

A New Kind of Teaching—with Authority

By Dr. Deborah Menken Gill

Everyone who is investing yourself in helping people to know Jesus more intimately and follow Him more effectively—I commend you. You are putting your energies into the one enterprise which has the potential to change this world for the better.

Whether you engage the interest of boys through a Pinewood derby, or hone the faith of a little girl into an Honor Star... .

Whether you capture the hearts of men with football through March Madness, or build bridges to women through a lovely tea party... .

Whether you're nurturing teens to be missionaries to students, or teaching kids to pray for, give and learn about the lost around the world... .

Whether you're growing single-parent saints or post-modern young adult activists... .

Whether you're building believers to be bold in an academic environment hostile to their faith, or whether you are modeling the Christ-life every day in a Christian school classroom... .

Whether you influence the hospitalized, the institutionalized, or the militarized...—thank you for helping to shape those lives for Christ!

Whether you facilitate a small group, lead a cell, or mentor one-on-one—your life-on-life involvement is making a difference!

Whether you lullaby-to-sleep a tiny infant with songs of Jesus' love, or whether you invigorate the seniors keep on growing, giving, and touching their world—you are contributing to life-long accountability to the Great Commission... and I thank you!

On behalf of this Fellowship, as National Director of Christian Education and Commissioner of Discipleship, and on behalf of Jesus in Whose steps we want to follow, I commend you! We are committed to helping Jesus' followers become His closest friends. Your contagious love for Jesus is the catalyst that causes even more to be caught than can be taught. Thank you!

This morning I'd like to offer you encouragement and inspiration from the greatest teacher, ever—Jesus, so that our ministries might match ever more closely His model.

Have you ever noticed that Jesus' kind of teaching was a radical departure from the way the traditional religious leaders of his day taught? It was a regular source of amazement to others! In my time alone with God, reading through the Gospel of Mark, I was struck by how many times it records people's amazement at Jesus.

They were amazed at his authority:

how he dealt with dead tradition yet revived the true Faith.

how he handled hypocrisy and repudiated politics;

how he touched untouchables but rejected rulers; and

how he resisted his relatives but welcomed the repentant.

Yes, they were amazed at His authority:

how He commanded the elements of nature and they obeyed Him;

how He freely forgave sins;

how He drove out demons with a word; and

how He healed the sick and raised the dead.

But they were most “amazed at His teaching,”

“because [as Mark 1:22 records] He taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law”

And in our text this morning, Mark 1:27, we read,

[PowerPoint Slide #1 {title}, up]

“The people were all so amazed that they asked each other,

‘What is this? A new teaching—and with authority!’

[PowerPoint Slide #1 {title}, down]

The way Jesus taught, that is the authority He exercised, was a marvel to the first-century audience. And talk about effective—His teaching produced both personal transformation and perpetual replication.

His New Kind of Teaching—with Authority transformed the lives of unlearned Galileans into men and women who touched their generation with the Good News so effectively that they reproduced their commitment to Christ in others.

This New Kind of Teaching—with Authority transformed their followers to reach the extremities of the Roman Empire within a few generations and to replicate their faith among peoples of many diverse cultures.

And this New Kind of Teaching—with Authority will transform us to touch our friends and neighbors with the life-changing Good News in this generation. It will establish them in such a loving relationship with Christ that they will carry on the Great Commission until everyone has had the opportunity to know Jesus.

You may be wondering, just what was Jesus' method ... this New Kind of Teaching—with Authority, how would you describe it?

[PowerPoint Slide #2 {title}, up]

What are its characteristics?

Is there a term for this concept?

What are the elements of its authority?

Did this new kind of teaching end with Jesus, or is it practiced anywhere today?

[PowerPoint Slide #2 {title}, down]

Now, these are questions the New Testament clearly answers!

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching—with Authority that amazed the people, also challenged the religious and political leaders, and confronted the very powers of darkness;

this New Kind of Teaching—with Authority penetrates one's character and spreads like a contagion;

this New Kind of Teaching—with Authority not only may be reproduced, but must be reproduced, over and over again;

This New Kind of Teaching—with Authority is called ...

