

Discipleship

Week 1 - 3/18/2018

1. The shockwave of astonishment had surely not subsided by the time the resurrected Jesus gathered his disciples on the mountain for one final directive. Had Jesus really risen from the dead? Was the tomb empty? What did all this mean? As his closest friends and followers wrestled with these weighty questions, Jesus prepared them for their true calling in life. Some of his final words on earth came in the form of a commission—a timeless and universal commission to all who would follow Christ.

Read Matthew 28:16-20

What impact did everything they had witnessed—before and after Jesus' death—have on the disciples' hearing and acceptance of Jesus' commission?

What does it mean to “make disciples”?

What are you doing to make disciples?

Prayer: Thank God for entrusting us with the gospel message, and humbly ask God to empower you to make disciples in some very specific areas of your life.

2. Making disciples means letting the “light” of Christ shine through us as we live and interact with others. In a world engulfed in the darkness of sin, injustice, hatred and hostility, heaven's light is needed maybe more now than ever. Although the need is great, we often allow the demands and desires of the world to diminish the light of Christ in us. Much like the recent eclipse, the light of the Son is blocked by the things of the world. Jesus reminds us why it is so important to let our lights shine.

Read Matthew 5:14-16

To whom is a watching world's attention meant to be drawn when we do good deeds for others? How have you seen this great truth unfold in life?

How do you feel knowing that Jesus calls you “the light of the world”?

Who around you is in darkness and in need of the light of Christ?

How can you let your light shine?

Prayer: Thank God for letting His light shine into your life—mention specific ways you experience the light of Christ. Pray for open eyes to see specific ways to let your light shine this week.

3. Day 3 “Men wanted for hazardous journey. Low wages, bitter cold, long hours of complete darkness. Safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in event of success.” These are the words of Ernest Shackleton's famous recruitment ad in the early 1900's as he prepared for what would become his renowned Trans Antarctic Expedition. How does the ad strike you? Would you enlist knowing the stakes were so high? Jesus didn't put an ad in a newspaper, but he did want his disciples to know what they would surely face if they said yes to following him.

Read Luke 14:25-33

Why is it important to “count the cost” of discipleship?

What do you think following Jesus costs most people you know?

What has it cost you?

What does it mean for YOU to “carry your cross” and to “give up everything”?

Prayer: Recommit to following Jesus by acknowledging the many things that sometimes hold you back and asking God to bless you with a renewed sense of commitment.

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Discipleship

Week 2 - 3/25/2018

4. What is truth? This question has haunted and hounded philosophers, theologians, scientists and regular people like you and me for generations. We all seem to be looking for something dependable and consistent, something that will withstand the intense fires of relentless scrutiny. We want something we can take to the bank. We want truth! But maybe we are just looking in the wrong places. In a world of lies and half-truths, Jesus claimed HE was the Truth (John 14:6).

Read John 8:31-32

If possible, look more closely at the context of this scripture in John 8. What is happening? What is Jesus saying to the Jews about true discipleship?

Why does truth seem so elusive and indefinable in our world these days?

When is it most difficult for you to hold to the teachings of Jesus?

Prayer: Thank God for Truth—for the absolutes in this world and for the Truth of Jesus Christ. Ask God to use you as a faithful messenger of Truth, that you would always speak the truth in love.

5. Hatred silences the voice of truth and hostility damages the witness of Christ. We cannot expect a watching world to see and believe Christ if his messengers are acting in detestable ways. Jesus reminds us that his love for us is meant to be channeled through us and poured out on the world around us. Being disciples and making disciples is impossible without love.

Read John 13:34-35

Look in your Bible at the broader context of these verses in John 13. Jesus' words are sandwiched between two incredible acts of love: humbly washing the disciples' feet and willingly giving up his life at the cross. Why does Jesus ask us to love another?

According to Jesus, love is an important mark of discipleship. If Christ-like love is the standard for his disciples, what does your attitude and actions toward others say about you as a disciple?

