
CREEKSIDE

MULTIPLY

HOW TO DO THE MULTIPLY STUDY

WHAT YOU NEED

- 1) Bible
- 2) Pen
- 3) MULTIPLY Curriculum

HOW TO STUDY

When you sit down to do your MULTIPLY study anticipate that it will take you a couple hours. Especially, when you take the time to look up several passages, write out your answers, and pray. So don't plan to do each lesson in a single sitting. You will get out of this what you put into it.

Your MULTIPLY packet will have enough space for you to write your answers to all the questions that are asked. When the study asks a question, write out your responses in the space provided. This is where you will record what God is challenging you on. It will also be a key reminder for your MULTIPLY discussion. The more you write down the more detailed you will be able to be when you share. It will also prove to be a helpful tool for personal prayer. If you are faithful to journal throughout the next 8 weeks, you will be more likely to see the work that God is doing overtime and it will help you to focus your prayers.

THE MAIN GOAL IS TRANSFORMATION

Make sure that you try and avoid treating the MULTIPLY study as homework. The goal is not to complete an assignment in as little time as possible. The goal is to have our minds and lives transformed by an encounter with the living God (Rom. 12:1-2).

ROM. 12:1-2 — I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

OO | INTRO

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Before you embark on MULTIPLY, we must address three assumptions to ensure that we are all on the same page. These assumptions define the heart and challenge of the MULTIPLY training. Take some time to read and evaluate what you believe about the following three statements.

THREE ASSUMPTIONS

1. THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IS THE SINGULAR HOPE FOR THE WORLD

The apostle Paul says it best to the Corinthian church.

1 Corinthians 15:1–2 (ESV) — **1** Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, **2** and by which you are being

When we talk about making disciples of Jesus we are talking about the process by which people (like you and me) preach the GOSPEL, receive the GOSPEL, stand firm in the GOSPEL, and are continually being saved by the GOSPEL.

The gospel is our singular message and hope for the world. Multiplying is not about getting more people to come to church; it is about exposing more people to the message of the gospel. Multiplying is not about training people to live moral lives; it is about God opening their hearts to receive the good news of the gospel.

Multiplying is not about counseling men and women in how to be stronger and more self-confident individuals; it is about leading them to find strength in the redemptive work of the gospel. Multiplying is not about rescuing people from their poor life choices or desperate situations; it is about helping them find their salvation in the gospel.

Don't get me wrong. You cannot separate tangible acts of love, service, compassion and redemption from the sharing of the gospel. This is not about elevating evangelism above everything else in the church. It is about making the gospel central to all ministry work that we do. But we must never forget the end goal is that every believer and disciple of Jesus, receives, preaches, stands firm in, and is saved daily by the truth of the gospel.

So if you are going to participate in multiplying disciples of Jesus, you must be very clear on what the gospel is, how it applies to your life, and that Jesus himself has entrusted you with this message so that you may bring life to others.

2. A DISCIPLE IS TRAINED TO BECOME LIKE HIS MASTER

Luke 6:40 (ESV) — 40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is

The second assumption is that by definition, as a disciple of Jesus, you are on a journey to become like Jesus. Do you eagerly desire to love like he loved, to share what he shared, to see people the way he saw them, to trust the heavenly Father the way that he trusted him and to allow the Spirit to lead and guide you the way he was led?

The word disciple literally means adherent. In the Jewish context, you are not a disciple if you are simply interested in knowing what your rabbi knows, or even doing what your rabbi does. A true disciple follows his rabbi so closely that it is like the disciple is literally STUCK to him. Wherever the rabbi goes, the disciple goes because the disciple's goal isn't just to memorize the rabbi's teachings, or be trained in the rabbi's methods, the disciple wants to experience what the rabbi experiences in as many situations as he possibly can. The disciple longs to become who the rabbi is. A true disciple is seeking a heart transplant, not just an education.

The assumption that we make in the MULTIPLY curriculum is that you truly desire to be like Jesus. Do not underestimate the weight of this assumption. Naturally, we read the scripture through the lens of how the message of Jesus ministers to us. But the adherent has a secondary lens. He looks at everything Jesus does and says because he believes that Jesus is training him to do and say and live in the exact same way.

Certainly, you are not the Son of God and you probably will not walk on water, forgive sins, or miraculously fuse the spine of a quadriplegic. But each and every one of the disciples was an ordinary man that God transformed into an incredible tool for his kingdom, and I believe he wants to do the same with us. Do you?

3. JESUS “TOLD US TO” & “SHOWED US HOW” TO MAKE DISCIPLES

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV) — 18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore 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 observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am

In chapter 28 of Matthew (the last chapter of this gospel) Jesus gives the disciples the commandment to make disciples of all nations. If you take this verse on it's own. The methodology for making disciples is limited to “baptizing them” and “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”.

In chapter 28 of Matthew (the last chapter of this Gospel), Jesus gives the disciples the commandment to make disciples of all nations. If you take this verse on its own, the methodology for making disciples is limited to “baptizing them” and “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” If you read Matt. 28:18-20 not as a stand-alone commission, but as a summary of everything that Jesus demonstrated in his calling, teaching, and training of the Twelve, the seventy-two, and more, then you realize that Jesus has provided us 28 chapters worth of material that reveal exactly how he did ministry. He called his disciples, challenged his disciples, taught his disciples, rebuked his disciples, encouraged his disciples, and sent out his disciples to make more.

The MULTIPLY curriculum examines the methods and teachings of Jesus through the lens of disciple-making. If I were to make disciples like Jesus did in my present context, how would I do it?

THE LAUSANNE MOVEMENT

In 1974, 2700 evangelical Christians from 150 nations met to discuss and promote the proclamation of the Gospel among all people. From that meeting was born the Lausanne Covenant, a shared commitment of the global church to continue the work of reaching all unreached people. The slogan adopted by the Lausanne Movement is:

“The whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world”

The whole church – means every church, every tribe, every nation, and every believer-priest. No disciple of Jesus is exempt.

The whole gospel – is the entire message of the Good News. It isn’t just a message about “how to get to heaven;” it is the message that Jesus, in his teaching, in his redemptive work, and in his ministry, saves us from the consequences of sin and death, today and for eternity.

The whole world – means that unreached people are everywhere from every culture and all around us. We mustn’t settle for the “low hanging fruit” but prayerfully believe that God wants to reach our Muslim, Mormon, atheist, agnostic, and non-“spiritual” neighbors. If the goal is reaching everyone, we may suspect, like Paul says in 1 Cor. 9., that it requires us to “become all things to all people, so that by all possible means we may save some.”

MULTIPLY is an effort to equip you in your present context to participate in a worldwide movement to reach every unreached person in every nook and cranny of the world. A mission of that magnitude requires every believer and every priest to take responsibility for the proclamation of the gospel in their spheres of influence. Though scary and uncomfortable at times, participating in the mission of God need not feel like an obligation or guilt-driven drudgery, but a continuation of the joyful transformation that the Holy Spirit is doing in each and every follower of Christ.

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Multiplying looks different for each of us, because of the unique nature of our spiritual gifting, contexts, and maturity. So we are not asking you to learn a methodology or be trained in a particular style. We are asking you to join us on this terrifying and exhilarating journey in order that we may rediscover how God wants to use us to multiply his kingdom TODAY right where we presently live with the people that already surround us.



