

Good morning! If you are visiting this morning I want to welcome you to Eagle Ridge - you will not find a more gracious and loving family. My name is Matt Chesney and I am the Youth Pastor and Director of Outreach, and it is my pleasure to not only share a little bit of God's Word with you all this morning, but to also introduce you to a number of amazing organizations that we support and work with to make an impact on our community.

But, before we get to that, we should chat about the "why." In **Psalm 68, verses 5-6** David describes God in the following way:

**"A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing"**

And in **Ephesians 2:10**, Paul describes us in the following way:

**"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."**

So... if God created us in his own image to do the good things he has planned for us - then of course that is to be fathers to the fatherless, defenders of widows, families for the lonely, and to lead the prisoners out singing!

We were created to do this work. We have been endowed with the spirit of God to do this work. AND through the Holy Spirit, we will be successful in this work.

And at this point you're probably squirming in your seat, thinking - Ok, great, here's Matt again to tell us that we need to do more! To sign up for another organization or something. Actually, no! :) Today is a celebration. Many of us are already involved with

these organizations in a variety of ways. Some of us volunteer our time. Some of us volunteer our skills. And some of us give of our resources to provide for others. But, I do want to put the work that we're already doing in the context of what we're learning. Because doing that good work is awesome! But we still have a primary mission: To Make Disciples. Bill spoke with us about that last week. Here's the **command**:

**Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!**

**Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

And notice again, like Bill explained last week, that they were told to go somewhere first, and then from there told to go again! That's just like us! You've been faithfully following God's tug on your heart to serve and give in these different areas. And in these areas you are experiencing Jesus - just like the disciples did on the mountain. But you are also being told to do something more once you're there. To make disciples.

Here's how Paul **describes the process**:

**Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others. 2 Tim 2:1-2**

So, here's the rub. HOW!?! How are you to teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others? Well, you've got to be in relationship with them. So, if you're serving at Open Door - that means that you're also sitting down with the people to eat with them, getting to know them, and forming intentional relationships. If you're serving with Forgotten Man Ministries it means that when these men and women are released from jail, they've got someone that's a positive influence on their life waiting for them to help introduce them to a new family. And it means that through those relationships you're being an ambassador of Christ and teaching them about the Gospel. AND we're always looking for who's being drawn by the Holy Spirit!

So, let's go back to that verse. Paul starts out with some encouragement - **be strong!** Eagle Ridge - Be Strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. Then Paul reminds Timothy that he has been **taught and trained**. Eagle Ridge - You know the **Gospel!** You know what a **disciple is!** And you know how to **make disciples**. And if you don't - then your first step is to be discipled! You can start this process by joining a Bridge Group or attending the Come and See class and asking someone in either of those groups if they would be willing to disciple you. By the way - they're looking for people to Disciple!! So it will be an easy ask!

Then Paul says **Go!** Eagle Ridge - Go! And teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

Looking for a place to get started? Try where you're already serving! If you're not already serving. Let me tell you about these groups that are with us today. Keep in mind

- each group probably has a hundred different ways for you to get involved and serve. Don't be afraid to test something out and see where God is moving you. He may direct you away from something you've been involved in to something else – because that's where he wants to use you now. One of our core values is Release – sometimes you need to release yourself to pursue what God is calling you to do. Tammy is able to help with this and guide you to some of your spiritual gifts and abilities. But I'm going to highlight just one way with each that you could refocus on Discipleship:

**Forgotten Man Ministries:** You could develop a relationship with an inmate and be part of their support network when they are released, bring them to church, and Disciple them!

**Young Lives:** You could develop a relationship with a teenage mother and be part of their support network as they raise their child or children, bring them to church, and Disciple them!

**Adoption Option:** You could develop a relationship with a young boy or girl in the foster care system and be part of their support network while they are trapped in a system they didn't choose, go to events with them, (potentially bring them to church) and Disciple them!

**Open Door:** You could develop a relationship with an economically disadvantaged member of our community, be part of their support network while they work to regain control of their life, bring them to church, and Disciple them!

**Life Clinic:** You could develop a relationship with a man or woman that is conflicted about an unexpected pregnancy, be part of their support network while they seek

medical help, parenting classes, and counseling, bring them to church and Disciple them!

**Gideons International:** You could work with other men to serve our community and develop relationships with others and help expose them to the Word of God and through those relationships, Disciple them!

**Caregiving Network:** You could develop a relationship with an economically disadvantaged child, and assist them with their school work and mentor them while they try to focus on academics in a difficult home environment, (potentially bring them or the whole family to church), and Disciple them!

**Salvation Army:** You could be part of the Share Camp that is held each summer and work directly with children as mentor leaders, develop relationships with the family, bring them to church and Disciple them!

**Monday Night Basketball:** You could play basketball with teenage boys in our community, develop relationships with them, bring them to church, and Disciple them!

**Cultivate: Coffee & Tea:** You could develop an intentional relationship with a person in the mall, bring them to church, and Disciple them!

Hopefully, you're sensing a pattern here. In all of these areas, no matter how you are serving, the focus should be on developing relationships and discipling them! Or, if you're not ready or able to serve in the ways that I'm describing for whatever reason – then spend some time getting to know these ministries and pray! Prayer is our greatest weapon on earth and I know that each of these ministries would appreciate your prayers!

So, in a little bit, I want to give you the opportunity to talk with these groups, see where you might fit in, or, like I said, if you're already working with one - maybe how you might adjust that role to include developing relationships with others.

So, after I pray we're going to take an offering, this is just a typical Sunday offering though. Later this month you will have an opportunity to give specifically to these Faith Promise ministries if you feel led to do so. And then after offering I'll come back up and dismiss us to the lobby. Please join me in prayer.