

Learn From Me - People Work

Christians are supposed to share Jesus with people and make disciples. This is one of the most difficult things to do. At least we make it difficult.

There are loads of books and teachings on how to make disciples. There are programs to walk people through. Yet the church is failing miserably to actually make disciples. (I don't mean church leaders, I mean the entire church body)

We sometimes have this false view of making disciples, that it's coming to church or getting someone else to come to church. Well, that's a spoke in the wheel.....

Discipleship is people work. It's investing time, it's being consistent, it's putting yourself out there, it's interjecting yourself into someone else's life, it's showing them what Jesus looks like!

Today in the series Learn From Me, we're going to focus on how Jesus did this "people work" when He called the first disciples to follow Him.

Matthew 4:18-22 (NKJV)

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

21 Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

This is the call of Peter, Andrew, James, John (Very similar account in Mark chapter 1).

We look at this and it's amazing. Jesus shows up while Peter and Andrew are working and says "Follow Me" and IMMEDIATELY they DO!

He goes on to another set of brothers, James and John, and again....calls them, they leave their father and follow Jesus!

WWJD? He'd walk up to someone at work and say "Follow Me" and it would work!

I don't know about you, but I really don't think many people would follow me like that. But I think when we talk about discipleship, and sharing the gospel, this is what people picture. We look at scripture and see the example Jesus set, and we tell people to copy it, but it just doesn't work.

#1, YOU are NOT the Son of God. #2, You are you scared to try it anyway....

You might be surprised to hear, that's not all Jesus did either.....This is why reading all 4 gospel accounts are important. They all tell the same story from 4 different points of view with different target audiences and different goals to accomplish. It's really good to read things like this in as many accounts as it is in to get a better picture...

Look at Luke's account:

Luke 5:1-2 (NKJV)

So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2 and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets.

So these men were not out fishing, they just got DONE fishing. They were washing their nets to get the salt off of them. They hadn't caught anything all night, they were tired and ready to go get some rest.

How many of you know that Jesus shows up at the perfect time? He wasn't too late, He was right on time!

Luke 5:3 (NKJV)

Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

Jesus sees tired people and makes a connection with them. He found a way to interject Himself into their lives. He didn't wait for them to come to Him, He went to them.....at work....when they were tired!

What does He say? "Follow Me"?.....nope, not yet. He begins with "hey would you mind taking me out just a little off shore"

"You have a boat, I have all these people, this MASS of people I need a little space while I speak to them....can you take me out?"

Man if this isn't a lesson on discipleship, I don't know what is.... Did Jesus preach to Peter? Nope. Jesus simply took Peter along for the ride as He preached to those who were already interested. But Peter heard it all.

We can glean some wisdom here from Jesus:

#1 - He sat down in the boat to teach. We may see this as Him getting comfortable, maybe He was tired or planned on preaching a while. But in that culture, when someone would sit to teach, it was a posture of authority. It showed confidence.

Jesus was confident in what He was about to share. He was confident enough to physically show it. And when we speak to people about Jesus, we have to do it in a way where it's loving and relatable but from a place of confidence, a place of "the Holy Spirit has shown me this is TRUTH! I know it. I believe it. I've been changed by it."

And when we do that, people will listen.

#2 - share this with people that want to hear it, but don't shy away from doing it around those who don't. They are listening. And the Spirit is working on their heart too.

Luke 5:4 (NKJV)

When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

Here we see Jesus has spoken to the masses. He knows Peter just came in from fishing. I'm sure He looked around and thought "where is the night's catch?". And He, a carpenter, tells Peter, a fisherman (this was not his hobby, it was his family business, done it his whole life).....go deep and put those nice clean nets back in for some fish!

Jesus saw their need, and He did what He could do to meet it. How often do we stop with sharing the message of Jesus. If we do that, we feel like we did our part and we call it a day. Jesus shared the good news but then He helped meet a need.

Look at the response:

Luke 5:5 (NKJV)

But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."

I don't know what would have compelled Peter to listen to Jesus here. I might be thinking "dude....seriously.....I already took you out here and listened to you preach after fishing all night"

And Peter points this out, in fact he says "Master....(teacher, leader)....we toiled all night....this means to grow weary, tired, exhausted.....and that was during peak fishing hours, but then says "Nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net"

Why? Was it the love and compassion that he heard as Jesus preached to the masses? Was it the authority that He carried? Was Peter desperate for some income?

