

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

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SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Follow Me

PART

8

TITLE

I Will Make You Fruitful

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:16-20



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Well, it is so good to see you Providence family and for all of you who are guests here, we are grateful that you have actually made the choice to be here. It's a great honor of ours when you come. We're so thankful for you and I pray that this time would be very encouraging to you. But, Family of Faith, it is great to see your faces. Been gone the last two weeks. God really just helped me see one more time how powerful he is to use people that would be pretty unsuspecting to bear fruit in places that are just really, really dark. In fact, over the last two weeks where we at, in terms of just the atmosphere environment. It's just suffocatingly dark. There's so few believers. There's so much resistance to the gospel.

There's so many people who are so opposed to what we just sang about that it is startling. In fact, it can be really discouraging. About the ninth or 10th day, God opened up my eyes once again to give hope and he did so through somebody that most people in the world would look at and think this is not the person that God is going to use. His name is [Bozon 00:02:10]. There's a little shot of a small group and he's the one on the far left. You notice he has glasses and he has a little iPad that was a great gift to him. He's 95% blind. In fact on that iPad, the font is so big that there is three words at a time that can fit on the entire screen and he holds it straight up to his face like this and he starts scrolling just like this.

He's from Syria and he and a lot of people had to flee for their lives where they were at. You guys have probably seen news stories over the last several years of all these refugees leaving Syria and have to flee somewhere. Well, they fled to the place where we were at. Many of them, half the country of Syria has actually fled within the last five years. It's an amazing thing. Here he is, he doesn't know the Lord, and God gives him a dream. In the dream, this is a true story by the way, is that he sees God saying to him "You need to believe in my son Jesus." He doesn't know who Jesus is. He's never heard the gospel. Later that week, somebody comes to him, which is a really rare thing in this region, and shares the gospel with Bozon, he comes to faith in Jesus Christ.

He has another dream and where he says that God tells him "Now, I want you tell other people. I want you to preach the good news, this gospel of Jesus Christ to people, even though it's a risk to your life." It's an amazing thing. We were in a city of about a million people. There's 90 known believers in the entire city. Up in the north region where they've allowed all these Syrian refugees to live, Bozon has led 300 people to faith in Jesus Christ. Two weeks ago, Bozon ... Yeah, you can clap for that. It's a remarkable thing. Just a few weeks before this, he baptized 42 people. Here's a man who is without his family, meaning his parents, his brothers and sisters. He has his wife and his kids there.

Of these 300 people, they've organized into 25 different house churches and he spends all of his time preaching to them and training up leaders in each one of these little house fellowships where they can continue to be a light in a really dark place. This is so encouraging to me and it should be really encouraging to all of us because every single one of us recognize the vast amount of weaknesses that we have in and of ourself. What the gospel says is this is that when we believe in Jesus Christ, his spirit comes and lives within us. When we yield to his spirit, he has the power to do remarkable things through people just like you and all of your weakness and all of your frailty and all of your sinfulness, and all of who you know who you are, he knows you are and yet he can use you.

This is what it means to follow Jesus Christ. What I do right now is pray for us. I just confess to you right now my heart is really full and yet my tank is pretty empty. You can be praying for me and we have an amazing text this morning. Let's pray together. Father, we love you. Thank you for Bozon and thank you for saving him and saving him, Lord, that you've opened up the door for so many other people to hear the gospel. We are so thankful that as a church family we even have now the amazing privilege to be able to support him and his family. We thank you, Father, for you're doing around the world and even in those places that are suffocatingly dark. We thank you that you are at work in the lives of people that maybe other people would write off.

That gives us hope because you can do that in our life. Lord, many of us, myself included, we look at you and we look at what you ask us to do. We look at ourselves and we think I'm just simply not worthy of the task and yet your word tells us that if we will yield to you, if we will abide in you in a relationship with you that's made available by Jesus, that you will make us fruitful, that you'll bear fruit in our life that helps other people and it brings glory to Jesus Christ alone. I pray that you would do that in each of our lives. Would you help us as we read your word? Would you help us, Lord, to see true and vital and precious things within your word? Would you give us the gift of faith and encourage to believe it?

