

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 7 Jan 2024

Sermon Title : Make Disciples Intentionally

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : Matthew 4:19-20

INTRODUCTION

On this 1st Sunday in 2024, we are reminded that we already have a vision for Faith Methodist Church – “Transforming Lives, Changing the World”. As people who have experienced the gracious transformation of God, through His love, mercy and faithfulness, we are therefore in a place to journey with people, through us being a channel, allow God to transform their lives. As God has changed our lives and situations, we also desire to step out into the world to change the world. Two years ago, we focused on “Know God Intimately”. Last year, our focus was on “Love People Genuinely”. This year we will be focusing on “Make Disciples Intentionally”.

In this New Year, may we remember that joy and happiness should not depend on our situations, but we should purpose to be joyful in all situations as the Psalmist declares in Psalm 118:24. It is not about what the day brings but focusing on The One who created the day, rejoicing in the Lord always. (Philippians 4:4) So even in days in 2024 when we may seem all alone in a desert land, with only darkness in the horizon, we need to apply this verse because even in the driest of situations and scenarios, it is the day that the Lord has made and we should rejoice and be glad in it.

Make Disciples Intentionally (Matthew 4:19-20)

There are 2 ways to fish; using a fishing rod and bait, hoping for a fish to bite the bait and casting nets to draw in as many fish as the net can hold. In Matthew 4:18, Jesus saw 2 fishermen Peter and Andrew casting nets as He walked along the shores of Galilee. Fishermen were central to the economy in the Galilee area. In fact, they were doing better than all those villagers and peasants who were working the land, earning more than them and were well-off.

Jesus’ unexpected “Call” (v.19) - “Come, follow me,” (NLT)

- There is no small talk.
- This call spoken more than 2000 years ago continues to beckon us.
- Jesus is continuously looking for followers/disciples who will walk with Him today.
- In Greek, this verse is given in the imperative, a command/call of utmost urgency, a matter of highest importance. Almost a matter of life and death.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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- To follow Him means to walk closely with Him to imitate Him, to become like Him or grow into Christlikeness. To adopt His posture, principles and priorities.
 - It means to put aside the posture we carry due to our positions in this world to adopt the posture of Christ – a posture of humility (don't think we know everything or that we are the best for everything), love and forgiveness (turning another cheek when hits us) and even praying for those who crucified Him.
 - It means to drop our own principles we may hold to and adopt Jesus' principles; to follow how Jesus makes decisions and lived His life being led by the Holy Spirit.
 - It means to drop our different priorities and to adopt His priorities so His priorities become our priorities.

And I will “show” you (v.19) (NLT)

- It is not to be shown what He can do so we may be amazed but He will “make”, “transform” or “change” us by showing us.
- He will “show” us and by “showing” us He will be teaching us. By teaching us, He will be molding us, so we will know how to follow Him.
- It is an amazing privilege that Jesus Himself says that when we follow Him, He will show and teach us. The very Son of God will show, teach, mold and make us. As believers, we need to appropriate this privilege of Christ teaching us.

How to “fish for people” (v.19) (NLT)

- Jesus will “show” or “make” us into fishers of men. To fish for people is to intentionally make disciples as it echoes Matthew 28:19 – to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The call of Jesus however is that we are to first be His disciples before making disciples. We have to be intentional disciples before we can make disciples intentionally, otherwise we will not know where to start or how to go about it. When Jesus shows us, grows us and makes us, we will then know how to do it.
- We can only make disciples in the image of Christ whom we follow closely when we are intentional disciples ourselves. If we have never been an intentional disciple, even if we want to obey the Bible in making disciples, what kind of disciples will we be making? Will we be making disciples in our own image?

To be an intentional disciple

To be an intentional disciple takes commitment, cost and a lot of doing. As believers, we ought to believe but to be a follower and a disciple of Christ goes beyond simply believing. It goes beyond inner reflection and calls us to external action. James 2:17 tells us that even the demons believe, but we cannot stay at believing even though it is a good start. We need to go from believing to go to following, to being shown, to fishing.

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A radical invitation calls for a radical response – “left their nets” (v.20) (NLT)

Radical invitation – In those days rabbis and masters do not call people to follow them. When people felt that they wanted to follow a rabbi or master, they would approach the rabbi themselves. Only the most radical and audacious, daring and bold rabbi, master and teacher would call for disciples to follow them and Jesus is one of those.

Radical response – Peter and Andrew immediately left their nets, no delaying, no procrastinating, and followed Christ.

Jesus is still calling for disciples today, may we respond radically like Peter and Andrew and not delay or procrastinate or give the excuse that we need to pray about it. Jesus is the one calling us, so there is no need to pray to Him about it.

Mark 1:19-20

After verse 20 in Matthew Chapter 4, Jesus continues walking and He sees James and John. We are told in Luke 5 that James and John are fishing/business partners of Peter and Andrew.

- When Jesus made that radical audacious call to James and John, they too responded radically by following Him at once leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men.
- The fishermen James and John had good lives not lacking in anything and even had hired men.
- They decided and committed to follow Jesus not at their convenience but at great cost.

As Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John, He is also calling us at Faith Methodist Church to be intentional disciples to be shown, transformed, taught and molded so we can also make disciples intentionally.

Cost of discipleship

“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)

- To give up your own way means to do things the way Jesus does. It means to have Jesus’ will be done and His priorities guide you in your life.
- To take up your cross daily is to carry a weight passing people who may be accusing, insulting and scolding you along the way. Sometimes those voices come from fellow Christians who may ask why you are so serious.

CONCLUSION

We are serious because the Call is a serious one. Christ wants us to be prepared as it is not a cross we can carry and then put down and carry again another day. We are

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to carry the cross daily to the place where we will be crucified. To die to our ways and follow Him, His posture, principles and priorities. May we respond radically.

A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How has your life as a follower of Jesus been in 2023?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read Matthew 4:19-20 slowly.
 - a. How do these verses speak to you personally?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 3a. How has the way Jesus called Peter and Andrew to follow Him impacted you?
- 3b. (i) What do the fishermen's responses in Matthew 4:20 and Mark 1:20 tell you about their faith in Jesus?
 - (ii) What are some inconveniences they could encounter in following Jesus?
- 3c. What about Luke 9:23 makes you uncomfortable? How can you overcome it if you are serious about following Jesus?

- 4a. Have you moved beyond believing to be an intentional disciple of Jesus Christ? If not, do you want to?
- 4b. What are some ways you can intentionally appropriate Jesus' teaching, molding and making you into His disciple with His posture, principles and priorities?
- 4c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 4b in the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share how Jesus called you and how you responded.

OR

Give thanks to Jesus, the Son of God who calls us to the privilege to be “shown” how to fish for people (make disciples).

6. With a prayer partner, bring your concerns in 3c. to God and ask the Holy Spirit to enable you to overcome them. Pray also that everyone in your Life Group and our church will commit to respond radically to God’s call to follow Jesus and make His posture, principles and priorities ours so that we may be ready to transform lives and change the world.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Jesus Way – Phil Wickham <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARSGgC9iQb0>
2. Holy Forever – Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkHgXKemCRk>
3. My Tribute – Andrae Crouch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WO_oq_mYDY

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