Questions:

- Which of the three assumptions are easy for you to believe and which is hard for you to embrace? Why?
- In what ways are you continually being saved by the Gospel?
- In what ways are you afraid of becoming like Christ?

Are you committed to not just talking about what it looks like to make disciples but, through this 8-week training, to prayerfully, faithfully and actively begin to make disciples of the people that God has placed around you?

THE ASSIGNMENT:

If we agree on these three things, then it would serve to reason that the Gospels are essential for our growth, knowledge, and guidance. Spend time throughout these eight weeks immersing yourself in the stories of the life of Christ. The teachings and lessons will focus on the life and ministry of Christ as well, but spend time really reading and focusing on the Gospels themselves.

Read through the Gospel of Matthew. Read it through with an eye for Jesus' relationship with his disciples. Look for everything that has to do with him and them, and focus there. Pay attention to their interactions. How does Jesus dwell among the people he ministers to? What are the many different ways that he bears witness to the Father?

As you are reading take notes on two things and record the scripture references.

- 1) What is Jesus training the disciples to do? What does he want them to become?
- 2) How does he do that? How does he challenge their thinking? What type of questions does he ask? What mistakes does he allow them to make?

01 | THE WAY

01 | THE WAY

THE QUESTION: HOW WAS JESUS SENT?

John 14:6 (ESV) — Jesus said to him, “I am the way.”

John 17:18 (ESV) — As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.”

John 20:21 (ESV) — Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent



Question: Do you notice in John 17:18 and John 20:21 Jesus says, “As you sent me...so I have sent them...” The important word in this sentence is “as,” which tells us the nature of our mission to the world. If we want to know how to make disciples, then we need to first look to how Jesus did it, because we are sent in the same way.

CORE TEXT: READ JOHN 1:1-18

John 1:1-5

What does this passage say about the nature of the “Word?”

In verse 5, John says that the “Light shines in the darkness.” How was the life of Christ characterized by bringing light to the darkness? Is there a time in your life when you feel like Christ shined the light into the darkness?

John 1:6-8

In these verses it talks about John, who came to bear witness about the Light. Why do you think this is important?

While John’s mission was to bear witness, what does verse 7 say about the purpose of his ministry? How is that relevant to us today?

John 1:9-18

While the beginning of this chapter describes the nature of who Christ is, and the events leading to his life and ministry on earth, these verses really describe the nature of his ministry itself. While on Earth, the way Christ was sent is summed up in two ways.

JESUS DWELT AMONG US

The word *INCARNATION* is a theological term that literally means “to take on flesh,” or “become enfleshed.” As it relates to Christ, this concept is described in John 1:14 when John says that the Word “became flesh and dwelt among us.” Through the taking on of flesh and the act of living with us, Christ was able to make an unseen God known to humanity (v. 18).

Colossians 1:15 (ESV) — He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

John 14:8–11 (ESV) — **8** Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” **9** Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? **10** Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. **11** Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on

In what ways do you believe that Jesus was the “image of the invisible God?”

Spend some time praying about ways that Jesus physically revealed the Father and write as many ways as you can think of.

Why is it so critical that Jesus dwelt among us? What does that tell you about his heart and mission toward humanity?

Now spend some time journaling about how we, as the church, can dwell among people of the world? What about in our community?

JESUS BORE WITNESS

While Jesus was the visible incarnation of God; he also came to bear witness about the Father and himself. He did this through teaching and parables, which revealed the heart of the Father and revealed the nature of Jesus’ mission and ministry on Earth.

John 8:18–19 (ESV) — **18** I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.” **19** They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”

John 14:23–24 (ESV) — **23** Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. **24** Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you

Spend some time praying about ways that Jesus' teachings revealed the Father and write as many ways as you can think of.

Now spend some time journaling about how we, as the church, can do the same.

In what ways do we, as the church, have the opportunity to bear witness about the heart of the Father and the works of Christ?

What does Jesus' continued focus on the Father communicate to those around Him?

THE EXCUSE: IT'S NOT MY RESPONSIBILITY

"I'm not qualified"

"I don't know anybody"

"I'm not good with people"

"I have a heart for the church"

"I don't know what to say"

"It's not my gifting"

"There isn't enough time"

"Someone else will do it"

Do any of these excuses sound familiar? Regardless of how we phrase it, each of these scripts are different ways of dictating what our heart wants to think is true:

"Making disciples is not my job."

Often times, the excuse we use to absolve ourselves from the call to bear witness in the world is that it isn't our responsibility. It may be motivated by a feeling of inadequacy, or fear of judgment, but we like to pass the responsibility on to others who we feel are better qualified or more mature. We all feel woefully inadequate and, apart from God's spirit, we all are. But let's not allow our fear and lack of faith to pervert what the Bible clearly teaches about our role in spreading the gospel.

Romans 10:14–17 (ESV) — **14** How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? **15** And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" **16** But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" **17** So faith comes from hearing, and

In this verse, what does Paul say is essential for those who are to come to faith in Christ? What does this verse say is the way people would hear the gospel, and the means by which it would get to them?

As you interact with people in your life that are outside the influence of the church, what does this verse say is your responsibility in regards to their exposure to the gospel message? What would it look like if you believed you were truly sent into the lives of the people around you?

Do you honestly feel the weight of responsibility for the spiritual health of those dwelling beside you? How does that make you feel? What would it look like to dwell among them as Jesus did?

THE HOPE: I WILL BE WITH YOU

Read the interaction between God and Moses, after God told Moses that he was sending him to free the Hebrew people from slavery.

Exodus 3:10–12 (ESV) — 10 Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” **11** But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” **12** He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when

Moses also feels woefully inadequate, but God could not be clearer about his expectations of him. Moses could not pass the responsibility to someone else. But what did God say to Moses to comfort him?

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV) — 18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore 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 observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am

How is the message of God in Matt. 28:20 and Ex. 3:12 the same?

How does this message translate to your own feelings of inadequacy?

Do you believe that Christ is with you now? How does that influence your ability to dwell among others?

Not only do we have the promise of God's presence, but we have the very Spirit of God living in us, guiding us as we interact with others.

Acts 1:8 — But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even

How hard is it for you to believe the Spirit of God will equip and enable you to share the gospel?

How does this idea comfort you as you dwell among people and bear witness about the gospel?

THE CHALLENGE: THE DUAL RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility of the disciple-maker is two-fold and mirrors the dual mission of Christ. In his mission, we can see that our call is to dwell among people and to bear witness. Both are crucial and to overemphasize either presents an incomplete view of disciple making.

TO DWELL AMONG

Dwelling among people is an essential part of making disciples. If we bear witness but never dwell among people, at best, we make converts but not disciples. This call to “dwell among” means that our lives are intertwined with those around us, providing us the opportunity to speak truth into their lives and situations. This was exemplified in the life of Christ as he came to dwell among us on earth, but it is essential in the context of our lives as well.

In everyday terms, what does it look like for us to dwell among others vs. dwelling beside others? Is there a difference?

In what ways would you say that you dwell among the people in your life? Where have you settled for dwelling beside them?

Why is it so critical that we dwell among those who are around us? What does our willingness to do so communicate to them?

TO BEAR WITNESS

Bearing witness is the other crucial element in our disciple making process. If we dwell among people but never bear witness of Jesus, then we may have great friendships but never make disciples. This call is to communicate the truth and life that can only be found in the message of Christ, and is motivated by our care and concern for the welfare of others.

What does our bearing witness about the Father communicate to those around us?

Why is it so important?

