**Series OVERVIEW**

The kingdom of God has come near!” Jesus came announcing that there was a way of living, a way of being in the world, that was available to us right now. We don’t have to wait until after we die to experience eternal life, we can experience a life that is truly life today! How? By responding to Jesus’ invitation to “follow me.” Jesus invites us to be his apprentices in living. He wants to guide us in living this life that is truly life. During this series, we’ll invite people to say “yes” to a way of life that truly changes everything.

During this series, we will be challenging everyone to a 25 Day Journaling Experience. Paper journals will be available at all locations with a suggested $1 donation.

**Week 1 | September 15, 2019 | Heaven Starts Now**

**Scripture:** Mark 1:14-15, John 10:7-10, John 17:1-5

**Message Big Idea:** Jesus gives us a picture of an eternal life that starts right now.

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” -Mark 1:14-15

7 Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. -John 10:7-10

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. -John 17:1-5

**MESSAGE DESCRIPTION:**

Even if you’ve never read the Bible, there are two passages of Scripture that most of us have heard at one time or another.

One is the Lord’s Prayer that includes the line: “...your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” -Matthew 6:10

The other is John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

These are familiar passages that speak of heaven, eternal life, and a kingdom, and yet most of us don’t understand them.

Most of us think heaven as something that begins after we die. However, Jesus doesn’t talk about eternal life that way. When Jesus proclaims, “The Kingdom of God has come near” (Mark 1:14-15), he is telling us that there is a way of life that can be lived right now that is eternal. A quality of life that is heaven on earth! It’s a life lived in the Kingdom of God.

“Kingdoms” (Ortberg, Eternity is Now in Session, 20-23)

*“Everyone has a kingdom–in the biblical sense. Your kingdom is that little sphere in which what you say goes. Your kingdom is the ‘range of your effective will.’...My kingdom is the range of my effective will. It’s the sphere where things go the way I want them to go.”*

Having a kingdom is a good thing. It’s part of the imago dei in us (Genesis 1:26). We were made to have dominion.

“On earth, all our little kingdoms intersect and merge and form larger kingdoms–families, corporations, nations, and economic, political, and cultural systems. We could call that whole conglomeration the ‘kingdom of the earth.’ And that kingdom is junked up by sin.”

“Jesus says there is a domain called the ‘Kingdom of God.’ It is the range of God’s effective will. It is wherever God’s will is done. It is the sphere in which everything that happens meets with God’s approval and delight. Everything is precisely as God wants it to be.”

Things in the kingdom of earth are not going well. But Jesus has a plan. To bring the kingdom of God to the earth.

Jesus’ intent is for us to integrate our kingdom into his kingdom, and to learn to mesh our kingdom with the kingdom of others. Jesus came to show and teach what life looks in God’s kingdom. This is an eternal kind of life that we can start living right now and live forever!

Jesus defines “eternal life” only once. In fact, in all of the New Testament, this is the only definition we find for eternal life and it is this:

“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” –John 17:3

Eternal life is knowing God. Not knowing about God, but a knowledge of God that is interactive and participatory and experiential. It is experiencing the presence and favor and power of God in our lives in a way that transforms everything about us and our experience of this life. It literally changes everything!

Author John Ortberg writes: *“This is eternal life. It is not something far away in outer space that we can only hope to experience after we die. It is not simply being able to give the right answers at church, affirming the right doctrines, or achieving the minimum entrance requirements to cross over the bridge and get into heaven. On the contrary, it’s something much bigger and far more amazing. The gospel Jesus preached is Good News that this eternal kind of life is available now.”* (p. 5)

The Good News that Jesus came to bring is that eternal life is available right now by grace through Jesus (John 10:7-10).

Jesus is still inviting people to live in this grand journey of inner change and outer purpose. He is inviting you. You can live a life that is truly life! Heaven starts now!

**Week 2 | September 22, 2019 | The Invitation of Jesus**

**All Church Baptisms**

**Scripture:** Mark 1:14-20, Mark 2:13-14

**Message Big Idea:** Jesus invites us to an eternal life that starts right now.

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” 16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 “Come, follow me,”Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. -Mark 1:14-20

13 Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. 14 As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. -Mark 2:13-14

**MESSAGE DESCRIPTION:**

What does “being a Christian” mean?

Someone who hold certain beliefs?