Prayer: Spend some time listing the many ways you experience the love of God, and thank Him for His love for you. Humbly ask God to let His Spirit lead you into being more loving to other people. You might even mention some specific people to whom you need to be loving.

6. An invitation to be changed forever and to be used to change the world forever! How would you respond to such an offer? Just as he called his first followers to be disciples and make disciples, Jesus extends a heartfelt invitation to you to follow him and "fish" for people. That Jesus would use ordinary guys from all walks of life to change the world is remarkable. That he would still use the likes of you and me to do the same is no less remarkable.

Read Mark 1:16-20

What is significant about these first disciples leaving everything behind to follow Jesus?

Why did Jesus instill in his disciples' minds from the onset that they would be used to "fish" for people? What did Jesus mean by that statement?

How does the nature of your discipleship mirror the discipleship of the first followers? How is it different? What does it mean?

Prayer: Pray for the courage to drop everything and follow Jesus when he asks. Pray to be used by God to "fish" for people at work, school, or some other specific place.

Discipleship

Week 3 - 4/1/2018

7. An “Us vs. Them” mentality is counterproductive to disciple-making. When we put up boundaries that keep the “saints” separated from the “sinners,” we fail to reflect the heart of Christ and we fall short of accomplishing our mission of making disciples. Although criticized, Jesus broke social norms to reach people where they were. He did it because he knew they needed hope, they needed him. If the Church withdraws from the world in fear, we will appear conceited, detached and irrelevant to a world that desperately needs Jesus.

Read Matthew 9:9-13

Why did Jesus choose to associate with “sinners?”

What did Jesus mean when he said, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice”?

What does Jesus’ words and example in this passage teach you about what you need to do?

Prayer: Thank God for His unfailing love and grace, and ask for guidance in knowing where to go, what to do, and how to interact with someone you know who is lost apart from Christ.

8. Their stories are brief. We don’t even know their names. What we do know about the three would-be disciples is that something seemed to be holding them back from wholehearted devotion to Christ. One could argue they had reasonable responses, even good excuses to delay or downplay following Jesus. But possibly for them—and for us—the excuses are simply a mask to cover nagging fear or chronic selfishness. Jesus wants all disciples to know what is required if we choose to follow him. We must surrender our pride and overcome our fear, leaving everything behind for the journey ahead.

Read Luke 9:57-62

Why do you think these brief stories are mentioned in Luke’s gospel?

What excuses do you sometimes use to justify not following Jesus wholeheartedly?

What is Jesus calling you to leave behind to be his disciple and to make disciples?

Prayer: Ask God to help you overcome whatever obstacles are holding you back from being a deeply devoted disciple of Jesus. Offer up your excuses to God and humbly ask Him to lead you through them to a place of stronger commitment.

9. Self-sacrifice is one of the most compelling marks of discipleship. Until one is willing to put everything on the line for the cause of Christ, his/her discipleship may be well-meaning, but it is likely superficial. The pursuit of pleasure and material possessions and other worldly treasures have a way of consuming us. We often choose self-indulgence over self-sacrifice. In the end, what will we have to show for it? Jesus reminds us.

Read Luke 9:23-26

How can genuine life be found in losing oneself?

How have you seen this truth reflected in life?

Being a disciple of Christ and sacrificing self seem to run parallel throughout the New Testament. What is the relationship between the two?

What is the biggest take-away for YOU from this teaching by Jesus?

Prayer: Thank God for the cross that Jesus carried and died upon for you. Ask God to help you to unashamedly carry your cross daily.

Discipleship

Week 4 - 4/8/2018

10. "Eat my flesh and drink my blood." These radical words by Jesus were misunderstood by many who heard him. Is he promoting cannibalism or is he just crazy, they wondered. He was neither. Jesus was explaining, in vivid, unforgettable terms, that true disciples of Christ are consumed with Christ. But the message was too radical, too extreme, too nonsensical for some. They just couldn't stay with Jesus. They felt compelled to unfollow.