What would you say is hardest for you to do: dwell with people or bear witness?

How might this hinder your ability to make disciples?

John 1:18 says that Jesus made God, who was unseen, known. How can you as an individual make God known to those around you? How would your life be different if this was your focus?



“Community is the best apologetic and hermeneutic for the Gospel”

– Jeff Vanderstelt

THE ASSIGNMENT:

As we’ve begun to look at the way that Christ was sent into the world, and the call that He made to us, it’s obvious that our mission is much larger than we often realize. This mission includes the people we interact with everyday, and focuses on our willingness to dwell among them and bear witness about who we know Christ to be. This presents us with a unique challenge and encompasses every aspect of our lives, breaking down the walls between what we view as sacred and secular. As we begin to think like this, every day, every relationship, and every conversation can be an opportunity for us to bring the gospel of Christ to those that need it.

Begin to think about those people in your life that need to hear the message of the gospel. Can you think of ten? If not, begin praying about the places where you have some presence or influence, whether it’s your kid’s school or soccer team, or maybe your neighborhood, workplace, or classroom. God has put these relationships and situations in your life as an opportunity for you to shine the light of Christ in the lives of those involved.

After prayer and consideration, identify at least ten people that God has sent you to. Commit to praying for them throughout this study, begin to pray about how you can represent Christ to them, and ask God to show you what it would look like if you were to truly dwell among them.



02 | THE HEART

02 | THE HEART

The heart is a powerful tool. It is the source of everything that is glorifying to God and, at the same time, the source of everything that is destructive in this world (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21). From it flows love and hate. It doesn't matter how disciplined you are if your heart isn't in a thing, it just doesn't matter. We can talk about sharing the gospel all that we want, but until God gives us his heart for people, training in disciple-making will profit us nothing (1 Corinthians 13: 1-4). Let's look at the heart of Jesus.

HOW DID JESUS LOVE THE LOST?

HE GOES TO THEM

Read Luke 15:4-7

In this passage, Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep. What is the shepherd's reaction to losing just one sheep?

What are the potential risks or real losses associated with the shepherd losing the sheep in this story? What are the potential risks associated with going after the single lost sheep?

Describe how the reaction of the shepherd in searching for and finding the sheep indicates the value he places on it.

HE SEARCHES FOR THEM

Read Luke 15:8-10

This passage tells the story of a woman who has lost a coin. What is she willing to sacrifice in order to find the coin that she lost? How is that significant?

Why do you think the woman focuses on the one lost coin instead of the nine that she still has?

What real loss does this woman face if she's unable to find the coin? Does this explain her attitude while looking for it?

What is her reaction to finding the coin? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?

HE WAITS FOR THEM

Read Luke 15:11-24

What is the father at risk of losing in this story? Why do you think he is willing to let his son leave?

What does the reaction of the father to the son's request communicate about his love for his son?

Do you think the father ever stopped looking for his son? Why or why not?
How are the actions of the father in this story different than the shepherd and the woman in the previous two? How are they the same?

What are the common elements in these three stories? List as many as you can find.

If the main character in each story represents God, and the lost objects represent us, what does this say about how he views those who are separated from him?

What does God's reaction to the lost tell you about his character? What does this tell you about the value of the lost person?

What does the fact that God sent Christ into the world tell you about the urgency and importance of the mission? What does it tell you about the value of humanity in God's eyes?

THE EXCUSE: JUSTIFIED INACTION

"They are getting what they deserve"

"I would love them if I had time"

"I would love them if they were more like me"

The elder brother in the prodigal son story justifies his lack of concern for his lost brother by telling himself that his brother deserves the consequences of unfaithful lifestyle. How do you do the same thing?

If it is clear that God desperately searches for his lost children because he values them so dearly and we deeply desire to be like Jesus, why is there such a disconnect between our hearts and our heads? What traps do we fall into and how do we remedy it?

Luke 10:29 (ESV) – But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who

In this passage, what do you think the lawyer is really asking?

Responding to the call of Christ to love our neighbors, the lawyer immediately begins trying to justify himself, and we often do the same. Whether it's motivated by fear or something else, we often look for reasons why we need not love those around us.

How do you think your attitude and actions toward people reflect this attempt of justified inaction?

THE HOPE: GOD CAN CHANGE OUR HEARTS

I had a woman say to me, "I could never love a stranger the way I love my family." I feel the same way a lot of times. But when I think about all the things that I didn't think God could do in me along my journey of faith, I am humbled by the truly transformative power of the gospel. The combination of God's relentless love and kindness paired with the persistence and power of the Holy Spirit is formidable force. If I am faithful to offer myself to him, he will be faithful to transform and renew my heart and mind.

Romans 12:1-2 (ESV) — **1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is

Take a minute to record some of the ways that God has already transformed your heart to love in ways you previously never would have had you never met Christ. Do you think he can and will complete the work he began?

What are some of the things God used to bring about change in your heart? How did that change happen?

Philippians 1:6 (ESV) — And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you

Often times, a change in heart is preceded by a change in the way we act. If we truly pursue God's heart in prayer and show compassion to those around us, God will continue to mold and shape our hearts to be more like His.

THROUGH PRAYER

Jesus gives us another insight into how we might deal with hard and unloving hearts in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7).

Matthew 5:44 (ESV) — But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who

Could it be that Jesus tells the disciples to pray for those who persecute them because as they pray, God reshapes their heart? Do you think praying for those who are lost may in fact have a similar effect?

Prayer is the antidote to hate and the catalyst for love.

This is why when Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray, he teaches them to pray “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” and “forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Prayer is our way to petition the Father that the work he has begun will come to fruition. You want the heart of God? Pray the heart of God and do the works of God and you may be shocked at the radical work that God can do with even the most stubborn and selfish individuals, like myself.

THROUGH ACTS OF COMPASSION

Luke 10:30–37 (ESV) — **30** Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. **31** Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. **32** So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. **34** He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35** And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ **36** Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” **37** He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him,

Jesus’ response to the lawyer’s question is to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan.

How do you think this answers the question regarding the identity of our neighbors?

How do you think it describes the way in which we can love them?

What distinguishes this traveler from the other two is not fundamentally that they are Jews and he is a Samaritan, nor is it that they had high status as religious functionaries and he does not. What individualizes him is his compassion, leading to action, in the face of their inaction.

- J.B. Green, *The Gospel According to Luke*

THE CHALLENGE: PURSUE PEOPLE

As we pray for others and serve them with compassion, God will transform our hearts to be more like His. It is then that we begin to see the true value in the lives of others, the value that drives us to genuinely seek after them. Without our hearts being transformed by God, our acts of evangelism are often motivated out of a desire to be right, or to prove someone else wrong, rather than being motivated by our love and concern for those around us.

When we begin to understand the value that people have, we begin to feel the need to reach them the way that Jesus does. Using his examples in Luke 15, Jesus calls us to GO, SEARCH, and even WAIT for the sake of the people around us.

GO TO THEM

Like the shepherd who left his sheep for the sake of the one lost sheep, we are also called to go after those who need the good news of the gospel in their lives. This may be a physical call to go, but more likely it's simply to leave the comfort of our religious insulation to be sent into the lives of those around us.

This act of going is less about location, and more about intention. How can you intentionally put yourself in a position to be an influence to those around you?

What do you think going looks like in your life? Do you think that you can GO without leaving your job, life or neighborhood?

How do you think prayer and acts of compassion can help you as you GO to those around you?

