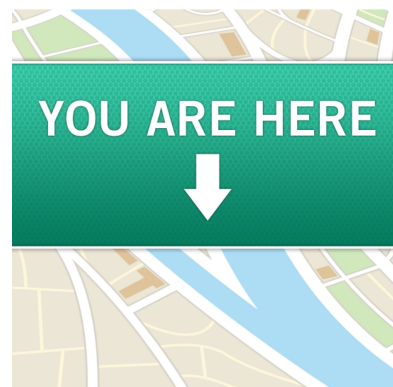


Media Notes are highlighted in this background color

- Please leave the definition of a disciple from the first of the sermon on screen until I mention it again in the Conclusion.



Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about what it means to be a disciple - in Jesus today and for us today.

Why is this sermon important?

This sermon is important because understanding more of what it means to be a disciple can help us become one and help others along the pathway of discipleship.

What is the context of this sermon?

This series is between our back to school series and stewardship campaign. Key resources for this sermon and series include: Which Way Should I Go¹ and Trusting the Path² sermons by Rev. Paul Rasmussen preached at Highland Park United Methodist Church and the Nooma–Dust video by Rob Bell³.

What are the next action steps?

The next action steps are to:

- Go into deeper water
- Move out of our comfort zone.
- Take a next step on the pathway of discipleship.

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that God invites us to and equips us for the pathway to perfect love of God and neighbor.

Metadata

- Topic(s)
 - Discipleship, faith
- Sermon Books of the Bible
 - Luke

¹ <http://www.hpumc.org/sermon/which-way-should-i-go/>

² <http://www.hpumc.org/sermon/trusting-the-path/>

³ <https://flannel.org/products/nooma-dust-008>

- Series
 - You are Here
- Speaker
 - Andrew Conard
- Tags
 - faith, discipleship, disciple, Jesus, life, worship, grow, give, serve, share, path, pathway

Outline

[Media Notes are highlighted in this background color](#)
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Luke 5:1-11, CEB

1 One day Jesus was standing beside Lake Gennesaret when the crowd pressed in around him to hear God's word. 2 Jesus saw two boats sitting by the lake. The fishermen had gone ashore and were washing their nets. 3 Jesus boarded one of the boats, the one that belonged to Simon, then asked him to row out a little distance from the shore. Jesus sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. 4 When he finished speaking to the crowds, he said to Simon, "Row out farther, into the deep water, and drop your nets for a catch."

5 Simon replied, "Master, we've worked hard all night and caught nothing. But because you say so, I'll drop the nets."

6 So they dropped the nets and their catch was so huge that their nets were splitting. 7 They signaled for their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They filled both boats so full that they were about to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw the catch, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Leave me, Lord, for I'm a sinner!" 9 Peter and those with him were overcome with amazement because of the number of fish they caught. 10 James and John, Zebedee's sons, were Simon's partners and they were amazed too.

Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people." 11 As soon as they brought the boats to the shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Starter Video

- Play sermon starter video.
-

Introduction

Series Review

Our mission as a church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. What is a disciple? How do I become one, much less make one?

The truth is, it can be a challenge to know the next step in your faith journey. There are so many options from which to choose, and it can seem as though each person is going in a different direction. In this series, we are exploring the challenges of growing in your faith in a way that, hopefully is simple, straightforward, and user friendly.

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message

today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

Opening Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Peter's Fishing Trip

Simon Peter was not having a great day. He and his friends had worked all night and not caught anything. They were cleaning up at the end of their shift when a man comes followed by all kinds of people. He borrows one of your boats and then says, get back to work.

Jesus: Go into deeper water. Throw out the nets.

Peter: Seriously? Who are you? We are professionals and there is nothing out there. Just because you asked, we'll do it.

They caught more they could imagine. Peter is overcome with amazement and when they got back to the shore, they left everything to follow Jesus—to be one of his disciples.

Transition

Let's take a closer look at what it means to be a disciple, both in Jesus' day and for us today.

What did it mean to be a disciple in Jesus' day?

Jesus is a Jewish rabbi with Jewish disciples, living in a first century Jewish world. As you know, the Jews believed that God had spoken through Moses to give them the first five books of the Bible - the Torah.

The Torah was the center and foundation of their lives. And the focus of their educational system.

Phase One of Jewish Education - Memorize the Torah

Most Jewish boys and girls, around the age of six, would go to school for the first time to

learn the Torah. It was probably held in the local synagogue and taught by a local rabbi or torah teacher.

This first phase of education lasted until the child was about 10 years old. In this phase of education, most children would memorize the Torah and by the age of 10 have the Torah by heart—every word.