[PowerPoint Slide #3 {title with subtitle}, up]

discipleship. Not just education, not even mere Christian education, but discipleship ... Jesus' style.

His New Kind of Teaching—with Authority is less concerned with the communication of information and more concerned with one's character transformation. Such is Christian education at its best! And that is discipleship.

[PowerPoint Slide #3 {title with subtitle}, down]

You see, the ancient Greek teachers had disciples. But the Greek concept of discipleship didn't influence one's character.

Jewish disciples not only knew the teachings but imitated the life of their master.

Yet Jesus' discipleship transcends even the Jewish model, because His teachings are absolutes and because His character is flawless.

At first, Jesus' authority was noted in His powerful words, later it was confirmed by His powerful works, and ultimately it was recognized in His divine attributes.

And according to Mark 3:14-15, Jesus' disciples are called to evidence His authority in the same three ways.

We are called to "be with Him" enough that we become like Him.

We are commissioned to "preach" His Good News—His powerful words.

And we are promised "authority" to do the kinds of things He did—His powerful works.

And though Christ's disciples are mortals, still, our discipleship transcends other kinds of discipleship—our righteous character is to conform to Christ's.

All this is personal transformation, the first element of discipleship.

And then there's perpetual replication—it's the second characteristic and completes the cycle of discipleship.

We are not disciples until we're discipling others!

Jesus demonstrated how He disciplined others. Though he broadcast his message to the multitudes, he invested the majority of his time and energy with the few.

And that model of multiplication (instead of addition)—took hold to touch the entire world.

By studying Mark's records concerning the amazement of the people at the teaching of Jesus, we can discover what are the elements of authority in His New Kind of Teaching. This morning, we'll spotlight five of those elements of New Authority that distinguished Jesus' New Kind of Teaching. And then we'll illustrate those elements of His example with the inspiring testimonies of five other examples of discipleship from around this country. These are the special guests you were introduced to earlier in this service; folks from our Fellowship across the nation—male and female, clergy and lay, adults and a child. Friends who've been gripped, not only by Christ's message—but are practicing His

method—“A New Kind of Teaching—with Authority.” And what was the result? It changed their lives and is empowering them to help change the lives of others.

The stories we share in this message are all on the Discipleship DVD you'll be receiving as you leave this service. You may show it to your congregation when you return home. In fact, you may even access the text of this message and the PowerPoint presentation from our web site: discipleship.ag.org. Feel free to use any of these materials in your ministry. We see our role in the National Office as a Resource Center serving your needs. We want to assist you in any way possible.

So—what are the elements of the authority of Jesus' New Kind of Teaching? We'll spotlight five of them, based on the texts in Mark that emphasized them, but there are more. In fact, several elements of the Authority of Jesus' New Kind of Teaching seem to be common to every example. Let me mention two that pervade all descriptions of His kind discipleship.

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching exemplifies the authority of relationships. Without question, Jesus' discipleship style is relational. His discipleship of the Twelve was up close and personal. Christ modeled discipleship as a contact sport. It is not focusing on the law but falling in love with Jesus that brings disciples our greatest growth. As the Twelve matured in their intimacy with Jesus, He no longer called them servants but friends.

Another characteristic of Christ's model of discipleship, is that it is a process not simply an event. Conversion begins with a decision, but discipleship never ends. It is a life-long life-style, not just a momentary flash in a pan. Jesus' New Kind of Teaching exemplifies the authority of continuity.

Now, let's examine the first example in Mark of one of the elements of the authority of Jesus' New Kind of Teaching—with Authority...

[PowerPoint Slide #4 {Point 1, The Authority of Grace}, up]

I. The Authority of Grace

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching—demonstrated the authority of grace. He had the self-assurance to reach out to those who were despised and rejected. The teaching of the self-righteous, possessed no similar authority. Jesus was angry and grieved at the lack of grace and compassion exhibited by the Sabbath synagogue attenders for the man with the withered hand in Mark 3.

[PowerPoint Slide #4 {Point 1, The Authority of Grace}, down]

When we don't think we need grace, we tend to think others don't deserve grace. Without the authority of grace in our teaching we can become hard-hearted and unresponsive to human suffering.