SEARCH FOR THEM

Like the woman looking for the lost coin, we are called to search for those who need the healing message of the gospel in their lives. Sometimes this means that we have to put down other things in our lives so we have the ability to pursue those around us. This search also means that we actively look for opportunities to influence people around us as we interact with them.

This search is an active pursuit, meaning that we are to actively seek after those that need to be found. Do you think that you have enough room in your life to really pursue those around you? If not, why?

What does the nature of the woman's pursuit in Luke 15 tell you about your pursuit?

What do you think has to be put down in order to pursue those who need the gospel in your life?

How do you think prayer and acts of compassion can guide you as you SEARCH for people in your life?

WAIT FOR THEM

In this story, the father does something different than the others. Instead of going to his son, or actively seeking him, he stays home waiting patiently. In the same way, we are also called to wait for the Spirit to work in the hearts of those around us, watching and waiting to embrace them when he does.

This act of waiting, while done patiently, does not indicate passivity. The father did not simply wait without expecting his son to come home, but was watching and waiting for the change to take place. When it did, he sprung up and celebrated it.

Similarly, we are to be watching and waiting for transformation to take place in the lives of those around us. As we do that, we will begin to see where that is taking place and celebrate together as the Spirit is moving.

How do you think your own life could be characterized by waiting for those around you?

Do you think that you can be patient as the Spirit works, but also be actively looking for the signs of change?

What do you think the father's reaction as the son returns tells you about our role in the lives of others as the Spirit works in their lives?

How do you think prayer or acts of compassion could help you as you wait for those around you?

THE ASSIGNMENT:

Pray

Each day this week read, meditate and pray through the Parables in Luke 15. Carry your journal with you this week and as often as you can keep a log of the people that you encounter each day, paying particular attention to those whom you listed last week. These people can be school teachers, co-workers, baristas, kids, your own children, or your neighbors.

On at least two nights near the end of the week, take some time to pick a few of the people you encountered that day and spend some focused time asking the Lord to search your heart and show you his. Write down how you genuinely feel about these particular people. The good, bad, judgmental or indifferent thoughts, be as brutally honest with yourself as possible.

Now write down how God feels about them, how He sees them, ask him for his perspective. In what different ways are each of these people 'lost'. Finally, what would it look like if you were to 'seek' these people, pursue them, care for them? What would it look like to go to them like Jesus went to 'the lost' while He walked the earth?

Act

After prayerfully processing through how God feels about the people you see and encounter, think about a simple act of compassion that you can do to love this person. It may be as simple as watching their kids for an evening so that a couple could go on a date night. It may be intentionally scheduling a meeting with your kid's teacher to see how you may serve her. It may just be a kind note of appreciation. It doesn't matter what the act is, just choose one person that you see on your prayer list and do something unexpected to communicate your care and compassion for them and their situation.



03 | THE WHO



03 | THE WHO

Mark 2:17 (ESV) — And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous,

WHOM WAS JESUS SENT TO?

Luke 4:18–19 (ESV) — 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are

Why do you think Jesus chooses this passage out of Isaiah 61?

Isaiah is full of prophecies regarding the life, and death, of Christ, and yet He chooses to read this verse that is focused on his ministry to the world, why do you think this is significant?

In this verse, Jesus identifies three types of people to whom he is sent with a specific message to proclaim. Let’s spend some time looking at each one.

POOR

Jesus starts this message by stating that he has come for the poor. This poverty reaches beyond anything physical, although it does not neglect that altogether; this spiritual poverty is shown in those who have nothing, or those who have lost everything. Because of that, the poor often feel tired, exhausted and depressed.

Who in the synagogue do you think was most interested in Jesus’ inclusion of the poor in His message?

Have there been times in your life when you would consider yourself poor? What did those situations look like?

When you have felt poor, what was the message of Good News for you? If you are poor now, what do you think the Good News is?

Spend some time journaling about some people in your life that you would consider to be poor. What are the circumstances that led them to where they are? How do you think Jesus would address their need?

CAPTIVE

Jesus specifically points out that His message is meant for people who are captives. These captives are simply those that are trapped. This can be in many forms, whether it's enslavement to idolatry, blinded by darkness or trapped by the demands of a specific lifestyle. Captivity is also something that can be difficult for people to recognize. Regardless of the specific situation, Christ specifically pinpoints the captive as one of the people for whom his message is meant.

John 8:31–38 (ESV) — 31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” **33** They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?” **34** Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. **35** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. **36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. **37** I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. **38** I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”

In this verse, Jesus addressed a group of believing Jews who didn't think they were enslaved. How is ignorance of our slavery a great stumbling block to the Gospel?

Who in the synagogue do you think was most interested in Jesus' inclusion of the captives in His message?

Are there some things in your life now, or in your past, which have held you captive? How have those things kept you from life in Christ?

Under the category of captives, Jesus includes both the oppressed and the blind. How do you think being blind and oppressed relates to the idea of being a captive?

Think about people in your life that you would consider “captives.” What holds them captive? How do you think they got there? What do you think Jesus would say to them regarding their captivity?

REJECTED

In declaring that he would usher in the year of the Lord's favor, Jesus implies that there are those who need the favor of the Lord, or the "unfavored." We will refer to them as the rejected. Those that are rejected often live with a fear of judgment, with guilt and despair. Because of this, they often feel hopeless and alone.

Who in the synagogue do you think was most interested in Jesus' declaration of the year of the Lord's favor?

Is there a time in your life when you have felt rejected, needing the Lord's favor?
What are the things that led you to feel that way?

Think of those in your life who you would consider needing a message of the Lord's favor. What are the circumstances surrounding their feelings of rejection?
How do you think Jesus would bring hope to their situation?

THE EXCUSE: LACK OF OPPORTUNITY

One of the biggest hurdles to living on mission and making disciples is feeling like there is a lack of opportunity. We say things like:

"I don't see a need"

"All my friends are believers"

"I don't know what they believe."

"People are closed off and don't share what they believe with me."

"They are so far from God."

Oftentimes we avoid the opportunity to see where the gospel fits into the lives of others by believing that we don't have the opportunity. Sometimes this is because we insulate ourselves with Christian friends, or we just ignore the people God has put around us. Other times, it is just because we are unaware of many layers of need in the lives of those who are around us.

Jesus was very clear and direct in the way he interacted with the poor, captive, and rejected people who needed to hear the message of the gospel. Instead of spending his time with religious leaders, he spent his time and ministry focused on dwelling with the hurting people around him.

Do you feel as though you rarely have the opportunity to speak life to those around you?
Why do you think that is?

In what ways have you closed yourself off from the opportunity to be present in the lives of others?

Do you have a hard time pinpointing people in your life who need to hear the message of the gospel? How do you think you could change that?

THE TRUTH: PEOPLE ARE ALL AROUND US

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV) — 18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore 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 observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am

The Greek verb used in v. 19 for “go” is not in the imperative or command form of the word.

The emphasis of this passage in Matthew is not on the “GO therefore” because the verb tense used for go is a passive tense, better translated as “As you are going.” The thrust and force of this passage is on the imperative verb “MAKE disciples.” Jesus is saying, “As you are going, MAKE DISCIPLES of all people.”

This means that as we go, Jesus asks us to open our eyes to the lives of the people around us and pray that the Holy Spirit would help us discern what each person needs at that time, teaching them and helping them as they grow in faith.

