

2022 Theme - Extraordinary God + Ordinary People = Transformed Lives

Sermon Series - Extraordinary Discipleship

Sermon Title - Fellowship - Tragedy and Triumph

Sermon Text - John 1:35-39

Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry

Full Sermon Notes

"I was a wretch I remember who I was, I was lost I was blind I was running out of time
Sin separated, the breach was far too wide, But from the far side of the chasm You had me in
Your sight"

Folks, that is my testimony and I can say with Paul the Apostle...

1 Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

1 Corinthians 15:57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

God wants to save you and to fellowship with you on a daily basis! Jesus made a way for that to happen, but He has given you the choice of whether to enter into a relationship with Him and then fellowship with Him as a disciple of Jesus! Today we will see the stark difference between a disciple who embraced discipleship and a disciple who refused to be discipled! Let's pray and ask God to reveal to us our personal discipleship status! Prayer!

The disciple John, more commonly known as the Apostle John, writes in his gospel this account of some of Jesus' first disciples who had been disciples of John the Baptist...

John 1:35 The next day John (the Baptist) was there again with two of his disciples.

John 1:36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

John 1:37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.

John 1:38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

John 1:39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

I would have loved to have been a part of that time of fellowship! These disciples of John the Baptist would end up fellowshiping with Jesus for some three plus years. We know from John's gospel that one of the disciples was Andrew, Peter's brother. And most theologians believe the other disciple was the Apostle John who wrote the Gospel of John. As we will see today, the Apostle John would not mention his own name. Evidently out of humility.

Jesus loved each one of the disciples! Today we're going to talk about two of them. We're going to talk about the fellowship that could have been with one, and the fellowship that was with the other. We'll spend most of our time talking about the fellowship that was!

The Fellowship that could have been! Tragedy in the Life of Judas Iscariot!

Matthew 10:1 Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Matthew 10:2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John;

Matthew 10:3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

Matthew 10:4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans.

Matthew 10:6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.

Matthew 10:7 As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'

Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

Matthew 10:9 "Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts—

Matthew 10:10 no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.

So Jesus called 12 disciples to follow Him as His closest disciples and to fellowship with Him. But He was also training them and calling them to do ministry! And yes, along with Peter, and Matthew, whom we have already talked about, Judas Iscariot was among the ones sent out to do ministry. Although Jesus knew what Judas would eventually do, betray Him to His death, Judas had opportunities to go a different direction, but he didn't. Jesus was well aware of what was going to happen. We see this in Jesus' words following one of Peter's famous statements...

John 6:68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

John 6:69 We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."

John 6:70 Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!"

John 6:71 (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

However, just because God, in His infinite wisdom, knows what someone is going to do, this does not mean God causes that person to do what they do! As I've said before, when my kids were little, I would sometimes know exactly what they were about to do in a given situation, but that was certainly not me causing them to behave that way! So just because God knows something in advance, doesn't mean He causes that something to happen. I think it's very interesting that in His initial instructions to the 12, Jesus says...

Matthew 10:9 "Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts—

Matthew 10:10 no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.

Jesus was using extraordinary discipleship principles to teach valuable lessons! This message was for all 12, but held special significance for Judas. Jesus knew Judas struggled in this area. You might remember this incident...

John 12:1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

John 12:2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.

John 12:3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

John 12:4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected,

John 12:5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages."

John 12:6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

John 12:7 "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial."

Jesus had to put Judas in his place but He was still trying to teach and disciple. He explained to Judas and the others that this perfume had been used symbolically as preparation for His death. And when it comes to Judas Iscariot, Jesus really did love him. We know this because of what happened in the garden when Judas betrayed Jesus to His death...

Matthew 26:47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Matthew 26:48 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him."

Matthew 26:49 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

Matthew 26:50 Jesus replied, "Do what you came for, friend." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

Did you hear that? Jesus called Judas "Friend!" Jesus wasn't being facetious, He really did care for Judas and was sad for him. Jesus wasn't caught off guard by Judas' action! He knew Judas' heart, but that didn't diminish Jesus' love for Judas! It's like Andrew preached, Jesus is a friend even to Sinners. In fact, God's Word says this...

Romans 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

So we know Jesus loves sinners and died for them, but each one of us sinners must make a decision to trust what Jesus did on the Cross for our salvation. We do that when we realize we are sinners in need of a Savior and cry out to Jesus be that Savior. Paul would later write...

