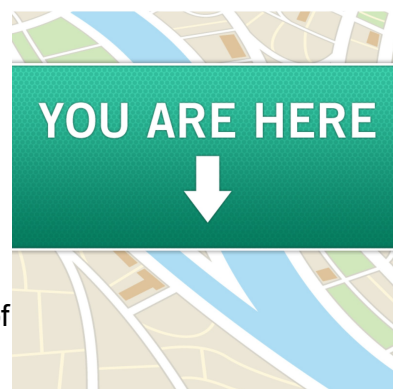


Graphics, Audio and Video - Media Notes are highlighted with this background color

- Please review service for the following non-routine worship elements at the 8:30 AM Service
 - Receiving New Members
 - Affirmation of Faith
 - Congregational Care Minister Recognition
 - Treasure: New Series Introduction Video at end of the service
- Please review service for the following non-routine worship elements at the 11:00 AM Service
 - Congregational Care Minister Recognition
 - Treasure: New Series Introduction Video at end of the service



Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about the discipleship pathway at First United Methodist Church which tells us how to become, grow and make disciples of Jesus Christ

Why is this sermon important?

This sermon is important because to be and make disciples we have to know the path.

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?

Take a next step toward perfect love of God and neighbor.
Go and make disciples.

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that, before we believe in God, God believes in us. In you. In me. Jesus

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>

has faith in us.

Metadata

- Topic(s)
 - Discipleship, Faith
- Sermon Books of the Bible
 - Matthew
- Series
 - You are Here
- Speaker
 - Andrew Conard
- Tags
 - discipleship, pathway, disciple, Jesus, faith, worship, grow, give, serve, share, disciples

Outline

[Graphics, Audio and Video - Media Notes are highlighted with this background color](#)

[Key Questions, Metadata and Outline](#)

[What is this sermon about?](#)

[Why is this sermon important?](#)

[What is the context of this sermon?](#)

[What are the next action steps?](#)

[What is the good news \(bottom line\)?](#)

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[Matthew 28:16-20, CEB](#)

[Response to Scripture](#)

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Matthew 28:16-20, CEB

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. 18 Jesus came near and spoke to them, "I've received all authority in heaven and on earth. 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 teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age."

Response to Scripture

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

All: Thanks be to God!

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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.

Great Commission

Introduction

Our mission as a church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. During this series our focus has been on how to be a disciple. We did not just make this up. This is who we are called to be. This is who Jesus sent us to be.

Eleven Disciples Following Jesus

Let's take a closer look at the scripture passage which was read a few moments ago. Jesus has been crucified, resurrected and appeared to his disciples.

Disciples—That's what we are trying to make, right? We start off with eleven.

These eleven disciples have traveled to the mountain where Jesus told them to go.

This is what we are trying to do. We want to go where Jesus tells us to go, know what Jesus knows and be like Jesus.

Make Disciples

Then he sent them on a mission. Jesus said, all authority on heaven and earth has been given to me. You don't need to ask to speak to the manager or bring out the owner. Jesus says, I am the top guy. All authority has been given to me and here is what I want you to do:

Go - Get on the path, church

Make disciples - This is what we do

Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. This is what we are charged to do as a church.

This is what our church wakes up every day to do—to follow that commandment.

Transition

As we make disciples, we remember the principle of the path which I shared last week.

Principle of the Path

Here it is: **Direction, not intention, leads to destination.**

This simple principle guides every area of our life and it is critical for us to understand as we seek to make disciples and to grow as disciples. We have to be going in the right direction if we want to end at our destination

Destination: Kansas City for the World Series

If you wanted to head up to Kansas City to see the Royals play in the World Series, but you get out on the Turnpike and head south. You will never get to Kauffman Stadium.

No matter how you have prayed about it...

No matter how much you have asked God to get you there safely...

No matter how much you intend to go to Kansas City...

If you are on a path that leads you south you are going to go south every single time.

Direction, not intention, leads to destination.

Right path as a disciple

While this seems so simple when we are walking or driving somewhere, it really applies to every area of our life—career, relationships, finances and our faith.

If you want to be a disciple, you have to be on the right path.

If you want to make disciples, you have to invite others to the right path.

You have to be heading in God's direction that leads leads to perfect love of God and neighbor.

Church without Direction

One of the challenges that we have had as a church is that we are not very good at telling people what this path looks like. We love to get together for worship, have great music, share a meal together, be a church family and feel really good about Christ.

We say we want you to be a disciple. Then we give you no map and no direction. We just trust your intentions, your hopes and your dreams and your "want tos"

Individual without Direction

The trouble is, our intentions, hopes, dreams and "want tos" don't help us become disciples or help us grow as disciples. They don't put us on the path.

I know that many of you have asked Jesus to be part of your life. You would tell the world, "I am a Christian." Maybe not everyone, I know that there are people here still trying to figure it out. That's okay.

Yet, even if you claim Christianity, you may not feel much like a disciple of Jesus Christ.

You may even feel a little empty.

When you hear about things like the joy of the Lord or the fruit of the spirit — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control — You say, I don't have those things in my life.

I said I was a Christian, Why don't I feel like a Christian?
Why am I incomplete?
Why am I still so lost?