Someone who is part of a particular church?

Someone who does certain things?

Someone who has prayed a certain prayer?

Someone who has been baptized?

The truth is many people aren’t experiencing the fulfilment of their longings in their Christian faith. Maybe you’re someone who would say: “I believe in Jesus, I was baptized, I go to church regularly.” And yet, in the words of Bono, “I still haven’t found what I’m looking for.”

Or maybe you’re not a Christian, and when you look around at those who are, it doesn’t seem very compelling.

The problem: We have a mistaken view of what it means to be a Christian. We think of salvation as believing the right things about Jesus so that we’ll go to heaven after we die. The problem is Jesus doesn’t talk about salvation this way. (Possible Illustration: Climax of the movie Monty Python and the Holy Grail. King Arthur and his nights come to the castle. Lying between them and the castle is a bottomless abyss. A bridge keeper guards the only bridge that gives access. Only if King Arthur gives the right answer to the keeper’s questions will he be allowed to cross. Otherwise, they will be cast into the abyss. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPOyOM7wxlE)

Jesus went around announcing that something had happened with his arrival in this world. The “Kingdom of God” had come (Mark 1:14-15). It is now available for everyday, ordinary people to live in. Jesus’ invitation to live in this Kingdom is simple. He states it this way: “Follow me.” (Mark 1:16-20, Mark 2:13-14) It’s an invitation to become a talmidim, which is Hebrew for “disciple” but might be better translated with the word “apprentice.”

John Ortberg writes: “Jesus never said, ‘Believe the right things about me, and I’ll let you into heaven after you die.’ His news was something far grander, more cosmic, more life-changing, more costly, more compelling, and more humbling than that...Jesus’ Good News is that eternal life–life with God and for God, life under God’s care and life by God’s power–is available now. If you want that life, the logical step is to become a disciple–a student, an apprentice, a follower–of Jesus.”

Finding your way back to God is not meant to stop with just accepting what Jesus did for you on the cross. It is meant to be a decision to follow Jesus.

This is the main reason at COMMUNITY we don’t really use the word “Christian,” instead we prefer the term “Christ-follower.” The Bible never defines the word “Christian.” It never calls anyone to become a Christian. It never records anyone becoming a Christian. Jesus never uses the word Christian. In fact the word “Christian” only appears 3 times in all of the New Testament, while the word for “disciple” or “apprentice” appears 269 times. We believe “Christ-follower” more accurately describes what it means to become an apprentice of Jesus.

Dallas Willard states: *“[An apprentice] is someone whose ultimate goal is to live their life the way Jesus would live if he were me.” (*The Divine Conspiracy, p. 60)

My Actual Life is the Focus of My Apprenticeship to Jesus (Willard, 283-291)

“I am learning from Jesus how to lead my life, my whole life, my real life. Note, please, I am not learning from him how to lead his life. His life on earth was a transcendently wonderful one. But it has now been led.”

“My discipleship to Jesus is, within clearly definable limits, not a matter of what I do, but of how I do it.”

“To be a disciple of Jesus is, crucially, to be learning from Jesus how to do your job as Jesus himself would do it.”

“As his apprentices, we are personally interacting with him as we do our job, and he is with us, as he promised, to teach us how to do it best.”

Brother Lawrence: “Our sanctification does not depend upon changing our works, but in doing that for God’s sake which we commonly do for our own.”

“The apprentices of Jesus are primarily occupied with the positive good that can be done during their days ‘under the sun’ and the positive strengths and virtues that they develop in themselves as they grow toward ‘the kingdom prepared for them from the foundations of the world’ (Matthew 25:34). What they, and God, get out of their lifetime is chiefly the person they become.”

“In summary, the disciple or apprentice of Jesus, as recognized by the New Testament, is one who has firmly decided to learn from him how to lead his or her life, whatever that may be, as Jesus himself would do it. And, as best they know how, they are making plans–taking the necessary steps, progressively arranging and rearranging their affairs–to do this.”

