

**Jan. 13:** 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Message: Disciples Make ... Disciples!

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20 “16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. 18 Jesus came near and spoke to them, ‘I’ve received all authority in heaven and on earth. 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 teaching them to obey everything that I’ve commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age.’”

Text: 2 Timothy 2:2 “You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.”

Memory Verse: Matthew 4:19-20 “‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will teach you to fish for people.’ At once they left their nets and followed Him.”

Blurb: Are you a fan of Jesus? I hope so. But that’s not really what Jesus wants us to be. Jesus doesn’t want fans, He wants disciples. When Jesus told people to follow Him, He said that if they did, He would teach them to make other disciples. That’s our purpose. We start our new message series, Disciples Make .... This Sunday we learn that disciples make more disciples!

**Opening Song:** *More Like Jesus* -Sanctify

**Welcome:** -Pastor David

**Memory Verse:**

Matthew 4:19-20 “‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will teach you to fish for people.’ At once they left their nets and followed Him.”

**Worship Music Set:**

*My Lighthouse*

*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*

David takes kids into lobby - write names in Greek

*Simple Pursuit*

Worship Prayer - Andrew

**Offering:** *Come, Follow Me* -Sanctify

**Serve Moment:** Alaska Mission Trip -Cassi

**Prayers:** The Lord’s Prayer -Pastor Andrew

**Kid’s Moment** - Names spelled in Greek...had to learn to copy!

## Bumper Video

**Message:** Disciples Make . . . Disciples!

**Video:** Jesus leads the conga line <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPga9DqgQv0>

You saw it right! At MetroCon, Jesus was leading a conga line! And as they went through the crowd, more and more people joined in. Keep this image, as a way to think about discipleship.

**PP#1:** Disciples Make . . . Disciples!

“You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.”  
-2 Timothy 2:2

Today we start our new, winter series, and first thing in the new year, we’re going back to the foundation of our reality. You see, our lives are not anchored in what we see or the motions we go through each day. We are anchored in a spiritual reality that determines all the rest of our lives. What is most real to us is what we don’t see, but what holds us up throughout life.

You and I, we’ve come here today because we know that we are children of God, and that God has a hold on our lives. We have awakened to the realization that our daily lives are passing, but that we press on to a future that will never end. Our core identity is connected to One we call Jesus. Jesus is our God, who came as a human, lived among us, and was Himself the way to God. He died on the cross to take away our sin and to restore us to the God who made us. We can live abundant lives! This Jesus rose again to conquer death and to create a way out of death for us. We can live eternal lives!

And while He was here on earth, He called people to know Him and follow Him. And ever since, His people have been following Him, and inviting others to follow Him, too. It’s kind of like a big conga line! This following Jesus, we call discipleship, conga-discipleship. And being a disciple of Jesus is the foundation of our reality. So, at the beginning of 2019, we’re going back to our foundation of discipleship, and reconnecting to Jesus.

Disciples of Jesus make ... disciples. 2 Timothy 2:2, “You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.”

**PP#2:** Our Church’s Mission Statement: “Forest Hills is Christ-centered, with a focus on making disciples who love God and others, grow in Christ, and serve our wider communities.”

Together here at Forest Hills, we are also renewing our focus on discipleship. A year ago we celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a church, and this past year has been a Jubilee, going back to our foundations on Jesus. And we’ve clarified that our primary mission is making disciples of Jesus who make more disciples. This is the work of Jesus. This is the work of Jesus’ church. This is the work of Jesus’ followers. So, this is our work as Jesus followers and as His church here at Forest Hills. Going forward, we are committing that making disciples is our church’s singular priority. We are extending the Jesus-conga line!

Now discipleship may sound normal and safe. It’s what Christians and churches often talk about. But I want to warn you, if we take this seriously, it will push us into a radically different life.

It will shock us out of the normal daily lives we've settled into, and it will completely turn our church upside down.

I want to break it down into three paradigm shifts.

**PP#3: Disciples Make ... Disciples**

1. Know Jesus, Not Know *about* Jesus

"This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent." -John 17:3

Paradigm shift #1: True discipleship means *falling in love WITH* Jesus, not just *knowing ABOUT* Jesus. God came as a person in Jesus, so that people could have a personal relationship with Him. This makes Christianity different from every other religion in the world. Everyone else tells us about God, and how to live as God wants. They teach the character of God, the history of God with people, and how people are supposed to live in order to please God. They strive to make good people. But Christianity says that one day, God actually showed up. And He turned to people and said, "Here I am. Follow Me. Let's have a personal relationship together. Let's share our lives together. Let's talk in the cool of the day. Pour out your hearts to me, and I'll hold you, carry you, be with you, be in you." We are invited into a personal relationship with God, one in which we hear the God of the universe call us by name, and we get to call this God by His first name, too.

