

## **Small Groups Discussion**

“Discipleship”

Mark 3:13-19, 8:22-38

### **Opening Question** (Leaders: choose whichever one you'd like from the following options)

- Outside of your Christian Faith, how do you convince others of something that is valuable to you? Examples: appeal to ego, appeal to basic needs, use logic and explanation, share passionately, model it in your own life, I never try to influence others, etc. Please explain.
- Who is someone who has modeled the life that you want to live?

We're in a sermon series that's spanning the academic year, called “The Big Story.” We've been walking through the Bible, seeing the ways that it's one big story of redemption. Between now and Easter we're looking at some of the key elements of how Jesus went about the rescue that he came to accomplish. This week, we're looking at Jesus' invitation to discipleship.

### **Read Mark 3:13-19**

- Mark tells us in v. 13 that Jesus went up onto a mountainside and called to himself those he wanted. Why go up on a mountainside? (Hint: What other significant events in Israel's history were located on or near a mountainside?)
- Jesus invites a select group of people to come up to this significant place with him. What happened when they reached their destination?
- The invitation of Jesus is first, to **be with him**. What is the significance of this fact? Discuss.
- Remember The Fall of Humankind in Genesis 3? How were relationships affected then? How does that impact us now? How does this invitation from Jesus begin to overturn these effects?
- Pastor Josh stated that this invitation to relationship is of a specific type – discipleship. What does the word “disciple” mean? How does this shed light on one key aspect of our relationship with Jesus?
- Josh stated, “Unlike any other rabbi, Jesus is not a means to learning something else; he is himself the content.” What do you think this means practically?
- Do you sometimes feel a pull toward spiritual knowledge more than to a relationship with Jesus? If so, why do you think that is the case?
- How can we cultivate a learning, intimate relationship with Jesus on a daily basis?
- What do you know about the **diversity** within this list of 12 names? What does being in a diverse community teach us about what God values in relationships? Josh talked about the challenges of being in “unlikely community.” How can those challenges be rewarding?
- Jesus calls disciples to himself for a second invitation, and that is to be **sent out**.
  - One purpose of being sent out is to preach. How do you feel about this? If you knew that the word “to preach” (*kerusso*) means “to tell the story,” would that seem more “do-able”? Explain.
  - If you knew that the original 12 disciples were not theologians but mostly everyday laborers, how would that affect the way you “tell the story”?

- The other purpose of the invitation to be sent out is to have authority over evil.
  - Josh stated that Satan's evil most often appears as a challenge to our identity as children of God, who can trust in God's goodness. How have you seen that in your own life or in the lives of those you love? How can we counteract Satan's temptation in this area?
  - Josh also stated that the other most common aspect of Satan's evil activities is heightened spiritual opposition to expanding God's kingdom. Have you ever noticed this, say when you're trying to get your family to get ready for church, or when serving in something at church like VBS, Sunday School, or worship? Discuss.
  - How might we use the authority of Jesus' name to counteract these evils?

### **Read Mark 8:31-38**

- What does it mean when Jesus says, “**Take up your cross** and follow me”? How would Jesus’ first-century followers have heard this?
- How might we die to ourselves in the area of status and identity?
- How might we die to ourselves in the area of our plans and agenda we set for our lives?
- Bryan Wilkerson says, “The harder you try to save your life and happiness, the more it will slip through your fingers. God’s dream for your life is way better than yours. The only way to discover ourselves is to abandon ourselves to Jesus and his purposes.” Please reflect and comment.
- How was Jesus’ model effective for communicating his life-changing message in a lasting way? Why has it had such staying power?

The **Great Commission** that Jesus gave these 12 men—his last words to them, recorded in Matthew 28, is our Commission too, and it only contains 1 **imperative**.

**16** Then the eleven disciples (minus Judas) went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.... **18** Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** 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, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

- In Greek there's only one command here: “make disciples” (as you go, and baptize, teach, etc.). How committed and focused are you on “making disciples”? What is getting in your way?
- Who is someone who has poured into you, apprentice-style, as you've come along in your journey with Jesus? What might it look like for you to pour into someone else in this way?
- What does it mean that Jesus will be with you forever as he asks you to do his Great Commission?

**Share concerns and pray for one another.**