

DISCIPLE

With Jesus | In Community | On Mission

SERMON TITLE: In Community: The Invitation

DATE: June 28, 2020

SCRIPTURE: Selected Scriptures

PASTOR: Charlie Boyd

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?

Here are the main points from today's message and the call-outs that were on the screen.

We are continuing our study in what it means to be a disciple of Jesus today. We are saying that "Discipleship is doing life *with Jesus, in community, and on mission*. So far, we've seen that being a disciple of Jesus means being a "Scripture-saturated," "Spirit-led" person. Over the next three weeks, we're looking at a third way we do life *with Jesus* and that is "in community." In other words, as my friend Michael Easley puts in—"The way we live the Christian life, the way we grow as disciples, the way we put Jesus on display in our world today is by being in the Word, led by the Spirit, surrounded by God's people. Today, we will unpack life "in community" with two pictures and two responses. But first, let's start with this working definition—"Gospel community is living in intentional relationships built around life and mission with Jesus." And the reason this kind of intentionality is so important is b/c—Community plays an essential role in our spiritual transformation. Now, let's look at two pictures of Jesus' invitation into community.,

Picture #1 — Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9-13; 10:1-4; 20:20-2—These four stories paint one picture of what Jesus' community of disciples looked like. Jesus' invitation to discipleship is an invitation into community—a community made of people so different that conflict is inevitable. Discipleship happens in the space between the ideal and the messy reality of community. Picture #2 builds on Picture #1

Picture #2 — Acts 2:42-47; 5:1-5 — Gospel community is essential for a disciple of Jesus—it is not optional. Living in the messy reality of community is a primary way we are transformed to become like Jesus. Today, since Jesus is present with his disciples in and through the Holy Spirit, we experience life with Jesus in community.

Two pictures, now two responses—(#1) *Get rid of your idealized pictures of the church and God's people*. There are no perfect disciples and therefore, there is no perfect church. People are messy and so group-life is messy. That's the *messy reality*—so live in that reality, not some *romanticized ideal* of the church that is sure to disappoint. Your faith does not rest on the faithfulness of Christians—it rests on the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. The truth is—You cannot truly live in relationship with a perfect, all-loving, all-forgiving, all-understanding God in heaven, if you cannot live in relationships with a less-than-perfect, less-than-forgiving, and a less-than-ideal understanding of community here on earth. (#2) *Get involved in Gospel community*. Paul Tripp puts it this way—"Your walk with God is a community project." Why? First, Jesus' invitation to be his disciple was not as much personal as it was communal. That being true, you cannot really follow Jesus alone. Second, community is the primary context where personal transformation takes place. All of the exhortations found in the NT to personally grow and mature in your faith are given to people living in the messy reality of a less-than-ideal community. We are forever thinking about personal growth and transformation in terms of *being in the Word and led by God's Spirit only*. We ignore or downplay the supreme importance of being surrounded by God's people in Gospel community.

Action Step: *If you are already in some kind of small group here at FG, begin talking about how you can turn the focus of that group into a community of intentional relationships build around life and mission with Jesus. What would have to change in your group for it to become a true, Gospel Community? Start talking about that—start praying about that—begin that conversation. If you are not in a small group here at FG, think about your friends or existing relationships—Do you have a group of friends that you could gather in your home or through Zoom to begin a*

conversation about how as followers of Jesus we need to be more intentional about pursuing life and mission with Jesus together. I'm saying—*if* what we see in Jesus and his disciples and in the churches of the NT is true—and *obviously it is—then* take personal responsibility—personal initiative—to create Gospel community with some people you know—or—to help shape a group you in which you have already become more intentional about pursuing life and mission with Jesus.

Be in the Word, led by the Spirit, and *surrounded* by God's people.

Discussion Starters — Discuss each picture above by reading the passages that are listed for each one. Then read the description of the picture in the notes above—then ask:

- What “aha’s” did you have with Picture #1? What did you think about the statement that those who first heard Jesus’ invitation to be his disciples would not have heard Jesus saying, “Come, enter into a personal relationship with God through me?” Would you say you have an “idealized” picture of what the church should be?
- What “aha’s” did you have with Picture #2? What do you think about the statement that “Gospel community is essential for a disciple of Jesus—it’s not an option. You cannot truly live in relationship with God alone.?” How does life in community with messy people (like you) work to transform us to be the person and the people God wants us to be?
- Now discuss what Charlie said at the end of the message—What would it look like if your small group became more intentionally focused around life and mission with Jesus? What does that even mean? Why is it important?