

The Year of The Disciple

Mark 1.14-20

It's that time of year again, time to start looking forward. What will this year hold? What do we want it to hold? What are our hopes? Our dreams? Our aspirations? Dare I say it, our resolutions? Come on. You know you make them, even if you don't verbalize them to anyone. We won't even talk about whether we keep them. But, we do make them. Somewhere deep down inside we seem to be hard-wired to look forward toward a future that is different than the present we are in, something wholly other, better, more whole. We resolve, set within ourselves, to work toward that future. I think this internal bent, this unquenchable thirst for something other is what draws me to the message of Jesus, for Jesus comes offering more. The rub for me comes in what he asks of me to get there.

Think about it for a moment. Jesus comes on the scene announcing that the Kingdom of God has broken into time. God is moving in an intentional way to reestablish His control over creation, over people so that it all moves back to the way it was meant to be, the way it is supposed to be. Think, that life of something more. As Jesus shows up, his preaching about God's Kingdom showing up has ramifications, real personal ones. You see, the reason God's Kingdom is showing up is that other Kingdoms already exist, Kingdoms that are ruling the world and our lives. I don't know about you, but it is my understanding that Kingdoms don't like to coexist. That means one has to go for the other to stay. I can't have God's Kingdom and the life that comes with it and keep the Kingdoms I already have. They just can't coexist. So, what Jesus is really asking of me, of you, is for the other Kingdoms to go so that His can stay. That's tough, because we like our Kingdoms, our own fiefdoms of control and power. As good as they make us feel, the longing for more, for that life that is wholly other makes me pause and then let go. Letting go so that I can grasp something new, something better, something that is going to move me to what I really want anyway.

A fellow traveler,

Blake
Spiritual Formation Pastor

My Next Step

We encourage you to consider doing the following as a way of handing off faith to your family. . .

- **Posting visual reminders to follow Jesus:** Jesus calls us to follow him, to orient our lives completely around him. Sometimes that is easier said than done. One thing that can help is the posting of visual reminders in conspicuous places that spur us to turn our lives continually to

Christ. This could be a framed Bible verse in a family room or kitchen, or a picture of Jesus or a cross somewhere in your home. When you hang these objects in your home, use them as touch points to explain what following Jesus means to your children on a periodic basis. You will find that they will carry both these images and your words with them as guide posts for their adult lives.

We encourage you to take one of the following next steps on your faith journey. . .

- **Evaluate what Kingdoms are reigning:** Jesus calls us to abandon all other Kingdoms so that God's Kingdom make reign in our lives. The pushing out of other Kingdoms is a slow and arduous process that takes us being honest and open to God. Consider spending some time evaluating where you are at in the journey of abandoning other Kingdoms for the purpose of accepting God's own. You might begin by sitting for a few moments in God's love and then asking God to be open and honest with you. Next, go through your checkbook, calendar, and any other item you have that might give an overview of how you are spending your time and money. What do these say about who is in-charge of your life? Next, sit in God's love and then ask Him how He would have you to respond.