

# MY HOPE AMERICA

## Lesson 3: Caring For New Believers

### \* VIDEO CLIP: Who Will Speak? \*

**Open:** We are not just to feed a man a fish; we are to provide a fishing pole with a few helpful lessons ...

➤ I hope you will commit to being a Matthew host in our “My Hope America” event.

- Look around, look up, look out, look forward, look after.
- Those who respond to the Gospel will become a new creation in Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT** ... anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

- We need to hang in there with them and help them begin to grow in their new relationship with Christ.
- Our marching orders came from Jesus: **Matthew 28:19 NLT** ... go and make disciples ... it doesn't say: make converts or lead them in the salvation prayer.

√ A disciple is a follower of Christ ... we will need to show them what this looks like and teach them how to do it.

➤ In His teachings, Jesus once used the example of a farmer sowing seed.

**Mark 4** The seed that produced fell on fertile soil ... someone cultivated it, weeded it and watered it, and the result was a bountiful crop.

→ Required: time, work, patience, sunshine, rain = harvest.

➤ Illust.: When a couple has a baby, they are not done. When the baby is born ... the work has just begun. No baby can take care of themselves at first, but they need lots of love and training ...

\* Paul's strategy for helping new believers:

(1) Paul gave of himself.

– Paul and Silas arrived in the city of Thessalonica ... it was a coastal city and political and commercial activity. It became known as “the mother of Macedonia” and had a population of 200,000 people in Paul's day.

- ✓ **Acts 17** tells us of the events: Once Paul and Silas arrive in town, they go to the local synagogue where for 3 Sabbaths in a row they explain how the Old Testament prophecies predict how the Messiah would suffer.
- ✓ Paul connects the dots and with compelling evidence he shows that Jesus is Messiah.
- ✓ Some of the Jews were persuaded along with some God-fearing Greeks and prominent women.
- ✓ Some who didn't believe stirred up some trouble, started a riot and attacked the home of one of the new believers named Jason.
- ✓ During this 3-week stay, Paul and Silas invested their life in these new believers and would later write 2 letters back to them.

**1 Thessalonians 1:6 NLT** So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you ...

**1 Thessalonians 2:6-8 NLT** <sup>6</sup> As for human praise, we have never sought it from you or anyone else. <sup>7</sup> As apostles of Christ we certainly had a right to make some demands of you, but instead we were like children (gentle) among you. Or we were like a mother feeding and caring for her own children. <sup>8</sup> We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.

→ Paul got involved in the lives of those he led to Christ ... he was sincerely concerned ... he gave of himself.

(2) Paul prayed for them.

**1 Thessalonians 3:10 NLT** Night and day we pray earnestly for you, asking God to let us see you again to fill the gaps in your faith.

- What an encouragement it must have been for them to know Paul was praying for them.
- This wasn't some duty but a delight ... it was a natural response born out of a heart of love.

**(3)** Paul sent others to help them.

- Ministry is a team sport ...

**1 Thessalonians 3:2-5 NLT** <sup>2</sup> ... and we sent Timothy to visit you. He is our brother and God's co-worker in proclaiming the Good News of Christ. We sent him to strengthen you, to encourage you in your faith, <sup>3</sup> and to keep you from being shaken by the troubles you were going through. But you know that we are destined for such troubles. <sup>4</sup> Even while we were with you, we warned you that troubles would soon come—and they did, as you well know. <sup>5</sup> That is why, when I could bear it no longer, I sent Timothy to find out whether your faith was still strong. I was afraid that the tempter had gotten the best of you and that our work had been useless.

- When Paul couldn't go himself, he sent Timothy to strengthen, encourage and correct.
  - √ We must not sit idly by and allow the enemy to “pick off” new believers ... “no soldier left behind!”

**(4)** Paul wrote letters to encourage new believers.

- Much of the New Testament are follow-up letters to encourage spiritual growth in individuals and churches.
- In these letters, Paul would answer questions, give instructions, encourage and correct.

**2 Corinthians 2:9 NLT** I wrote to you as I did to test you and see if you would fully comply with my instructions.

- Whether we use letters, texts, emails or Facebook ... we need to encourage and help others grow in faith.

(5) Paul would check back on new believers.

**Acts 15:36 NLT** After some time Paul said to Barnabas, “Let’s go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing.”

- Spiritual progress is a lifelong process ...
- Checking back on those you have helped bring to Christ is important.

\* Paul teaches us that new believers need our love and support.

- That care must be provided by someone, and it seems logical that the person who befriended, invited and helped bring the person to Christ be the one to do this.
- God will use you along with the Holy Spirit and the Bible to help the new believer become established in the faith.

\* 4 Needs of a New Believer

(1) They need to be loved.

- They need to know they are welcome and accepted in their new family.

**John 13:34b-35 NLT** <sup>34</sup> ... Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. <sup>35</sup> Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

(2) They need to be fed.

- Babies come into the world hungry ... their feeding times are not always convenient.

**1 Peter 2:2-3 NLT** <sup>2</sup> Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, <sup>3</sup> now that you have had a taste of the Lord’s kindness.

(3) They need to be protected.

- The enemy will try to devour them and their sinful flesh to weaken them.

**1 Peter 5:8 NLT** Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

(4) They need training.

- They need to learn how to live responsibly and do the work God has called them to do.

**Colossians 2:6-7 NLT** <sup>6</sup> And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. <sup>7</sup> Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

**\*\* VIDEO CLIP: What do I do as a Matthew? \*\*** (If time allows.)

**Close:** When it comes to discipleship, people need someone not something.

- A tool is provided to help you help them. See “Living in Christ” booklet.
- Will you begin to pray that God will add people to your Matthew list?
- Pray God opens their heart.
- Commit to helping those who come to Christ grow in their new relationship.

Message Notes  
First Baptist Church of Lexington  
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July 21, 2013