Read John 6:66-69

Why do some people you know "unfollow" Jesus?

Have you ever been tempted to "unfollow" Jesus? If so, when and why?

Peter's response to Jesus was an inspiring and unflinching declaration of faith. Can you respond the same way to Jesus?

How can your actions reflect such a bold pronouncement?

Prayer: Declare your intentions to follow Jesus whenever he leads you and whatever comes your way. Resolve through prayer, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to never leave Jesus, and humbly ask God to use you to lead others to Christlikeness.

11. We are given many models in scripture. We see heroes of faith in the Old Testament; Paul puts himself forward as a spiritual model; and Jesus is the ultimate example. However we also have a model for the Church. We see in Acts 2 a church that is on fire, growing and embracing God's will in an amazing way. Let's embrace this model as we look at our goals for discipleship.

Read Acts 2:42-47

When have you really seen the Church at its best? What did it look like?

Why do you think the passage starts with this idea of devotion?

How can you work towards building this kind of community in our congregation?

Prayer: Pray that we will strive to follow the example of Acts 2 and that God uses us to accomplish His will in His kingdom.

12. The world is full of need. There are physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs. Sometimes people's brokenness creates need and sometimes it is simply the imperfect nature of the world. One of the most incredible charges that we have as Christians is to be people who show love through our actions. Sometimes it is even possible that through meeting needs we are able to lead people to the Savior who has already taken care of mankind's greatest need.

Read Matt 25:34-40

How have you experienced serving others?

What is it like to give? What is it like to receive?

What needs are you aware of right now?

How can you show Christ's love this week?

Prayer: Pray that we can be aware of the needs around us, have the courage to address them and do so with the motivation to demonstrate God's love to those around us.

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Vision

Week 5 - 4/15/2018

13. I hope you have a rich relationship with Scripture. There are answers present in the Word that we can spend a lifetime struggling to understand on our own. There is encouragement and challenge, sadness and humor, hurt and love. Sometimes we struggle to spend enough time in the Scriptures, but nothing else can convince us of both our spiritual frailty and overwhelming hope all in the same breath. Let's put God's word to work in our lives.

Read 2 Tim 3:14-17

How does scripture make you wise?

How does spending regular time in scripture impact the way you go about your life?

How do we make sure we are people of God's word?

Prayer: Pray that God directs your engagement in His word, and that you can come to greater understanding of His nature, love and gift through reading it today.

14. I'm not sure any subject has inspired more poetry, art and music than the idea of love. Even so I am still not sure we really understand it. We are enamored with the idea of love but many times it is a self-serving love. Christ demonstrates a sacrificial love that holds nothing back. It is a tall order to love like Christ loves, but it is amazing to be part of a community that makes this its goal.

Read John 13:34-35

What does it mean to love as Christ loved?

How does showing love to each other identify us as disciples?

What does this kind of love look like in practice?

Prayer: Pray that we can have a deeper understanding of the love that Jesus shows us. Ask that we can better demonstrate it to those around us.

15. I used to work as a backpacking guide. I would take groups into the backcountry of Idaho. One of the first things people learn in backpacking is to keep it light. When you have to carry everything, you quickly learn the value of certain items. One of the biggest gifts you can give to another person on a backpacking trip is to lighten their load. It was always inspiring to see the group come together to help someone who is struggling. Let's work to lighten each other's loads.

Read Galatians 6:1-6

Is it harder for you to help carry someone else's burden or to allow someone else to carry yours? Why?

What kinds of burdens are you uniquely qualified to help someone else carry?

What can you do to build more of the kind of relationships where you can share burdens with each other?

Prayer: Ask God to make you aware of those in our church family that need help and to give you the resources to help them.

