Reach Sunday

Reach Sunday – 11.22.26

Matt. 28:18-20

INTRODUCTION: Reach Sunday is a time for us to focus as a body on the outward call for us as a church and as individual Christians, that is, the call of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). As a church, we believe in the importance of that call and the responsibility of believers to engage it as Jesus commanded. That means that we look for opportunities to share the gospel in the everyday places that we go and to join in gospel-advancing work to the ends of the earth. We join in that "ends of the earth" work by praying for, financially supporting, and going to serve alongside global partners for short periods of time. We also join God in his Great Commission Calling on our lives when we love the sojourner in our own neighborhoods and communities.

The Great Commission commands believers to "go" and make disciples. Does that mean we need to travel to be obedient to Jesus' words? Possibly, if God uniquely calls you to that. More specifically, the emphasis of "go" is better understood as "as you are going." That is, as you go about your normal everyday life, be intentional in making disciples. So, where do you go on a regular basis, and whom do you meet there? Do you take time to be curious about the stories and lives of those you meet as you are going? This Reach Sunday, we had guest speakers, Nate and Brittany, who encouraged us to be willing to be curious and to share the gospel with our neighbors even if it feels awkward. Curiosity isn't merely the pursuit of uncovering the interesting parts of someone else's life, but it is about getting to know and understanding their life in a way that leads to purposeful and intentional gospel conversations. Too often, we can feel the pressure of having to lead with the gospel in a relationship, when in reality, if we took time to be genuinely curious about a person, we could speak the gospel into their life in a way that deeply resonates. This is something we see Jesus do in John 4 with the woman at the well. We first hear Jesus' intentionality in going through Samaria (Jn. 4:4). This was not normal for a Jewish person, let alone a rabbi. Samaria was to be avoided. Yet, here is Jesus intentionally going there. While he is there, he intentionally engages the woman at the well, which spurs her curiosity about who Jesus is and what he is offering her. So much so that she goes back to her village and talks about the man she just met! What might change in our everyday relationships if we were intentional about being curious? How might that cause us to have purposeful gospel conversations? How might that inform our prayer lives? How might that remind us of our new identity in Christ? Let us be faithful to make disciples as we are going, and let us understand that genuine curiosity is an important part of the discipleship process.

GETTING STARTED – As you get started in your group time, share about a time that someone went out of their way to get to know and welcome you. How did that make you feel? What did they do? What did you learn from that experience?

IN THE WORD – Let's dig back into the passage. It is important to strengthen our muscles in reading God's Word. On Sunday, we walked through the passage in the sermon. Hopefully, that helped you to see the landmarks of the passage with fresh eyes. Now, with your group, go back through it and see what God is saying to you specifically.

First, before you read the passage, take a moment to ask God's Spirit to quiet your mind and heart and to illuminate the text to you. Second, read the passage aloud to the group. Then, follow the simple method below. (O.P.A)

Observe: Make 8-10 observations from the passage. Pay close attention to observe and note repeated words and phrases, names, places, and themes.

Principles: From your list of observations, what patterns or big ideas do you see emerging? Can you distill it down into 2-4 big idea truths?

Apply: Moving from your list of principles, it is time to apply God's Word. Remember, we believe that God's Word is living and active and that it can change the way we live Monday- Friday. What is one tangible way to apply a truth from your list above?

Some questions to help with your discussion:

1. What is something that stood out to you from the service on Sunday morning?
2. When you think about the fact that there are 26,000 permanent residents in Ames who have no measurable connection to a gospel-preaching church, what is your first reaction? What do you think Jesus' reaction would be if he were physically among us?
    a. How might you begin praying regularly for God to work in their lives?
3. When you read Jesus' command in Matt. 28:18-20, what stands out to you about his words?
4. Part of "going" in Matt. 28:19 is the going of our everyday lives. Do you see your regular encounters throughout the week as gospel opportunities? Why or why not?
    a. What is one intentional step you could take to see gospel encounters this week?
5. Looking at John 4:1-45, what is something that stands out to you about Jesus? What about the Samaritan's response to Jesus (v.39)? Why do you think they responded that way?
6. Do you feel like you have time or margin in your life to be genuinely curious? If not, are you willing to intentionally reorder things to have margin? If so, what is your next intentional step to grow your margin for curiosity?