Memorized.

Transition

By the time they were done with this phase, most children were learning the family trade, how to manage a household or something similar.

The best of the best would continue their education to the next level

Phase Two of Jewish Education - Memorize the Hebrew Scripture

In this phase, the best of the best, would memorize the remainder of the Hebrew scripture.

Genesis through Malachi.

Memorized.

Transition

By the time they were done with this phase, 14 or 15 years old, most children were learning the family trade, apprenticing with their parents or building a household.

The best of the best of the best would continue on to the next level of education.

Phase Three of Jewish Education - Become a Rabbi's Disciple

They would go to a rabbi and apply that rabbi to become one of that rabbi's disciples. When we use the word disciple we often mean student or someone who knows what the teacher knows.

A disciple is something far deeper. A disciple doesn't want to just know what the rabbi knows. A disciple wants to be like the rabbi and wants to learn to do what the rabbi does.

A Rabbi's Yoke

Different rabbis had different interpretations of the Torah. They might look at a verse or command and one would say, "This is what it means to follow this command" and another would say, "I think it means something different."

Different rabbis had different sets of interpretations about how they lived out, understood and interpreted the scriptures. A rabbi's set of interpretations was called that rabbi's yoke.

When you went to apply to a rabbi to become one of his disciples, what you wanted to do was take that rabbi's yoke on you. You did this so that you could know what the rabbi knows, do what the rabbi does, so that you can be like the rabbi.

Applying to Be a Rabbi's Disciple

So, the process went like this: You would go to a rabbi and say, "Rabbi, I would like to become one of your disciples."

The rabbi would then grill you. He would ask questions about Torah, the prophets, about the oral tradition. The rabbi wants to know,

"Can this kid, sit in front of me?

Can this kid do what I do?

Can this kid spread my yoke?

Does this kid have what it takes?

The rabbi would fire off all these questions and if the rabbi thought "This kid is good. This kid loves God and knows the Torah, but isn't the best of the best of the best." The rabbi might say, "You obviously love God and you know the Torah, but you don't have what it takes to become one of my disciples. Go and continue learning your family trade."

If the rabbi thinks, this kid has got it.

I think this kid could do what I do.

The rabbi would say to the kid, "Come, follow me."

Being a Disciple

So, as a 14 or 15 year old kid, you would leave your family, your friends, your synagogue, your village. You would devote your entire life to being like your rabbi.

Learning to do what your rabbi does.

This is what it means to be a disciple.

Transition

The first twelve could literally follow Jesus.

We are in a different place several thousand years later, so we talk about being a disciple in a different way.

What does it mean to be a disciple today?

Our discipleship team has determined that our working definition for a disciple at First United Methodist Church is this:

Disciple: A person who follows Jesus by engaging in practices to worship, grow, give, serve and share.

- A person engaging in these practices will grow toward perfect love of God and neighbor.

[Please leave this definition of a disciple on screen until I mention it again in the Conclusion.]

Worship

Being a disciple at First United Methodist Church means worship every Sunday, unless you are sick or out of town.

God uses the power of worship to transform us through humility

When we spend time in when we focus on Christ, something happens in our life that is fundamentally good. Something changes in us.

When we worship we come into God's presence and declare God to be God. This reminds us that we are not.

Imagine being in the middle of the Flint Hills.

You are always the right size.

God is so big.

When we worship, we humble ourselves in response to the awesomeness of God.

God uses the power of worship to transform us through closeness

Another way that God transforms us through worship is being close to God. This happens when we place ourselves close to the most good and righteous being in the universe. This sanctuary was built to remind us that God is close. The stained glass, the soaring ceilings - just being in this place reminds us that when we gather for worship, God is close at hand.

People come and may need courage, comfort, assurance, forgiveness, grace, encouragement, conviction. People's lives can be changed just because they show up on any given week.

Until we worship, we will be unchanged, never know the transcendent, beautiful and all that is good. When we worship we give ourselves to God.

Transition

Yet, worship is not all there is to the Christian life.

Grow

Being a disciple at First United Methodist Church means growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ outside of worship, preferably with others. We have to live our faith in our everyday life. This is when we put down the roots of our faith and are able to go deeper in our relationships with God and other people.