Instead of adding the task of sharing the Gospel to our busy schedules, this tells us that “as we go,” we should be communicating the gospel every day, in every relationship, and in every interaction we have with people. This call includes the entirety of our lives, words and actions.

Have you ever been afraid that Jesus’ call to go and make disciples would mean that you would have to go somewhere far away, or do something you didn’t want to do? How does the idea of making disciples “as you are going” change that perception? Think about your own life and routine. What would it look like if you made disciples as you went into these situations each day? How would you approach, interact and talk to people?

Spend some time journaling about where God has specifically given you the opportunity to be present in your life. Have you ever seen these as places that God has sent you? How would you act differently, if you did?

READ MARK 5:1-20

In this story, Jesus does the very literal work of freeing this man from bondage, both to the demon and shackles. At the end of the story, however, Jesus' commands to the man are rather peculiar. He wants nothing more than to go with Jesus and be a part of his ministry but Jesus' response is surprising, telling him to go back to his own town and family, proclaiming the mercy that the Lord showed him. Why do you think Jesus turned the man away, sending him back to his family?

Do you think there is more he could have learned from being with Christ?
In what way was this man sent? Who was he sent to, and why do you think Jesus did that?

How does this story challenge your perception of what obedience to God's mission looks like? How does it affirm the idea that we are called to make disciples as we go?

THE CHALLENGE: ENGAGE PEOPLE LIKE JESUS DID

If Jesus went to the poor, captive and rejected, how do we do that in our everyday lives? The key lies in being willing to lay aside our own preferences, comfort, and schedules for the sake of others. Jesus often did this by simply sharing a meal with those that needed the message of the Gospel.

BEGIN WITH SHARING A MEAL

Mark 2:16-17 (ESV) — 16 And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" **17** And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Luke 15:1-2 (ESV) — 1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. **2** And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives

How did Jesus create opportunities to be in the lives of people who needed to hear the gospel? What does this tell you about his priorities?

What did Jesus communicate to the poor, captive and rejected by simply spending time around the table with them?

How did the Pharisees respond to Jesus' unconventional way of conducting his ministry? What does that tell you about their priorities or expectations?

Have you ever found yourself preferring to be comfortable rather than spending time with those who need the message of the gospel?

How do you think your Christian friends would respond if you were to spend the majority of your time with those outside of the church? Has this discouraged you or made you afraid of reaching out?

If it's true that hurting people are all around us, who do you think Jesus would prefer you to spend your time with? What insight does his mission give you in that regard?

THE ASSIGNMENT:

Inherent in the call to go is the call to be with people. This week, the assignment focuses on you spending time with someone, getting to know them, and praying that God would help you to see what He is doing in their lives.

At least one time this week, ask someone who you've been praying for to go out to grab a coffee or a meal. As you sit together and talk, ask them about their family, their background and their lives. Focus your attention on asking questions and really listening to what they have to say.

After you get home, spend some time writing in your journal about your experience. How has your view of them changed? Did God give you any insight during your conversation that would help them in their situation? How do you think the gospel fits into their story? In what ways are they poor, captive or rejected? How can the story of God's mercy in your own life bring light into their lives?

04 THE MESSAGE

04

THE MESSAGE

Mark 1:14–15 (ESV) — **14** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, **15** and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Luke 4:43 (ESV) — but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the

Jesus brought a message of good news to a people ravished by sin, a people who had placed their hopes and dreams in the empty promises of false gods and weak men. The spiritual climate of the first century was bleak: the religious leaders were self-righteous, the poor were systemically impoverished, and fear and insecurity defined people’s everyday interactions with one another and God. The same gospel that Jesus proclaimed to first century Palestine is the message we proclaim today.

Gospel means “good news”. The good news that Jesus proclaimed wasn’t limited to a singular message about sin and redemption. The good news that Jesus proclaimed all stemmed from what he called “the kingdom of God” or the “kingdom of heaven” (Mark 1:14-15, Matt. 4:17, 10:7, Acts 28:31).

In concept, the rule of a king and the establishment of a kingdom are easy to understand... new king, new rules, new reign, new power, new kingdom. But think of all the implications of each political coup or transition in local government. The effects are vast and wide-spread and different depending on your proximity and relationship to the ruling order. Under a new administration, previously held prisoners of war may be released. Under a new administration, relationships with neighboring countries may be mended or exacerbated. New laws are likely to be implemented. Not to mention the impact on the hearts of the citizens: some citizens panic, some brim with hope and expectation, some wait in silent reservation. All of these things happen every time leadership changes in even the smallest of governments. Think of all the implications of God’s rule over humanity and this earth.



So when Jesus proclaims that the kingdom of God has come near, he doesn't mean that a place is approaching, but that God's own royal authority and power have come on the scene. So, we could paraphrase Mark 1:15, which summarizes Jesus' preaching, as follows: "God's reign is at hand. God's power is being unleashed. Turn your life around and put your trust in this good news." – Mark D. Roberts

Let's look at how the good news manifests itself differently to the poor, the oppressed, and rejected, as Jesus describes it in Luke. This will inform us about the types of messages we should bring to the people God puts in our path.

THE QUESTION: WHAT DID JESUS PROCLAIM?

Luke 4:18–19 (ESV) — 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are

GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR

Jesus starts by proclaiming that he has come to declare the Good News to the poor. Who were the poor in Jesus' time? Do you think he was strictly alluding to the financially poor?

To understand how the gospel relieves poverty, we must look at two of the defining characteristics of poverty: 1) those who are poor have no way to pay incurring debt; and 2) the hunger pains of the poor regularly remind them of the insufficiency of their resources.

UNDER THE RULE OF JESUS, YOUR DEBT IS PAID

How does the gospel relieve spiritual debt? How will he someday eliminate physical debt and poverty?

When Jesus teaches the disciples to pray, he teaches them to pray:

Matthew 6:12 (ESV) — “... forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

How do these verses contribute to the concept of spiritual poverty and where the solution to our spiritual poverty resides?

Colossians 2:14 (ESV) — “...by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV) — “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin,

Go through the MULTIPLY list of people you are praying for. How are these people spiritually impoverished? How would the gospel be good news to them?

UNDER THE RULE OF JESUS YOU WILL NEVER THIRST

How does the gospel satisfy our deep inner hunger?

Jeremiah 2:13 (ESV) — for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken

According to Jeremiah, why were the people of Israel always looking for satisfaction in other things? Why is this a futile effort?

How are you looking for satisfaction in things other than God?

How are the people on your MULTIPLY list looking for satisfaction in other things?

How does the gospel speak into this?

Jesus spoke to a Samaritan woman at a well.

John 4:13–14 (ESV) — **13** Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, **14** but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water

What is the water that Jesus offers?

2 Corinthians 8:9 (ESV) — For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty

LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES

Next, Jesus proclaims “liberty to those that are captive, sight to the blind, liberty to the oppressed.” Those suffering from blindness, captivity, and oppression all share the same problem. They are stuck and there is nothing that they can do to free themselves from their current state. How does the gospel liberate those who are trapped?

UNDER THE RULE OF JESUS YOU ARE FREE INDEED

The good news is that God is king, and he has sufficient power to break the grip of these things that enslave us.

Think about a time in your life when you were enslaved, oppressed or blind to the truth. How was the message of Christ able to bring liberty into that situation? If you feel as though you are there now, what does liberty look like today?

How may the message of the gospel liberate those on your MULTIPLY list?

YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR

Life in this world is full of insecurity. The insecurity often stems from our uncertainty of how others feel about us. Do your kids appreciate you? Does your boss recognize your hard work? Is your spouse still enamored by you? What does God think of you?

Sin leads to insecurity about how we stand before God. What do you think about when you hear the phrase “the Lord’s favor?” Why do you think this favor is a source of comfort to those who are rejected and isolated?

UNDER THE RULE OF CHRIST YOU ARE FAVORED

John 3:16 (ESV) — “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that

Why did Jesus eat with sinners and tax collectors? What was he communicating to those who felt rejected by the religious system because of their sinful choices?

Luke 15:22–24 (ESV) — **22** But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. **23** And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. **24** For this my son was

Has there been a time when you questioned God’s favor or his goodness toward you? How was the message and ministry of Christ able to show you the favor of the Lord?

Why do you think that Christ desires to express the favor of the Lord to those who are rejected?

1 John 4:16 (ESV) — So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God

THE EXCUSE: I DON’T KNOW WHAT TO SAY

“I don’t know enough to share.”

“What if I have nothing to say?”

“What if they ask a question I don’t know the answer to?”

Proverbs 3:27 (ESV) — Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it

What does this verse say about our responsibility to share what is good with those that God has put around us?

How do you think you have been withholding something good from those around you?

Acts 1:8 — But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end

What does this verse say is the source of our ability to be a witness of the gospel? How does this challenge your fear of not knowing what to say?

If the Holy Spirit is the one who empowers us to be witnesses, what would you say that your responsibility is when it comes to sharing the gospel?

THE HOPE: THE GOSPEL IS MORE THAN WE THINK IT IS

IN POWER

Romans 1:16 (ESV) — For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God

What do you think Paul means when he says that gospel is the “power of God?” Do you ever feel as though the effectiveness of the message depends on your delivery?

How would you act differently if you really believed that the power of God was in the message of Christ?

In what ways have you stopped believing that the gospel is actually God’s power?

How does this verse encourage you to proclaim the Good News with confidence?

IN SCOPE

1 Corinthians 15:1–2 (ESV) — **1** Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, **2** and by which you are being

In this verse, Paul highlights the centrality of the gospel as it pertains to our faith, salvation, and continued growth in Christ. This means that we will never exhaust the power of scope of the gospel’s work in our lives. This gospel isn’t just the message that you needed to hear when you gave your life to Christ; it is the message that will continue to save you from self-rule, spiritual poverty, captivity, fear and insecurity for your entire life.

In what ways does the gospel speak much needed truth for you TODAY?

THE CHALLENGE: PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS

READ JOHN 4:1-30 'THE WOMAN AT THE WELL'

The truth of the gospel brings freedom to spiritual bondage. This requires listening, asking questions, and speaking boldly, but humbly. Note how Jesus does this in John 4.

- How does Jesus engage this woman into conversation? Why does this show love?
- How does Jesus turn the conversation almost immediately to both spiritual and meaningful direction?
- What is the significance of Jesus revealing to her that he is the Messiah? Even though we can't say that we ARE Jesus, what CAN we say that brings about the same truth?
- In what ways would you consider this woman poor, captive or rejected? How was Jesus able to identify and address this need?
- What do you see in the disciples' responses when they see Jesus engaging this woman? What does it tell you about the people God may put in your

WHAT DO I SAY WHEN?

Do you ever feel like you want to point a person in your life to Jesus but have no idea how to do it in a way that feels encouraging and helpful to them?

The answer is found in the broad scope of the Good News.

The gospel has something to say to the woman trapped in a loveless marriage.

The gospel has something to say to the man who struggles to provide for his family.

The gospel has something to say to the addict, the idolater, and the deeply insecure.

The gospel has something to say to the person who doubts the goodness of God.

ABOVE ALL, CHRISTIANS MUST BE KNOWN BY A MESSAGE OF HOPE

The Good News is really good news. Our message to a lost, hurting, and deceived world, a world ravished by the sin and despair, is a message of hope.

Therefore, as a disciple of Jesus, and one who hopes to make more disciples I too must be characterized by a message of hope. Too often Christians focus on fixing people's lifestyles, correcting their beliefs, or arguing a set of theological principles rather sharing the hope-filled message of Jesus to captive and impoverished people.

Your task is to prayerfully recognize in the ways in which those people that surround you are captive and poor. Then, go and proclaim!

THE ASSIGNMENT

1) When thinking about how Christ wants to move in the lives of others, it's helpful to reflect on the way he is moving in our own lives. In 1 Corinthians, Paul says that we are continually being saved by the Gospel, which implies that this process of identifying spiritual depravity and good news continues as we grow.

Spend some time reflecting on your own story, and ways in which you are currently poor, captive, or rejected. Pray and write in your journal about what the good news is for you in the midst of this moment, what freedom God is leading you to, or how accepting the Lord's favor would address those needs.

2) Make time for at least one of the people in your life God has been opening your eyes to invest in spiritually. Invite them to get together this week. Whether it's a coffee date, play date, dropping by their house, etc - make an intentional effort to spend time focused on them. Listen, ask questions and make the time about them and what's going on in their life. As they are sharing (and amidst your other conversations this week as well) practice identifying where people might be bound by a lie and inserting the Good News into your conversation.



05 | THE CALL



05 | THE CALL

Mark 1:14–15 (ESV) — 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, **15** and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom

Throughout His ministry, Jesus was able to have meaningful interactions with those around Him. Rarely did Jesus leave people the same way that he found them and he did that by offering a call or a challenge. If we are sent as Jesus was sent, it's important to understand the nature and purpose of this call, as it is the same call that we offer today.

THE QUESTION: WHAT DID JESUS CALL PEOPLE TO?

Mark 1:14–15 (ESV) — 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, **15** and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom

REPENTANCE

While we often think of repentance in terms of our actions, the word repent literally means “a change of mind.” This change of mind refers to an individual choosing to acknowledge that the things we try to place our trust, hope, and security in are futile. This also becomes a universal call, as we are all being transformed into the image of Christ.

In light of this, Jesus' call to repentance becomes something much more significant than pointing out behavior that needs to change; it becomes a call to change our minds about what we choose to put our hope and trust in; and an opportunity to see the world the way that God sees it. While this change of mind should lead to a transformed life, changing behavior is not the focus or goal when Jesus calls us to repent; a transformed mind is.

BY CONDUCTING CHANGE

Matt 16:16-22 — 16 Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” **17** “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.” **18** “Which ones?” the man inquired. Jesus replied, “ ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, **19** honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’ “ **20** “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?” **21** Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” **22** When the young man heard this, he went away

In this story, Jesus was able to see right into the heart of this man. This meant that he was able to see the very thing that this man loved most, even above his desire to enter into eternal life. In identifying this, Christ was able to show him the flaw in his thinking that was holding him back from being able to truly follow him.

What does this passage expose in this man’s life? What does this say about him?

Why do you think Jesus asked the man to sell his possessions? Why do you think he didn’t ask everyone who wanted to follow him to do the same?

Why do you think this man is unwilling to sell his possessions? What do you think he gets from his wealth?

What would repentance look like for this wealthy man? How do you think that Jesus was calling this man to that?

Spend some time thinking seriously about things in your life that provide you with security, make you feel loved, or give you purpose other than God. Spend some time journaling about them.? Would you consider these things you need to change? Why or why not?

God did not have a universal response for everyone to sell their possessions in order to follow him. What do you think he would ask you to change if you asked him the same question?

