



Session 6: Leaders take discipleship seriously

"We are not meant to die merely in order to be dead. God could not want that for the creatures to whom He has given the breath of life. We die in order to live."
Elisabeth Elliot

"The "show business," which is so incorporated into our view of Christian work today, has caused us to drift far from our Lord's conception of discipleship. It is instilled in us to think that we have to do exceptional things for God; we have not. We have to be exceptional in ordinary things, to be holy in mean streets, among mean people, surrounded by sordid sinners. That is not learned in five minutes... The best measure of a spiritual life is not its ecstasies but its obedience."
Oswald Chambers

"You will know as much of God, and only as much of God, as you are willing to put into practice."
Eric Lidell

"We must decide where we want our ministry to count—in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of our lives in a few chosen people who will carry on our work after we have gone. Really it is a question of which generation we are living for."
Robert E Coleman

"Many pastors think their greatest impact comes from preaching to many. Not true. Our greatest impact is in discipling a few. Jesus did life with the disciples in close proximity. You won't create radical disciples from a pulpit; you'll only create an audience. You must walk closely with people."
Jonathan Hayashi

Leaders are disciples first: Apprenticing Jesus

1 Timothy 4:16 challenges leaders to "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." Leaders have not arrived and are not perfect; but we are pressing on in God's kingdom as His disciples! We need to keep advancing ourselves as disciples of Jesus.

- Are we learning, growing, maturing, serving, witnessing, giving, loving and following Jesus. We need to watch our own discipleship closely.
- Am I growing cold? Am I lukewarm? Do I care about others? Am I backsliding? Do I really follow Jesus? Do I know God? Does God know me? Am I making any difference, in Jesus name, to those around me; for this world and for eternity?

Growing in Freedom in Christ

Galatians 5:1 says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

- How are we doing in the battle against the entanglements of sin and strongholds that seek to hold us back?
- We may need to break these sin patterns in our lives through the cross, repentance, forgiveness, inner healing and walking in obedience.

Seeking to Live a Holy and Christ-like Life

Leaders must first follow. We seek to follow Jesus. This affects how we live, more than we sometimes realise. Apprenticing Jesus is very practical:

- *"Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.² Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.⁸ In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.*

1 Timothy 3:1-10

Beware: backsliding happens and false teaching can affect you

"Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well,¹⁹ holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith.²⁰ Among

them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.”

1 Timothy 1:18-20

“For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵ But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”

2 Timothy 4:3-5

Leaders make disciples, who make disciples

Evangelism and disciple making as a priority

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20

We are all called to be evangelistic in our lives. Sharing Jesus is part of who we are. How will people know about Jesus, unless we tell them and show them His love? **But, how do we actually make disciples?**

“The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. ³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.”

Acts 16:29-34

Leading someone to Christ – a few simple steps to memorise and use:

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|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. God loves you | John 3:16 |
| 2. All have sinned | Romans 6:23 |
| 3. Christ died for you | Romans 5:8 |
| 4. We need to repent and believe | Mark 1:15 |
| 5. It’s time to follow Jesus | John 1:12 |

- or
- A – Admit** I have sinned against a holy God.
 - B – Believe** that Jesus died for me, to forgive my sin and save me.
 - C – Confess** my sin and turn to Christ for new life.
 - D – Decide** now to follow Jesus and give my life to Him forever.
 - E – Every day** seek to read the Bible, pray and share the gospel.

Multiplication of the church – a growing church is normal

Leaders are to make disciples, who also make disciples, who also make disciples... it keeps going and multiplies; as we grow, plant the gospel and new churches. Acts 6:7 says, “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly...”

- Leaders think about how to multiply what God has given to them by giving it away. John Wimber said that, “we can only keep, what we give away.” This giving is about multiplying the kingdom.

“Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”

Acts 13:1

Signs, wonders and social justice accompanying the gospel

This is also supernatural ministry. Jesus modelled this ministry and we can join in with His ministry in healing and deliverance. Matthew 10:8 commands the disciples to, “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.” After Jesus ascending into heaven, the miracles continued:

- *“Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”*

Acts 3:6-10

Pastoral care, teaching and loving discipline in the fear of the Lord

Discipling people involves caring, gentle instruction, loving correction and exercising healthy and appropriate discipline, remembering God's grace. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 says, *"And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. ²⁵ Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will."*

"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction."

2 Timothy 4:2

Filling with the Holy Spirit is essential for every disciple

The filling of the Spirit is essential to discipleship. We need to pray for more people to be filled. Have you ever prayed for someone to be filled with the Spirit? We can all do it and leaders need to offer this ministry as needed:

- *¹⁴ When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. ¹⁵ When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 8:14-17

How to pray for someone to be filled with the Spirit: a few simple steps to memorise and use.

- If possible, minister to the same gender or in two's. Ask if you can lay hands on the person's shoulder; encourage them to close their eyes and place their hands out as if to receive a gift. Make sure you keep your eyes open so you can see what God is doing. Then gently lead them through a prayer, which they will pray, but you lead them in. Keep everything simple, natural and low key.

Encourage them to:

1. **Seek** to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. **Confess** all known sin (silently or out loud).
3. **Ask** and expect – "Please fill me with the Holy Spirit now in Jesus name."
4. **Invite** the Holy Spirit to come – "Come Holy Spirit"
5. **Wait** on the Lord... and keep waiting and expecting (keep your eyes open).

Leadership Bible Character:

Tabitha: A leader who made disciples

Tabitha lived in the port city of Joppa. She was known for “always doing good and helping the poor” (Acts 9:36). When first we hear of her in Acts 9; she had fallen ill and died and was prepared for burial. So important was Tabitha’s ministry to the early church that Peter was brought to her bedside. He found widows weeping from all over Joppa. They showed him all the clothes she had made for them. Peter sent everyone out of the room and fell on his knees to pray and said, “Tabitha, get up” (v40). Tabitha opened her eyes and sat up. This is one of just two resurrection stories in the book of Acts. **To Tabitha belongs the worthy distinction of being the only woman in the New Testament identified with the feminine form of the word “disciple” — *mathetria* (v36).** The word literally means “pupil,” or “apprentice,” and might possibly mean that at some point, Tabitha had learned directly from Jesus, like Mary of Bethany – perhaps one of the larger group of followers.

What we do know is:

- Tabitha was a disciple and disciple maker
- She was probably not on the platform in church, but behind the scenes helping others. She did good works and cared for the poor
- Her death showed how she was missed by those in need – she made a difference in their lives (she had made clothes for them).
- She served in ordinary ways, doing acts of love and kindness that served others, but God did far more .

A closing encouragement to leaders here at St Mary’s

*¹⁰ You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹ persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. ¹² In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,¹³ while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.¹⁴ **But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,** ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ **so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

2 Timothy 3:10-17