**Think big! Disciple the nations!**

**Intro –** This lesson has two parts. One addresses the current fixation of the world on the COVID-19 outbreak. The other expands our thinking about discipling the nations. The current pandemic is a great indicator that man is not in control of his destiny, God is. It is interesting that the great economies of the world and all their machinery, the transportation systems of the world, the governments of the world with all their pompous leaders, the sports empires of the world, even the armies of the world are threatened, potentially grinding their operations to a halt all because of something so small that several thousand could fit on the point of a needle. It is a reminder that we must be nation-minded, not just local church-minded in our service to God. We’ll address both the spread of the coronavirus and the spread of the gospel.

**Ps 139:14** – All you hear about on the news is the body’s complete vulnerability to the killer sickness called coronavirus. The real fact is that your body is well able to resist this invading virus. God has the entire outbreak under His control and will use it to bring people to Jesus all over the world. His defenses are amazingly potent and already built into every one of us. If that were not enough, one simple, hopeful terminator for the virus, something not even located within our bodies, is the warming of the air as the spring approaches. Ever notice that our flu seasons always start in the cold part of the year and just fades away as the weather warms? There’s a reason for this: viruses are very temperature sensitive in our bodies. This type doesn’t reproduce in our lungs or stomach, where the body temperature is 98.6 degrees. It gets a foothold in the nose, where the temperature is a cooler 93 degrees. It really helps the virus if your nose is dry also. Viruses can stick to the surface of the nasal cells better. As the weather warms and gets more humid, the virus can’t reproduce as well because your nose is warmer inside. If a nasal cell does get infected, it produces a signaling chemical, called *interferon* (yes, the same thing that doctors use against cancer) which alerts surrounding cells go on the defense, calling for secretions to flush away the invaders and a rise in body temperature to cook them. Cold inhibits the work of the interferon, so the viruses can reproduce with less interference. Heat helps the interferon do its work. Coronavirus will recede as the air warms up!

Here’s some simple wisdom: instead of focusing on handwashing, *focus on your nose*. Use a humidifier at night, and turn your heat up slightly while sleeping, (it only takes a 5 degree increase to keep your nose in the “virus killer zone”). Additionally, irrigating your nose and blowing it regularly probably has more effect than trying to avoid every airborne virus. God made you rugged and well able to defeat a virus! It is good to know that at this date, 145,000 people worldwide are infected and that 70,000 have already recovered! This is still a miniscule part of the world’s population.

**Matt 28:19-20** God is making people reachable during this crisis. Some will be seeking answers like they were after 9/11. In this verse Jesus commands us to disciple nations. Our view of this is always small! We usually think only of our local church, maybe just surviving or at best seeing a couple people making “decisions” for Christ. The church in a whole city is a foreign concept. The church in a region is even more remote, and the church in a nation is incomprehensible. Many pastors just hope to keep the status quo until they retire. Some hope to grow their churches bigger and bigger, putting as many people under their roof as possible until they burn out. The modern megachurch will not evangelize the nations. Statistically, they are very poor at incorporating new people into the Body of Christ. A church the size of ours has a much greater growth rate, for the size of our church, than the largest megachurch in the US.

The church which Jesus started multiplied like a human family. It grew horizontally, sideways, not by addition (1+1+1 = 3), but by multiplication (2x2x2=8). Mom and dad give birth to kids, who give birth to grandkids, who give birth to great-grandkids, who give birth… Megachurches can only add, they don’t multiply. The smallest units of fellowship, home meetings, keep the potential to multiply themselves. They spread into society like a virus. This is how the church of Jesus Christ will take over the nations! It is done at the cellular level, not at the institutional level.

**Concl** – The church must get smaller in order to get bigger!