

More Than a Building – Making Disciples

Sermon Date: February 1, 2026

Texts: Matthew 28:16–20; Hebrews 5:11–6:3

Have you heard the term *ghosting*?

It's when someone abruptly ends communication with another person—no explanation, no argument, no closure. The calls stop. The texts go unanswered. The relationship just... disappears.

We usually think of ghosting in terms of romantic relationships, but it happens in other areas of life too. It can happen in friendships. It can happen at work. You stop caring, stop contributing, stop growing. You do just enough to avoid consequences, but there's no initiative, no ownership, no desire to move forward.

We even ghost our own health. We ignore exercise. We eat whatever we want. We overlook warning signs and aches and pains, hoping they'll just go away. Not because we're angry—but because dealing with it feels hard. So we stop trying. We stop struggling. We stop resisting. It just doesn't seem to matter anymore.

And I wonder—are there times when we ghost Jesus?

Not because we're angry with him. Not because we've rejected him. We still like Jesus. We just stop talking with him. We don't hate the Bible—we just don't open it. We're not opposed to God—we're just apathetic toward him. We stop trying to grow in our relationship with Christ, stop seeking to understand him more deeply, stop striving to become more faithful followers. We haven't rejected Jesus. We've just ghosted him.

More Than a Building

We are in a series called **More Than a Building**, where we're asking what our priorities are as a church—what we are truly about.

Jesus gives us clear direction in Matthew 22. When asked about the greatest commandment, he replies:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

This is the first and greatest commandment. Loving and worshiping God—authentic worship—is the first pillar of who we are.

Then Jesus adds:

“And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Loving others flows directly from loving God. And the visible evidence of loving others is *community*. That's the second pillar—building Christ-centered community.

But there is another command Jesus gives—one of the last things he says to his disciples before ascending into heaven. In Matthew 28, Jesus says:

“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.”

This is our third pillar: **Making Disciples**.

What Is a Disciple?

A disciple is a *learner* of the way of Jesus.

To be a disciple means spending time with Jesus, becoming like Jesus in character, and doing what Jesus did—loving people, serving others, living faithfully in the world. Scripture makes it clear: our ultimate goal is not simply to go to heaven someday; our goal is to become like Christ.

This is exactly what the earliest believers did. Acts 2:42 tells us:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship.”

They were constantly, persistently learning the ways of Jesus.

But over time—even with the best intentions—the excitement can fade. Life gets heavy. Illness enters the picture. Work becomes stressful. Family situations grow complicated. Someone says or does something that hurts us. New hobbies and distractions fill our schedules.

And slowly, subtly, devotion fades into neglect.

We don’t become anti-Christian. We just become apathetic.

That’s when ghosting begins.

The Letter to the Hebrews

The writer of Hebrews is addressing believers who are doing exactly that.

These were Christians with Jewish backgrounds. They genuinely believed in Jesus, but following him had become costly. They were weary. Discouraged. Tempted to drift back toward the familiarity and safety of the old religious system—rules, rituals, and traditions.

They still liked God. But following Jesus felt hard.

So they didn’t reject their faith—they neglected it.

And the writer of Hebrews responds in a way that may surprise us.

Milk or Solid Food

In Hebrews 5, the author pauses mid-teaching and says:

“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand.”

That sentence should stop us in our tracks.

He continues:

“Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food.”

Then in chapter 6, he urges them:

“Let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity.”

A few weeks ago, Dianna, Cara and I went to the Monet Immersive Experience in Short Pump. It was wonderful time, learning about Claude Monet, the Impressionist painter- learning about his childhood and history and seeing many of his paintings (in replica). I love impressionist paintings—I think they’re really cool. The highlight of the exhibit was floor-to-ceiling projections of his paintings, accompanied by music. It was thoughtful and moving and relaxing (I fell asleep twice!).

As we left the exhibit, we noticed papers taped to the wall—children’s coloring pages. Outside, kids were invited to sit and color.

The contrast was striking: masterpieces on one side, finger-painting on the other.

