

Resurrecting Discipleship

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[0 : 00] Thank you very much for the warm welcome this morning.

We are very glad to be able to worship with you and to share about the work and also to bring God's Word.

Today we have maybe a surprising title, Resurrecting Discipleship. When we were on our way back from Ecuador, we visited Canada and in one of the towns, there was a very famous store there that makes excellent donuts.

They make mouth-watering donuts. They just were very good and we were very glad to be able to visit Crooked Creek and savor that Mennonite recipe.

And people would travel for hundreds of miles just to buy these donuts. And it really made me think, how far do people go to get an answer from us about our faith?

[1 : 34] How far would somebody come to be discipled? So we are going to revisit discipleship and see the importance of the resurrection in this context of Jesus' formation of the first disciples.

We are going to look first at, in Mark chapter 8, how Jesus was preparing the disciples, both generally and specifically for His death and resurrection.

in Mark chapter 8 and verse 9. This was just after the feeding of the 4,000.

And it says, And there were about 4,000 people, and He sent them away, and immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and went to the district of Dalmanetha.

The Pharisees came and began to argue with Him, seeking for a sign from heaven to test Him. And He sighed deeply in His spirit and said, Why does this generation seek a sign?

[2 : 47] Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. And He left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side. Then, continuing, Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat.

And He cautioned them, saying, Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod. And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.

And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand?

Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the 5,000, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?

They said to Him, Twelve, and the 7,000 for the 4,000, sorry, and the 7 for the 4,000, how many baskets full of pieces did you take up?

[4 : 02] And they said to Him, Seven. And He said to them, Do you not yet understand? The disciples were squabbling among themselves about the fact that they had brought no bread.

And probably knowing the disciples, they were shifting the blame, trying to put the blame on somebody else. But Jesus points out to them that He did two great miracles, feeding the 5,000 and the 4,000.

And then, and the disciples didn't seem to understand. Maybe they wouldn't understand. They didn't want to understand who Jesus is. Mark and his gospel is, up to this point, showing us who Jesus Christ is.

And reading on, Jesus does this miracle. He says, And they came to Bethsaida, and some people brought to Him a blind man and begged Him to touch him.

And He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. And when He had spit on His eyes and laid His hands on him, He asked him, Do you see anything?

[5 : 18] And He looked up and said, I see men, but they look like trees walking. Then Jesus laid His hands on His eyes again, and He opened His eyes. His sight was restored, and He saw everything clearly.

And He sent him to His home, saying, Do not enter the village. The blind man said that He saw men walking like trees.

Jesus took the blind man out of the village. So who was there? It was the disciples, as we see in verse 27. And Jesus went on with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi.

And so it was the disciples who were with Him. Those were the people who were standing there that the man thought looked like trees. So why did Jesus do a two-stage miracle here?

This was the only time that we see recorded that Jesus did a miracle like this. And it's obvious that Jesus knew that He was partially healed when He asked the man, Do you see anything?

[6 : 34] So, and maybe the man actually had two problems. Perhaps he had blindness and cataracts.

But this was for the benefit of the disciples. And Mark places it right here for the purpose that the disciples would see clearly who Jesus Christ is.

Can they see with their spiritual eyes like the blind man had fully recovered his sight?

Or would they be woodenly walking on dimly, not understanding as trees? Do we, after months or years of hearing about Jesus Christ as the promised Savior, perhaps we don't understand fully or do we want to understand who Jesus Christ is and what He came to do?

We continue to read here in Mark chapter 8. And Jesus went on with His disciples in verse 27 to the villages of Caesarea Philippi.

[7 : 51] And on the way He asked the disciples, Who do people say that I am? And they told Him, John the Baptist. And others say, Elijah. And others, one of the prophets.

And He said to them, But who do you say that I am? Peter answered Him, You are the Christ. And He strictly charged them not to tell, to tell no one about Him.

And so, Jesus is asking the disciples, Who do other people say that I am? And they gave Him all sorts of answers. And then He asked them the very critical question, Who do you say that I am?

And Peter was the one who was quick to say, You are the Christ. You are the Messiah, the promised one, the one anointed by God.

And in Matthew's gospel, it tells us that He also said, You are the Son of the living God. And so, we are beginning to learn about Jesus' method here of making disciples.

[9 : 05] He spent lots of time with them. You see that He was with them 24 hours a day, practically. He, it wasn't just one or two hours a week. He spent time eating with them, fishing, traveling, praying.

They saw Him when He was tired, when He was sleeping, when He was doing public teaching, and miracles.

They asked Him questions about His teaching. He answered, and He also asked them questions. Questions to lead His disciples to a greater understanding of who He was and what He was teaching.

The disciples sometimes put two and two together, but not always. And Jesus had private times of teaching and miracles like this one with Him, with them.

Jesus made sure that they understood His public teaching. We see that from some of the parables, like the parable of the sower. And then, in the following chapter, Jesus even treats the inner three, Peter, James, and John, to a special glimpse of His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration.

[10 : 23] So, in summary, Jesus was in a real relationship with His disciples. He cared about them. He was relational. Jesus did everything with goals so that disciples would learn.

He was very intentional. Everything in the book of Mark leads to this point to show us that Jesus is the Messiah. He is the Savior of the world.

