

Sermon Notes—Discipleship

John 1:35-51

I. Learning to BE and MAKE Disciples

a. God Weaves Us into His Story (Life on Life) John 1: 47-49

- i. Whatever Nathaniel's "fig tree" story was, Jesus knew it and stepped into it.
 1. We are defined by our stories. Each one of us has one. Some of us are the hero in our own stories. Some of us play the victim. Listen to most people stories (including sadly, myself half the time) and we are the smartest, most noble, honest, and good looking person in them. Most of us like to think we're the author. As William Ernest Henley puts it "*I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul*".
 2. Grace changes things. Meeting Jesus gives us a new story. We meet the author. He opens our eyes to the real story. He shows us that he knows us deeply, and amazingly still loves us dearly.
 3. Like we learned in week 1, meeting Jesus changes who we are at our core, our hearts and desires begin to change.
 4. Have you met the real Jesus? What's your story? Have you experienced the freedom that comes from knowing that Jesus was fully pleasing to God so that you don't have to work for God's approval? Do you rest in the fact that your Father loves you because of what Jesus did?
- ii. John 1:40-41 Part of the transformation into the image of Christ is that we are now "disciple-makers". If we are disciples of Christ, then we are all about making disciples. It's a natural progression. It's the response to the love with which we have been loved. Mark 12:30-31
- iii. The phrase "making disciples" can sound overwhelming or scary. So let's put it this way:
- iv. We must now weave our story into the stories of others. Discipling others simply means "doing deliberate spiritual good to help them follow Christ". Famous classical pianist William Kapel once said "*The most important moments in people's lives are when their identities become linked to those of others*" When we find our identity in who Christ is and what He has done, the logical next step is to help others to do the same.
- v. There is a desperate need in our church (and in all churches) for our members to take ownership of seeking the spiritual good of each other (and of our friends and co-workers). We are starving for personal discipleship.
- vi. Objection 1: "*I can't disciple anyone because my life isn't perfect.*"
 1. Great! Neither were Jesus' disciples!
 2. 1 Corinthians 1:26-30

3. Sometimes letting someone into our messy lives is the best way to show them a life that is being transformed by the gospel.
 4. What do you enjoy doing? What is your daily routine? Can you open up your life to someone to let them see your walk...even in the failures and the messy-ness?
- vii. Objection 2: *“I won’t know what to say. I’m not good at sharing the gospel”*
1. We are all formed by our stories. If we have experienced the gospel’s transforming power in our lives, that’s what we share!
 2. John 9:13-15, 24-25 (The healing of the man born blind)

b. God Welcomes Us Into a Loving Family (Life in Community) John 1: 38-39

- i. God has always existed in perfect community (the Trinity) and as his image bearers, we were made to be joined into this community. Genesis 1:26 *“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image...’”*
- ii. Family is where we grow and measure growth. Ephesians 4:15
 1. Good families support, encourage, correct, and live with each other. But above all, they love one another. We are one body! We absolutely need each other just like one part of the body needs to be connected to the rest of the body!
 2. We cannot love God and not be a part of his body! 1 John 3:14-18, I John 3:23
 3. Ever heard someone say (or maybe you have said it☺) “I love Jesus, I just can’t stand the church. It’s full of hypocrites”. This in itself is one of the most hypocritical statements one can make! Jesus didn’t die for perfect people. He doesn’t love just the ones that are lovable (thankfully).
- iii. Family is how the world sees Jesus. I John 4:11
 1. The church is the physical manifestation of Christ on this earth. The world will won’t see Christ because you have outstanding morals. Even those from other religions can have those. The world won’t see Christ because you give a bunch of time and money or because of your church attendance, or even because you know a lot about the Bible. The world responds to seeing genuine love between people who have obvious faults and brokenness. After all, family are the hardest people to love.
- iv. One final excuse: “My relationship with Jesus is personal. It’s no one else’s business.”
 1. I think most of the time when we say this, it’s because either
 - a. We are selfish and lazy
 - i. If you are following Christ, you have something to offer the body (maybe it’s missing an arm and you’re the arm!)
 - b. We are afraid of being exposed or known.
 - i. I can relate. We all have areas in our lives that we wish were better or that we are uncomfortable with

or maybe even ashamed of. Great! You are not alone. The body of Christ is not a place where we all “fake it till we make it”. It’s where together, we press on in spite of our brokenness “bearing each others burdens” to look more like Christ. Until we’re willing to expose and admit who we really are, Christ cannot change us.

**c. Following Jesus Gives Us a New Name and a New Purpose (Life on Mission)
John 1: 41-42**

- i. We’re given a “new name” and a new purpose. John 1:41-42. Matthew 4:18-21. John 17:18
- ii. We order our lives around our identity and our mission. Much of my boredom, dissatisfaction, and restlessness in life stems from incongruent values. I say that my life is about following Jesus and helping others to follow him, but my life is spent in pursuit of comfort, fun, job...etc.
- iii. Jesus transformed Peter from a “fisherman” into a “fisher of men”.
 1. Would my career decisions look different if I made them from the perspective of where I have the best opportunity to make disciples?
 2. Would the way I spend my money look different if the driving factor in my decision making was how to better position myself to make disciples?

d. Following Jesus Results in Transformation –John 1:50-51

- i. John 1:50-51 –Nathaniel has seen nothing yet!
- ii. 2 Corinthians 3:18—Take heart! The goal of discipleship is to be transformed into the image of Christ! The goal of discipling someone is to help them do the same! Both processes take time.
- iii. Think about how anything biological grows. When we plant seeds, much of the growth happens beneath the surface. You can’t see it happening. But over time, you notice changes. It’s sprouted branches. First buds, then flowers, and finally mature fruit. Sometimes this takes years. Sometimes there are “dormant periods”. But the trend over time is toward maturity. A beautiful example of our growth as disciples.
- iv. Philippians 1:6 It’s God who causes the growth. And he WILL complete it!