Mark 2:13-17 explains how Jesus used the authority of grace in calling Levi, the tax collector, to be His disciple. When confronted about such an unconventional approach for a religious figure—associating with undesirables—Jesus likened himself to a physician. He claimed that he had His work cut out for him meeting the needs of the genuinely sick. Thus, there was no reason to spend time treating the ones who considered themselves healthy. Those who don't admit to an ailment, tend not to accept medical attention. Jesus chose to reach out to the ones who owned up to their neediness.

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching—demonstrated the authority of grace: to forgive sins as well as to heal; to call the unrighteous, to welcome sinners, to fellowship with pre-believers; to tolerate, allow, and even encourage a whole flock of pre-regenerate followers. Jesus' New Kind of Teaching exercised the authority to “hang out” with folks that needed God's help. He regularly associated and shared meals with sinners. Consequently, many of them became His followers. Does your kind of discipleship demonstrate authority of grace?

Thank God that when the Gospel was shared with Jeanie Turner, in Fort Meyers, Florida, it was proclaimed with the authority of grace. The Word preached with such bold confidence in Christ's willingness to forgive came as very Good News to Jeanie. It so transformed her life that she has reproduced that Gospel witness to many others using the same authority of grace.

[Sermon Illustration #1—One Way Out, Jeanie Turner, Ft. Myers, Florida]

In the Bible there's a story about a woman at a well and Jesus. He said, “Woman, go call your husband.” And she said, “I have no husband.” He said, “You said well. You have no husband. You've had five husbands, and the man you are with now is not your husband.”

Her life and my life are parallel. She had been married five times and so had I. She had an adulterous relationship and so had I. I was looking for love in all the wrong places, but Jesus came that I would have real life and that I would never thirst again.

I was blessed to meet a woman who invited me to a Bible study called Help for Hurting Women. The very first night that I went, she told the story about a woman at a well, and I knew that my Lord was personal, just for me.

I began to desire to pour into the lives of other women. I didn't even know what I was feeling at that time, but I started driving up and down the streets on the way to church looking for women working to talk to or to just tell about Jesus. “Lord if I had a gift. Just a gift to give them that I could leave something tangible with them.”

Today, One Way Out ministries is a ministry that is designed to help women who desire to leave the profession of exotic dancing. We go into the clubs once a month and we take gifts to the women. It's building a relationship with them. We give them these gifts and they know that that is a tangible gift of love.

One of the things that God has blessed our ministry with is this beautiful Chabash home. In Hebrew, the word Chabash; actually it's habash, for those of you who pronounce it correctly; it stands for binding, like an Ace bandage. The women who come out of the clubs, they need that. They need God's grace and forgiveness to cover them.

In the last 4 years that we've been doing this ministry we've helped over 26 women out of the clubs, that we know of. We help them with clothing from our professional clothing closet. We help them with job resumes; we help them with getting child care for their children. We help them financially.

One Way Out ministries is a ministry because of what real love has done for me. And I know that nothing will be the same in a woman's life once she receives Jesus' grace and forgiveness and finds her One Way Out.

[End of Sermon Illustration #1—One Way Out]

You can enjoy this kind of wonderful fruit of discipleship if you will be willing to exercise the authority of grace. Jesus knew His purpose! A physician's reason for being is to make the sick well—what is your purpose? Disciples can be like our Master. We, too, can exercise the authority of grace. You can be like Jesus!

Now, let's look at a second example in Mark of another one of the elements of the authority of Jesus' New Kind of Teaching.

[PowerPoint Slide #5 {Point 2, The Authority of Creativity}, up]

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching exercised the authority of creativity. He was confident enough in His purpose to use new methods to accomplish it. Jesus had a clear understanding of His role and of His place in time. He was not stodgy or even reactive, but proactive.

[PowerPoint Slide #5 {Point 2, The Authority of Creativity}, down]

In response to being questioned about fasting, in Mark 2:18, Jesus explained that you can't patch an old garment with a piece of new, unshruken cloth. It will only make things worse. The religion of the Jews in the first century, Formative Judaism, was not the same as the Religion of Israel of the Old Testament.

Formative Judaism was a religion of reaction, not religion of response.

The Pharisees and scribes were reacting to the fall of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms and to the exile—not simply responding—in repentance to God.