Vision

Week 6 - 4/22/2018

16 Harry Truman is said to have had a sign on his desk that said, "The buck stops here." He was sending the message that he would take responsibility, even for things that were not directly his fault. He was the highest authority. It is comforting to think of someone in authority who is confident, wise and stable. When we look at the church we see a group that is led by the very Messiah that sacrificed his life for her. Christ took on our sin and now sits in the highest place of authority.

Read Colossians 1:15-20

What did your parents teach you about authority?

Were they good models? Not-so-good?

How is the authority of Christ different than any other kind of authority?

How does it change your idea of the church to think of him as the head?

Prayer: Acknowledge the authority of Christ. Focus on our gratitude for his sacrifice and our comfort in the knowledge that he is in charge.

17 Have you ever had to work around an injury? Sometimes a tweaked ankle or jammed finger can really slow us down. In scripture the church is compared to a body. We all have important roles to play and we all must be healthy and working together to really fulfill God's role for us.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:18-26

What talents and abilities do you have?

Which ones are you using for God?

Which ones do you need to put to work?

What can we do to acknowledge those who are in roles that get less attention?

Prayer: Pray that our church can be effective in accomplishing the tasks God has for us. Ask that God will make you aware of how you can discover or fulfill your role in His church.

18. Who "gets" you? For some of us, it is our family. Maybe it's our group of friends. We all want to have a connection to someone that extends beyond the superficial. Often we connect to other people over a shared interest or experience. How does it change things when that experience is our walk with God? What an incredible experience to have a family of believers that can encourage us in our spiritual walk.

Read Philippians 2:1-4

What does it mean to be "like-minded"? Always agree? Have the same interests? Have the same values? Want the same things?

How does being "united with Christ" impact our ability to be like-minded?

What role does humility play in this process?

Prayer: Focus on what things in your faith offer you encouragement, comfort and joy. Pray that God can help you become a more engaged part of His church through those things.

Vision

Week 7 - 4/29/2018

19 Sometimes more of the same is boring. I love talking to people from other places. I enjoy hearing stories about how they grew up, what experiences made them who they are and what things they value and pursue. Sometimes it is a challenge to connect with people who are different but it makes us stronger and better able to communicate God's word to more of the world when we are not all exactly the same.

Read Galatians 3:26-29

What are some of the differences that can take our focus away from our unity in Christ?

Why do we focus on differences so much? Pride? Fear? Something else?

What are some of the ways differences make us better?

Prayer: Pray that God can help us embrace differences and strengthen us by bringing to us those with different experiences, backgrounds and perspectives.

20. What things get you to work? Some people are motivated by the idea of a job well done. Others are motivated by helping others. Sometimes we are motivated by a sense of duty or simply knowing a job has to be done. God has a job for us. We are in the business of spreading His word and His love. What an amazing opportunity to be able to participate in His plan.

Read Matthew 9:37-38

What emotions do you experience when you read this verse? Anxiety? Excitement?

What do we need to do to be better workers for the harvest here in Satellite Beach, FL?

Who can you reach out to this week?

Prayer: Spend time in prayer asking that we are able to make an impact in bringing people to God here at home and all over the world.

21. TRANSFORMATION. When contradictory terms appear together in a phrase, they are referred to as an oxymoron (e.g., jumbo shrimp, tight slacks, Great Depression). Romans 12:1 calls Christ followers to be a "living sacrifice." That feels like an oxymoron. How can a person live as a sacrifice? Romans 12:2 answers that question by calling followers to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" and no longer conforming to the pattern of this world.

Read Romans 12:1-2

How have you let the expectations of others dictate your actions?

Why do you allow others to have power over your actions?

In the process of transformation, why is renewing one's mind an essential step?

How can you engage in a continual process of "renewing your mind" in an effort to live as a sacrifice and avoid the patterns of this world?

Prayer: Ask God for the courage it takes to be different from the world. Pray that He will help you renew your mind and focus solely on His will for your life.