Later on, we pray for those that'll be baptized at the end of the sermon. God, we pray that as they're waiting and maybe their hearts are anxious, we pray God that you will give them comfort and peace in knowing that they're walking with you. We love you and we pray this in Jesus name. Amen. We're in Matthew chapter 28 and so I would love for you to turn there. If you don't have one with you, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. If you don't have one at home, take that home as a gift. This is the last of eight sermons on this series called Follow Me. Next week, we're going to look at a book that really deals with the vast amounts of injustices that our eyes see in the world and we're wondering what in the world is God doing in allowing all this to take place.

We'll be there next week, but there's one more text that we want to look right at and it's this one right here. It starts in verse 16. It's just five verses. It's at the very end of Matthew. What he says to us here is this is that "If we will follow him, he will make us fruitful." This is what he says. "Now the 11 remaining disciples went to Galilee to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them and when they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted and Jesus came and said to them all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go there for and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and behold I am with you always to the end of the age."

Now, each of the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they end with a similar instruction, a similar calling out to where he's now finished his work on the earth in terms of his time as a man and he's going back to heaven. Now, he gives us something to do. In Mark's gospel, it says "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creations."

In Luke's gospel, he says "Repentance and forgiveness of sin should be now proclaimed in his name to all nations." In John's gospel, Jesus says "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." What this means is this is that you and I are a follower of Jesus Christ, we cannot escape a commission upon our life. You cannot read any other gospels and conclude that you are not called to take the good news that you know to somebody who's never heard it.

It doesn't matter what our weaknesses might be. It doesn't matter what our paths might be. This is for every single one of us. What I want to do in this amazing little text that's well known by many of us, go and make disciples and show you really three big truths of what it really means to follow Jesus. The first is this is that following Jesus is really learning to live under his authority. To follow Jesus is to learn to live under another person's authority. See, when Jesus Christ died on a cross and rose from the dead, he received from the Father the ability to tell you and me how to live. To live under his authority is what it means to follow him. Our text says that when they, his 11 remaining disciples, you remember Judas is now dead, but when they saw Jesus, who's now risen from the dead, it says that they worshiped.

All of them worshiped. But, it says but some doubted. This is such a fascinating picture to where they would be worshiping Jesus and yet recognizing that within their heart there's such doubt that a human author could look at what was happening and he could see other people's experience of worship and say not only are you worshiping, but at the same time you have doubts within your heart. The doubts that they had in their heart and there's no doubt that it wasn't what are they looking at, it's no one's ever written a book on what do you do if your friend raises from the dead. What's next? What does it now mean to follow this person? Jesus is standing in front of them resurrected from the dead.

He has holes in his hands and his feet. They don't know what to do with this. Sometimes, what I like to do is to find a picture that sort of encapsulates what we find within the text and this is the one that I sort of imagine as I think about what's happening here. Within these men's hearts, was this restless sea of distractions and doubts and uncertainties and yet their hearts all with these doubts and uncertainties are colliding with this immovable resurrected Jesus Christ. Their doubts were real. They were palpable. They were strong. They influence their life. It influenced how they thought. It influenced how they could look at Jesus and look at other people and yet standing in front of them was the resurrected Christ, and so their worship was absolutely earnest and yet it was imperfect.

Isn't the case, even with our worship this morning? It's filtered through every single one of us. We showed up today distracted. We have doubts about what's happening in our life. We have doubts about God's nearness in our life and why is he doing this and why is he waiting in this way? All of these things, we all show up, and yet we put up a portrait of who Jesus is.

Suddenly, the reality of our doubt is conquered by the reality of Jesus Christ and so they're earnestly and yet imperfectly worshiping. What Jesus does is in the context looking into the seas of imperfect worship, he wants to give them some hope. This is what he says, he says "All authority has been given to me. In heaven and on earth, everywhere, it's been given to me."