In order not to make the same mistakes again, post-exilic Jews hedged up their interpretations of the God's Law—and hedged out sinners' access to Him!

Their form of religion became increasingly rigid and exclusive. Jesus couldn't repair it with a patch—he had to replace it with flexible inclusively exercising authority of creativity! New forms, new structures, new methods to reach new people that were just as important to God, but had been not influenced by the traditional approached.

Christ's wine was new—sweet and potent! You can't just throw it into old wineskins. Otherwise the wine will burst the wineskins and both the wine and the skins will be destroyed. Instead, new wine must always be put into new wineskins. Judaism, as a wineskin, was old and ineffective. Its cracks had caused an evaporation of potency and flavor. Its wine was sour as vinegar. Forcing Jesus' new vision into old structures just wouldn't work. The entire container needed to be replaced, exercising ...

II. The Authority of Creativity

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching—demonstrated the authority of creativity.

When Pastor Lee McCloud came to Madras, Oregon, he came to a struggling church in a discouraging situation.

The community had more than its share of social problems—known for its high drug use, teenage pregnancy, and high school dropout rates—it is located in the most un-churched region in the most un-churched state. The locale has a large Hispanic and Native American population, but the congregation was mostly Anglo. In a little town of 3,400, their church's average Sunday attendance was 30.

Throughout its history, the congregation had experienced frequent pastoral changes and many challenges. They felt defeated and acted defeated. Most of the people had given up! The religious church people acted like they didn't want people like they used to be messing up their church.

Ten years later the congregation is 10 times bigger! It reflects the ethnicity of its community. A healed congregation is bringing spiritual health to its community. Pastor Lee empowered them with Christ's principles and breathed into them new hope. He taught them to love Jesus and love people. As they caught a passion for Jesus, Pastor Lee cast a vision for their community.

How did these things happen? Through the powerful exercise of the authority of creativity.

[Sermon Illustration #2—Our Creative God, Pastor Lee McCloud, Madras, Oregon]

When I first came to Madras, I had a plan. I had an outline of what God wanted us to do. But I had no idea of how flexible we were going to have to be in order to fulfill that plan. I knew that it was going to be difficult; I knew that it would be hard. I knew that we were

going to have to determine that this was not my church; this was not the board's church; it wasn't the people's church—it was going to have to be God's church.

We knew that anything went as long as God said it was OK, as long as it was staying with the vision that God gave us for Living Hope Christian Center. And so we started working that way.

We were severely challenged for quite a while on this, especially by those that were maybe super spiritual or those that had run the church for a while. We ran into opposition. But once we got past that, it opened the way to creativity.

And because of creativity we could do a lot of things. For instance we could turn our church into a VBS jungle scene, because we knew that it was more important to reach kids than it was the wear and tear on the building. We knew that it wasn't about the building.

Because of creativity we did things like juggle classrooms around, and we never had anybody upset at us. We never had anyone say, "Well, that's my classroom," or "Somebody's getting a better room."

Because of creativity we could go forward and we could turn an old warehouse into a worship center. Because we knew it was about a bigger tool. It wasn't about the building, it was about having a bigger tool where we could share the gospel with more people and equip them for the gospel of Christ.

I talk to a lot of pastors and they're afraid to make change. They're afraid to move forward. They're afraid, and they hold on to tradition so tightly that they miss God sometimes. What I have discovered through the years is... tradition is great... but sometimes you have to let go of some things. Sometimes tradition can get you to miss Christ—it happened with the Pharisees.

Some people say, "But I'm out of ideas. I don't know where to go. I don't know what to do." Well, when you run out of ideas go back to this awesome, wonderful God we serve, because He never runs out of ideas. God has given us pastors the authority to be creative; it's up to us whether or not we exercise that option.

[End of Sermon Illustration #2—Our Creative God, Pastor Lee McCloud, Madras, Oregon]

As the followers of Christ, we too can be like Jesus. Just as He, we can be confident enough in our purpose to use new methods to accomplish it. Just as He, we can have a clear understanding of our role and place in time. Jesus' New Kind of Teaching exercised the authority of creativity. We don't have to be stodgy or even reactive, but creatively proactive.

