



6 Bible Studies

DISCIPLESHIP:

A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION

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TERM 3 MORNING TEACHING SERIES



PRIMARY AIM

To be encouraged to grow as a disciple of Jesus.

SUBSIDIARY AIMS

- To help us to take responsibility for our own maturity as Christians.
- To grow in our understanding of what a disciple is.
- To introduce St Hilary's Core Practices

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is easy to be passive about our own ongoing Christian Formation or to limit it to a narrow set of activities, such as bible reading, giving and going to church. However, a passive or limited approach is not effective at producing mature Christians. We are called to actively follow Jesus with our whole life, to work to become more like Christ and to help others to know and grow in Jesus. This teaching series is designed to help us understand what a disciple is and how disciples are made. In addition, we will explore the role of the church in each other's maturity, what practices of Jesus we can adopt into our life to become more like him, and to think about the fruit of the Spirit in our life.

After studying Colossians, the 10am Congregation will continue its exploration of Discipleship in Term 3 by embarking on this 6-week Discipleship teaching series. This teaching focus complements a number of other discipleship initiatives announced at the St Hilary's Conference in August.

STRUCTURE AND TOPICS

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READING
1	Aug-25	What is a Disciple?	Mark 1:16-20
2	Sep-1	The Making of Disciples	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
3	Sep-8	Maturity in Christ: The Role of the Church	Ephesians 4:1-16
4	Sep-15	Becoming more like Christ	2 Corinthians 3:12-18
5	Sep-22	The Fruit of Keeping in Step with the Spirit	Galatians 5:13-26
6	Sep-29	Beyond Our Walls: Mobilising Disciples	Matthew 28:16-20

1 **Mark 1:14-20**

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

1. Share in your own words what being a disciple of Jesus means to you.
2. Pray and read Mark 1:14-20.
3. In verses 14-15, why is it called 'good news'?
4. The word 'time' contains the sense of favourable, opportune or significant time. What fulfillment of God's promises is in view here?

5. What response is expected by Jesus to his proclaiming of the good news (v.15)?

6. Explore the following references to the 'kingdom of God' in Mark's Gospel: 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14, 15, 23, 24, 25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43.

What do we learn about the 'kingdom'?

7. What does Jesus ask Simon and Andrew to do (v.16-17)?

8. Jesus uses a fishing metaphor. In what ways is this metaphor helpful?

9. James and John also choose to follow Jesus 'without delay' (v.20; cf. 18). What were the likely costs for these men and their families in responding to Jesus?

10. Optional: Read the following verses and discuss how they contribute to our understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus: Mark 4:33-34; Mark 8:34-35; Luke 14:33; Matthew 5:1-2; 9:18-19; 12:48-49; 28:16-20.

11. Looking back over Mark 1, what might we learn about discipleship from the calling of Jesus' first disciples?

12. How might you grow in your capacity to follow or respond to Jesus in your daily life? What action could you take over the next week?

13. Pray for each other.

2

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

THE MAKING OF DISCIPLES

1. Pray and read 1 Thes 1:1-10.
2. Where does Paul spiritually locate the Thessalonian Christians in verse 1? What might this mean?
3. Why send greetings of 'grace' and 'peace' (1)?
4. What motivates the work of the Thessalonian believers (3)?
5. In verses 4-6, how did the gospel come to the believers in Thessalonica?

6. Who gets the credit for their faith?

7. In verses 6-7, Paul also gives thanks for how the message was modelled and imitated. How important is modelling for the process of making disciples, and why?

8. Do you think of your life as being a model for others? What difference does this understanding make in guiding our actions?

9. In the last couple of verses, 9 and 10, Paul gives a short gospel summary of how the Thessalonians became disciples: turn, serve and wait. Do you think about your own discipleship as serving and waiting? Why or why not?

10. As Paul reflects on how the Thessalonians came to faith in Jesus, what parts of their story resonates with your own story of coming to faith?

11. What is one insight from the study or something you would like to put into action this week?

12. Look back over the chapter. Notice all the places where the character of God is revealed. Spend a few minutes in prayer, praising God for his character, and then spend time praying for each other.

3

Ephesians 4:1-6

MATURITY IN CHRIST: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

1. Pray and read Ephesians 4:1-16.
2. What is 'a life worthy of the calling' characterized by according to verse 2? Share a time when you have you seen these characteristics in action.
3. What might it look like to 'make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace' (v3)?
4. Why is it important for Paul to emphasise that there is only 'one' of body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God and Father' (4-6)? What is at stake?