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Transformation

Week 8 - 5/6/2018

22 My in-laws had a house fire a few years back. The upstairs was lost and the whole house had to be remodeled. They often recount the precious seconds they had to grab their possessions and get to safety. It is in these moments when our priorities are made clear. They made it out with dogs, pictures, phones, and—most importantly—their lives. Sometimes we need a jarring moment to reorient ourselves. Zacchaeus had a reorientation moment when he encountered Jesus.

Read Luke 19:1-10

List the five most important things in your life. Does your time management reflect that these are priorities in your life?

Why do you think Zacchaeus was willing to make such a drastic change to his priorities?

Jesus interacts with Zacchaeus because Jesus came “to seek and save the lost” (v. 10). What changes need to be made in your life in order to prioritize sharing faith with lost people?

Prayer: Ask God to make His priorities your priorities.

23. Imagine we could revisit the characters of the Prodigal Son story a few years later. Things have settled down and become routine again. The party is over and the younger son is back to normal life. A thought creeps into the younger son’s mind: “What if I ran away again? I could have a little fun and my father is obligated to welcome me back again with a big party.” How ridiculous! Why would someone return to a sinful life? Paul seems perplexed by the same question in Romans 6.

Read Romans 6:1-14

If you are a Christian, take a moment to recount your baptism. Where were you? What led you to that decision? Who disciplined you? How did that moment change your life?

What does it mean to die to sin? Do you feel that you have died to sinfulness?

Through baptism and the proclamation of Jesus as Lord and Savior, we are given new life. How is your new life different than your old one?

Prayer: Offer a prayer of thanksgiving. Thank God for the beautiful gift of baptism in which He washed away your sins and gave you new life. Pray that you will choose faithfulness to this new life instead of sinfulness.

24. God often chooses unlikely characters. Saul of Tarsus was a devout Jew and was militant toward Jesus followers. He stated, “I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it” (Gal. 1:13). We even see Saul affirming the stoning of Stephen. But Saul’s life is dramatically transformed by an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Saul goes from persecutor of Jesus to proclaimer of Jesus in only three days! What a transformation!

Read Acts 9:17-31

What do you think it was like for Paul to be on the opposite side of the persecution against Christians?

Would you be willing to make such a drastic change to your life following an encounter with Jesus?

Saul is given a new view on life after the scales fall from his eyes. What “scales” need to be removed from your eyes so that you can see and do the will of God?

Prayer: Pray that God will give you a mission, as He gave to Saul/Paul, and that He will give you strength to withstand any persecution that may come your way.

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Transformation

Week 9 - 5/13/2018

25 “What are they doing here? They don’t belong here!” Those were the words I heard when I sat down at an Oklahoma State game decked out in crimson and cream. It was a miserable experience. Not only did my Sooners lose, but I felt an overwhelming sense of rejection. I didn’t belong. In our text, Peter is fraternizing with the enemy. Not only did he fellowship with Gentiles; he considers them part of God’s family now! Can just anyone be part of the family now?

Read Acts 11:1-18

Reflect on a time when you felt like an outsider. What was that experience like? What could have made your experience better?

How do you think the community of believers was transformed by the addition of Gentiles?

Are we a church where everyone belongs?

Would anyone come and feel like an “outsider”? What can we do to fix that?

Prayer: Ask God to make the Edmond church of Christ a place where diversity is embraced and everyone feels welcome.

26 Sometimes we do the list of the Fruit of the Spirit a disservice. It is easy to fall into the trap of believing that if we try hard enough, we can simply live out these nine qualities without help. A person cannot simply decide to embody these characteristics and will them into existence. The Spirit must work to bring about these qualities in our lives. When we are “in step” (v. 25) with the Spirit, these qualities begin to manifest in our lives.

Read Galatians 5:22-26

How would your life change if you embodied these characteristics?

How would others’ view of you change?

How can we “stay in step with the Spirit”?

How can you acknowledge the work of the Spirit in your daily life?