I believe what he's saying here is really twofold. First of all, this is a word of great comfort. These guys are all scared. They're all uncertain. They all have fear, so what he's saying is this is that everything that causes your fear right now is under my authority. But, there's no doubt that there's something else that's happening here. This little sentence, this little phrase when he says "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" is also a call to surrender. You see, what it also means is this. Because I rose from the dead and I have authority in heaven and earth, not just some authority but all authority, I have the authority to tell you that there is one way to the Father.

I have authority to tell you that you must be born again. I have authority to tell you that you must believe in me and in my accomplishments. I have the authority to tell you that you must repent of your sin. For those of us who have done these things, God says to us, Jesus comes to us right now and he says "I have the authority to tell you to forgive the person who hurt you. I have the authority to send you to the nations. I have the authority to tell you to love people who are to lovely. I have the authority to tell you how to live because the jurisdiction of my authority runs over your life and past your life and in all directions for ever." Many of us play chess and at the end of a game, someone says checkmate.

That last piece when they recognize that they are defeated is laid down. This ultimately it what's happening here. Jesus rose from the dead and he says checkmate. He says checkmate over death. He says checkmate over sin, over the grave, over everything in the world. He also says checkmate to you and yet unlike a chess match where the game is now over, for those that lay down their life, they lay down their will, and we say "Christ, I cannot save myself, so I repent to my desire to do so. I believe in you and I confess you as Lord life just now begins." This is the hope of the gospel and what he's saying. Do you know why Jesus has all of this authority? Because The Bible says he's the son God, the he created all things and by his mouth he holds all things together.

When he was on this earth at the command of his mouth, the wind, and the water and the demons, the molecules, disease and death, they all bowed before him. They all suspended their routines at the command of his mouth and this very mouth when he was on the earth, he promised "I am going to Jerusalem and I am going to die for your sin and I'm going to conquer sin when I rise from the dead." Then, he went and pulled it off. Philippians tells us "Therefore," in other words because he did pull it off. It says "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so that a the name of Jesus every knew should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Every human government we're told within the scriptures rest on the mighty shoulders of Jesus. Every evil principality recoils under the might of his foot and every believer finds refuge in his grace. Providence, this is the Jesus we are following. When he is walking in front of us and he turns around, he extends an arm to us and he says "Follow me," this is the one we're following. He is the King and his jurisdiction reaches into every part of your life and mine. There is no place that he cannot tread. There is no relationship in your life that he can't dictate. There's not a day of your future that is not ordained by this man who has all authority in heaven and earth.

Providence, let's gladly submit our life to Jesus. I want to encourage you to say a little prayer that I have been saying many, many years now when I wake up. It goes something like this. I just say Jesus, I recognize as I wake up today that you are the king of the universe and that you have all authority over my life. Once again this morning, I gladly submit to your authority. Oftentimes, I'll go back to the Lord's prayer and even say God, you tell me to pray. Our Father in heaven, hallowed would be your name. I pray that your name will be hallowed. What that simply means is God, would you see to it that your name is seen as holy in my heart. Now, what this means is that when I yield and when you pray this and you say God, I yield my life to you."

We say God, would you see to it that your name is hallowed in my life. What that means is that in all of my interactions and all of my decisions and all of my decisions with my family, and all of my relationships in everything that I'm doing, would you help me to see that you are the holy one who's standing over my life and has the authority to tell me how to live? Would you do that throughout the entire world? You see, Providence, whatever then he places on your heart to do, I want to encourage you to do it at once. Don't wait. More instructions will follow once you take the first step. This is the reality of walking with Jesus is he does not show you the 100th step. He shows you the first.

Once you have enough courage to take a step of faith to say this where you want me to go, then he unveils the next step. There's no reason for the king of glory to show you the 10th step if you do not believe him with the first. What is it that God's telling you to do? Who do you need to call today to confess your sin? What relationship needs to be restored? Who needs to get a passport today? What is God telling you to do because following Jesus is all about learning to live under his authority? The second thing we learn here is that following Jesus is about moving to make his disciples. Now, let's be very clear. When I use the word move there, there are some people and they literally pack their things up and they move to a different country.

