

DISCIPLE

With Jesus | In Community | On Mission

SERMON TITLE: "With Jesus: Scripture"

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SCRIPTURE: Selected Scriptures

PASTOR: Jim Thompson

The earliest followers of Jesus didn't call themselves Christians. They didn't think of themselves as members of a religion. They considered themselves disciples – students and apprentices of Rabbi Jesus. So if this is who we're supposed to be, how do we begin to define 'disciple'?

Is being a disciple about knowing certain things? Doing certain things? Saying, believing, or rejecting certain things? If so, what? Is there a manual for this? How long does it take? And what's the point of it all? Or simply, what does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

In the first century, disciples were people of The Book. If you were a formal disciple in the Jewish world 2,000 years ago, you had already memorized the entire Hebrew Bible. You knew it backward and forwards. It had wholistically shaped, changed, and made you who you were. Shouldn't the same be true for disciples of Jesus? Shouldn't we also be a people of The Book? He is, after all, the greatest teacher ever.

As disciples, doing life *with* Jesus means that we should be a Scripture-saturated people. We should seek to be immersed in and saturated by the truth, beauty, and story of God's Word. But how do we do this? How do we become people of The Book? Here are five pictures of Scripture-saturated people and five responses that should help us lean into being a Bible-people.

1. **Jeremiah 15:16**... When God's word came to Jeremiah, it became to him a joy! It says that Jeremiah ate God's words. He devoured them. They were his food. He digested them. God's words nourished him. And his eating gave him holy happiness.
2. **Acts 17:10-11**... Paul and Silas went and preached in Berea, and it says that the people there "examined the Scriptures daily" to make sure that what they were saying was biblically accurate. And don't forget, Paul had the whole Hebrew Bible memorized. He probably had sections memorized in different languages, and he knew how to understand it from every angle imaginable. And if a guy like that is teaching, shouldn't we just take his word for it? Not these Bereans. They investigate. They wrestled. They asked questions. They pressed in. And they did it daily!
3. **Nehemiah 8:1-6**... When Israel returned from exile, they experienced a kind of revival. Corporate idolatry was in their rearview mirror, and they were starting to remember their identity and their mission. In this passage, we see these things as they respond to the public reading of God's word. Ezra read the Torah out loud for close to six hours, and the people responded by lifting their hands and bowing their faces to the ground in worship, thanks, and humility before God.
4. **2 Timothy 3:14-17**... Here, Paul is like the rabbi, and Timothy is the disciple. But rather than constructing a biblical foundation for Timothy, Paul holds Timothy accountable to what his mother and grandmother already taught him. Paul encourages him to drink from the fountain of Scripture because it's one of God's primary means by which he makes us wise, equips us, reproves us, corrects us, and transforms us.
5. **John 6:66-68**... Because of some strange and difficult teachings, some who were following Jesus stopped following him. But Peter exclaims, "Jesus, where else can we go? You have the words of eternal life?" Even if other people walk away from Jesus because they think their questions are bigger than he is, we should stay. If

you ditch a relationship with Jesus because you think the world revolves around how you feel about a few unanswered questions, you definitely won't find help elsewhere. Rather, with Peter, we should respond with faith, "Where else can we go? Your words are life!" To do life *with* Jesus is to give yourself to his words. This is part of the essence of discipleship.

These five pictures are helpful. But, as we've said, discipleship includes action. Being *with* Jesus by being a Bible-loving people requires something out of us. So, here are five parallel responses for us so that we might be Scripture-saturated people just like the ones we looked at.

1. **Read the Bible at different paces.** Jeremiah ate God's word when it came to him. You don't eat all food the same way. Proverbs is a snack, and Romans is a steak. Sometimes you need to read a few verses, and then re-read them, and then read them in a different translation, and then read a commentary on them. And sometimes you need to read all four chapters of Colossians in one sitting. But to develop a deep-seated joy, like God's word was for Jeremiah, you have to experience it in different ways.
2. **Write and take notes in your Bible.** Follow the example of the Bereans in Acts 17. Investigated. Pay attention to details. Jot questions in the margins of their Bible. Draw lines and make connections in the passage. Highlighting phrases or verses that stand out. Write in the margin what it's saying about God or what it's saying about us as God's people. And if you don't have one, get a Bible with big margins (or a Bible-prayer journal). With a pen, examine and process what God is doing through Scripture in your life.
3. **Listen to the Bible.** That's exactly what happened in Nehemiah 8. And there was a special kind of beauty to it when they heard it. So, get together with friends and family to read it out loud. Download an app that will read it to you. Reflect on what you hear. Internalize it through listening. This is how Scripture was often originally experienced.
4. **Get in a CBR group.** CBR stands for Community Bible Reading. This is our church's Bible reading plan for 2020. It's what Timothy, his mom, his grandma, Paul, and others did with Scripture: they talked about it with one another. The goal is simply to engage with others every day about something that stood out in your reading. Not only is an excellent way to hold each other accountable, but there's so much to be learned by what other people are learning.
5. **Trust God and his word.** This is what Peter does when he says, "We can't go anywhere else; your words are life!" It's great to have Scripture in your eyes by reading it. It's great to have it in your hands as you write about it. It's great to have it in your ears as you listen to it. It's great to have it on your lips as you talk about it. But it's all empty if it's not in your heart. If your heart is not clinging to God and his word in faith, it doesn't matter how much Bible you read. The God of the Bible is not primarily analyzed. He ought primarily to be trusted, worshipped, and obeyed. And we can come to him with all our questions. He's not scared of them. And even if we don't get the answers we immediately want, he is more trustworthy than we can fathom. And his word proves this again and again, climactically so in the gospel of Jesus. Jesus is the incarnate Word that is the Hero of the story of the written Word. He lived the sinless life that we couldn't. He died for our sins as we should've. And he

was raised again proving God's word to be true. This is why God and his word can and should be trusted. Trusting God as he has revealed himself in Jesus will make us faith, Scripture-saturated disciples.

Discussion Starters —

- What part of this message stood out to you the most?
- What holds you back from spending quality time with Jesus in Scripture?
- Who is someone you know who spends quality time with Jesus in Scripture?
- Which of the five pictures resonates the most with you?
- Which of the five responses do you think would most benefit you?
- What are other ways that you can be immersed in God's word?