5. What is Psalm 68 about, and how might Psalm 68:18 in context be applied to Christ in Ephesians 4:8 (cf. Eph 1:20-22)?

6. What might verses 9-10 mean? Common options include: Christ's descent into Hades (cf. 1 Peter 3:19) or Christ's descent at his incarnation (cf. Phil 2:6-11), or descent of the exalted Christ in the Spirit. Discuss.

7. What is the purpose of giving the body of Christ these different gifts (Eph 4:11-13)?

8. What is common and distinctive between these different ministries?

9. Recall some kinds of teaching that you are aware of that misleads others. In verses 14-16, why are the metaphors Paul uses of infant and a mature body, and wind and waves so appropriate?

10. What are some ways that we as the church can encourage the identification and development of the gifts mentioned by Paul?

11. Thinking about your own life, what gifts do you have and how might you use them to build up others this week?

12. Pray for each other.

4

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

BECOMING MORE LIKE CHRIST

1. Have you ever wanted to be like someone else? What was this like?

2. Pray.
Read Exodus 34:29-35 and then 2 Corinthians 3:7-18.

3. Referring to Exodus 34, Paul contrasts the ministries of the old and new covenants to show how glorious the new covenant is. In what ways is the ministry of the new covenant superior to the old, according to verses 7-11?

4. Moses veiled his face, which served to veil the radiance of God's glory from the Israelites. In verses 12-13, the boldness of Moses, the minister of the old covenant, is contrasted with the boldness of Paul, the minister of the new covenant. Why can Paul be bold?

5. Paul speaks of another veil. What does Paul say is required to lift the 'veil' of his many fellow contemporary Jews, in verses 14-16?

6. In verses 17-18, what causes a believers' transformation into the Lord's image?

7. Read these verses:

Genesis 1:26

Romans 8:29

1 John 3:2-3

1 John 2:3-6

Matthew 11:29

Philippians 2:5-8

John 13:12-17

Ephesians 5:2

John 20:21

And ask the following,
what do we learn about Christlikeness
and God's purpose for us?

8. In what ways is it impossible to be like Christ? In what ways can we become like Christ?

9. How will we know whether we are being transformed into the likeness of Christ?

10. What steps can we take to be formed into the likeness of Christ?

11. What role do spiritual practices such as solitude, prayer, generosity, witness and service play in helping us to become like Christ?

12. Pray for each other.

5

Galatians 5:1-26

THE FRUIT OF KEEPING IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT

1. Pray and read Galatians 5:1-26.
2. Look at verses 1-12 and try to summarise Paul's argument.
3. In verse 13, what are the Galatian believers called to be free of and what are they to use their freedom for?
4. Why would Paul now refer to the law in verse 14, after saying that no one can be justified by the law (v.4)?

13. Commenting on verse 17, John Stott says, 'This is a very instructive verse because it shows that our conduct to others is determined by our opinion of ourselves'. Discuss.

14. What is one insight that you have gained or something you will incorporate into your life as a result of thinking about this passage?

15. Pray for each other.

6

Matthew 28:1-20

BEYOND OUR WALLS: MOBILISING DISCIPLES

1. What is your response to hearing that Jesus rose from the dead?
2. Pray and read Matthew 28:1-20.
3. What were the two Mary's response to Jesus' resurrection? What were the soldier's response?
4. What do we learn from the religious leaders, in how they responded to the news about Jesus' resurrection?

5. The disciples go to Galilee. We are told of two responses to the resurrected Jesus in verse 17, 'they worshiped him; but some doubted' or 'hesitated'. How are we to understand these two responses?

6. What does it mean for Jesus to say that 'all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me' (v.18)?

7. Jesus' followers are told to 'go and make disciples of all nations' (v.19). Where are Jesus' disciples told to 'go' and who do they go to?

8. There are two parts to going and making disciples - to baptise and to teach. What is required for baptism and teaching, looking at verses 19-20, but also drawing from your knowledge of scripture?

9. Do you think the great commission applies to believers today? In what ways do you see yourself as fulfilling Jesus' command?

10. How important is Jesus' promise, 'surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age', to you?

11. St Hilary's not only wants to make and mature disciples but also to mobilise disciples. To do this we continue to support the sending out of many to do this work . This can involve growing our awareness of God's mission and opportunities beyond our walls, but also encouraging each other to pray and to consider equipping and ministering further afield. Discuss some ways you are able to help mobilise disciples.

12. The work of our Mission and Social Justice Committee is one important way we support the mobilising of disciples, through giving and praying (see www.sthils.com/connect/missions-and-social-justice for the many partners we support). As a group, spend time praying for one or more of these partners.

13. Pray for each other.



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