Prayer: Pray that God will give you opportunities to display the Fruit of the Spirit and ask for His Spirit to work powerfully through you in those opportunities.

27 “Do you really want to get better? Or are you content to eke out your days lounging around here making excuses like, I can’t get in the water before other people?” This seems to be the intent behind Jesus’ question to the invalid man in John 5. On face value, this appears to be a ridiculous question; of course the man wants to be healed! But Jesus knows our hearts. He knows that we often choose to remain broken rather than engage the process of transformation.

Read John 5:1-9

How close do you like to keep your sin? Do you flee from it or do you keep it close enough to dabble in when you desire?

Do you want to get well? Do you genuinely want to be faithful?

What, if anything, is keeping you from engaging the process of transformation and living a faithful life in the pattern of Jesus?

Prayer: Ask God to give you the desire to be faithful above all else and the strength to implement any changes that need to be made.

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Transformation

Week 10 - 5/20/2018

28 Possibly the most penitent statement a person can make is “I have sinned.” Those words do not come easily, but when they are stated out loud, real change can happen. In Psalm 51, David admits his sin before God. Following his transgressions against Bathsheba and her husband, David confesses his sin before God and pleads for cleansing, forgiveness, and renewal. After his confession, David asks for a pure heart and a steadfast spirit. May God transform our sinfulness into clean hearts and steadfast spirits.

Read Psalm 51:10-12

Spend some time in confession. Acknowledge your sin before a just, but merciful God. What role does confession play in transforming us into faithful followers of Jesus?

How can our church family better embrace confession and vulnerability with one another while also celebrating the forgiveness God offers to those who repent?

Prayer: Simply offer Psalm 51:10-12 as a prayer to God. Read it as many times as you like. As you read, offer these words to God as your prayer for renewal.

29 In Paul's writings, one moment changed everything. That moment was the cross. In Jesus' death, we are justified. In Jesus' death, we are unified. In Jesus' death, we are given a pattern for life. Paul knows that he must live in a way that follows Jesus' model. He must die to himself and his own selfish desires. After dying to self, he allows Jesus to guide his every step. This is beautifully articulated in Galatians 2:20.

Read Galatians 2:20

What does it mean to “die to self”? Have you done that—are you dead yet?

If Christ were in your shoes, what would he do differently at your work? With your family? At your school? With your neighbors?

Choose one tangible way that you can die to yourself and align your actions with those of Jesus.

Prayer: Pray that God will bless you with the heart of Christ for the world around you.

30 If you are in Christ, you are a new creation. You have been given a new focus and a new purpose in this new life you enjoy. What is your new purpose? You are now a minister of reconciliation and an ambassador for Christ. Through Jesus, God has invited the world back into relationship with Him. Broken people are allowed into an eternal relationship with their holy Creator. That is great news! This news has been entrusted to us to share with lost people!

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

What emotions do you experience when you think about the responsibility you have to be a minister of reconciliation and share the gospel with lost people?

What, if anything, keeps you from sharing the gospel with lost people? How do you intend to overcome those obstacles in order to make disciples?

How can our church family better embrace the responsibility to be ambassadors for Christ to the Edmond and surrounding community?

Prayer: List 3 people that you are close to that do not have a relationship with Christ. Ask God for opportunities to share your faith with these three people. Also pray for our church family to embrace the responsibility of making disciples.

Calling

Week 11 - 5/27/2018

31 Feeling inadequate? As a child when they chose teams for sports were you usually selected near the end? I was. I was the smallest until I was a freshman in high school. Jesus called his "team" and called 12 of the most unlikely people to be his inner circle of disciples. But to go even further, he has chosen you and me to follow him as disciples and to invite others to become disciples. Let us not take his calling lightly or with a spirit of entitlement, but rather with gratitude and humility.

Read Mark 3:13-19

Do you feel over-qualified to be a follower of Jesus or is it by grace that you get to follow Jesus?

Describe the feeling you get from the calling of Jesus. Would you call yourself a disciple? Why or why not?

