

Discipleship 101: Service

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[0 : 0 0] Welcome here for this Sunday, April 10th, Palm Sunday. And welcome, as I said, whether you're here in person or whether you're joining us in some other way or down the road, another day perhaps.

This morning we're continuing, this is what you're afraid of, continuing in our sermon series, Discipleship 101. And through this series, Michelle said to me this morning as she was getting ready to put the Facebook blurb up, she said, how many weeks is this?

And I said, I don't know, it's as many as it is. And she said, that's cheating. But we'll recognize, we've been recognizing through this series that Discipleship is about a journey of growth for us as individuals, but it's also a journey that we take together as we're disciplined by others.

So have you seen this graphic before? This graphic, there it is. Have you seen it? Of course you have. So if you were here last week, maybe you're thinking, didn't we finish this thing last week? I was sure. How many parts are there to a cross? Like there's four parts to a cross, Pastor Kent. Or maybe you've been thinking, yeah, the cross has four arms.

[1 : 1 3] We've covered four topics by now in the series. Maybe he'll move on, right? Hopefully you're not thinking that, but you might be. But I need you to hang on with me for just a couple more weeks.

I promise. Give me today. Give me next Sunday. And then we'll see where we go next. But I truly hope that the past few months that we've spent in this series have had an impact on you.

That you've gained a new perspective on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. I hope that you've been challenged to consider how to more intentionally engage in that calling.

Engage in what it means to be a disciple. Because that's what Jesus is asking us to do. Absolutely. Discipleship, helping people to grow in their relationship with Jesus, that is my calling.

That is my goal as a pastor. And our goal as a church should be, do you remember from last week? Do you remember? Our goal as a church should be to make disciples who make more disciples.

[2 : 2 9] Right? Sounds redundant. But it's absolutely what we're called to do. To be a welcoming and loving group of people who seek to make a difference in our community.

And throughout the history of the church, the people who God uses, has used, will use to turn the world upside down have been sold out, totally committed followers.

Disciples. People for whom Jesus is the center of their lives. And so since the church is people, right? Church is not a building.

Then for the church to bring change, the people of the church need to be the ones who bring that change. And we need to be people who have been changed ourselves before we can do that.

To do that. Can you recognize that? And so we need to be true and change disciples of Jesus ourselves before he can use us in the way he wants to.

[3 : 3 5] So we've seen this graphic over the past month or so. Couple months. And it's been used to help us visualize the different aspects of what it means to be a disciple. And how those aspects, those different parts, interact with one another.

And so I mentioned this name before. Avery Willis is the man who created the Disciples Cross. And he created it to help people understand as a learning tool.

And so we've used that during our series as well. And with the Disciples Cross, we start at the middle, the vine and the branches, right? That Jesus is the center of this diagram just as the center of our life we should find.

Anyone? Jesus. The obvious answer is the correct answer. Jesus has to be at the center of our lives. He's got to be number one.

Our top priority. Our lives have to be centered on him. Our decisions have to be centered on him. The way we live our lives has to focus with him as the center.

[4 : 45] The hub around which everything else revolves. And we're called to take up our cross daily and follow him. And we've explored that a disciple needs to be grounded in the Bible and that we can't know God.

We can't follow God. We won't hear from him apart from being connected to his word. And that's scripture. And that needs to be a daily conversation, right?

If we truly love the Lord, we need to be grounded in his word. And just as being connected to the Bible is important, prayer has to be a daily part of a disciple's life as well.

Because prayer is our literal conversation with God. And it's an honor and a privilege. We need to recognize it to be in conversation with, in relationship with, the creator of all things.

He waits to hear from us. He wants to hear from us. He loves it when we come to him and praise him and thank him for all that he's done. He wants us to agree with him about our sins.

[5 : 55] Agree with him about where we've drifted away. And the damage that that causes not only to us but to others as well. He wants us to trust him so that we come to him first with our needs.

We don't try and figure it out on our own. We start with him first. And then he also wants us to step into the lives of other people as we lift them up in prayer.

We've recognized that. God has more for us in mind than just focusing on him. And that's where that horizontal axis comes in.

God wants us to have meaningful relationships with other people. Both with people who know him and people who don't. God didn't create us to go through life alone.

He created us for community community and fellowship. He wants us to be part of a group where we can support one another. Where we can encourage one another.

[7 : 00] Stand together. Grow together. Be part of a family. A disciple needs to be part of a group of disciples.

Right? We're designed to work together. To be together. And then last week we looked at the other side of the horizontal axis because we explored witness.

The importance of it. And that's the fruit bearing side of the disciples cross. When we're anchored in Jesus he works in us and we're changed.

And then when we're grounded in God's word and prayer we start to hear God's voice calling us. And what is it that God wants from us ultimately?

God wants more people to come to recognize him. To turn to him. To let go of their own plans and allow God to change them.

[8 : 04] And as we recognized last week that as God changes us from within the Holy Spirit shines through us. Right? And that catches people's attention.

They want to know why we're different. Have you ever had someone ask you that? We talked about that last week. Have you ever had someone ask you why you're different? Why you're less cranky than everyone else?