That may be the case in your life. How I am very specifically using this word moving to make disciples is simply this is that you will not do this unless you move somewhere. To exert energy, to help other people, maybe it's even across the street, maybe it's just across your office. I don't know where it is, but to move where you're not going now because people there do not know Jesus Christ. It's all about moving to make disciples and this what we find in verse 19 and 20. You see, let me just say this again. When a man stands on this earth and predicts his death and resurrection, then goes out and pull it off, whatever he says next matters.

What he said next was this “Go therefore and make disciples in all nations, baptizing them of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you.”

Now, this is clearly not the only thing that Jesus told us as his followers to do. If a church uses simply this text as the bounds of what the church should be, it would actually be an unhealthy church. He’s also called us to pray. He’s called us to love. He’s called us to care for one another. He’s called the church to do other things that this great commission, but he has called the church to do this great commission. There are other things that he called us to do, but this was the last thing that he called us and directed us to do. He wants to be known through the entire earth. Do you know the mechanism the he wants to use is us? It’s us. The church. Ephesians chapter 3 verse 10 says “Through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known.”

Now, I want you to do something real quick. I know it’s a little bit awkward, but you can embrace the awkwardness. I want you to look around at some of the people who are in this room. Go ahead. Do it. Just observe. Now after looking at what you just looked at, isn’t true that this plan doesn’t seem so good? We’re the solution. We’re the answer. You look around this room and you see older people and you see Millennials. You see people who are or you heard people who are off key. You see people who sin just like you. You see weakness just like you. You see people who bite at each other just like you. Jesus says “Through the church, the gospel of what I have made available to the world is going to be made known.”

You see, we see all these flaws and we think this isn’t a good plan. Yet, The Bible says that “The powers of darkness look upon us, the local church, that’s filled with the Holy Spirit of God as a mighty army that cannot be stopped.” Sometimes when we think about this text, we think let’s do this. Let’s tighten up those shoes and let’s go. Yet, everything you know about the scriptures also needs to be factored into what he’s saying here and it’s simply this is that he doesn’t want you to try to bear any fruit apart from him. That everything that God calls us to do, everything he wants us to do in terms of being fruitful before him, the first command is to be attached to him. A branch and a vine.

You cut the branch off, it can’t bear fruit no matter how sincere their understanding of the commission unless we’re tied into the source of power, we cannot bear fruit. Jesus said that “It was by this, my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” Within this scripture, he tell us that he wants us to be fruitful in two different areas. One is character and the other is influence. He tells us of our character. He says this that “The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” This means that when we are abiding in Jesus Christ and close to him is that by his spirit, he gives us the capacity to live this way so that when people look at our life, they think what a joyful person, what a pleasant person, what a self controlled person, what a faithful person, what a peaceful and patient person.

It's a miracle for these things to be seen in our life consistently and yet this is what is made available to us, but not only character also influence. There is one and only one imperative in everything that he says in verse 18, 19, and 20. He says "Go therefore make disciples." He says "Baptize them." He says "Teach them." It looks like there's lots of different verbs. There's actually only one and it's the word make disciples. Make disciples. Then, the word go and the word baptize and the word teach, they're all participles. I realize that most of you don't care a thing about a participle. It's really important you understand what they do because participles are the things that he tells us to do in order to get the verb done, in order to accomplish the verb.

In other words, what he's saying is this is by going and by baptizing and by teaching, you will make disciples. This is what will take place. It says [inaudible] that we have to careful not to fool ourself because healthy trees bear healthy fruit with seeds that are capable of reproducing themselves and so we have to ask ourself am I making a disciple? As life groups, ask yourself. As a leadership team in that life group, is what we are doing here, are we making any disciples? As a church, we have to answer this question honestly. With everything that we're doing, are we making disciples? How are we supposed to do this? He talks about three ways. First is by going. By going. People argue over this needlessly because they can be translated, therefore go and make disciples and it looks like go is the verb.

