

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

JUNE 25, 2023



DISCIPLE

and the process of change

by Drew Downs

People chose to follow Jesus. Why? Something about him was attractive. Something drew them.

Discipleship isn't just following the rabbi around, though. It isn't just attraction. Disciples are students. They watch, mimic, and practice the work of the master.

It might start with attraction: being drawn to him: but it doesn't stay there.

The crowds, too, are drawn to Jesus. So it isn't *just* attraction. It must be something else.

Change. They follow Jesus because he offers them a better life. Or, more precisely, a better way of living. We aren't passive receivers of our situation; a life happening around us, without us. Discipleship is about integrating the rabbi's way of life into our own so that we become more like them. We *want* to change our priorities *and* practices.

ORDINARY TIME

2023

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Waycross

Waycross Camp and Conference Center is a jewel in the heart of our diocese. Waycross offers summer camps for youth, hosts conferences, and provides space for retreats. It has both rustic cabins and modern conference spaces; woods to wander in and spaces to sit. It is always a genuine treat to be there.

Many of our youth have spent weeks upon weeks there, linking our current youth to generations past.

Our clergy have gathered there every year, our members of diocesan groups have met there, and we currently have a member on the Waycross Board.

Vestries and congregations have invested in themselves, taking time at Waycross to connect, be, and share in this remarkable resource.

Having spent last week at a retreat in another such spiritual place (Kanuga – a camp and conference center near Hendersonville, North Carolina), I was constantly being reminded of how special Waycross is. How important this one place has been to generations of Episcopalians throughout Indiana. And what a valuable resource it is and could even be more valuable to us.

Being able to get away is important. To get away to a special place is incredibly important. To do that with others who are seeking, sharing, becoming like us? That is beyond value. It is truly holy.

With love,
Drew

ORDINARY TIME

2023

FOR SUNDAY

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

June 25, 2023

Collect

O Lord, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving-kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Reading

Matthew 10:24-39

Jesus said to the twelve disciples, "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

PENTECOST

For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

Reflection

This may be the most controversial statement we hear from Jesus in the gospels: that he came, not to bring peace, but a sword.

To take this literally, we'd then ask "Where is it? Where's the sword?" Because many use this passage as a defense for weapons, self-defense, and even violence. We might also ask why, then, do we call him the Prince of Peace if he seems to contradict it?

These questions are common *and* misguided. He isn't promoting violence. And we aren't hearing how this is the challenge of following Jesus. That we may have to leave parents behind because *they* aren't willing to share in the generous love of Jesus.

When I started in ministry, I found a good number of colleagues uninvited to ecumenical clergy gatherings because they were women, gay, or because our church refused to demonize and sought to make peace (Matthew 5:9).

Perhaps these clergy thought it was *their* job to divide, rather than Jesus's. And missed that Christ *received* rejection from leaders who rejected his message of change. We follow the one rejected, not the ones rejecting.

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