Why you're more kind than everyone else perhaps? We want our answer to be Jesus. Right? It's Jesus at work in us because that is our witness.

That is how people see God at work in the world is through his disciples. Service. It's another part of the disciples cross that we haven't looked at yet.

It's on this horizontal axis. And that's our focus this morning. And the verse that we're building this around is John 15 verse 13.

[9 : 03] It will sound very familiar. Greater love has no one than this. Say it with me. That he lay down his life for his friends.

It seems pretty fitting. Now I didn't plan this. I didn't look back. I look at Easter and fit the calendar together.

This message landed on this Sunday. Seems fitting and I didn't plan it. Jesus himself said these words.

And he said them the night before he was nailed to a literal cross. And so this is how he recognized the depth and the breadth of his love for each one of us.

That he was willing to give everything. He was willing to give his life. Jesus was a man but he was also the son of God.

[10 : 08] He is the son of God. He always has been and he always will be. That's reality. And more than 2,000 years ago the son of God came to earth in human form and became flesh and blood.

And Jesus came for a very specific purpose. Can you guess what that was? To serve us. Jesus came to do for us what we could have never done for ourselves.

He made it possible for us to be right with God for our sins to be forgiven for us to be restored in relationship with his father and our heavenly father.

He gave himself not just a bit not just what was convenient or comfortable for him. he gave everything he had for you and for me.

And friends there is nothing we can do for him in return. Nothing. We can never repay that debt but you know the most amazing part?

[11 : 30] He never asked us to do that and he never will. Jesus gave everything for us because he came to serve.

He helped us when we had nowhere else to turn and he still will. My friends that is what service looks like.

That's the model. The Bible tells us to emulate Jesus in everything that we do that he is our example for how we should act how we should speak how we should treat one another.

Jesus is our example. The ultimate example of service in Jesus is him giving everything that he had for us and that's how we are called to serve others.

And I've said to you before you may never be called to give your life for someone else but you may but how much are you willing to give up for someone else? It's a good question.

[12 : 40] When we reflect on our lives how often do we sacrifice for someone else? Because that is what we're called to do.

And as I said before Jesus didn't do what was comfortable or what was convenient for him. Is that what limits our sense of service or our sense of sacrifice for someone else?

I'll do this much and no more. How often do we think of others first? How often do we put someone else's needs before our own?

Because a true disciple is called to serve others. Greater love has no one than this than that he lay down his life for his friends.

The life of a disciple isn't just meant to be really spiritual people who are isolated from the world. Isolated from the reality of what's going on around us.

[13 : 46] We're not called to insulate and withdraw. When Jesus called his disciples they didn't go off on their own and study together for three years until Jesus returned to his father.

Can you recognize that? He called his disciples to learn from him and serve alongside him to make a difference in the lives of other people.

They rolled up their sleeves and they got their hands dirty. Sometimes really, really dirty. But they got down to the business of serving.

God's disciples. My friends, he calls you and me, his disciples in this place at this time to do the same thing.

And we answer this call by serving each other. And not just within these walls, right? We don't just come here, serve each other for an hour and then we're good.

[14 : 49] Living a life that's grounded in the word of God, that's grounded in the Bible, leads to serving. Other people. For example, this morning, when I sit and listen or watch you worshiping God together, singing with all your hearts, that makes me glad.

Truly. It's a way that you serve me without even realizing. And maybe you feel served by other people worshiping as well. Because it reminds me of who Jesus is to you and to me.

Singing those familiar hymns like we did this morning, I can just hear you belting it out, master or not. There's truth and power in those words and even more so when we just unite our voices together.

Have you ever thought of that before though, that you're actually serving me or serving someone else just by worshiping God? It's encouraging and it's a blessing. And another way that we've talked about serving other people is by interceding for them.

We're interceding for people in our church, for friends, for family that we know that we care about. We're bringing them up, we're lifting them up before God to heal them, to provide for them, to care for them.

[16 : 13] That's one of the greatest things you can do for someone is to lift them up before God in prayer. that is true service. Spending time in fellowship with each other, it leads to serving because we're caring for one another, right?

We're recognizing the needs that we have. I need you and you need me in this community. I need you to be there to support me, believe it or not.

And I'm there to support you. and I witness all the time, all of us supporting one another. Spending time as an intentional witness is another way to serve people, bringing them to Jesus.

Because what's the most important thing you can ever do for someone else? Change the course of their eternity? sounds fairly significant, doesn't it?

Tell them about Jesus. You may never be rich or famous, at least according to how the world, the world measures those things.

[17 : 29] But you can always give someone that gift that is more valuable than any other by introducing them to your Savior, the one who can be their Savior as well, Jesus Christ.

My friends, a disciple is a servant. A disciple is someone who puts the needs of others before their own, which has been modeled by Jesus himself.

Who can you serve today? And I don't necessarily mean with a bowl of soup, but it's a good place to start. Who can you serve tomorrow at work, in your home?

Who can you think of that you could serve right now or this afternoon? Friends, seek to serve the people who you come into contact with.

Because those are the people that God has put in your life. Amen? Amen. Amen.