

“Discover” - (John 14:1-6; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

Good morning everyone! As you may know, over the past few weeks we've been looking at our vision and values as a church, and today we're going to be thinking about what it looks like to “discover,” and this is really important because as a church and as disciples of Jesus, we should always be seeking to discover more and more of who God is.

And so the main question for us to think about is: “how much do we long to discover? How much do we desire to grow in our faith and progress in our spiritual journey? As we explore this, we are going to do so under the two following headings:

- 1) We Discover Through Reading The Word**
- 2) We Discover Through Lifelong Discipleship**

So let's begin with **“We Discover Through Reading The Word.”**

I want to start by asking you what you think about this book – the Bible? You might love it! Or maybe you think it's all right. You'll pick it up from time to time... Maybe you think it's a bit out-dated or even irrelevant...

For myself, I've concluded that this book really is God's Word. It's God breathed and completely trustworthy, and it's become the standard of truth by which I use to test all things. I really think what we believe about the Bible is so important, especially today, because right now we're living in a society that believes “truth” to be relative. Society tells us that “there is no such thing as absolute truth,” and that “what may be true for you may not necessarily be true for me”... But then what does Jesus tell us? He says, “ I am the way...the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me...” Jesus has told us that he is The Truth! You might remember that when Jesus stands before Pilate, and Pilate asks him: “What is truth?” (John 18:38), Jesus doesn't say anything, because he is The Truth. The Truth is standing right there before Pilate, but Pilate is unable to see. In a similar way, the truth is here, right before us, but if we were honest, it's very easy to simply choose not to read it... We need to remember that the Bible as the written word, points to Jesus, who is the Living Word.

There's so much in the Bible for us to discover. I love what St Augustine says when he says that, “The Bible is shallow enough for a child not to

drown, yet deep enough for an elephant to swim.” We can also read the Bible in so many different ways. This is what Selwyn Hughes writes: “Sometimes, [when reading the Bible] I focus on a book or passage, and thus the approach is analytical and expositional. Sometimes the purpose is functional and practical, giving insights on how to be a more effective disciple of...Jesus... And on occasions the approach is devotional and inspirational – portraying biblical truths that are designed to warm the heart and set fire to the soul.”

When I was studying theology, one thing I began to understand was that the more you know, the more you know you don't. The more you learn about God, the more you realise there is to discover. In Matthew 13:53, Jesus says: “...a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.” And so when we read scripture, and we re-read something again that we've already read, we are able to discover new things that we did not see before. There will always be new treasures for us to discover...

Someone once asked me: if you were persecuted and you have no access to a Bible, how much of God's Word do you have in your head and your heart to guide you?” Really challenging, but do take some time to think about that.

Let's move on to, **“We Discover Through Lifelong Discipleship.”** Another thing that we need to understand is that there should never be a time in our lives where we become content with where we're at in our spiritual journey. We should always be seeking to grow in our knowledge and love of God, because Jesus has called us to be his disciples, which means to be a “learner” and “student.” Now, we know that there were many people who followed Jesus, and for some of them, the reason why they followed, was not because they wanted to learn, but because of what Jesus could do for them. And for those people, all it took for them to leave was for Jesus to say something they found challenging to accept. They had no true commitment or desire to learn.

William Barclay writes this: “It is possible to be a follower of Jesus without being a disciple...” Then he goes on to tell this story: “Once someone was talking to a great scholar about a younger man. He says: ‘So and so tells me that he was one of your students.’” And the teacher replies, “He may have attended my lectures, but he was not one of my students.” This short little tale teaches us that we're not truly students unless we're engaged and have a desire to learn. And so it's very possible

for a person to even attend church each week, without being a true disciple of Jesus.

In Hebrews 12, it says we are to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, and to run with endurance the race that God has set before us. As true disciples of Jesus, we are on a lifelong journey of discovery and growth, and we should desire to grow in knowledge not for the sake of knowledge itself, but so that we can better love God, and out of that, better love others. It says in 2 Corinthians 3:18, that through the Spirit, we are being made to become more and more like God as we are changed into his glorious image. This is something that is taking place right now, and it will continue to take place for the rest of our lives. For those of us who are in Christ, right now God is doing a work in us and we are being transformed to become more and more like Him, and our discipleship has a big part to play in this. So, what is your attitude toward discipleship? How much do you desire to learn and grow? What are you doing to ensure that you continue to progress in your Christian journey?

To finish, here are a few practical suggestions that you may find helpful:

The first thing is this: Get serving... Make yourself available, and keep asking God where He wants you to serve - because very simply, there are some things that we can only discover by doing. As we serve there will be opportunities to discover and grow in our giftings. So try something new. Be intentional in discovering your role within the body of Christ.

Secondly, Find people to journey alongside you. The Christian journey is not something that we do on our own. It says in Proverbs 27:17, "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend." It's really important for us to meet up with people who we can talk to honestly about our faith and our relationship with God. Join a life-group, if you're not already in one. Go to a friend you trust, and give them permission to check in on you...to hold you accountable and ask you how your walk with God is going." It might be a bit awkward at first, but once you've built up trust, you'll realise just how valuable it is. So find people to journey alongside you.

And finally, Spend time with people who are ahead of you in the journey. Allow them to speak into your life and share with you their experiences - because if we remain humble and have a teachable spirit, there is so much we can learn from those who are ahead of us.

For THOSE of you who are ahead, why not ask God to show you who He wants you to disciple. Maybe you can be a spiritual parent so you can

really pour into the life of a younger person! Invite younger people to your home, ask them about their lives, and tell them about yours, because who knows; maybe you can learn something from them too!