

# LORD

Our fall discipleship series focuses on the Ten Commandments. Not only what they teach us not to do, but what to do. Jesus is Savior and Lord. Once we know Him as Savior, it's time to begin to allow His lordship in every corner of our lives. I can easily recognize Jesus as "Lord" in some abstract way. He's Lord of the universe. He's Lord of all history. But it gets harder when I think about His lordship in my own life. Is He really my master when I'm thinking about my relationships with my family? Is Jesus my first consult and guide when I'm arranging my finances? So much of discipleship is simply about loving Jesus more—more than desires of the flesh, more than money, more than what my neighbor has. The Ten Commandments are a great measure of our hearts. Do we love Jesus more than these? Jesus is Lord.

There have only been a few times in my life when I felt I was truly standing on sacred ground. Arlington National Cemetery. Westminster Abbey in London. Oddly, this one might sound strange, but standing on the spot in York in the U.K. where Constantine was named Emperor of Rome. But one of them was on July 8, 2011. I was standing at a gravesite in Kikuyu, Kenya, over a stone marking the grave of Rev. Thomas Watson and his wife Minnie. Thomas Watson was among six men sent by the Presbyterian Church from Scotland to Kenya in 1891 to open up the first mission to East Africa. He worked and ministered for eight years along the construction of the railroad from Mombasa to Nairobi. In 1899 the railroad made it to Kikuyu, a small town outside of Nairobi, and he was finally able to bring his fiancé Minnie to Africa. They married in Mombasa as soon as she got off the boat and rode the train up to the mission where they found a land devastated by draught, locust invasions and smallpox. Minnie immediately established a camp to care for those in pain and a school for both boys and girls. They called her the Lady of the Camps. On December 4, 1900, two weeks before their first anniversary, Thomas Watson died of pneumonia. Minnie continued the mission alone for over a year before the church was able to send Rev. Ruffelle Scott to lead the mission site, then she stayed on for over thirty years.

As I stood looking down on the memorial, behind me stood a small tin-structure church. It had been prefabricated in Scotland and shipped over in pieces. When it was reconstructed there, it was the first permanent church structure erected by Presbyterians in East Africa. They called it the Church of the Torch. It took years to see the first conversion to faith in Christ baptized in this building. In front of me was the new church building, a 1,000 seat gothic stone cathedral serving over 3,000 members—just one church of the now four million member Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Behind that began a system of multiple private and public schools serving boys and girls with some of the finest education in Kenya. A little further on was Presbyterian Kikuyu Hospital established in 1908, the first hospital to bring x-rays to East Africa. Down the road from that is Presbyterian University serving 1700 undergraduates.

Around the corner and down a small hill you find Kikuyu Orthopedic Rehab Center, one of the most innovative eye clinics and prosthetic limb clinics on the continent. Down the road from that you'll find a block of eight toilets in a self-standing building with running water and a plaque out front with my name on it! How Tim got a toilet named after him in Kenya—that's a story for another time.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the development of the nation of Kenya, its educational systems, health care systems, government and economy, would not have come into being apart from the influence of these institutions, the church in Kikuyu and Tom and Minnie Watson, whose gravestone and remains I was standing over. But do you know what? As I looked down over them I realized, they didn't come to help build a nation. They didn't come to build a hospital, although that happened. They didn't come over to create a university or start a school, or improve agriculture. They didn't come to combat abuse of girls or change the rate of economic participation among women, although all these things happened. They came to share Jesus with a people who didn't know Him.

"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then 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'" (Matthew 28:16-20). It's no mystery what we are supposed to be about. This is our mission, church. Jesus said very clearly, "Go and make disciples." The church is a body of people gathered around Jesus to worship Him; we have to be what the church is before we can do what the church does, and the church is a worshipping body, reflecting, proclaiming, enjoying the presence of God to His glory. But then the church *does* something, it activates, it has a *mission* and that mission is to make disciples.

And make them out of what? Make disciples out of non-disciples. Make people to know and follow



Jesus who do not presently know and follow Jesus. This is the mission. It happens when we go to all “nations.” The word here is *ethne*; ethnicities, peoples, groups of peoples. Some who are the same as you, some who are a lot like you and many, probably most, who are totally different from you. Go to them. Baptize them. That means help them to convert. Help them to enter a relationship with Jesus Christ where they give their lives to Jesus for eternal salvation, when once they didn’t know His name at all. Make disciples. It happens by going; it happens by baptizing (conversion); it happens by teaching. Teach them to obey all I have commanded you—that’s not just content teaching, that’s life coaching.