It's a participle and so it can be translated with an ing, meaning as you are going. Why people sort of debate this word is because it can mean two different things. If it means as you're going, what it means is look, as you're going or to work and as you're going to the supermarket and as you're going about your everyday life make disciples. Then, other people look at it and go no, it says of all nations and so the only way to get to the nations is someone has to go. You have to go somewhere. Isn't it true that it's both? That as we're going where we're at, we are looking to turn everyday conversations into gospel conversations in order to make disciples and at the very same time there is no way to get to the nations unless some of us go.

We have to get on an airplane and go. Both are there. You see, as a church family, we're in the middle of a three years vision. It's called Plant. We want to plant our lives in the church. We want to plant the gospel in our city. We want to plant churches in the world. We have to ask this question of ourselves is are we actually going? You see that third one. One of the things that we want to see is over 300 people every single year going on a short term mission trip in the hope that many of those people would actually be inspired to want to go back for a longer period of time. Are we going? Second is we make disciples by baptizing. The word baptism comes from a Greek word baptizo. It literally means to dip or submerge.

It was used by people that would dip garments into dye in order to change the color. You would dip a white garment into a red dye and all of a sudden you had a red garment. This is exactly the word that is used in baptism. This is why we submerge people in water here at Providence. What he's saying here is this is that a disciple is simply someone who delights in being publicly identified with God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, and the gospel. You see, it's all about an opportunity to publicly say I am not ashamed of the gospel.



The word shame is interesting, isn't it? The feeling of shame is something that we've all felt and we feel it in a number of different ways. One way that we feel shame is when we sin in front of other people.

We want them to respect us and so when we do something that we regret and we know that their admiration for us and of us, it is lowered, we feel ashamed of that. There's another way that we feel shame and that is not necessarily when we sin, but maybe when we just fail. If you're running the mile, which is four laps around the track, and you happen to get lapped, you may feel ashamed even though you've not done anything wrong. But, then there's another form of shame and it's the shame of association. That's where somebody you have as sort of a friend, it maybe that crazy uncle and you want to bring someone special home to the family and so you have to warn and say "Now, look, there is a guy there and he is kind of related to me and so I am associated with him, but I'm kind of ashamed to be associated with him."

This is specifically what the New Testament speaks about when he talks about that we're not ashamed of being associated with Jesus Christ is that in this world, where his name is diminished over and over and over again, he wanted to give us an opportunity to publicly identify with him almost like a skit, a drama to where we lower people into the water, it's like a death. When they're under the water just for a moment, it's like a burial and just as Jesus rose from the dead, we raise them up for newness of life. The water doesn't save them. It's a picture that they've been saved and what they're doing is they're saying "I am not ashamed to be associated with Jesus Christ." Then, the third thing he says they would've made disciples by teaching that every new follower, every new believer in Jesus Christ needs to learn what it means to please the Lord.

Also, they need to learn enough so that they can teach others because Jesus doesn't say teach them everything that I've commanded, it says teach them to observe or to obey everything that I've commanded you. In other words, for every single person of Providence who's a teacher, who's teaching anybody, even their little ones, you need to understand this is that your job is not to relay information. He's telling us to teach in such a way that people are inclined to believe, they're inclined to admire Jesus Christ and inclined to obey him. Providence, let's plan the gospel in the hope of making disciples. As you care for people and as you interact with people, as you learn about people, I want to encourage you to look for bridges.

One of the tools that we've taught you here at Providence that I like to use because it's very simple. It can be drawn on a napkin. It can be drawn ... Well, it can be used anywhere. It's just very, very simple, even in the sand. It's called Three Circles. We've taught this in life groups and we've shown you this in our services, and I want to encourage you to practice it one another, practice it, continue to practice it in your life groups, so that you can then share with other people and how it basically goes as this. You see, this whole idea of Three Circles, why I like it so much is because it touches on a nerve that every single one of us struggle with and that is the brokenness that we see every single day in this broken crazy world that we live in.

A lot of people are looking for answers as to why things happen the way they happen. When I was overseas, I sat down with a man and I said “What do you believe is the problem with your country?” He says this “Everyone hates everyone.” I said “Well, let me ask you why do you think that is?” He goes “I have no idea.” I said “Well, let me tell you something. I do.” I do. This is what you say and this is what I said. I said “You know what’s interesting is that God created a world, a good world for his glory and for our good.” You can see goodness and beauty and math and science and all kinds of amazing complexities that God’s created in the world. He’s created it for us to live in a relationship with him and this is his design.