Being a Christian is giving our hearts and lives to Jesus. It's joining the conga line! It's moving from recognizing Jesus and seeing Him go by, to going after Him, grabbing a hold of Him, and following Him by putting your feet in His footsteps.

The Bible talks about like a marriage. We bond our lives together in an intimate, personal relationship of love. We don't just know about God, or try to live as good people. You are God's dearly beloved, chosen, wanted! And discipleship is first and foremost a love-relationship with Jesus. We fall in love with Jesus! And as the years go by, we grow deeper and deeper in love with Him. And that commitment, joyfully, is all-consuming. It takes over our lives, and recreates us as new people.

If you don't know Jesus like this, I invite you to let Him in. Join the line! Bind your heart to His. Give Him your life, and you will finally know what it means to live. All you need to do is want Him. Ask Him into your heart. If you want some help with that, or just ask some questions, I urge you to seek out anyone you've seen on this stage this morning, and ask them to pray with you. They will be most excited to do that with you. All you need to ask is, "What's my next step?"

Or perhaps you've known Jesus for a while. Then, think about it. Are you experiencing abundant life? Are your heart and feet in sync with His? Or have you found your relationship is a bit stuffy, or cool? Is He dragging you along, and your feet out of step? Are you making some time for Jesus, but not giving Him your whole life? Have you and He seemed to have drifted a bit a part? Then today is a good time to renew your commitment. Reaffirm your vows to make Jesus your #1. Recommit your whole life to Him, and let go of the other priorities that have crept into what you hold most closely. Again, it's just a simple prayer: "Jesus, I want more of you! Give me that allegiance. Fill me with Your Spirit." Disciples love Jesus, and know His love.

**PP#4: Disciples Make ... Disciples**

1. Know Jesus, Not Know *about* Jesus

2. Contributors, not Consumers

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will teach you to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed Him." -Matthew 4:19-20

Paradigm shift #2: Disciples are not Christian consumers. God's grace and boundless love are not just pointed at me. Sometimes we believe that to be a Christian is to choose Jesus and invite Him into your heart. You receive life abundant and eternal, and your salvation is achieved. We continue to grow closer and closer to Him, and our love for Him grows and deepens. This is the perfect Christian life.

Except it's not. This is a consumeristic way to think about Jesus. He gives me the longings of my heart, He makes me complete, and it's about the blessings He brings into my life.

But when Jesus calls us to follow Him, He doesn't lead us away from everything and into a cloistered relationship set apart from everything else. It's not just you and He doing a private dance. It's not just about what you believe, or think, or experience, or have, or do. Jesus calls us to follow Him, and He leads us back into the business of daily life, into the center of the village, into relationships with others. It's not just about Jesus and me! A disciple is not a consumer. A disciple is a contributor.

When you join a conga line, you don't just grab a hold of the leader, and he grabs you back, and you dance in place. No, the leader is heading off into the crowd, hoping for more to join. When you grab hold of him, you begin to move and get pulled into a direction the leader chooses.

Notice when Jesus calls the first disciples. He goes to them on the shore by where they've been working as professional fishermen. And notice carefully what He says. He doesn't just say, "Come follow me." Right from the beginning He calls them as contributors. Matthew 4:19-20 "'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will teach you to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed Him." He calls them to Himself, and to His work. He says, "Follow me, and we will go out looking for more."

This past Christmas we've had one of the best shopping seasons in years, despite the stock market. We know how to live as consumers. So, this morning, as we push hard into discipleship, consider, how is your discipleship? Is it consumeristic? Who is the beneficiary of your relationship with Jesus? Is it *always* you? How do you spend your time? Do you intentionally cultivate relationships with new people in a way that can be described as fishing for people for Jesus?

I think this is a huge paradigm shift for us and for our church. This radical call to discipleship really changes what we do! And when we take it seriously, it changes what we spend time on, what we resource, what we give our focus to. The conga line of the church pulls us along following Jesus, rather than our own way, but in the process we are caught up into something that is pure joy!

Discipleship pulls us away from selfishness! We must continually fight against our desire to make ourselves our focus. We must die to ourselves and our wants, even the want of keeping Jesus all about me. We let Him lead the dance!

#### **PP#5: Disciples Make ... Disciples**

1. Know Jesus, Not Know *about* Jesus
2. Contributors, not Consumers
3. Make disciples, who make disciples, who make ...

"You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others."  
-2 Timothy 2:2

The 3<sup>rd</sup> paradigm shift of true discipleship...can you handle any more? The Holy Spirit will help you! Here it is: disciples make disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples, who . . . .

The conga line must continue to grow!