Living as a Disciple

The principle of the path applies to your faith, just as it does in every other part of life. There is a very specific path that leads to discipleship. So I want to talk with you today about what the path to discipleship looks like here at First United Methodist Church

I don't want you to just call yourself a disciple.
I don't want you to just profess your faith.
I don't want you to just tell the world that you are a Christian.
I want you, me, all of us to actually live like disciples.
To do that, we need a direction. We need a path.

Map to the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

This summer our family went to the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. You stop at the visitor's center near the parking lot, go inside and the park ranger hands you the map.

You aren't looking forward to that part of the trip, you don't take pictures to always remember what the inside of the visitor's center looks like. You want to get out to see the historic buildings and on the prairie for hiking to see the hills, the sky and the wildlife. Yet without the map, you don't know where to go.

It may have been the most important part of the visit when we stopped off to pick up a map and the ranger said, "Here, enjoy your visit."

Transition

Today, I am going to go "Here" and share with our discipleship pathway at First United Methodist Church. It is not perfect, but this map will help you grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ. I don't ever want you to wonder or someone to ask you how to be a disciple and you not be equipped.

Our Discipleship Pathway

What is a disciple?

- A disciple is a person who follows Jesus by engaging in spiritual practices to worship, grow, give, serve and share.
- A person engaging in these practices will grow toward perfect love of God and neighbor.

We align our life to Jesus' direction when we engage in practices to worship, grow, give, serve and share. This is how we get on the path and move in God's direction. These practices will lead us to the destination of perfect love of God and neighbor.

Worship

- Starting Point - Attend worship less than once a month
- Next Steps - Attend worship 1 to 3 times per month
- Going Deeper - Worship every week unless sick or out of town
 - 70% of our congregation

Grow

- Starting Point - Basic Christian belief; Occasional use of spiritual practices
- Next Steps - Biblical Literacy; Regular use of spiritual practices
- Going Deeper - Ongoing weekly meeting for care, accountability and spiritual growth; Daily use of spiritual practices
 - 37% of our congregation

Give

- Starting Point - Give in Sunday offering, Christmas Eve and Easter Offering
- Next Steps - Make an annual commitment and give in proportion to your income
- Going Deeper - Make an annual commitment and give in proportion to your income at a tithe (10%) and beyond
 - 29% of our congregation

Serve

- Starting Point - Occasional or once a month volunteer
- Next Steps - Member of a committee or team; Occasional engagement serving beyond the walls
- Going Deeper - Leader of a committee or team; Ongoing engagement serving beyond the walls
 - 37% of our congregation serves weekly inside the walls
 - 3% of our congregation serves weekly inside the walls

Share

- Starting Point - Share your faith through invitation
- Next Steps - Share your faith through personal testimony
- Going Deeper - Regularly share your faith with others through invitation and witness
 - 4% of our congregation shares their faith every week

How do I grow as a disciple?

- You can grow as a disciple by adding a practice, taking a next step or growing deeper. This is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ at First United Methodist Church. This is how you grow in your faith as part of this church.

This is how you set yourself in God's direction and follow after Jesus.

Conclusion

I want to remind you of one more story about following Jesus.

Walking on the Water⁴

Jesus disciples are in a boat. It is the middle of the night and they are trying to get across the lake. The wind is blowing and it is getting choppy.

Jesus comes walking out to them on the water.

They are terrified. They think he is a ghost.

Jesus says, "It's me. Don't be afraid."

Peter replies, "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water."

And Jesus said, "Come."

Peter got out of the boat and was walking on the water toward Jesus.

Why Get out of the Boat?

What is he thinking? Why does he believe that he can walk on water?

Why is Peter's first reaction, "If it is you, then tell me to come to you."

Because he is a disciple. He has oriented his whole life to doing what he sees his rabbi doing, learning to be like his rabbi.

He sees his rabbi walking on water and what is the first thing he wants to do? I want to walk on water, too. I want to be like my rabbi.

Doubt and Faith

"But when Peter saw the strong wind, he became frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, "Lord, rescue me!

Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him, saying, "You man of weak faith! Why did you begin to have doubts?"⁵

I always assume that Peter doubts Jesus, but Jesus isn't sinking!

Who does Peter doubt?

He doubts himself.

He loses faith in himself, that he can actually be like Jesus.

Jesus would not have called him if he didn't think he could be like him. Jesus even reminds his disciples of this at one point. He says to them, "You didn't choose me, I chose you." Jesus doesn't choose you, unless Jesus thinks you can do what he does. That you can be like him.

⁴ Adapted from Matthew 14:22-33, CEB

⁵ Matthew 14:30-31, CEB.

Good News

The good news is that, before we believe in God, God believes in us. In you. In me.
Jesus has faith in us.

Call to Action

He must have faith in us, because he leaves it all in the hands of these disciples.
What is the last thing Jesus said to them? Go and make more disciples. He leaves it all in the hands of these anybodies, these fishermen and they do it.

Invitation

What if we can actually be the kinds of people God created us to be?
What if Jesus actually believes that?
The kinds of people who move in God's direction and follow Jesus as we worship, grow, give, serve and share. Making disciples and transforming the world
What if, by God's grace, that we can actually love God and love our neighbor perfectly?
Jesus has faith that you can be like him.
Jesus has faith in you.
Will you be his disciple?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, I choose to believe in you today. Please forgive me for all of my sins, and for everything I have ever done wrong. Come into my life Jesus, fill me with your Holy Spirit, and give me the strength to live for you every day. I trust you today as my Savior.

□□□□**Stop Sermon Timer**□□□□