

Sent

On Sunday, we continued our series “Journeying With Jesus” by exploring what it looks like to accept the call to live as followers of Jesus.

1. Warm-up Question: A wise soul once said, “Everyone has a purpose in life; perhaps yours is watching television.” What’s one of your favorite ways to waste time?
2. Of course, a certain amount of wasting of time is healthy. But those are usually not the moments that give us deep meaning in life. Nor is it easy to find meaning. It’s much easier just to float along, marking time, doing what everybody else does, guided by nothing deeper than meeting the external demands that life in our culture imposes.
 - a. What are some of the external demands of life that have consumed a lot of your energy, but haven’t felt worthwhile to you?
 - b. As you look back across the years, when have you felt most like your life was adrift – most lacking in purpose and direction?
 - c. As you look back across the years, when have you felt like your life was most purposeful and meaningful?
 - d. Most people struggle to find a compelling answer to the question, “What am I here?” Why do you think that is? Why is it so difficult to find meaning in life?
3. On Sunday we explored how Jesus suggests we answer the question, “Why am I here?” For guidance, we looked to the words of Jesus’ when he first commissioned his disciples. Read Matthew 10:1-15.
 - a. Before they met Jesus, his disciples seemed to be living pretty ordinary lives. James, John, and Peter were fishermen. Matthew was a tax collector. Joanna travelled in high society circles as part of King Herod’s inner circle (Lk. 8). Mary Magdalene was also well off, but struggled with what we today would call mental illness (Lk. 8). Then they met Jesus. In their first encounters with Jesus, what kinds of thoughts and feelings do you imagine these disciples experienced?
 - b. By Matthew’s 10th chapter, Jesus is ready to send his disciples out to practice living more fully into their call/meaning/purpose. So he gives them instructions. Before we get to the meat of his instructions, let’s explore a few incidental questions. Why do you think Jesus told them to focus only the Israelites?
 - c. Why do you think he told them to take no money or extra clothes or shoes on their journey? What, if any, application might that have to our lives today?
 - d. At the end of this passage, Jesus compares the wickedness of those who would refuse to show hospitality to his disciples to the wickedness of the people of

Sodom and Gomorrah. Based on what Jesus says here, what appears to have been the great sin of Sodom and Gomorrah?

4. But now let's turn our attention to the core of Jesus' instructions to his disciples. On Sunday, Jeff defined "kingdom of heaven" as "any place where God is king, i.e., where God rules and God's presence and power are pervasive." The message Jesus tells his followers to proclaim is, "The kingdom of heaven has come near!" (Vs. 7.)
 - a. What does that mean? What did it mean back then – and what does it mean now – to say, "The kingdom of heaven has come near!"
 - b. Do you believe that message? Do you believe it's true? Why or why not?
 - c. Specifically, Jesus tells his followers to "cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." (Vs. 8.) Why? How was this relevant to convincing people that "the kingdom of heaven was near"?
 - d. What are the implications of verse 8 for us in figuring out what we're supposed to do with our lives today?
 - e. The classical King James Version rendering of the last phrase in verse 8 is especially poetic: "Freely you have received, freely give." What does that mean? What does a life characterized by that phrase look like? Who in your life experience comes to mind as an example?
5. Jeff suggested that the classic 1978 movie "Superman" offers a great metaphor for how Jesus' followers should think of themselves – the idea being: that we too have been "sent" – i.e., put here on this planet – to be powerful, permeating, positive change agents for God.
 - a. Do you feel sent? Why or why not? How would you finish this sentence, "I feel I have been sent here to. . . ."
 - b. If you feel sent, when was your "Arctic crystal temple" moment, i.e., the time or place in life when you first began to awaken to that sense of being "sent"?
6. Jeff summed it up this way: "When we are at our best, we are the kind of people who bring a little more of heaven into every situation we enter. When we enter a room, people ought to feel that the kingdom of heaven has come closer to them."
 - a. Of course, none of us lives that calling perfectly. But can you think of a time recently when you've had a chance to have that kind of influence on a situation?
 - b. As you look around at some of the challenging situations you now face, describe what it might look like for you to bring more of heaven into one of those situations.