



January 27, 2021

Last Sunday, I preached on the text of Jesus calling the first disciples. Discipleship is the call of all Christians, in one form or another, and so I shared these four encouragements for disciples.

1. Find the life of Jesus inspiring, beautiful, and captivating.

Remember that we are moved to act by what inspires us. Guilt and fear are poor motivations for anything. The beginning of discipleship is to (re)discover the inspiration of what is good, valuable, and important in the life of Jesus. Return to this well as often as possible to be refreshed.

In practical terms, we can do this by returning to worship, prayer, and scripture; remember the people who have shaped your life and let their lives inspire you; set aside time for reading, music, or movies that motivate you to live a life shaped by the teaching of Jesus, centered in love, justice, and mercy.

2. Practice.

Discipleship is formed by practice, like the model used in medical training of “watch one, do one, teach one.” When our church worships, we practice the act of speaking a blessing to others during the passing of the peace. This is a bit of practice, to turn to someone and say “peace be with you.” We practice in easy ways, with family and friends, and then we are more prepared to share a blessing with strangers, and with people we find difficult to like.

3. Remember that anything that is worth giving yourself to is also worth sacrificing for as well. Every choice we make involves sacrificing other choices. The life of discipleship is good; it is valuable; it is important. And so discipleship is worth sacrificing alternative paths, and worth being generous, and giving of ourselves. The womanist theologian Delores Williams reminds us that “God’s gift to humans, through Jesus, was to invite them to participate in the ministerial vision,” which is a life of “righting relationships in body, mind, and spirit.” That is a gift worthy of all we have.

4. Start today with the next good thing.

Bishop Michael Curry quotes a bit of dialogue about when is the best time to plant a tree? Answer: twenty years ago.

What’s the second best time to plant a tree? Right now.

Don’t worry about the past: the 'should haves' and 'could haves.' Start with the next good thing today. Maybe the next good thing is to rediscover your inspiration. Maybe it’s a bit of practice. Maybe it is a choice to sacrifice one path in favor of a path that leads toward the “ministerial vision” of God.

Peace,

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Senior Minister

notes: Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, 1993, page 146.  
Michael Curry, *Love is the Way*, 2020, page 121.