Grow on Your Own - Do no harm, do good, stay in love with God

There are three simple rules which John Wesley gave Methodists to which help us grow in our faith:

- **Do no harm** - Avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced.
 - Stop doing bad things, especially those that you know to be wrong
 - We know when we are causing harm to other people and to ourselves

- **Do good** - Do good of every possible kind to every possible person.
 - Do to others what we would want them to do to us.
- **Stay in Love with God** - We stay in love with God through the practice of spiritual disciplines which create a greater opportunity for God to be at work in our lives, such as:
 - Worship - Public worship
 - Listening to preaching
 - Studying the Bible
 - Receiving Holy Communion
 - Praying alone and as a family
 - Fasting or abstinence

Grow with Others

Like many things, growing in your faith is something that is best done in groups. We can hold each other accountable, offer encouragement and care for our journey of growth. We do this in a variety of ways at the church - Sunday School classes, Alpha Course and the Class Meeting small group which we are pilot testing this year.

Transition

As we begin to grow deeper in our faith, we may begin to face the reality that faith is not just about what we believe. It has to do with how we use our resources.

Give

Being a disciple at First United Methodist Church means giving financially in proportion to your income with the tithe or 10% being the goal. Every year you are invited to make a giving commitment to financially support God's work through this church in the year ahead. I want to share with you a few things that happen when you give

When you give, you fulfill your purpose.

We are made in the image of God, and God is generous. There is something deep inside you that's wired for generosity. You may not always feel generous, but you were created that way. You've got generosity hard wired into your soul.

When you give, you gain perspective.

Spending money can be fun – new clothes, new restaurants, a new car. Nothing wrong with those things. But deep down, they don't really satisfy.

Our money and our heart are connected. Where we send our money says something about what we truly value, and when we give, it's a statement on what's truly important.

So when you give, you're making an intentional statement that something matters. This thing over here, that person over there, God's mission through this church...it matters. It deserves my attention, focus and support.

When you give, you partner with God.

When we give we partner with God to accomplish God's purposes in the world. God's love is for all people and God invites us to live as a part of God's kingdom and be God's hands and feet in the world. When you give, that is exactly what you are doing.

There is something bigger going on around us.

More than the here and now.

When you give, you're a part of what God is doing everywhere.

Transition

The resources that we have to offer are not just financial. We can also offer our time in service.

Serve

Being a disciple at First United Methodist Church means serving God with your time both inside and outside the congregation, at least once a year.

Temptation to Be Comfortable

The truth is that "There is something deep inside humans that leads them to presume that knowing the right truth or holding the right position is enough to make them righteous."⁴ We have a tendency to find a safe resting place in our church

Serve Inside the Walls

There are a wide variety of possibilities to serve inside the church:

- Serving as an usher
- Singing in the choir
- Serving on committees
- Helping out in the kitchen
- Visiting those who are homebound
- Teaching and caring in Children's Ministry

This "basic and ordinary service is the lifeblood that gives [our congregation] strength. The phrase "to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:12) means that churches invite, encourage, prepare, and cultivate such ordinary service so the ministry of Christ thrives."⁵

Serve Beyond the Walls

We are also called to serve outside the walls of the church to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God in our everyday life. This means that as individuals and as a

⁴ Leander E. Keck, ed., *James*, vol. XII of *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 199.

⁵ Five Fruitful Practices, 84.

congregation we are seeking to address the realities of basic human needs in our community and around the world. We also seek to address the root causes of these needs so that, over time, the communities where we are connected look a bit more like God's kingdom.

Share

Being a disciple at First United Methodist Church means sharing your faith with others, at least twice a year. This involves simple steps:

- Listen to God
 - Still small voice of prevenient grace
 - Urge / nudge to talk with someone
- Start where they are
 - Don't come with a pre-set agenda or what you think someone "needs to hear"
- Speak from the heart
 - Be who you are
 - Share your story
- Be clear about your purpose
 - Not for greater worship attendance or for more money
 - Share what is important to us
 - Share the good news of Jesus Christ

Conclusion

Disciple: A person who follows Jesus by engaging in practices to worship, grow, give, serve and share.

- A person engaging in these practices will grow toward perfect love of God and neighbor.

Good News

The good news is that God invites us to and equips us for the pathway to perfect love of God and neighbor.

Call to Action

God's grace comes before we are even aware of it.
God's grace forgives us and gives us a new start. Time and time again.
God's grace enables us to worship, grow, give, serve and share and move toward perfect love of God and neighbor.

Like Peter, Jesus invites us and I encourage you
To go into deeper water
To move out of our comfort zone.
To take a next step on the pathway of discipleship.

Invitation

My invitation for you this week is to ask God:
Where God is calling me?
What is my next step of faith?
So that Jesus' words to us might be,
"Don't be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people."

Follow Jesus wherever his path may lead.