

"Discipleship - Reports Due July 10th "

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Propers Seven of Cycle A of the CRL

Text: Matthew 10: 24-39

24 'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; 25it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

26 'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. 27What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. 28Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.* 29Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. 30And even the hairs of your head are all counted. 31So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; 33but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

34 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. □35For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; □36and one's foes will be members of one's own household. □37Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Sermon:

Good morning, beloved of God. I am going to ask you to write down the names of four people. If you have some empty space on your pocket calendar, that would be great. Feel free to write this down inside your bulletin or if you have a business card use that. everyone have something? Good.

Now, think of some one close or very dear to you that God has placed on your heart. that you could support with prayer. Please write their name down. Think of another person that could use a word of encouragement. That person might be a friend or associate at work. Who is that someone you could talk to about the promises and hope of the Gospel as you have come to experience them personally. Now, write their name down. Think of another person in your life who is in need. They maybe sick. They maybe facing a crisis. Emotionally or spiritually they may be having a tough time Write their name down. Lastly, think of another person in your life that would benefit if you would spend some time with them. Write their name down.

So, you have before you the names of four people. One who could use the support of your prayers. Another who could use a bit of encouragement. The name of one you know who is in need. And the name of a person who would love it if your could spend some time with them.

In the 10th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is sending out the 12 disciples on their first missionary journey. The chapter itself is labeled as 'The Call and The Sending of the Disciples.' Jesus instructs them that they are to go to the "lost sheep" of the house of Israel. They are given the "authority" (power) to "cast out unclean spirits" and "to cure every disease and every sickness"- The apostles' mission mirrors that of Jesus himself (10:7-8). Used here are the exact phrases Jesus uses to summarize his own healing ministry. What they are being sent to do is to be an extension of Jesus' ministry.

The Gospel text assigned to today is an except from the 10th chapter of Matthew. Jesus concludes the text with this promise:

“ ...those who lose their life
for my sake will find it. 10:39b

Three Christian friends got on the conversation of: “When you are in your casket, and friends, family are mourning over you, ‘What would like to people to say about you ? ‘ ” The Episcopalian of the group said:

"I would like to hear them say that I was a fine Christian, that they felt the love of Christ flow through me." The Roman Catholic said: “ When people look in my casket I would like to hear them say ‘that I was a good disciple of Christ who made a huge difference in their and other’s’ lives.’” “When people look in my casket,” the Lutheran said,
“ I would like to hear them say: “Look, he’s moving!”

As Christians called to be Disciples, God wants us to be on the move.

As a congregation moving forward in his Mission and ministry: 1) *We have a vision* that propels us. Our vision is “to be a dynamic congregation of disciples proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all.” 2) *We have a mission* that engages us. We want “to glorify God in all we do, reflecting His Love to our community and the world.” To accomplish our mission and vision we as a congregation have set specific measurable goals for 2008 -- outcomes that we expect to achieve that focus on:

- Discipleship
- Assimilation
- Service
- hospitality

You have heard the report on how we are did in meeting those goals the first three months of this year. Thank your Eric and Keith. On July 10th the second quarter report is due to evaluate how we are doing in making those goals a living reality. Thus the sermon title for today

As a Christian you may have been asked: “How’s your walk with Jesus going?” As a Christian disciple have you ever been asked: “How is your Christian discipleship going? Seldom, if ever, has been my experience to date.

Are you moving? Have you grown in your discipleship? Since the beginning of the year, what have you accomplished for Christ?

“I didn’t know we were supposed to do anything. I thought being a Christian was enough.” Many Christians don’t set their sights on anything for Christ. They never think to because they never were mentored to do so. Without goals, without a plan, without measurable outcomes we will be nothing more than a collection of hap-hazard mediocre Christians rather than becoming congregation of dynamic disciples Christ commissions us to be.

Cadyn, my grandson, will be one YEAR OLD next Saturday Last Friday night as we were waiting for our food to be served at a restraint we were singing to him “Itsy Bitsy Spider,” having him do he hand motions. Then we were having him do the Florida State “Seminoles Chop. Then we were asking him “How big is Cadyn?” Upon which he would raise his hands above his and we say: “So big!”, both to his delight and ours.

How big are you in your discipleship? You and I may not be

where we want to be in our growth in discipleship but we should be bigger spiritually than we were a year ago. Physical growth takes time and so does growth in discipleship. Growth in discipleship doesn't happen overnight either. Discipleship takes a plan to grow, Disciples are made, not born. Just because you consider yourself a "good" Christian, doesn't mean that instantaneously growth in ones' discipleship will occur. Unlike physical growth and maturity. growth in discipleship doesn't automatically occur. Discipline is essential for effective discipleship.

When Jesus sent the 12 out on their first missionary journey, he sent them to "the lost sheep of Israel" (Later he would send them into the world beyond, to "all nations.") Secondly, he gave them a specific list of ministries to concentrate on doing. This list included the casting out of demons and proclaiming the good news. Jesus had a plan to develop forward the discipleship of the Twelve.

Before you is a plan for your discipleship. If intentionally followed, you will experience growth. This plan reflects Jesus' plan when he first originally sent out his disciples. If you and I enact this plan on a weekly basis, we will experience a growth in our personal discipleship.

Do you see the PLAN?

At the start of this sermon I asked you to write the names of four people. One that write the name down of some one close that you could support with prayer. Then I invited you to write the name of another person that could use some words of encouragement. Then jot down a person's name that you know is in need. Lastly, write before you the name of another person in your life that could benefit greatly if you would share some time with them.

The action verbs listed above reflect the missionary actions Jesus first gave the Twelve. Upon taking the first letter of each of the action listed they form the anagram: "S-E-N-T." if spelled they spell out "sent"

- Support
- Encouragement
- Need
- Time

In verse 2 the disciples are called apostles. "Apostle" means "one who is sent." Ah ha!

You might not be able to carry out every ministry in a week's time. You may not be able to reach every one you listed . You may just get three. You may just get two or one. Keep one planning. Keep on going. Martin Luther once said "If you can't fly...run, if you can't run ...walk, if you can't walk....crawl. But for heavens sake... don't stand still."

I believe making a action plan each week for your personal discipleship would MOVE US in the direction of becoming "a dynamic congregation of disciples." To the glory of God. Let it be so!