

(Turn to Matthew 4:18-22)

Last time, we shared about reaching out to others. How remaining in Christ, loving one another, and relying on His Holy Spirit is only half the story in reaching out. The other half is in making an invitation to others to follow Christ.

When we accept Christ, according to 2 Corinthians 5:17, we are “...a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” In other words, we are transformed into something new and fresh by the Spirit of God. We are born again.

After transformation...what next? How do we become a follower of Jesus? By going to church, to a small group, or to a Sunday school? Will this be sufficient?

If Christ is within us, we must daily commit our lives to following Him. Our faith becomes genuine and we begin to develop endurance for abiding and growing in Christ for life. This is a journey and tonight, I want to talk about it.

Let's pray...

1. Following Christ

In life, we are given so many roads to take and so many avenues to cross. There are turns, dead ends, even detours in life from which to choose. We can even get off course, can't we?

Who has ever gotten lost? *You know, it's the women who can sometimes get lost and the men who can never admit it, right?*

My family has taken many road trips and I cannot stand it when I get lost. I'm thankful that Heidi is patient with me at times when I get lost. This last time, we were going to Houston.

We got into the city and I took a wrong turn and it took a little while to get on course again.

Well, in life, Jesus gives us a clear direction to take. #5

Jesus says to "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."
Matthew 7:13-14

IT IS WHERE ABUNDANT LIFE IS FOUND.

Our story

"One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and followed him. A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind." Matthew 4:18-22

Why would these men suddenly follow Jesus? Fishing could have been their only trade and their only source of income for living. They chose to follow Jesus instead.

They left their independence to become dependent. They left themselves behind in those boats.

a. Following Christ, we lose ourselves. (Baptism)

“If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.” Matthew 10:39

b. We lose who we have become in life.

So many times we can define ourselves by what we do in life. “I’m a doctor or a lawyer...” so we pattern our lives after that...we go after the biggest house or the biggest car. We spend the time it takes with the right people, in the right environments, all for the sake of becoming. After all, it is who we are, right?

**Back to our scripture in Matthew 4: Jesus followers left the boundaries of what they knew to be true in life...fishing, the sun and water, hard work and labor all day and sometimes all night...for the unknown to follow Jesus.

c. We lose what we know to be true.

Truth: Conformity to fact or actuality.

A statement proven to be or accepted as true.

Fidelity to a standard

Reality

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

**So many people, including followers of Jesus, are still looking for truth and relevance in life, when everything we need is only found in Christ.

****Moving from trust in the world system of thought to using the Bible as their new road map for decision-making and morality.**

*“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’
John 14:6 (NIV)*

d. Your mind is made new. (Prayer/Bible Study)

*“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”
Ephesians 4:22-23.*

e. Know who you are in Christ.

Neil T. Anderson states, “Your understanding of who God is and who you are in relationship to Him is the critical foundation for your belief system and your behavior patterns...”

You are God’s child. You belong to Him.

*“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”
John 1:12*

You are complete as His kid!

*“...And you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”
Colossians 2:10*

You are free from your past.

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free....” Romans 8:1

“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:3

You are important.

“You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world...” Matthew 5:13,14.

*“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.”
John 15:16*

“For we are God's workmanship...” Ephesians 2:10

“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13

2. A lifelong journey - the power of a testimony

(Fasting/Journaling/Tithing/Giving)

Fear/Faith prop

Proverb: “The longest journey starts with a single step”

“I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us— yes, the

many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.” Isaiah 63:7

Born in San Antonio
Divorced at 3
Musician since 7
Came to know Christ at 12
Call to Ministry
Pastor

A testimony is important for life:

*“Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.”
1 Peter 5:8*

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” Revelation 12:11

1. You are reminded of what God has done.
2. The enemy is reminded of what God has done.
3. Others are encouraged and witness Christ’s power in your life.
4. You know where you are and where you want to grow.

3. Never walk alone (*Family of God, vision of LifeHouse*)

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.

A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.”