



**APPRENTICES WANTED:
NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**
DONE IN SYNC WITH "THE LIVING GOD'S STORY JOURNEY"
THE PASSAGES – MATTHEW 4:18-22, MATTHEW 26:69-75
& JOHN 21:15-19

***Preface:** Welcome to our LC Bible study in our sermon series "Living God's Story." As you know, this year we are working our way through the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. So fasten your seat belt—it is quite a ride! These LC studies will complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading.*

Study's BIG idea: Though Christian discipleship has its many ups and downs, we can learn that not only does Jesus never give up on us, but He continues to call us closer to Him, invites us to serve in His Kingdom and empowers us to love and nurture others.

Possible starter question (3 min.): Think back to when you first became a Christian. What did you believe being a disciple of Jesus was about? How has that changed in the time since?

Transitional comment: In today's passages, we can see the evolution of discipleship. We will be focusing on Peter's story and examining it from when he was first called by Jesus on a beach to when he was reinstated and personally commissioned by Jesus (again taking place on a beach). A lot happens between those scenes, and the same is true for all of Jesus' followers.

(If you haven't already prayed, pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study, opening our eyes and hearts.)

Matthew 4:18-22

18 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.

O – It is important to note that Jewish Rabbis did not seek out students. Rather, aspiring disciples normally approached them and made formal requests to follow them. From there, the rabbis would select the best of the "applicants." Contrast that with Jesus' "discipleship process."

(Jesus seeks them. In fact, in the text, the disciples do not even speak – they simply immediately follow)

O – Before moving on too quickly here, imagine why Peter, Andrew, James and John immediately followed. They had not seen Jesus perform any miracles yet, they may or may not have heard him preach (vs. 17 does not imply either way). It seems the more appropriate question would have been to ask Jesus, “Where are you going that we should follow?” What is happening in this text?

“Discipleship is not an offer man makes to Christ. It is only the call which creates the situation.”
– *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

(There are many who speculate that Peter, James and many of the disciples were “failed applicants.” Though we do not have textual evidence to support this, this is part of the cultural understanding of the time. In any case, it is important to note that they responded to Jesus like many of us have responded – our hearts were supernaturally touched by his words, calling, and love.)

I – After completing his time in the wilderness, the next two things Jesus does is to begin preaching and calling his disciples. What does this tell us?
(Obviously they were important. That the Kingdom being proclaimed wasn’t advancing with a sword at the expense of people but with the good news of salvation for people.)

A – What can we apply today from how Jesus chose his disciples?

Matthew 26:69-75

69 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said. **70** But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said. **71** Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.” **72** He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!” **73** After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.” **74** Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed. **75** Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

O – What do you see happening in Peter’s responses?
(They escalate in denial – the second with an oath, the third with cursing.)

O – What do you notice about those questioning Peter’s relationship to Jesus?
(None of them have any civic authority. They are either described as slaves or locals, not Roman officers with the ability to arrest Peter and take him into custody.)

I – Textually speaking, it’s helpful to see that Matthew is not only telling the story of Peter to “tell on him”; he’s telling the story in contrast to what Jesus is doing. It’s predictable (maybe even understandable) for anyone to lie to save their skin. But Matthew is telling us two contrasting stories.

Can you identify and explain what Matthew is doing in his contrasts between the questioning of Jesus and of Peter?

(Peter is in the courtyard lying to save his life. Jesus is inside telling the truth to save humanity.)

A – While most of us (living in America) are not in danger of losing our lives in being held in connection with Jesus, what risks do present day Christians face in being identified as Christ-followers?

John 21:15-19

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

17 The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. **18** Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” **19** Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

O – This passage begins with Peter and the disciples having returned to fishing (vv. 21:1-3). What does this suggest?

O – What do you observe in the questions and responses between Jesus and Peter?

(Jesus asks Peter 3 times, Jesus commanding Peter to take care of his sheep, Peter’s hurt after the third ask.)

Please Note: This next question is for experienced LC groups (and members) who have heard sermons mention the “agape/agapao”/“phileo” usage. It’s an interesting (and maybe fun) debate but do not let it distract from the overall point of the study.

I – John does an interesting and much debated thing here. It’s important to note the use of the word “love” in this exchange. Jesus asks Peter twice if he loves him in the “agape/agapao” sense (this is understood as the ‘love of God’) and Peter responds in the “phileo” sense (the love between friends). Jesus matches Peter’s “phileo” in his third ask. Is Jesus questioning Peter’s love? Is He reminding Peter of the three denials? Is Peter really being reinstated? What do you interpret happening here?

(There is a debate among interpreters that the different usages of “agapao” and “phileo” are used interchangeably throughout John which shifts the discussion to the number of times Peter is asked instead of the type of love. Further, it is likely that Jesus and Peter are speaking to each other in Aramaic, not the Greek in which John is writing. Note the same “love” distinctions do not exist in Aramaic (or even English), only in Greek.

John may be highlighting the greater love of God/Jesus versus fallen humanity but we cannot be sure.

In any case, we can see Jesus’ call to Peter and all believers, that to love God is to love Him and to feed/love the flock.)

(This question would likely be redundant if you included the previous one to your study, therefore you should consider omitting it.)

I – Why does Jesus ask three times?

A – Have you ever experienced a time when you sensed Jesus asking you if you truly loved Him? Describe the effect that it had on you.

A – Of all the final instructions Jesus could have given to Peter, it’s the commands to “feed the sheep” and “follow me” that He leaves him with. What applications should we as present day followers of Jesus make of this and how should this shape us as a church?

Prayer together: Pray for one another as we try to live and learn what it means to be a faithful disciple of Jesus.

Text notes (you can access biblical texts via www.Biblegateway.com)

Advice to study leaders:

- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single night.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
- b. Complement OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.