Reflect on when you were called to be a disciple, could you do that same thing for someone else?

Prayer: "Dear Lord, since you have called me, please help me focus more on you than myself or abilities. This is a privilege so help me realize how you use all those who are willing to make a difference in your world. I know you will be with me wherever you call me. Please give me wisdom and help me to invite others to follow you..."

32. Is guilt keeping you from fully responding to God's call? One of the most effective tools the enemy will use to keep you from serving God is convincing you that you've either messed up too much to serve God or that you must clean up your life before you can get God's attention. When these thoughts pop into your head, sniff the air for the scent of sulfur, because they are lies straight from the fires of hell! God doesn't call the qualified, God qualifies the called!

Read Isaiah 6:1-13

What volunteer ministries have you been involved with? How were you recruited or called?

Prior to God taking the initiative to cleanse Isaiah, the prophet felt overwhelmed and unprepared for any mission on God's behalf. Describe and reflect on how he felt after the cleansing, seemingly energized with a strong desire to serve God.

Prayer: "Dear God, you know my innermost desires, feelings, and thoughts. Please see the heart I have, then empower me to see what you have in store for me today. Help me to have the courage to do even greater things in the area of..."

33 God loves the lost. While He could force all of us to do His will, He doesn't. He lovingly invites, inspires and draws us to Him. In Luke 15, Jesus reminds us to be aware of lost people, and what we can do to help them become complete in Christ. He allows us to partner with him to call others. If we could save ourselves, we wouldn't need a Savior. But we can't. You need God to recover whatever you've lost. Others need him too. He's the only one who can save us.

Read Luke 15

You may not consider yourself "lost" because you are a Christian. But in what other ways do you feel lost at times? How can you help others overcome that same feeling?

To whom or what do you look for hope in these situations or areas in which you feel lost?

How is God calling you to be aware of lost people around you? With whom can you connect?

Prayer: "Dear Savior, I get busy and become insensitive to people who are lost. Would you lead me to someone in my life today who I need to help see you for how you truly are. You are a loving, kind, and caring Creator who is on our side. Empower me to have the courage to say something to others about you..."

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Calling

Week 12 - 6/3/2018

34. David Young says, "Disciples are hand-crafted, not mass produced." Paul felt that way too. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 9 that he became "a servant to everyone [to] win them to Christ." In other words, he wanted to find common ground with people and use it as an open door to share Christ. God wants us to love people that much — enough to reach out to them with the gospel in a creative way. We need to use every available method, at every available time, to reach every available person for Jesus Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Does the same method reach every kind of lost person?

Do Christians care enough about people to do whatever it takes to tell them about Jesus? Explain.

For those who didn't grow up going to church, what creative ways brought them to Jesus and the love of God?

How creative can you be in reaching lost people with the good news of Jesus?

Prayer: "Dear Lord, help me be like the apostle Paul and become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. Help me slow down and work to understand others rather than getting others to understand me..."

35. Jesus came to "seek and save the lost." But what does that calling mean? We use the word "lost" in many ways. It can mean you have misplaced something, and just need to find it. Or we say, "He lost his life savings." That doesn't mean he misplaced it, but it is in the possession of someone else. It's gone. Forever. Or we hear the alarming words from the surgeon who is desperately trying to save the life of a loved one, "We lost her." In the scriptures, "lost" describes the spiritual state of someone's soul. The lost are dead in their sins and need saving in a way that only Jesus can do.

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

In Luke 19:10 Jesus talked about "lost" people. In Ephesians, Paul used the word "dead" to describe the same. Can you think of a better word to describe this spiritual state?

How does it make you feel knowing people without Christ are eternally lost? Does it motivate you to action? Explain.

How can we improve our communication of the good news?

Prayer: "Dear God, We are very blessed with eternal life from you. Please help us to be courageous in speaking the honest truth to others and to share the opportunity for abundant life in Christ. Convict us with the seriousness of our calling to reach out to others in love."