But now that focus of the book changes as He seeks to show us Jesus' mission. His mission to be the Savior of the world.

And let's read on in verses 31 of Mark chapter 8. And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed.

And after three days rise again. And He said this plainly. And so, Jesus prepares the disciples for His death and resurrection.

[11 : 36] Jesus was the master teacher. He patiently prepared His disciples for the coming jolt of His death and resurrection. He didn't inform them all at once but step by step and repeatedly until their understanding increased.

And Peter obviously understood here verse 32. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him but turning and seeing His disciples He rebuked Peter and said Get behind me Satan for you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of man.

Peter understood Jesus' words but he had rejected His meaning. This is the first time that Mark records Jesus telling the disciples.

and then Jesus turns to Peter and seeing that the disciples are also watching He rebukes Peter because this open error needed swift and equally open correction.

And so He rebukes Peter and says Get behind me Satan or this could also be translated enemy get behind me. And so Peter saw clearly the first part we see this great declaration of Peter saying that Jesus is the Christ but was stumbling as a half-blind person with the second part with Jesus' mission to die on the cross and rise again.

[13 : 21] Of course the disciples were like the Jews of the time were looking forward to a conquering Messiah who would liberate them from the Romans and re-establish the temporal kingdom of David and Solomon.

Luke mentions that Jesus talked about His death and resurrection at least six times. We could say that being forewarned is to be forearmed and usually this is the case but we'll see it's not with the disciples.

Jesus' resurrection is essential for our faith, for our justification, for our future hope and our resurrection.

And so like the many layers of an onion there are many truths to grasp. The resurrection was essential so that Jesus could jump start the discipleship process.

Let's see what was happening in Mark chapter 16. In Mark chapter 16 after the resurrection we see the angels words to the ladies in the tomb.

[14 : 45] And he Mark 16 verse 6 said to them, do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified.

He has risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you.

And they went out and fled from the tomb for trembling and astonishment had seized them and they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid.

And so here we see the first problem. They left the tomb full of fear and said nothing to anyone.

And then in verse 11 we see the same situation. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene and then in verse 11 says but when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her they would not believe it.

[15 : 58] And so Mary Magdalene overcame the fear and told them that Jesus was alive but the disciples would not believe it. And so we are beginning to see the problem.

And then Jesus appeared to two of the disciples in verse 12 after these things he appeared in another form to two of them as they were walking into the country and they went back and told the rest but they did not believe them.

The disciples did not believe them. And then again in verse then we see Jesus coming to the twelve.

John mentions that the disciples were behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They were petrified. And then verse fourteen after he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.

And so we see this great problem that the disciples were petrified in fear and unbelief. Not a successful end to discipleship.

[17 : 25] Are we sometimes scared to tell others about our faith? We see what Jesus did about this situation.

He came and he appeared to them. He renewed his relationship with them. He convinced them. He taught them many times.

And remember in the Gospel of John how he restored Peter in his relationship with Jesus. So we can say that Jesus restarted the discipleship process eating with the disciples teaching them and answering their questions.

He kick started this process as a medic resuscitates a cardiac arrest victim with a defibrillator. Without Jesus and Jesus' resurrection his intervention into their lives none of us would have heard the Gospel because it was essential that these disciples carried the Gospel out to the different parts of the world.

And so we see the effect of Jesus' intervention here in verse 20. He says Mark writes and they went out and preached everywhere while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.

[18 : 52] And so it is totally essential that Jesus reappeared to the disciples and brought the discipleship to the final stage.

And so this is what we read here in verse 16. Whoever verse 15 and he said to them go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And so Jesus was commissioning the disciples.

He sent them out. He released them to serve without him accompanying them physically. I'd like to turn to Matthew 28 to get Matthew's perspective on the Great Commission from verse 16.

He says Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him. But some doubted.

[20 : 09] And Jesus came and said to them all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 teaching them to observe all I have commanded you and behold I am with you always to the end of the age.

And so Jesus was saying to his disciples you need to go out. The goal here isn't actually the command the command is to make disciples and so as you go make disciples of all nations baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and so Jesus is releasing the disciples he is asking the disciples to make more disciples and this is the task of every true disciple of Jesus Christ to make more disciples in in Loja we were involved in church planting and the church seemed to be going quite well with reasonable attendance however we began to realize that we were lacking in discipleship as we asked all of the different ministries in the church to give a report in the annual meeting so it wouldn't just be about money but actually about the ministry as well not one of our traditional programs were actually making disciples and so we realized that discipleship is the heart of the church's mission discipleship is what

Jesus asked us to be about to go and to make disciples of all nations and of course this isn't just for missionaries this is everywhere this is right here in Scotland right here in Livingston that we need to make disciples and the discipleship process isn't complete unless we're developing people believers and releasing them to make disciples and so we began to realize that the church there in Loja was like a donut like the donuts I was mentioning in the beginning that there was lots of activity on the outside but the heart was missing that of making real disciples who will make more disciples and so we must take discipleship further than halfway and just putting the Lord's commands into practice but also go full cycle and so that the disciples will make more disciples and so we need disciple makers in the church today thank you very much