Romans 10:9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Romans 10:11 As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."

Romans 10:12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Judas had choices to make, but made some really bad ones. And even after his betrayal, when he realized this...

Matthew 27:3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.

Matthew 27:4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."

Matthew 27:5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Judas, even after realizing he had done wrong and was seized with remorse, takes matters into his own hands instead of asking for and trusting in the forgiveness of God. Judas certainly knew the right thing to do because He had been a disciple of Jesus for 3 plus years and had heard His teachings on forgiveness! However, Judas didn't think he could be forgiven. He was still under the old way of Jewish thinking, believing he had to measure up to the fullness of the law or else. So even after seeing Jesus give grace and mercy to so many during His ministry on earth, Judas didn't think it could be for him, and he made yet another sad and bad decision and ended his life. Heartbreaking. Again, Jesus knew what Judas was going to do. Jesus had said this in His prayer in John 17...

John 17:12 While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

The Scripture Jesus was referring to was Psalm 41:9...

Psalm 41:9 Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.

So once again we see this word friend even in the Old Testament prophecy about Judas and his betrayal. And this passage says “close friend!” Jesus had spent three years with Judas and although He knew what Judas was going to do, Jesus truly cared about him. I want you to know that God desires fellowship with you today no matter what you’ve done. No matter how many times you have said no to God or even betrayed Him and have chosen sin over God’s will for your life, you need to know this truth...

1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

1 John 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

1 John 2:2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

So it’s never too late! Okay, there was another disciple who followed Jesus and found a powerful friendship and fellowship with Jesus.

The Fellowship that Was - Triumph in the Life of the Apostle John

The disciple I’m going to talk about now was on the opposite side of things when it came to fellowship and friendship with Jesus. This disciple chose to not only follow Jesus but he chose to be fully discipled by Jesus. In fact this disciple got so close to Jesus that he gained some very powerful insights into who Jesus was. He penned these absolutely amazing insights about Jesus...

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 He was with God in the beginning.

John 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

John 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

(That would be John the Baptist)

John 1:7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.

John 1:8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

John 1:9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

John 1:11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

John 1:13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

This disciple states very plainly that he had seen the glory of Jesus! What insights, what depth, what inspiration. That kind of inspiration came from the Holy Spirit and through the relationship this disciple had personally with Jesus! This disciple had been paying really close attention to every single word Jesus had spoken and had watched with eagle eye everything Jesus did. He learned by listening and watching! Which disciple wrote such amazing words about Jesus? None other than the Apostle John who wrote The Gospel According to John! Did you notice that John wrote in the plural when he said...

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

He was acknowledging that he was not the only one who had seen and heard and been disciplined! This was typical humble Apostle John fashion! John, however, was so confident in his relationship with and fellowship with Jesus that he would write about Jesus' love for him. But, he was so humble about their friendship and the closeness he had achieved with the Master he would never associate his name with the stories he reported concerning their friendship. At least five times anonymously referred to himself as...

"The disciple whom Jesus loved!"

Now John wasn't insinuating that Jesus didn't love the others. He was just very humbly trying to state the case that he had become extremely close to Jesus and that Jesus had taken him into His confidence and inner circle! Remember that the Apostle John was the unnamed disciple of John the Baptist who heard Jesus called "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" But the Apostle John not only remembered those major details, he remembered little things because when you're that close to someone, even little things are important! You know I want to get to the place in my relationship with the Lord that even the smallest things Jesus taught and did become very important to me. Because the truth is this: If Jesus thought it important enough to mention, then there's some really important reason I should pay attention! Jesus knew John's heart and his dedication to detail. I believe this would be one of the reasons John was present with Jesus and maybe even right by His side at really important times. Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him up on the mount of transfiguration. He took these three with him when He healed Jairus's daughter. Peter and John were the ones sent to prepare The Lord's Supper. The same three went further with Jesus into the Garden to pray with Him before

His crucifixion, even though they fell asleep. And you know that while in the garden, Jesus was arrested. And we all know about Peter's denial of Jesus three times when he was outside by the fire while Jesus was being questioned. The other disciples were nowhere to be found except an anonymous, unnamed disciple, who could have been the Apostle John...

