

First United Methodist Church

310 North Rowley, Mitchell, SD 57301

Rev. Keith Nelson, Lead Pastor

keith@mitchellfumc.org

605.630.6586

There's a great little, often overlooked, story in the Bible that is really rather powerful. It's a story I believe speaks to us as individual followers of Jesus, as well as to the church body, yet today. This short story speaks to the mission and motivation of Jesus and is found in both Matthew's and Luke's story of Jesus life.

What happens in this story is that John the Baptist sends a couple of his disciples to Jesus with a simple question; "Are you the messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?" Now remember, Jesus and John are related through their mothers, Mary and Elizabeth. Jesus could have taken great offense at this question. He could have "powered up" as they say, and responded with, "What, you dare question me? Doesn't John remember what he said about me, 'I am the lamb of God!' What, isn't he man enough to come himself to ask this question to my face? Get away from me! I don't have time for this!"

That could have been Jesus response, but it wasn't. Instead, how Jesus responded was to say, "Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard – the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor." (Luke 7:22) This is a rather interesting list of "qualifiers" for John's disciples to report back with concerning Jesus being the messiah, or not, until we read again what Jesus understood his mission to be. Remember, earlier when Jesus was in the synagogue and he was asked to read scripture and comment on it, Jesus read from Isaiah – "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

In this simple statement Jesus makes to John's disciples, he is reflecting back to John the very purpose of why Jesus was here. No bravado, no exaggeration, no claiming of importance. Jesus doesn't even claim that he's the one doing it. He simply says, "Report back what you have seen and heard – the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, etc." In other words, Jesus was clear on who he was and why he was here. He didn't let other things get in the way of his purpose.

We live in a very diverse time. There are many challenges in life and faith that confront us daily. In a way there are constantly people asking the question of us, "Are you really the church? Do you really reflect or represent God?" I believe now more than ever, even in the midst of the energy of how we sense God is at work in our midst, it is so important for us to be clear on our purpose. As disciples of Jesus our purpose is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the world. And as Downtown Mitchell First United Methodist Church a part of our "disciple making" is To Share the Love of Jesus with the next generation from the Heart of Downtown. This is who we are...this is what we are about...this is why we are here.

In the midst of all the distractions in our world, people more than ever need an anchor for life and living. I believe we, as the Church, have that anchor...that sense of purpose. In all that we do...in all that we are let's remember why we are here. We're sharing the Love of Jesus with the next generation from the heart of downtown. May others see these words lived out through our actions and our words.

Serving Together,

Pastor Keith

This Sunday is World Communion Sunday. Join us for worship at 8:30 and 11:00 am. Communion will be served at both services.