BELIEF

Upon acknowledging the false hope found in other things, Jesus calls us to truly believe in the message of the gospel. With a changed mind toward the things we have placed our hope in, we are able to understand and accept the truth of who God is, and what Christ has done. This belief is a choice to believe the whole truth of the Gospel of Christ and what it means for us, which is a transformed understanding of life and a renewed hope that is only found in Christ. Jesus pushes us, and challenges us to believe the truth, even when it's difficult to hear or understand.

BY ILLUMINATING TRUTH

John 3:1-11 — **1** Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. **2** This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." **3** Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." **4** Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" **5** Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' **8** The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." **9** Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" **10** Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? **11** Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and

Jesus always brought truth into the lives of the people around Him. Whether it's by challenging someone's beliefs, their heart, or their actions, no one who had an encounter with Christ was the same as they were before. In this example, Jesus' explanation of a new birth challenged Nicodemus' beliefs, and changed his perspective on spiritual life. Jesus made a clear declaration of truth, and gave Nicodemus a choice to believe and accept it.

How do you think that Jesus' description challenged Nicodemus' thinking? Why do you think it's so hard for him to understand?

How do you think this encounter with Jesus illuminated the truth to Nicodemus? Do you think he understood what Jesus was trying to say?

How was this challenge an opportunity for Nicodemus to believe the gospel?

Think of a time in your life when Jesus exposed something that was difficult to believe. How did that happen and how did you respond?

How do you think Jesus would respond if he were talking to you today? Is there something in your life that is difficult for you to believe right now?

THE EXCUSE: I DON'T WANT TO OFFEND OR EMBARRASS PEOPLE

“What if they think I’m pushy?”

“What if they say no?”

“What if this ruins our friendship?”

“What if they think I’m weird?”

“I don’t want them to think they’re my project.”

Can you relate to any of these feelings? No matter how we try to justify not speaking the truth to those around us, they are often characterized by one thing: fear.

Our fear when it comes to speaking the truth often stems from a fear of judgment or misunderstanding. Because of this, we often hold back for the sake of preserving friendships, or to avoid having difficult conversations. In this, we are also afraid that the people around us will misinterpret or distort our motivations for friendship and love, making them a sort of spiritual project.

THE HOPE: THE OFFER IS LIFE

John 10:10 (ESV) — The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

John 20:31 (ESV) — but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the

John 10:10 highlights the purpose of the mission and message of Christ, which is simply to bring life where it doesn’t exist. In that statement, we can rest in the power of the message itself, and not worry about our own misunderstanding or judgment.

In what ways has the message of the gospel brought life into your own story? How does this reflect the way that you share the message with others?

Do you believe that the message of the gospel is the message of life? In what ways?

Have you ever found yourself minimizing the message of the gospel as if you were just trying to prove your point? How would your message change if you were to rest in the fact that the gospel is the message of the one true source of life?

The apostle Paul says that some will hear the Gospel of Christ and say that it has the aroma of life and others will say that it has the aroma of death. It is not up to us to decide.

2 Corinthians 2:15–16 (ESV) — 15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, **16** to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is

THE CHALLENGE: CALL PEOPLE LIKE JESUS DID

Because of the life in the message of the gospel, Jesus called people to repent and believe. Although it wasn't always easy to challenge people's beliefs, he did so by calling them to change their thinking and exposing them to the truth found in the message of the gospel. As we are called in the same manner as Jesus, our charge is the same. Christ calls us to expose the things that people put their trust in, and shine the light of the gospel into their lives.

CALL PEOPLE TO REPENT

When we talk about repentance. We don't just mean that we are trying to get people to admit that they are sinners. We are calling people out on the falseness of their gods, the futility of the lies that they believe, their need to turn from their current pattern of thinking, perceiving, worshipping and living to faith in the Gospel of God. We are exposing the empty cisterns that people have placed their hope in (Jeremiah 2:13).

I met with a guy who thought that if he could catch a break in his career and get to the point where he could really support his family and do what he loved for his career, that everything would be great. Calling him to repentance required that I call him on the emptiness of that lie. I asked him, do you really think that you will be happy and satisfied and fulfilled if you get that promotion you are talking about? Look at those who are higher up than you on the food chain, do they seem to have that peace and security that you are longing for? You must turn from that pattern of thinking, to something that is real and lasting. Chasing a career is futile, but Jesus offers water that he says will never leave us thirsty. What would it be like if you believed that was true? He said, "I wish that were true." I said, "It is."

BY BEING SALT

Matthew 5:13 (ESV) — “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown

In this verse, Jesus calls His people the salt of the earth. Salt, as a preservative, draws the moisture out of meat, killing the bacteria that can make the food spoil quickly. Similarly, God’s people are an active part of drawing out the things that are hindering the spiritual growth of others by identifying them and exposing them for what they are. This has to be done so the truth of the gospel can bring life and health.

How do you think that God wants to use you as salt in the lives of those around you?

Has God ever used you as an agent of change in the life of someone else? How did your interactions draw the truth out in that situation?

Christ doesn’t ask his followers to be salt; he says that they are salt. Why do you think this is important? In what ways do you think we can lose our saltiness?

Think of the people on your **MULTIPLY** list... if they want to turn to God, what lies do they need to repent of?

CALL PEOPLE TO BELIEVE

When we call people to belief, we are not just asking them to believe that Jesus paid the penalty for their sins. We are asking them to place their faith in the authority of the King and to imagine life under the rule of God as a subject of his kingdom. If God is who he says that he is, what does that mean for me?

We are not calling people to live out Christian values, to attend church, to fix their lives and families. We are calling people to believe God at his word. The sin of Adam and Eve was rooted in unbelief. The sins of Israel were rooted in unbelief.

How can you call people to believe in the Good News about the rule and reign of God?

BY BEING LIGHT

Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV) — 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father

Inherent in the call to be the light of the world is the image of bringing light into dark places. In this, we can be active in both exposing the dark places where people do not believe and illuminating the truth. This is an active part of spiritual growth, and it gives people the opportunity to choose to believe the truth of Christ.

How do you think that you could be used to bring light into the lives of those around you?

Do you think that this call applies to your actions and attitude, as well as your words? Why or why not?

How do you think the call to repentance and belief are related? Can you have one without the other?

Christ doesn't ask His followers to be light, but he commands them to let their light shine before others. Why do you think he puts it that way? How do you think we could hide our light?

Think of those on your MULTIPLY list... if they want to follow God, what do they need to believe? Where will they truly find life?

THE ASSIGNMENT:

Hopefully as you've been praying for and meeting with the people that God has put in your life, you have begun to build some meaningful friendships. Spend some time in prayer this week considering what the next step is for someone that you have met with. Pray for what being the salt and light in their lives looks like and think about how you can begin to challenge them spiritually.

As you do that, take a chance and try to invite them to do something spiritually focused. It doesn't have to be a big deal; it could be anything from a simple prayer in the moment to an invitation to read and discuss the Bible together. Whatever it is, pray that the Holy Spirit would use you to point to the truth in their life as you begin to do something that is focused on spiritual growth and health.

If they say no, don't be discouraged. That doesn't mean that you can no longer be friends, it just means that they aren't at the point yet where they can recognize the truth of the gospel in the context of their own lives. Remember, in the above example from Matthew 16, Jesus presented a challenge to the young ruler, and the ruler walked away from it. Sometimes, people just aren't ready for the call to change or to believe something that's difficult to understand.