Something about Jesus made Peter want to do it even though it made no sense....

Luke 5:6-8 (NKJV)

And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

Could you imagine? SO many fish.....nets breaking, boats sinking....these were boats that could hold 7-8 people, decent sized boats.

This was a miracle! People say Jesus turning water into wine was the first miracle but I would argue that it was this....that's not normal.....it's miraculous!

Jesus saw a need and provided. And Peter's response was not "Thank you, or WOW", it was "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

He earlier called Jesus Master, but now calls Him Lord. Peter recognizes Jesus for who He is....Lord.....because He has seen His power!

Now, I know what many of you are thinking....."well I can't perform miracles like that".....I think you are wrong.

If you help someone with a need that they have, you might be the miracle they need. You have NO IDEA how God can use a situation as small as a helping hand to touch a person's heart.

You don't know how long they have needed help.

- How many days they have waited
- How many times they tried on their own and failed
- How many prayers they have prayed

And YOU.....yes YOU.....might just be the answer to that need and that prayer!

Today in America, we throw money at everything. It's the easy way out and often times it's a way to dodge what we actually should be doing. Most of us have \$5 to spare but don't have 30 minutes to spare.

Do you remember what Peter (this same Peter) later said to the lame beggar in Acts 3?

"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

Meeting people's needs can't always be answered by handing them money. (even if they think it can)

Sometimes people's needs aren't even what they need most. More than fish, these men needed a Savior. But the way for them to see that was by providing for the need THEY thought was their greatest need.....

Our hope is that when we help with a real, tangible need, that it shares the love and compassion of Jesus, that people see Him in us, and they recognize their greatest need.....JESUS.

Luke 5:9-10a (NKJV)

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

This didn't just affect Peter, but all who were with him, all the people in his crew, and his buddy's crew who worked with him. We see Peter, Andrew, James, and John were all here, they were all witnesses of the miracle. And they were all moved to follow Jesus.

Luke 5:10b-11 (NKJV)

And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

"Do not be afraid" - what a strange response....have you ever wondered why Jesus would say this? "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." (you will be fishers of men)

I think these men were afraid....they were afraid to follow Jesus.

- On one hand, look at what just happened, who wouldn't want to see some more of THAT?
- But on the other hand, "but we are fisherman"

Isn't this how it is.....we have to look at change and decide if it's worth the cost. We know that you can't follow Jesus and stay the same. Jesus saves but Jesus changes lives.

And when you might have to give up what's comfortable to you, what's easy, what comes naturally, what you enjoy, what you love, is it worth the cost?

Jesus tells us in Luke 14 to count the cost. Make sure we are going to carry it through. Don't get started and quit!

Why do we delay, why do we have to think about it so much....we know His way has to be better....but we are afraid.

Jesus says "do not be afraid", why? Because He will use you to do great things. But it is going to require you to leave some things behind, some of your safe things, some of your favorite things.

We see these 4 fisherman, forsook ALL and followed Jesus! In Mark it tells us that James and John even left their father in the boat and went after Him.

So you see....it was much more than just a simple "Follow Me".....it was people work.

Jesus spent some time with them before the call and then He walked with them for 3 years after that call. Why do we think we can make instant disciples if Jesus didn't?

- He spent time with them.
- He preached the truth to those who wanted to hear it, but did so in the company of those who didn't
- Jesus provided what they (thought they) needed most only to show them their need for Him
- Jesus showed them who He is
- Jesus told them that they would use their talents to serve Him (catch men)

Who can you spend time with?

Who can you talk to about Jesus? Talk about what you know. You don't have to have all of the answers.

Whose miracle can you be just be offering to lend a hand or an ear or a word of prayer/encouragement?

Who can you show Jesus to?

If God is laying someone on your heart right now.....take note. Pray and ask how to reach out in a way that you are confident and they will accept.

Maybe today you are counting the cost.

- Know you can't and won't stay the same
- Know that you will have to leave some things behind
- But know that there is no better way, no greater love, no higher name, than Jesus!
- It's gonna be worth it....