John 18:15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard,
John 18:16 but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

Again, we don't know for sure who this other disciple was, but it sure fits the pattern of John's anonymity when writing about himself. But what we do know is that John was so close to Jesus that when Jesus was on the cross, he did not watch from a distance but was at the very foot of the cross with Jesus' mother Mary. John was extremely loyal to Jesus and so Jesus gave John a huge responsibility.

John 19:25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

John 19:26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son,"

John 19:27 and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

This story says something beautiful and powerful about Jesus, and about John, as well as their relationship! Clifton J. Allen, in the Broadman Commentary on John says this...

"Although Jesus had now taken upon himself the cares of the world, he was no less concerned about the cares of his mother. In the same spirit of concern which he had shown for the protection of his disciples (John 17:11–12; 18:8–9), he refused to let personal agony distract him from the practical duties of a son. To his mother (here called woman as in 2:4) he commended the beloved disciple as her son (i.e., as the one who would take his place in her life), while to the disciple he presented Mary in her new role as his mother. From that hour this ideal disciple accepted the responsibility laid upon him and took her to his own home..."

William E. Hull, "John," in Luke–John, ed. Clifton J. Allen, Broadman Bible Commentary (Broadman Press, 1970), 360.

Wow! What an extraordinary relationship and fellowship John had with Jesus that Jesus would ask him to take his mother into his home and take care of her. Evidently Joseph, her husband, Jesus' earthly father had passed away. Man I would hope that my relationship and fellowship with Jesus could be such that He would trust me with such a responsibility!

So we know that the Apostle John was an amazing disciple of Jesus and was a disciple who had extraordinary fellowship with Jesus and would go on to pen the Gospel of John, First,

Second and Third John, as well as the Book of Revelation. However, don't think that he was perfect. He was not. In fact, if you study his life as a disciple of Jesus you will quickly discover that while he was the disciple whom Jesus deeply loved, Jesus had to do some extraordinary discipleship in his life. In fact he and his brother James were known as the Sons of Thunder! Why? They had short fuses! And John needed some serious character training! Maybe Jesus spent more time with John, his brother James and Peter, because they needed a heavier discipleship regime than the other disciples! Once, right after Jesus had healed a young demon possessed boy, this happened...

Luke 9:43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples,

Luke 9:44 "Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men."

Luke 9:45 But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

Luke 9:46 An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest.

Luke 9:47 Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him.

Luke 9:48 Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest."

Luke 9:49 "Master," said John, "we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us."

Luke 9:50 "Do not stop him," Jesus said, "for whoever is not against you is for you."

Luke 9:51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Luke 9:52 And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him;

Luke 9:53 but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem.

Luke 9:54 When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?"

Luke 9:55 But Jesus turned and rebuked them.

Luke 9:56 Then he and his disciples went to another village.

Wow! Would you say that discipleship is a process? Absolutely! These guys had been with Jesus when He offered grace and mercy to the Samaritan woman at the well! But now the old prejudices between Jews and Samaritans resurfaced! Shocking how quickly we are willing to cast stones at those we dislike or disagree with! Shocking how quickly we forget from whence we came! Shocking how quickly we will accept the love and forgiveness of Jesus for our own sins, but how slow or unwilling we are to give love and forgiveness to those who have offended us. What is the answer? The extraordinary discipleship of Jesus Christ in our daily lives and the extraordinary change that comes into a person's life after they have seen the price Jesus paid on the Old Rugged Cross to pay for the sins of wicked humanity and to be able to offer grace, mercy and forgiveness to all who will call upon the name of the Lord! And listen to what happened a year or two later, after Jesus' crucifixion...

Acts 8:14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria.

Acts 8:15 When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

Acts 8:16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 8:17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

How about that! John went from wanting to call fire down from heaven to destroy them to praying for them to receive The Holy Spirit!

And we have a beautiful written record of the changes in the Apostle John's heart and doctrine as he continued to be discipled by The Holy Spirit of Jesus after His death on the Cross. I will close with these words of the Apostle John, once known as one of the Sons of Thunder! Listen and be amazed at how the extraordinary discipleship of Jesus, through His Holy Spirit can transform a life.

1 John 4:7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 John 4:11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1 John 4:13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit.

1 John 4:14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

1 John 4:15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God.

1 John 4:16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

1 John 4:17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

Let's pray!