Willard adds: “If [Jesus] were to come today as he did then, he could carry out his mission through most any decent and useful occupation. He could be a clerk or accountant in a hardware store, a computer repairman, a banker, an editor, doctor, waiter, teacher, farmhand, lab technician, or construction worker. He could run a housecleaning service or repair automobiles. In other words, if he were to come today he could very well do what you do. He could very well live in your apartment or house, hold down your job, have your education and life prospects, and live within your family surroundings, and time. None of this would be the least hindrance to the eternal kind of life that was his by nature and becomes available to us through him.” (Willard, 14)

Why become an apprentice of Jesus? Again, from Dallas Willard: “There is no problem in human life that apprenticeship to Jesus cannot solve. You name the problem–greed, fear, racism, injustice, divorce, sexual assault, neglect, pollution, suffering, addiction, rejection, bitterness, violence, apathy, grief, war, death. Human problems will not be solved by human means. Human problems will not be solved by human nature. Human nature is our biggest problem. There are many problems technology will never solve. There are many problems education will never solve. There are many problems money will never solve. There are many problems religion will never solve. But there is no problem in human life that apprenticeship to Jesus cannot solve.”

This message will conclude with a challenge to say “yes” to Jesus’ invitation to become his apprentice. Some may say “yes” for the first time and choose to get baptized. Others, might realize they aren’t experiencing the fullness of life in his Kingdom because they aren’t living as his apprentice. We’ll want to give them the opportunity to make/renew their commitment today as well.

Encourage people to come back for the remaining three weeks of the series as we discuss how to live as an apprentice of Jesus. It means orienting your life around: 1) Being with Jesus, 2) Loving like Jesus, and 3) Living like Jesus.

**Week 3 | September 29, 2019 | Be With Jesus**

Scripture: John 15:1-10, John 1:35-39, John 14:16-18, John 14:25-27

Message Big Idea: An apprentice of Jesus chooses to be with Jesus.

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. 9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. -John 15:1-10

35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” 37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?” 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. John 1:35-39

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. -John 14:16-18

25 “All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. -John 14:25-27

**MESSAGE DESCRIPTION:**

There is an eternal kind of life available to us right now. It’s life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus’ invitation to live in the Kingdom of God is simple. He states it this way: “Follow me.” It’s an invitation to become a talmidim, which is Hebrew for “disciple” but might be better translated with the word “apprentice.”

If I’m going to be an apprentice of Jesus, there is one absolutely essential condition. I must be with Jesus.

When Jesus says to his would-be apprentices, “Come and see,” he’s in essence saying, “Let’s hang out (John 1:35-39, 43-49). The twelve men he eventually chose to be his apprentices were constantly with Jesus. Their apprenticeship took place around shared meals, road trips, and just doing ordinary life together.

How do we be with Jesus today? Through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18, 14:25-27). The Spirit is the very presence of God living within every Christ-follower. Our primary goal as apprentices of Jesus is to learn to live in a constant state of awareness of and connection to the Holy Spirit. Being “with” Jesus is about learning to always live in two places at once…at home and with Jesus, at work and with Jesus, in the car and with Jesus.

Jesus describes this kind of constant connection in his teaching about the vine and the branches (John 15:1-10). This metaphor is about “remaining” in him like a branch to a vine no matter what else you are doing. When we remain in the vine, the Spirit will produce all kinds of fruit in our lives. Trying to produce this fruit without actually abiding would be like taping fruit to a vine instead of letting it emerge through the branches.

Nothing will help us experience the eternal life more than a constant awareness of and connection to the presence of God. Brother Lawrence called this “Practicing the presence of God.” It doesn’t just happen naturally. As Brother Lawrence says, we have to “practice” this.

We’ll want to give some practical advice on how to be with Jesus. Here are some ideas:

John Mark Comer gives two pieces of advice...a short term one and a long term one. In the short term, set aside a little time each day for silence and solitude.” 10 minutes to just be with Jesus (not reading, not praying) just being still in his presence. Long term, simplify your life down to what really matters, slowly cut out all the extra, unnecessary activities, and gradually add in the practices of Jesus. Every one of us needs to figure out what, for you, are the core practices that lead you to life with Jesus? This takes years to figure out.

Habits of prayer, silence and solitude, corporate gatherings, fasting, reflecting on Scripture are the ways we practice being with Jesus. These CELEBRATE habits are not an end in themselves; the point of all of them is to help us be with Jesus.

We could conclude this message with inspirational story (as told by John Ortberg in a podcast with Cary Nieuhof) about the kind of intimacy with God we should strive for. Dallas Willard lived in such an awareness of the presence of God in his life that when he was dying, he told a close friend, “I wonder if it will take me awhile to notice.”