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching also exercised the authority of the supernatural.

[PowerPoint Slide #6 {Point 3, The Authority of the Supernatural}, up]

Mark 4:41 explains how impressed the disciples were that even the wind and waves obeyed Christ, and again in chapter 6, how He walked on water. Jesus backed up His teaching with His supernatural authority. Not only did He have power to save, to heal and to deliver, but He had power over the elements of nature, and could multiply loaves and fishes. Jesus' New Kind of Teaching exercised...

[PowerPoint Slide #6 {Point 3, The Authority of the Supernatural}, down]

III. The Authority of The Supernatural.

The awesome power of the Holy Spirit's infilling—by singing in tongues—brought about a total transformation of Earline Butler's emotions, outlook, and circumstances, and then gifted her new life with purpose and worth. It is The Authority of the Supernatural that has made Earline a devoted disciple who is discipling others, and is a model to us all.

[Sermon Illustration #3—Life in the Supernatural, Earline Butler, Chicago]

Narrator: Living in the projects of Chicago surrounded by gangs, drugs and guns, Earline Butler faced daily insurmountable challenges. But the supernatural hand of God was upon her life, working to guide her desperately needy heart.

Earline: As a deaf, single mother of two hearing sons, I lived in a dark, dirty project area. I was depressed and hopeless. I had accepted the Lord when I was 14 years old, but had walked away from Him. I was living in physical and spiritual darkness.

I reached a point of desperation and the Lord sent a pastor friend to my door. He invited me to church. I went and the Lord filled me to overflowing with His Holy Spirit.

Narrator: Earline learned to pore over God's Word and renew her mind through constant worship, praise and song in the Holy Spirit. She spent years maintaining light and life within her soul, alone in the jungle of project living.

Earline desired more. Through an Assemblies of God leadership-training program, God began to heal hurts and doubts in Earline's heart.

Earline: [I] began to explore my identity as a deaf person, a black person, as a woman, as Earline. I had always felt inferior and like I didn't know anything. No one had ever told me who I could become.

Narrator: With boldness from the Holy Spirit, Earline began to reach out in ministry. Today, she teaches Sunday School in her local deaf church and leads a weekly Bible study for young, inner-city deaf men.

As Earline lives in God's presence, He is faithful to provide supernatural joy, hope and purpose. God transformed Earline's dark, desperate life, and He is using her to change her city for His glory.

Earline: The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in my life has given me purpose. I moved from a life of darkness and no direction to one full of light and joy.

[End of Sermon Illustration #3—Life in the Supernatural, Earline Butler, Chicago]

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching exercised the authority of the supernatural. And if that same Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead, dwells in you—the Holy Spirit can do through you the same kind of supernatural things Jesus did. Jesus promised signs would follow them that believe. He promised, in fact, that with the coming of the Spirit to the Church, we can expect to experience an even greater quantity of miracles, now that the Spirit of God can be with each one of us, in every place, at all times. Full Gospel Christianity invites us to be like Jesus! You can experience the authority of the supernatural as an important element of Jesus' New Kind of Teaching.

[PowerPoint Slide #8 {Point 4, The Authority of the Obedience}, up]

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching exercised, also, the authority of obedience.

Discipleship has its costs. There is a cross to bear for every Christ-follower. When the Spirit speaks to us, how will we respond? Jesus was obedient, even unto death. From most of us, God won't exact such a cost. But the authority of obedience often requires repentance.

[PowerPoint Slide #8 {Point 4, The Authority of the Obedience}, down]

The transformation involved in discipleship often comes in response to conviction.

If we harden our hearts, deny our sin, and refuse to obey, we retard the transformation of our character and we may grieve the Spirit from speaking to us again.

But we can be like Jesus, who learned obedience through the things He suffered if we will humble ourselves in repentance and respond in obedience to the Holy Spirit. When we take action as He requires, we are changed from glory to glory.

This is the authority of obedience! As Jesus said in John 15:10-11,14 "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete... You are my friends if you do what I command." The blessing of God rests on those who exercise the authority of obedience.

I want you to see the discipleship turnaround that one committed layperson can bring about for a whole church, when he or she will exercise...