Again, this may sound good and right, but here's the push: do you? Are you making disciples? Are you following Jesus in a way that draws others to join the dance? This is the work Jesus calls us to. This is fishing for people. We know it, but we don't do it!

How do we make disciples, and, very importantly, how do we make disciples who, in turn, are the kind of disciples who make more disciples? Well, most importantly, we do it first. We join the dance. We model this kind of discipleship. The problem that many people say that they don't see this kind of Christian. They see Christians who are consumers of spiritual benefits, who protect what they get, who want things their way, who are fiercely controlling, who defend their rights and benefits. Many people describe Christians as self-centered!

So, we need to be sure that we are living differently. We live in a way that our greatest joy is when others experience blessings, when others encounter God through worship, in how our time is spent building relationships with others. As we go into the grocery store, we pray, "God, help me meet someone new here and start a conversation." On our drive into work, we pray for God to change our behavior and show others what living as a Christian looks like.

When worship is too loud and the wrong kind of music is played, our first response is, "I'm so glad we are working hard to make Jesus real for other people." When a new person suggests we change the time of our group, we don't say, "But this is the time that works best for us." Instead, we say, "How exciting if this would make it better for new people?" When we sit around the gathering and there is no one new in the past year, we begin our discussion by asking, "What can we do so others will be more likely to join in?"

#### **PP#6 Matthew 28:16-20**

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. 17 When they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted. 18 Jesus came near and spoke to them, "I've received all authority in heaven and on earth. 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 teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age."

Let's go back to that key biblical passage, where Jesus gives us as individuals and us as His Church, our commissioning. This is Jesus' final instruction to those who follow Him. Notice, He doesn't say, "Go off by yourselves and focus on me." What is the top priority, the main goal Jesus wants accomplished? Do everything to make this happen! What is it? Let's look at it again, and if you know it by heart, stop and hear it deeply again. Remember, this is what we are all about!

Matthew 28:16-20, "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. When they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted." Jesus came near and spoke to them . . . "

Pause there a minute. If I didn't know what was coming, I would expect Jesus to address the doubters. "See these people over here? They're worshipping me. They're getting it right! Be more like them! Yes, worship me in spirit and truth, with your whole being, make this your focus, do this better and better!"

That may be what I expect, but it's not what Jesus says. It's kind of surprising, actually. You see, authentic worship is important. Clearing away doubt is important. But it's not what Jesus gives as His top priority to His followers. He doesn't spend His last moments instructing His followers to love Him more deeply. That's pretty radical, actually. And now that I think about it, that would be a consumeristic perspective of salvation. But that's not Jesus. He cares less about how wonderful our worship experience is, or how well we worship, and more about those who don't know Him

getting to know Him for themselves. Wow...doesn't that show a different kind of discipleship than how we usually think about it?

Verse 18, "Jesus came near and spoke to them, 'I've received all authority in heaven and on earth. 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, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age.'"

When He first called them, He said, "Follow me, and I will send you out fishing." And the last thing He says to them is, "You who follow me, go and make disciples."

**PP#7:** I feel led to disciple:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Disciples of Jesus make disciples, who make disciples. Jesus is heading the church out into the streets, and Jesus wants new people to join the line!

Who are you discipling right now? Who are you fishing for? Take out your note sheet in the bulletin and write across the top: "I feel led to disciple:" and then make a list of three people below it. Before you leave worship here today, listen to whom God is placing on your heart to disciple. At least one of those people must be a person who does not yet know Jesus. And, at least one of those people must be someone who knows Jesus, but you are leading them into being a disciple-maker.

So, three names of people you are called to disciple in 2019. Put a date on top of this list, and stick it on your car visor, or somewhere you'll see it often. Maybe a year from now, you can look at this list and see the progress you've made.

**PP#8:** *Image of a conga line led by Jesus.*

How do we make disciples who in turn make disciples? Well, come back for the next few weeks, and we're going to unpack that. But you know, I think that the simplest way to think about that is to just take the next step with Jesus. First for us: right now, our desire is to take the next step in growing closer to Jesus. What is that? What does that look like? Let's stop fussing about all the big problems in our lives, and just focus on taking that very next step. And, with those around us, those we disciple, our priority is not to fix all their issues or untangle all the complicated web of their lives. It is to help the other person simply take the very next step in growing closer to Jesus.

That's what we do, and that's what we help others to do. We can't solve all of life's complicated problems. But we trust that Jesus can, and so our immediate priority is to take just that next step closer to Him. That's disciples making disciples who make disciples! That's joining the Jesus conga line!

Amen.

**Closing Song:** *Good Christian Friends Rejoice*

**Memory Verse:**

Matthew 4:19-20 "'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed Him."

**Announcements:** -Pastor David

**Benediction:** -Pastor David