The mission is to make disciples of all people. That could mean taking a ship across the sea to a foreign land. It could also mean building a fence in a neighborhood school and making a new friendship right here in Colorado Springs. It could mean just what we were doing yesterday with CityServe, loving your neighbor with no strings attached. It could mean getting to know your neighbor and building a relationship of trust with hopes that one day, at some time, God might open up an avenue for you to share what you know of Jesus. Make disciples out of non-disciples. But I think we hesitate; we wonder sometimes if everyone needs to know Jesus. Whether it’s the neighbor down the street or the Kenyan or Mongolian or Korean or ... we wonder, is someone better or worse for knowing Jesus?

Jesus sends us out with confidence. He is good and that means He is good for all.

Psalms 67, “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us—so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth. May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you” (Psalm 67:1-5). No hint of concern there. We worry we are foisting our culture on others, foisting our religion on others. Jesus doesn’t see it that way; God is God for all people. There is not a human being on this planet that doesn’t need Jesus. There is not a people group on this earth who would not be more authentically themselves for knowing and loving

Jesus. He is truly Lord of all nations.

Outside in the halls are tables of volunteers from Compassion. Compassion works with kids who live on less than two dollars a day, to release them from poverty through development in four areas: cognitive, social, physical and spiritual based on how Jesus in Luke 2:52 “grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” I had the privilege of seeing this ministry in action in Peru earlier this year. Some of you remember this story, but I want to share it again. I met a young lady working in the Compassion office in Lima, Peru, named Adela. She grew up in extreme poverty outside of the city. When she was eight, she contracted a skin disease. Something you and I would quickly get taken care of at the doctor’s office, but her family had no money for medicine or a trip to see a doctor. The skin disease grew and grew. It was more and more painful. Then all her hair fell out. Adela said, “At that time, I wanted to die. I asked God if I could please die.” Compassion partnered Adela with a woman from New Jersey; she got a letter about God’s love. She received nutrition, medicine, education and the Gospel. She gave her life to Christ and grew to a healthy, mature young lady following Jesus. She works in the central office of Compassion in Lima processing the sponsor letters for the 80,000 Compassion kids of Peru, and Adela smiled to tell us: “Now I have my own Compassion child. Emmanuel. A boy in Kenya.” From the chains of dehumanizing poverty, without the resources to care for her own basic needs, she is now part of ministering to a nation of children—and one special boy. First Pres has about 600 Compassion sponsorships with just over 100 in Guatemala. We want to grow our ties to Guatemala. If you have a heart to participate, please pick up a packet and explore taking on your own Compassion child. It’s one more easy way to participate in the rule and reign of Christ joyfully breaking in around the world to places of need.

So, as we turn to the table this morning, Jesus is truly Lord of all nations. He speaks every language. He knows every custom, every culture. He dances all the dances. He eats all the eats! There is no place where Jesus is a foreigner, and there is no person who doesn’t need Jesus or who would not thrive to follow Him as Lord. Around the table today, Christians gather on World Communion

Sunday from all nations with Christ as our head. On the memorial for Tom and Minnie Watson were written two sentences in the Kikuyu language. I can't read Kikuyu. But the church secretary was gracious to walk out there with me, and she translated. One was a Bible verse, "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (John 12:24). Not in Latin, or in Greek, or in English—in Kikuyu. See, He's the Lord of all nations. I could see the fruit all around from the seeds that had been planted, and died. The other sentence was an inscription in Kikuyu. It says, "Aria marehire utheri wa Ngai Kikuyu." I asked the church secretary, and she said, "Pastor, it reads: They brought the light of God to the Kikuyu people." Where will you bring the light of God?

## STUDY GUIDE

### LORD • Psalm 67:1–5, Matthew 28:16–20

#### **UP:** Connect With God Through Spending Time in God's Word

Read aloud the passages for the week: Psalm 67:1–5 and Matthew 28:16–20. Silently reflect on what you heard. Underline phrases that seem meaningful.

- Read Matthew 28:16–20. What are the most effective evangelism methods you have seen? The least effective?
- "Proselytizing" is unpopular and even offensive in our culture. Does the "Great Commission" still apply to us today? Why or why not? What role does it have in 21st century America?
- We are reminded this week that Jesus is the Lord of all nations and that there is no culture who does not need Jesus. What is our role in "making disciples of all nations?"
- Many of the nations resistant to the gospel 30 years ago now have a growing Christian presence, while the church in the United States has declined. How should we, the church in the USA, respond to this shifting reality? What can we learn from the churches in these nations?

#### **OUT:**

#### Connect With the World Around Us by Joining God in God's Mission

This video, based on InterVarsity's book *I Once Was Lost*, was produced by a church for their "New Members" class. View this and respond to the following questions:

Video Title: "Starting Point 5 Thresholds 1"

Link: <https://vimeo.com/81124306>

How have you experienced these thresholds in your own walk? Who in your life comes to mind as being at one of these thresholds? How can you support this person?

#### **IN:**

#### Connect With the Family of God

Pray for our church as we work to be part of making disciples of all nations. Pray for wisdom, energy, creativity, etc.