



## “Paradigm Shift”

*Matthew 28:16-20 | 01.09.22*

### Sermon Recap

- Looking at our culture, it would appear that organized religion in North America is in major decline. However, the Church is not dying. Jesus said, “I will build my Church and the Gates of Hades will not prevail against.” What *is* dying is the paradigm upon which we’ve built most of our local congregations. Our culture is no longer responding to our dying model; we must embrace a paradigm shift to lead fruitful ministries in the future.
- We have to transition from simply inviting guests to church, to learning how to make disciples. After all, making disciples is what Jesus calls us to do in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20).
  - Making disciples involves baptizing others in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
  - Making disciples involves teaching others to observe all the things that Jesus has taught us.
- In order for us to make disciples, we must first grow in our own discipleship. We must become more familiar with the teachings of Jesus and orient our lives around the kingdom of God. Each month in 2022 there will be a discipleship challenge to help us grow as disciples.
- The Discipleship Challenge for January is to “Find Your One.” After prayerfully identifying your person or family, here are some practical suggestions for how you can bear the light of God’s love in 2022:
  - Routinely check in with them through call or text.
  - Genuinely become invested in what is happening in their life.
  - Ask how you can pray for them.
  - Pray with them.
  - Invite them to lunch periodically or find other ways you can spend quality time with them.
  - Look for opportunities to share how you have witnessed God’s grace recently in your life.
  - Invite them to join your small group for your monthly outreach ministry. Remember that almost everyone wants to be engaged in making a positive difference. Your “one” might be more inclined to engage in an outreach opportunity than join you for Sunday worship initially.
  - Invite them to *The Table* for a meal, music, and a message.
  - Invite them to view *The Vine*, our weekly online worship service.
  - Invite them to join you for in-person worship at the drive-in service or worship in the sanctuary.
  - Invite them to join your small group for a social gathering or time of discussion.



## Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Do you have any goals for the New Year? If so, will you share them with the group?
2. At the beginning of the message, Pastor Jonathan shares a lot of disturbing statistics about organized religion in North America. How does this information make you feel? Are you able to find hope in Jesus' words that the "Gates of Hades" will not prevail against his church?
3. What do you think about the statement that "The Church is not dying, but the paradigm upon which we've built our local congregations is"? How does this statement help refine your understanding of what it means to be the Church?
4. In light of this week's message, explain in your own words the difference between inviting someone to church and making disciples. Do you feel equipped to help others become disciples of Jesus?
5. Have you identified the one person or family whom God is calling you to bear witness to God's love in 2022?
6. How have you witnessed God's grace recently?
7. How can we pray for you?

## Reference Tools

- <https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-well-being/>
- <https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/reimagining-church-buildings/>
- <https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx>
- A good article I read after writing this week's sermon: <https://careynieuwhof.com/12-disruptive-church-trends-that-will-rule-2022-and-the-post-pandemic-era/>