but to save the world from sin.

Jesus said in John 8:31, "if you abide in my word then you are truly my disciples. The role of the Christian in the world is not to clothe the naked, build homes for the poor and care for the sick.

The role of the church is not to be socially active in order to eliminate the great social problems of our day.

The role of the church is to "disciple." Take the good news of the gospel to the lost so that they will become disciples, their lives will be changed and through their changed lives, the world will be changed.

A changed world does not just produce changed lives, rather, changed lives produce a changed world.

The church has certainly changed the world through its charitable efforts, but these efforts should never become an end to themselves but rather a means to an end: **the goal of bringing the world to Christ.**

So, a disciple is someone who has been taught to obey all that Christ commands. It's a lifelong process.

How are we doing with this as a church? Is anyone coming to faith in Jesus? Are they being disciplined?

Our aim at Christ Church Cootamundra: is to know, grow and share Christ's love in the community.

This is a command not a suggestion.

In The Purpose Driven Church, Rick Warren talks about how to gauge a church's health:

"I believe that you measure the health or strength of a church by its sending capacity rather than its seating capacity. Churches are in the sending business. One of the questions we must ask in evaluating a church's health is, 'How many people are being mobilized for the Great Commission?'"

In Australia we have amazing opportunities the freedom to talk about our faith. There are many countries around the world where its against the law to share how to become Christian.

Two men were in a Middle Eastern nation, in a private home, sharing with people how to become Christians. The religious police arrived, raided the house and arrested them. They were convicted and sentenced to death. Some countries say, "Sure, we have religious freedom to be whatever you want to be, but you cannot evangelize. You cannot persuade someone else."

There's a brief article in the newsletter this week about persecution in China. In the People's Republic of China there is the state-run church that does not allow evangelism. Those who refuse to go to the state church go to the underground or house churches, because they're convinced you can't be a Christian unless you evangelize. They say that the two go together; and if you don't evangelize, you're not a Christian. They would say that those who are in the state-run church are really not Christians, as far as the New Testament definition is concerned.

Jesus commands His church to share the gospel and disciple people.

Somewhere, from someone, we heard about Jesus Christ.

We discovered for ourselves that receiving Jesus Christ changes life! Out of that experience, we tell others.

It doesn't take a newspaper ad. It doesn't take a review in a magazine. Christian disciples are people who know Jesus is real, telling other people, until it has spread across Cootamundra and the whole world.

I don't know about you but I don't want people to be ignorant of God. We don't want them to be lost. There's a T-shirt that says "Friends don't let friends go to hell." You may not want to wear that to work tomorrow morning, but you get the idea. When you care about other people, you share Jesus. If you really struggle to share, you can simply say I would love you to read or watch case for Christ, this book or DVD is part of my story.

A young man applied for a job as an usher at a picture theatre in the city. The manager asked him, "What would you do if a fire breaks out?"

The young guy answered, "Don't worry about me. I'd get out okay."

That's how we respond sometimes. "What would you do if Jesus came back tomorrow?" "Oh, don't worry about me. I'd be okay."

But as a Christian you're an usher! It isn't enough just to get out yourself. You are responsible for helping others get out.

So what do we do if we think sharing Jesus is important, but don't know how to do? The first step is to pray

Just pick three people whom you think are not Christians and pray for them every day. Pray that God opens their hearts and minds to Jesus & that they become Christians. Write their names down add them to your prayer card and pray. Be bold and ask God for opportunities to share.

The first disciples worked at it by praying, preparing, and they shared. So many people are looking for the hope we have in Jesus.

True story: In 2014, Mike Vilhauer just wanted to go fishing, but after wandering a short distance from his route to look for crickets to use as bait, the 58-year-old soon became lost. He was unable to ring for help due to a weak mobile phone signal and made several unsuccessful attempts at finding his way back. Vilhauer managed to stay alive by drinking out of puddles and creek beds along the way. He also made a shelter using pine and willow branches to stay warm.

After enduring five days without food or clean water, he wasn't certain he was going to survive, but he wasn't ready to give up. Hearing helicopters flying overhead, he spelled out an eight-foot-tall "HELP" on the ground using pine branches and was brought to safety after a rescue helicopter successfully spotted the sign. After it all was over, Vilhauer was given a piece of information that could have saved a lot of worry and a lot of pine branches. There were no fish in that lake.

Every day, people wander off in life and get lost looking for something that isn't where they think it is. People spell out calls for help any way that they can—desperate for someone to see.

God wants us to be His disciples, to be watching and listening ready to share His hope to others. So many people are looking for hope. Someone you know needs to know Jesus. God may be preparing you right now to introduce that person to Jesus. The question is, when God gives that opportunity, will you obey the command and respond obediently.