

What the world needs is an encounter with Jesus

Mid-series message with Pastor Candidate Michael Carlson

“The greatest issue facing the world today, with all its heartbreaking needs, is whether those who, by profession or culture, are identified as ‘Christians’ will become disciples – students, apprentices, practitioners – of Jesus Christ, steadily learning from him how to live the life of the Kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence.” Dallas Willard

Since the most pressing need in the world today is to see Jesus clearly, it is disturbing to find a disconnect between the life that we, the professed followers of Jesus, are living and the life of Christ. It is the vocation of the church to encounter Jesus and to be so enraptured by his love that others may see him in us. Our goal is to grow into his image in order to be an expression of his image in our everyday lives throughout this world. So, how do we encounter Jesus? -

Jesus shows up and invites people to join him.

Read Mark 1:16-20

Jesus chooses his disciples (optional: talk briefly about his doing so counter-culturally)

- Jesus wants a relationship with you. This was his idea, he has initiated, and he continually pursues you in love. **How might truly believing this make a difference in your life right now?**
- Jesus chooses the least likely people to do the most impactful things. **Can you think of an example of this from your own life or from the life of someone you know?**

The call of Jesus to “Follow Me” demands a timely response

The entrance point is an encounter with the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Thankfully, the call of Jesus is not “one and done,” it’s grace upon grace as we follow daily and even moment by moment.

- “Because I responded, something of God’s grace was released” (Pastor Michael of his experience with Becca).
 - **Share a time you responded to God and experienced something of his grace as a result?**
 - **Have you ever missed an opportunity of grace through delay or outright disobedience? Share if you will.**

Jesus leads to places unimaginable Read Ephesians 3:20-21

- **Where is Jesus calling you to follow now - trusting that his grace will be released as you do?** E.g. Take next step in season of life, have a difficult conversation, forgive, something else???
- **What if Jesus is inviting you down a path you never imagined? Where might he be inviting you?**

Prayer point: “stoke prayerful imagination.” Pray for one another.