The Message version of the bible paraphrases Hebrews 6:1 this way:

“So come on, let’s leave the preschool finger-painting exercises on Christ and get on with the grand work of art. Grow up in Christ.”

The writer of Hebrews longs for grown-up Christianity in his readers—a deep, mature, practiced faith. Then he lists some benefits of “grown-up Christianity.”

The Benefits of Discipleship

1. You Make Better Decisions

Hebrews 5:14 says mature believers *have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

We all know how easy it is to make bad choices. Sometimes it’s small—like eating an entire bag of ALDI cheddar popcorn (oh, it’s soooo good...and addicting) even though you know better. Other times it’s moral decisions that carry real consequences.

When we’re not grounded in Christ, we can be swept up in greed, misinformation, cultural pressure, or harmful patterns of thinking. Discipleship trains us to discern—to recognize what aligns with Jesus and what does not.

2. It Keeps You from Falling Away

Hebrews 6 warns about those who once walked closely with Christ but drifted away through neglect. Many people aren’t hostile to faith—they’re simply finished with it. “Been there, done that.”

Discipleship keeps faith alive and growing.

3. It Helps You Pass On the Faith

Hebrews 5:12 says, *“By this time you ought to be teachers.”*

When faith matures, it naturally overflows. People notice how you live—your kindness, your generosity, your steadiness in hardship. And they’re drawn to the life of Christ they see reflected in you.

4. You Get More Out of Life

In Hebrews. 6.4-5 the writer mentions five benefits of someone who is a disciple:

They are enlightened- they recognize the truth about God, the world, yourself and your neighbor. You just see the world differently as a follower of Jesus.

They have tasted the heavenly gift- realizing a new way of living, feeling the embrace of God’s love. That is amazing!

They have shared in the Holy Spirit- The disciple understands that God resides inside of you and helps you to discern truth and foster love, hope, and peace.

They have tasted the goodness of the word of God- We all know the refreshment that comes from reading scripture.

...and powers of coming age- The disciple knows that one day God will make all things right and that his justice will prevail. It’s not always going to be like this.

Discipleship opens our eyes to reality as God intends it—full of hope, meaning, and promise. So, what do we do with this?

How Do We Grow?

1. Prioritize It

Hebrews says, “*You no longer try to understand.*”

The question is simple: *Do we care about becoming disciples?* Sometimes the first prayer we need is for desire itself. Psalm 42.1 says, *As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.*

Let’s ask God to give us the desire for Him like the Psalmist had! The writer of Hebrews is telling us that it is worth it.

2. Read, Ponder, and Study Scripture

Hebrews 5.13 says, *Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness*

We must become acquainted with God’s Word—reading, pondering, discussing, learning together (in Sunday bible study or our Practicing the Way Course). If we want to be learners of Jesus’ way, we need to know his teachings.

3. Live It Out

Hebrews 5.14 says, *solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil* Transformation happens through “constant use.” Scripture must be practiced—loving enemies, serving others, praying faithfully, giving generously.

Jesus says in Matthew 7.24 :

“Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

4. Repeat It

Hebrews 5.14 says, *have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil*

The Olympics are right around the corner. Just like athletes train through repetition, disciples grow through daily practice. Habits shape character. Over time, Christlikeness forms.

A Final Question

If Jesus looked at your life over the past year—your time, habits, conversations, and priorities—would he say:

They are apprenticing with me.

Or would he say:

They stopped trying to understand.

You see, this passage from Hebrews doesn't accuse believers of rebellion or immorality or disbelief—only disengagement. It just says, *you no longer try*. You're not hostile or angry, just disengaged.

Here's the truth: you don't drift into maturity. No one accidentally becomes a disciple. We can drift into apathy, drift into spiritual infancy or drift into ghosting Jesus—but never into Christlikeness.

The question this morning isn't whether you believe in Jesus.

The question is this: **Are you still apprenticing under him?**

Are you content with finger-painting faith—or are you ready to step into the hard, beautiful work of becoming like Christ?