**Week 4 | October 6, 2019 | Love Like Jesus**

Scripture: Matthew 4:18-22, 9:9-10, Matthew 10:1-4, Ephesians 2:19-22

Message Big Idea: An apprentice of Jesus is committed to loving like Jesus.

8 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 20 At once they left their nets and followed him. 21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. -Matthew 4:18-22

9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. -Matthew 9:9-10

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

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; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. -Matthew 10:1-4

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. -Ephesians 2:19-22

**MESSAGE DESCRIPTION:**

There is an eternal kind of life available to us right now. It’s life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus’ invitation to live in the Kingdom of God is simple. He states it this way: “Follow me.” It’s an invitation to become a talmidim, which is Hebrew for “disciple” but might be better translated with the word “apprentice.”

Apprentices of Jesus learn to love like Jesus.

Recognize, Jesus lived in community. From before creation he lived in community with the Father and the Spirit, a mystery we know as the Trinity. And when he came to earth as a human being, he lived in community with his apprentices.

John Mark Comer (“How We Change: Community”) points out: Jesus didn’t just call one disciple. He called many. Religious people and non-religious people. Jesus had 12 apostles, but many disciples. A wide range of people. He puts together this little community from many different people.

What is “Community?” Community is more than just a group of friends. During this talk, we’ll unpack the imagery in Ephesians 2:19-22 to understand the kind of community we are meant to experience in the Kingdom of God. Each image is a more intimate expression of relationship...from citizens of a country to members of a family to being joined so closely together like the stones in a building. (Might also look at the wording of this passage in The Passion Translation)

Community takes time and intentionality. “We often fantasize about the village growing up around us spontaneously, as if frequent reciprocity will magically appear in the cracks of our over scheduled lives… Rather than wishing for intentional community, we have to doggedly pursue it. Make it concrete. Make it a shared Google calendar. Just make it real, even if you are earnest and vulnerable. Creating communities like these, creating communities at all, requires shared space and time. It requires a genuine commitment to slowing down.” -Courtney Martin

With this understanding of what “community” is like in the Kingdom, we’ll address several realities connected to it (adapted from “6 Thoughts on Growing into Something More Beautiful” by John Mark Comer):

**#1 - Community is non-optional for discipleship to Jesus.**

You can’t separate discipleship to Jesus from your involvement with a community of Jesus. You can’t follow Jesus alone. This is so hard for people to swallow in our hyper-individualistic culture.

Ronald Rolheiser - “Part of the very essence of Christianity is to be together in a concrete community, with all the real human faults that are there and the tensions that this will bring us. Spirituality, for a Christian, can never be an individualistic quest, the pursuit of God outside of community, family, and church. The God of the incarnation tells us that anyone who says he or she loves an invisible God in heaven and is unwilling to deal with a visible neighbor on earth is a liar since no one can love a God who cannot be seen if he or she cannot love a neighbor who can be seen. Hence a Christian spirituality is always as much about dealing with each other as it is about dealing with God.”

**#2 - Community is the byproduct of commitment**

Problem: We ache for community, and yet we also want to keep our options open. We approach relationships with a consumer mentality.

People often say, “I’m a part of \_\_\_\_\_ church” when what that means is they come once a month, listen to a podcast now and then, and follow the church on Instagram. This is not Kingdom of God community.

You can’t have community without commitment. To a people. To a place.

St Benedict: Stability is the spiritual skill for staying put to get somewhere.

What would it look like to live rooted in this community?

**#3 - Community is the context where we are transformed**

If you want to be transformed to love like Jesus, community is essential.

Recognize, Jesus’s community had conflict: Matthew 20:20-28.

Community is hard. There is the ideal of community… and the messy reality of community… and learning to love like Jesus happens in the space in between.

“Spiritual formation occurs primarily in the context of community… Long-term interpersonal relationships are the crucible of genuine progress in the Christian life. People who stay grow. People who leave do not grow… It is a simple but profound biblical reality that we both grow and thrive together or we do not grow much at all.” -Christopher Smith and John Pattison, Slow Church

Jean Vanier - “Almost everyone finds their early days in a community ideal. It all seems perfect. They feel they are surrounded by saints, heroes, or at the least, most exceptional people who are everything they want to be themselves. And then comes the letdown. The greater their idealization of the community at the start, the greater the disenchantment. If people manage to get through this second period, they come to a third phase - that of realization and of true commitment. They no longer see other members of the community as saints or devils, but as people - each with a mixture of good and bad, darkness and light, each growing and each with their own hope. The community is neither heaven nor hell, but planted firmly on earth, and they are ready to walk in it, and with it. They accept the community and the other members as they are; they are confident that together they can grow towards something more beautiful.”