06 SOIL & DUST

06 | SOIL & DUST

Matthew 13:23 (ESV) — As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

1 Corinthians 3:7 (ESV) — So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything,

Over the last several weeks, we’ve spent a lot of time looking at how Jesus interacted with people and what that means for us as the sent people of God. Another aspect of Jesus’ ministry lies in the power behind it. While Jesus was God in human form, he also understood that God was the one guiding him, and the one producing spiritual growth in the lives of other people. In the same way, we must not over emphasize our own role, forgetting the fact that God is the one who works in the hearts of people. In that truth, we can find freedom and hope as we interact with others, knowing that their spiritual growth is ultimately something that is in God’s hands.

THE QUESTION: HOW DID JESUS SAY IT WOULD WORK?

John 5:19 (ESV) — So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the

When talking about His own ministry, Jesus talked about His reliance on the power and prompting from God. Even though He WAS God, he still understood the need to be vitally connected to the Father as he went about his ministry.

Why do you think Jesus talked about his need to be connected to the Father? In what ways did Jesus’ life and attitude reflect this dependence?

Does it seem strange to you that Jesus would need guidance from the Father?

How does Jesus’ attitude and actions challenge you and the way you interact with people?

THE EXCUSE: IT DIDN'T WORK

"I've tried and failed."

"Nothing's happening."

"I'm wasting my time."

Feeling like nothing significant is happening is very common as we interact with people in our lives. One of the main reasons for this is because we are trained to judge our effectiveness on the direct results. If we aren't experiencing results based on our efforts, then somehow we are either wasting our time or energy. As a result, we often decide not to try or give up too easily for fear of failing.

Describe a time when your actions did not produce the expected result. Did that make you feel discouraged, frustrated, or more determined?

Has there been a time in your life when you felt as though you were discouraged by your interactions with people? Do you think that was a result of trying to do things in your own strength?

THE HOPE: GOD IS IN CHARGE OF THE RESULTS

The hope that we can have in this process is that God alone is in charge of the results. In that we can find rest, as we no longer have to feel like it's our responsibility to create spiritual growth in the lives of others, or feel like a failure when that growth doesn't happen. Continually in scripture, we see words of comfort for us as God promises to be present with us, empowering us and guiding us as we seek Him. These statements in scripture give us hope, because we know that we aren't in control or alone.

"GOD GROWS"

1 Corinthians 3:7 (ESV) — So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

In this verse, Jesus specifically states that God is the agent of growth in the lives of believers. What do you think that means for us as we interact with those around us?

How could the fact that God causes the growth change the way you interact with those around you?

“YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER”

Acts 1:8 (ESV) — But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to

In this verse, Jesus says that the means for our ability to be His witnesses is the power of the Holy Spirit alone. How does that impact your interactions with others?

If the Holy Spirit is our source of power, how do we stay connected to that power?

“I AM WITH YOU”

Matthew 28:19–20 (ESV) — **19** Go therefore 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 observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you

This promise is a very personal one, as Jesus promises that He Himself will be with us always. How does Christ’s presence impact the way you interact with others?

If Christ is with you, how does that change the way you view other people? What about the way you interact and talk to them?

THE CHALLENGE: SOW THE SEED & KNOW WHEN TO WALK AWAY

When we are aware of God’s promises to lead us and be with us, our mission starts to become clear. This mission is to be faithful with the message we have been given, and to be faithful to those whom we have been given. Often times, this means recognizing where the Spirit is leading us, including when he is leading us away from something else. For this reason, we must rely on the Spirit to lead us as we sow the seed of the gospel into the lives of those around us.

SOW THE SEED **READ MATTHEW 13:1-23**

While this analogy explains the process by which the seed will grow and flourish, it also details what happens when the seed fails to grow, eventually dying. Jesus goes on to explain this parable as a description of the gospel’s deposit in the lives of people. In this story, each element has significance, and can shed light on our multiplication process.

SEED

In this parable the seed represents the gospel, which is sown in the soil. The gospel is the source of life, from which the plant springs. The plant that springs as a result of this seed could be faith, or spiritual life.

In what ways do you see the gospel relating to a seed that is planted?

Have you seen growth of the gospel in your own life, or the lives of others? What, would you say were the conditions surrounding that growth?

SOIL

The soil in this story is the heart of the person who hears the gospel. The condition of the soil has a large impact on how the message is received, and therefore has a large impact on the health of the plant. In some cases, the condition of the soil is directly responsible for the plant's health or survival.

Have you ever experienced the seed of the gospel dying because of the condition of the soil? Does this change the truth of the message?

What is the result of the seed being planted on good, fertile soil? Does Jesus say we would know the soil is good?

SOWER

The sower represents the person who spreads the seed of the gospel, regardless of the soil's condition.

At what rate does the sower sow the seed? Does it seem like he is picky about where it is scattered?

Why don't you think the sower is careful to only plant the seed in good soil? What does this tell you about his desire to see the plant grow?

TIME

Inherent in the description of a plant growing is the aspect of time. No one can speed up the process of growth by physical means, which implies that time is not only probable but also necessary. In the example of the rocky soil, you could argue that a lack of the time required for growth was the cause of the plant's death.

Have you ever experienced impatience about the timing of the gospel? What was Jesus' warning about a plant that sprouts up too fast?

Spend some time praying about what this story reveals about the spiritual growth process, and list your insights in your journal. What do you think is your responsibility? What things are out of your control?

Since our role as the sower is to be faithful in sowing the seed of the gospel, this means that we liberally and actively look for opportunities to scatter the message of the gospel into the lives of those around us. Where we begin to see life sprouting up as a result of that, we invest our time and energy cultivating growth.

Sometimes this means having the ability to recognize and acknowledge where there is no growth, and having the maturity and wherewithal to move on.

KNOW WHEN TO WALK AWAY

Matthew 10:11-14 (ESV) — 11 “Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. **12** As you enter the home, give it your greeting. **13** If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. **14** If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words,

As Jesus is sending out His disciples, he details different ways that these relationships can end.

What is Jesus preparing them for? What are Jesus’ expectations of the disciples for their journey? How do you think Jesus would define ‘success’ for them?

The healthy natural end to a discipleship relationship is that a person goes out and makes disciples. While this may result in having to meet less frequently, it is a natural process of multiplication.

There is also an unresponsive end when you feel like you are no longer moving forward and your disciple does not seem to be responding or acting on your challenges. In this case, for the time being, you might need to move on.

Jesus does not seem to call either of them a failure on the part of the one being sent out.

Have you ever been discouraged as a relationship began to change? Do you think this is a natural process?

Have you ever felt like God was moving you to “shake the dust off your feet?”
What were the circumstances that led you to that conclusion?

THE ASSIGNMENT:

Some time over the next month, plan an event at your house and invite the people whom you have been praying for. Ask that the Holy Spirit would guide you as you ask them and invite them into the space of your life. As you interact and talk to them, be praying about where and to whom the Holy Spirit is sending you.

Afterward, spend some time praying about whose life the Holy Spirit seems to be working, and what it will take to invest in them. Rearrange your commitments and see what you need to cut out to make space to meet with someone on your prayer list. This may mean that you need to evaluate relationships you believe God is moving you away from and investing where there is new life sprouting.

Commit to investing in at least one person, whether it be an ongoing meeting to pray, read the Bible, or just talk about their life. In that space, you will begin to see opportunities to sow the seed of the gospel in their life