This is what he’s created and yet you see brokenness all over the world and the reason for that is that we’ve all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We’ve all said that I can do it my own way and even after we broke fellowship with God, we think I can get back into the good graces of God by simply being good. What this does is it creates this enormous world that’s broken where all kinds of crazy things happen. Like just yesterday, another person went into a synagogue and shot up a bunch of people in Pittsburgh. A lot of times what we think is we need to fix this. We need to fix this and so in that situation, you have a whole half of the country say “Gun laws, that would change everything.”

It wouldn’t change everything. I’m not saying that some of them may not be valid and worthy, but the fact is that if somebody wants to harm another person, they’ll find a way. The problem is in the heart, not the weapon of choice. Every single one of us throughout the entire world, we look at what’s broke and we say we can fix this thing and every one of our fixes, all it does is it creates more brokenness in the world for the next generation to have to deal with. God acted when we could not and it’s called the gospel. The word gospel, it simply means the good news. Jesus came from heaven to earth and he did so to rescue us. He lived a perfect life, then he died for our sins.

He was buried and he rose from the dead and when he rose from the dead, he extended an invitation and that is this. He says “If you’ll repent of your belief that you can save yourself and if you’ll believe in me for the forgiveness of your sin, not only will I forgive you, but I will give you the capacity to restore and pursue God’s good design from the beginning that you can enjoy a right relationship with him.” Let me ask you, Providence, how are we doing in planting the gospel? At Providence, we focus a whole lot on the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We focus a whole lot on Bible studies. We focus a whole lot on baptism. We focus a whole lot on going. We focus a whole lot on teaching people.

Do you realize all of this is to get us ready to tell somebody about Jesus Christ? Let’s plant the gospel. The third thing is this is following Jesus is all about learning to rest in his presence. He says in verse 20 at the very end, he says “Behold I’m with you always to the end to the end of the age.” When he says “All authority is mine,” what he’s doing is he’s giving us a warrant for the mission. When he says “Surely I will be with you always,” he’s giving us hope that we can do it. Every one of us have seen a movie to where there’s a soldier or there’s a pilot in war. His plane gets hit and it pans down to a picture of his wife or his family that’s stuck in somewhere in that cockpit.

You see, when we feel like we do not have security, one of the first things that we do is we think about people and wonder what it would be like at that moment to feel the security of their presence. This is exactly what he says. He says “Look, I have authority throughout the entire world. I’m telling you to do this and now I’m telling you this. I will never leave you. I have all the authority in the world then I promise that I will never forsake you. I have total authority over all the peoples in the world and no matter how they respond to you or what they do to you, I will be with you forever.” As we wrap this series up, let’s follow Jesus without fear or shame. For the last two months, we have looked at eight different portraits of people whom Jesus has invited to follow.

I pray to God and I will now that you have grown in your admiration for this Jesus Christ whom we have the privilege to follow. I pray that you’ve been inspired to release your fear and to release your apathy and to take a step of faith wherever he is leading. I’m going to pray and after I pray, we’re going to have the opportunity to celebrate a few people who unashamedly want to be baptized and identify with Christ. Let’s pray for him now. Father in heaven, we thank you for your love for us and for the great commission that you’ve given to us. We thank you that you have allowed us to hear the gospel and because we have heard the gospel and responded to it, we thank you, God, that you have given us a mission that’s worth our life, and so I pray now in faith that you would stir our hearts to be absolutely mesmerized by your authority over our life and absolutely comforted by your promise that you will never leave us or forsake us.

Would you help us to be faithful this week and look for people, maybe friends that we already have, people that we work with, people that we live near, and start conversations with the hope that we will be able to share the gospel? We pray now for these who probably feel some nerves right now as they’re about to be baptized and we pray, Father, that you would stir our hearts to celebrate what you have done in their lives now. We pray this in Christ’s name. Amen.



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