

Disciples Who Make Disciples

January 15, 2023 - Pastor Jason Carter

VISION STATEMENT:

We live to see lives transformed through Jesus.

MISSION STATEMENT:

We are a family committed to seeing lives changed. We connect people to God and others, make disciples of Jesus, and are Spirit empowered people who live out the Good News in our world. And we are each determined to fulfill our unique purpose in God's mission to everyone, everywhere, every day.

PILLARS:

Connect, Disciple, Empower.

Our desire is to become disciples who make disciples. It is not a suggestion, but a command as believers.

Disciple: a follower or student of; a learner; a witness.

- You are a disciple of anyone that holds influence over your life, and you willingly seek out information or knowledge from them.
- You are a disciple of any person or organization that has consistent access to your heart and mind, directly affecting the way you live.
 - an author
 - an actor
 - a musician
 - a school institution
 - a news organization
 - a pastor
 - a parent
 - a sports figure or team

Some may say "I don't follow anybody". If you are being influenced and their words are in your mouth, **you are being disciplined.**

Philosopher and author James K. A. Smith: "We are what we worship; we are what we love." Whatever influences you consistently, you are a follower or disciple of.

- Who has your ear? Who is, willingly or not, discipling you? What do you love and what do you worship?

John 15:8. "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

Matthew 28: 18-20 "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Discipleship is part of our Christian identity. God is committed to our transformation. He is committed to us being fruitful and change being produced. He is committed to us being disciples. It is woven into the fabric of our relationship with God.

Why is discipleship so difficult?

- Arbitrary- what are measurements, what are the characteristics? What does a person have to possess? Am I good enough? What is it going to cost?
- Change happens and could be difficult, uncomfortable, or painful.
- What is inside of us eventually comes out and we may be embarrassed or surprised.
- It may feel like too much when in the context of a lifelong journey of transformation; "for the rest of my life" is overwhelming.

A disciple makes a decision about Jesus.

People were debating who Jesus was. Was he a teacher, a prophet?

Matthew 16:17 "Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.'"

"Flesh and blood" do not reveal who God is to people. He does that. **This must be revealed in order to make the decision to accept Christ and be a disciple.**

There will be things that challenge our following of Jesus.

- Jesus had been teaching about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, which was a difficult concept to understand. What did He mean? How did it translate to their lives?

There will be things that challenge your relationship with God or are hard to comprehend.

God wants to take us from *information* to *revelation*.

Who do you say that He is?

What are you going to do when things challenge your relationship with Him?

John 6:67-69 "Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also, we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

- Peter tells Jesus (paraphrased) "You are the Christ. You have the truth. Where else can we go? We have nowhere else to go, there is nowhere else to go."

God wants to bring us to this point; moving from information we have been given to a personal revelation of who He is, to the point where we decide for ourselves and it becomes who we are and we decide we have nowhere to go but to God Himself.

A disciple is devoted to Jesus.

Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

- This was the way they practiced their devotion.

There are layers to our devotion. David gives us understanding.

Psalms 51:5-6 "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom."

Our decision for God and our devotion to God positions us in John 15:8 setting where we bear much fruit, showing others we are disciples.

Where else can we go? Nowhere, because we are devoted to Him as disciples.

Decision and Devotion: what happens when we are truly disciples. Devotion follows truth. There are layers to our revelation of God and there are layers in our devotion to God. God removes layers as we grow in our relationship with Him and His desire is that we know His truth in the deepest places of who we are.

Life happens. There are trials, disappointments, victories, dry seasons, etc. that affect our walk with God. Sin, distortion, pain, lies, arrogance, pride, wrong perceptions about God, wrong narratives about ourselves... it all leads to layers building up over our hearts, but God is intent on getting His truth through our layers.

Proverbs 4:23 "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

Ex: Our hearts are like mass transit system. Imagine a subway station when it first opens. It is clean, neat, and inviting, but as time goes on and people encounter the system, build up begins to happen; dirt, mud, and grime begin to stick and stay and after time, the clean system we knew now has layers of dirt and become all that we see.

We have things that create layers over our heart, but God is intent into getting His truth into **EVERY** area of our life. We might resist God's truth because of the build-up or layers on our hearts. For example, if we struggle with shame vs guilt we might believe the lies that come with that.

Guilt

I **did** this
I **did** something wrong
Separate from our identity
Something **temporary**

Shame

I **am** this
I **am** something wrong
A state of being
We take on as **identity**

- Where are you limiting the reach of truth in your life? What layers are over your heart?

God wants to permeate every aspect of our life with His truth, and He will use circumstances and situations to get our full attention. Our God does not want us to live in bondage or in a lie. He wants us to have life and life to the fullest.

Peter: Reflects our walk with God

- Jesus had spoken over Peter: "You are the rock, and you will help build my church"
- Peter recognized Jesus as Messiah and fought against His arrest
- Yet Peter denied Jesus three times, the last time to young girl

Imagine the guilt, the shame, and regret. It's likely that Peter questioned his devotion to Jesus.

But Jesus already knew what was in Peter. He knew his potential for sin and failure and his potential as he learned to grow. **THIS IS US AS THE CHURCH. Jesus knows** what's inside of us; the good and bad. Yet, **He still calls us.**

Even after this experience, **Peter still became a disciple-maker.** What he received from the Lord is what he had to give away.

Disciple-maker: to take what we have learned and received (our personal transformation with Jesus) and share it with others.

It is impossible to follow Jesus and not have something to give away. Jesus redeems, restores, reveals, heals and partners with us.

This includes what we have learned about God.

- Our past
- Our pain
- Our giftings, talents, abilities, serving, intellect and skill
- Giving- time, talent, treasure on behalf of God to others

It is *impossible* to follow Jesus and *not have something to give away.*

If you don't know what your mission field is, think about the very thing you have been through. **What God rescued you from and what God has revealed to you is your mission field.** Being a disciple is a decision and devotion God calls us to and willingly meets us in. The overflow of this is disciple-making.

What can you give away? What has God rescued you from that you can encourage others with? What has God revealed to you that you can share with others?

What is Holy Spirit highlighting for you to act on this week?