We learn to love like Jesus in a community of his apprentices. People who challenge us, test us, encourage us, stretch us, and walk with us. Life in the Kingdom of God is life lived in community. And this kind of community doesn’t happen around a stage, but around a table. Challenge people to get connected in a Small Group, but help them realize this is just a first step. The work of learning to love like Jesus only begins when we commit to a community.

**Week 5 | October 13, 2019 | Live Like Jesus**

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:23-5:2, 9:9-13, 10:1-8, 28:16-20, John 14:8-21

**Message Big Idea**: An apprentice of Jesus is learning to live like Jesus.

23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them.25 Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him. 1 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them. -Matthew 4:23-5:2

9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

12 On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” -Matthew 9:9-13

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

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; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. -Matthew 10:1-8

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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 28:16-20

8 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” 9 Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority.Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. 12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. 15 “If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.” -John 14:8-21

**MESSAGE DESCRIPTION:**

There is an eternal kind of life available to us right now. It’s life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus’ invitation to live in the Kingdom of God is simple. He states it this way: “Follow me.” It’s an invitation to become a talmidim, which is Hebrew for “disciple” but might be better translated with the word “apprentice.”

Apprentices of Jesus learn to live like Jesus. This should come as no surprise. If you want to be a runner, you have to adopt the lifestyle of a runner. If you want to be a musician, you have to adopt the practices of a musician. If you want to experience life in the Kingdom of God that Jesus modeled and offers, you have to adopt the lifestyle of Jesus.

Dallas Willard writes: “The general human failing is to want what is right and important, but at the same time not to commit to the kind of life that will produce the action we know to be right and the condition we want to enjoy. This is the feature of human character that explains why the road to hell is paved with good intentions. We intend what is right, but we avoid the life that would make it a reality.”

When Jesus walked this earth, he apprenticed his disciples to live like he lived. We see this pattern of apprenticeship in Scripture: (From “Do What Jesus Did” by John Mark Comer)

Matthew 4:23-5:1 – First disciples called to follow. Jesus teaches, heals. (I do, you watch.)

Matthew 9:9-13 – Jesus calls Matthew. Matthew gathers others in his house to be around Jesus. Jesus teaches, heals. (I do, you help.)

Matthew 10:1-8 – Jesus sends out his apprentices to further the mission. Tells them to proclaim the message, “the kingdom of heaven has come near,” and to heal. (You do, I help.)

Matthew 28:16-20 – Jesus entrusts the mission to his apprentices and charges them with making more apprentices. (You do, I watch.)

Jesus’s end goal was that his apprentices would do what he did...that they would grow into the kind of people who would carry his mission forward.

As apprentices of Jesus, we learn to live like Jesus...to do the things he did! This includes…

Preaching the gospel of Jesus

Teaching the ways of Jesus

Healing the sick

Casting out demons

Eating and drinking with people far from God

Doing justice

Prophesying

It’s at this point that a lot of us think, “Whoa! Slow down there! I’m good with being an apprentice of Jesus that spends time with Jesus and loves like Jesus, but I can’t do those things! After all, Jesus was God!”

But recognize, as John Mark Comer states: “When God became Jesus of Nazareth, he put down the ‘God card.’ He became human. He did what he did by the Holy Spirit. His disciples did what they did by the Holy Spirit. The early church did what it did by the Holy Spirit. Now, we do what we do by the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus said that by the power of his Holy Spirit living within us, we would do the things he did and even greater things.

But don’t worry, this doesn’t mean that all of us will go from the baptistry to casting out demons and teaching on stage, but it does mean that every apprentice of Jesus is called to contribute to his mission. Start somewhere, like contributing on a ministry team. And then continually ask the Holy Spirit to show you your next step in learning to live like Jesus.

To Jesus, the end goal of apprenticeship is that we would live like him. As apprentices, our goal should be to grow and mature into people who can fully carry out the mission of Jesus.