IV. The Authority of Obedience

Landon Altizer is another discipleship hero.

[Sermon Illustration #4—Choosing Obedience, Landon Altizer, Raven, Virginia]

Narration: In the early 1990s, livelihoods in Virginia's Tazewell, Buchanan, and Russell counties were disappearing along with coal mining. In Raven, Virginia, businesses closed, buildings were abandoned, schools were no longer needed, and churches struggled.

A safety engineer for the Island Creek Coal Company, Landon Altizer often went to Sunday School from working all night, only his hands and face scrubbed free of coal dust. Raven Assembly of God's Sunday School Superintendent for 19 years, Landon saw the community's troubles impact the church.

Raven's Sunday School participation declined along with church attendance.

Landon: Working in the Sunday School, I kind of relied on the Lord to take care of the SS. In about 1990 I got a wake-up call from the Lord.

Narration: God began speaking to Landon's heart. Are you really satisfied that SS is all it can be?

Landon: My prayer to the Lord was, I know this SS is not what it should be. I'm not even asking you to bless it. I'm not asking you to bring one more person into our attendance till I get the chance to work it out.

Narration: Landon quietly but obediently applied himself to answering God's call to turn around Raven's SS. Trained enthusiastic greeters now meet visitors at the door. A hospitality room is the first SS stop where newcomers are oriented to everything the church offers. Doors with glass panels are installed on classrooms giving families and teachers a sense of security. Teachers are required to go through 5 quarters of training. Over 95 individuals have earned SS teacher training certification. God captured Landon's heart with an awareness that one person's initiative is the start of leading others to obedient responsibility.

As God turned around Raven's SS, the entire church was reenergized. Enthusiastic about working in SS, teachers suggest new classes and ministries. Twenty-five classes, including electives, are offered, some at area prisons. More than 70 workers commit yearly to fill over 80 leadership positions. Growing an average of 12% each year for the last 12 years, attendance has increased 104%.

Landon: If I had to use one word to describe our turnaround in our SS, I think it would be restore integrity back in SS. I think that teachers feel like they have been well prepared, well trained.

Narration: Retired from working in the mines, Landon's work legacy is a sealed mineshaft. But he has a power heritage to pass on to future generations—the legacy of God-changed lives.

Landon: If I had to say what I'm the most thank for, it's that the Lord has trusted me with this SS.

[End of Sermon Illustration #4—Choosing Obedience, Landon Altizer, Raven, Virginia]

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching exercised the authority of obedience. You can be like Jesus! You can enjoy the wonderful fruit of God's blessing if you will be willing to exercise the authority of obedience. Discipleship will cost us—it cost Jesus. But remaining in the Father's love is worth any price.

[PowerPoint Slide #9 {Point 5, The Authority of the Multiplication}, up]

The last of my discipleship heroes illustrates ...

V. The Authority of Multiplication

The life cycle of discipleship culminates in multiplying our discipleship in others. The Morton family has planted the seeds of the Good News in little Emileigh, and they've already begun to sprout.

[PowerPoint Slide #9 {Point 5, The Authority of the Multiplication}, down]

She knows the voice of God at her young age and has accepted the call to serve Jesus for the rest of her life as a missionary.

[Sermon Illustration #5—A Child's Call, Emileigh, Springfield, Missouri]

I'm 11 years old now and God told me that I was going to be a missionary to Northern Asia when I was very young. He sent so many ways for me to prepare for going to Northern Asia as a missionary, like my dad has an intern from there. She knows the language and she's helping me read, write and speak it. I like the food, and I like to wear the clothes, and I like the customs and the language.

My friend is also part Asian and she wants to go to with me. Her name is Amanda. We want to be missionaries. We want to go to all the small villages that aren't on maps in Northern Asia. We want to build restaurants, clinics, apartment buildings, schools, orphanages—all kinds of things.

All the kids and teachers at school know I want to be a missionary to Northern Asia because I always check out books about the region, and I do reports on the religions, people or cultures. I always plan with Amanda what we're going to do in Northern Asia in our spare time.

I like to raise a lot of money for BGMC because I think it's very fun to help kids around the world and to help them learn about Jesus. I like to sell things that I make in a store I call The Briefcase Shop. It's in a spare briefcase I found in my garage.