36. Evangelism is simply sharing the good news. At the heart of evangelism is having a heart for someone else. As someone once said, it is "one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." It is one transformed life telling another what will change their life for eternity. But until we connect with God's divine power, we're useless. His sacrifice and redemptive grace gives us life, energy, and usefulness. His power flows through us; and when we work for Him, we are laboring with all His energy, which so powerfully works in us.

Read Colossians 1:24-29

What is the best news you have heard? How did you share it with others?

What does it mean to "proclaim him"?

When do you feel powerless to share good news? What would it take for you to become more vulnerable and dependent on God to empower you?

Prayer: "Dear Lord, we want to proclaim Jesus so others can know your energetic power. Our lives are powerless without you. Our friends' lives are powerless too and defeated by sin. We invite your power to work today in our lives..."

Calling

Week 13 - 6/10/2018

37. God is at work in our individual lives, but He is also at work through His church—His servants. It was His eternal purpose to work through His church, so don't grow discouraged. Instead, pray and yield to God's will as you make yourself available for His work. God asks us to work together to realize and embrace the fullness of His love. When we join together, receive His love and yield to His calling, God will do incredible things through us for His Glory.

Read Ephesians 3:7-21

What is the most powerful manmade thing you have experienced?

How much do we believe in the power of prayer today? Paul prayed for the church in Ephesus. Describe what might happen in our congregation if we all prayed his prayer together as we make disciples?

Prayer: "Dear God, please work in very powerful ways as I want to be your disciple. Please open doors so I can share the good news with my neighbors. I believe you still change lives and that you are the only answer for the world..."

38 Salt is essential to life. For thousands of years, long before refrigeration was invented, salt was used as a preservative to keep meat from spoiling and to provide flavor to food. So, salt—one of the most important minerals on earth—gives life, preserves life, and flavors life. If our lives become polluted by the things of this world, our ability to save, preserve, and flavor life will be diluted and weakened accordingly. Our mission is not just to be salt, but to be pure salt.

Read Colossians 4:2-6

Jesus said, "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?" What does this mean?

In whose life are you serving as a saving, preserving, and flavoring influence? Are your conversations with this person "seasoned with salt"?

Where is God calling you to be a blessing?

Prayer: "Dear Lord, I thank you for the work you do in my life daily. Help me to salt, to touch the world and make it a more Godly place. I want to make a difference in your creation and work with you to make it the place you desire..."

39. Every Christian is called to be an ambassador—you are a minister too—at your workplace or school or wherever you find yourself. Your job is to be an ambassador of Jesus to the people around you. Years ago, there was a TV commercial for a Clairol hair product that claimed, "Only her hair dresser knows for sure." Well, your faith is not meant to be a secret; God is not the only one who should know for sure. Other people need to know that you belong to Christ.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Who have you helped be reconciled to God?

How do we "no longer look at people from a worldly point of view"?

Who has God put in your life that you can bless?

How can God make His appeal through you to this person?

Prayer: "Dear Lord, I know you want to make connections to people through me. Help me live worthy of the gospel and be an ambassador to someone today."

Calling

Day 40 When we face resistance doing even the best things, we naturally stop doing them. Our thought process often assumes that if something is good, it should be easy. In reality, that is not true with many things, including diet, exercise, learning, etc. Doing God's will is good, but it's not always easy either. Satan is there to obstruct our efforts to share the good news of Christ. When the early church "went about doing good," they experienced resistance, but they kept doing good.

Read Acts 14:1-7

Is it possible that the assumption of "kingdom living is easy" comes from a denial of Satan or belief that he has very little power?

What does it require of a Christian to resist being distracted by bad news and discouragement?

Prayer: "Dear Lord, help me focus on being the disciple you called me to be and continue to help me find people who have potential of being disciples as well."

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Edmond church of Christ
801 South Bryant
Edmond, OK. 73034
405-341-3353