I got the idea to redecorate my room with things from Northern Asia because we were moving and my parents said we could absolutely remodel our rooms because boys had lived in there.

My parents have helped me for being a missionary in Northern Asia because they introduced me to David Plymyer who gave me books and a CD to help me learn the language. They've helped me by praying with me. I definitely want to be a missionary in Northern Asia till the day I die.

[End of Sermon Illustration #5—A Child's Call, Emileigh, Springfield, Missouri]

Jesus' New Kind of Teaching exercised the authority of multiplication. The Great Commission is to make disciples ... of all nations. Jesus' teaching produced both personal transformation and also perpetual replication. I know of no greater joy than bringing people into a relationship with Jesus, and watching them blossom in the love and service unto Him. The Gospel is so powerful, that if we are faithful to sow it in every conceivable field, it will bring a great harvest. The secret's in the seed! It will spring up overnight—without your even watching it. It will grow to unbelievable proportions. It can thoroughly penetrate this whole earth. If we are faithful to be intentional about multiplication! We are not really disciples until we're reproducing disciples. Any species that fails to reproduce will become extinct. Are you doing your part?

Invitation/Challenge:

My dear friends, it has been an absolute joy to share ministry this morning ... to express my gratitude for your investment ... and to sharpen the focus of our discipleship by studying the example of Jesus. As His followers, I want to encourage you again—you can be like Jesus! You can enjoy the wonderful fruit of His New Kind of Teaching if you will be willing to exercise the authority He modeled for us.

This morning I'm asking you to examine your life in light of His. He has called us to follow Him—to be His disciples. And He has commissioned us to be like Him—to make disciples. It is His example—His New Kind of Teaching that will enable us to do His work His way—with authority.

As the musicians are returning, I'd ask you to bow your heads and close your eyes.

The Great Commission is not an option—it is the core command for every believer. Whatever personality, whatever gifts, whatever role you play in life, if you've given your life to Jesus, discipleship is a non-negotiable.

How are you doing?

Have you made personal transformation and also perpetual replication core values for your whole life?

Are you listening to the Holy Spirit, and practicing the humble habit of repentance?

How are you investing yourself in making disciples?

Are you exercising the kind of authority Jesus exercised in His New Kind of Teaching?

What about grace? Jesus knew His purpose! A physician's reason for being is to make the sick well—what is your purpose? Jesus surrounded Himself with sinners and loved them into a relationship with God. If you've recognized that your kind of teaching needs more grace and you're willing to begin to exercise it, would you please raise your hand? I'd like to agree with you in prayer.

And what about creativity? Are there some old wine skins that need shedding? Sacred cows make great hamburgers! Is there a rigidity in your style, an exclusivity in your approach? If you've run out of ideas, and don't know where to go, will you this morning, choose to go back to our awesome, wonderful God who never runs out of ideas? If you're asking God to help you exercise the authority of creativity in your discipleship, may I see your hand?

What about the authority of the supernatural? Are you praying for the sick? Are you making room for the Spiritual Gifts in your services? Are you regularly praying in the Holy Ghost? Are you doing those greater works that Jesus promised His followers? You need to begin by giving God the opportunity! If you're wanting to grow in this area of the supernatural in your discipleship, raise your hand so that you can be included in prayer.

And what about obedience? Knowing is not enough—it's living the LIFE that counts! You may not get any further instructions from God until you've obeyed what He's asked of you. You will remain in the Father's love if you're obeying Christ's commands. Are you regularly practicing the humble habit of repentance? If you want to do a better job of exercising the authority of obedience in your discipleship, let me see your hand!

And then there's multiplication. We're not really disciples unless we're making disciples! We need to be involved life-long in relationships that will bring people to Jesus, and in relationships that will grow people in Him. Can you name people in whose lives you are intentionally involved in relational evangelism? Who are you loving to Jesus? Can you name people in whose lives you are intentionally involved in nurture and spiritual formation? Who are you mentoring? If you recognize the need of the authority of

multiplication in your discipleship, and will choose to invest yourself in exercising it, please raise your hand as a sign of your commitment.

Prayer

Let's pray.