

Daily Readings

Please note: The Series of sermons for the next month is called **The Invitation: Making Life Matter**. Each week we will deal with a different aspect of the discipleship growth process. We believe that being a disciple of Jesus Christ makes life matter. This week we deal with the irresistible invitation of God's grace that comes through Jesus Christ. These passages deal with Jesus' call to the disciples and the willing response they made to him. The daily readings allow us to dig deeper.

Monday, October 4 – Read Matthew 4:18-25. Matthew copies Mark's account of the calling of Andrew, Peter, James and John almost word for word. Mark stops at this point, while Matthew continues to give us an account of what Jesus does next. We notice that Jesus goes to the towns and villages beyond Jerusalem to the areas outside the Jewish communities. Everywhere Jesus goes, miracles follow Him. Notice also that instead of calling the religious leaders, Jesus calls the common workers of the day. Matthew wants us to know that Jesus has come for all people and calls everyone into ministry for God. How is God calling you? What have you done with God's invitation?

Tuesday, October 5 – Read Luke 5:1-11. Luke gives us the most detail in this story. The poignant passage is verse 8 following the miracle of the large catch of fish: When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, **"Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!"** Peter's confession is an indication of his own realization that he was inadequate to serve to the Son of God. When you hear God's claim on your life, how do you respond? Are you led to confession or are you paralyzed by the demands of your life? What needs to change to yes to Jesus' call to "follow me"?

Wednesday, October 6 – Read John 1:35-51. These two verses should be read over and over as a meditation for the day. The temptations of our society today are many. The self discipline of following Jesus is not always easy. Yet, the way to life is only found through a disciplined life focused on Christ. What is your greatest temptation that separates you from God? Are you worshipping, praying, reading your Bible, and serving others as a regular discipline? What message is God sharing with you today through these disciplines?

Thursday, October 7 – Read Matthew 9:9-13. Here we find the story of Jesus calling Matthew. He tells us something very important about himself – he is a tax collector. Tax collectors in the Jewish community were shunned and distrusted. For Jesus to seek out Matthew as a disciple reminds us that God uses those least likely to do God's work. The call of Matthew is followed by a dinner attended by other tax collectors and sinners. Matthew tells us that the religious leaders are critical of Jesus for his association with those of ill repute. In response Jesus says, **"Those who are well have no need of a physicians, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."** As you read this story, what character would you have been? Matthew? The other tax collectors who do not follow Jesus, but come for the meal? Or the critical Pharisees?

Friday, October 8 – Read John 21:15-23. This story takes place after the resurrection of Jesus. It represents a refocus of the invitation that Jesus had given to Peter at the very beginning of his ministry. The message is clear from Jesus – **"Feed my sheep."** How are you answering the invitation of Christ in your life? In what ways are you feeding the lost sheep of Christ? What do you lack?



STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, October 3, 2010

The Invitation — Making Life Matter *The Invitation (Week 1 of 5)*

Mark 1:16-20 — The Word from the Bible *(New Revised Standard Version)*

"As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him."

Irresistible

Most people in our culture are bombarded with invitations these days. Our mail boxes are stuffed with invitations to the grand opening of some new store or building, invitations to parties, invitations to special celebrations of every kind, invitations to buy something, or invitations to support some candidate or organization – and this is the short list.

Most of these go straight to the trash. Others are kept for further consideration, if time allows. Then there is the occasional invitation that we don't want to miss. This is the invitation that goes into our personal or family calendar. This invitation is posted on the refrigerator or in some prominent place so we will remember. We RSVP immediately, because this invitation is special.

The invitation from Jesus "to come and follow me" should be treated with the same respect, response and excitement. Our calendars and lives should be marked for the sake of Christ in an ink that can not be erased – his blood. Have we forgotten how much God loves us? Have we forgotten that God has made us the crown of all creation – marvelously made? Have we glibly dismissed the invitation that has come to us from God in Jesus handwriting?

Maxie Dunnam, in his book *The Irresistible Invitation* writes this in the introduction: "It is with great boldness that I have written this book. The title is as bold as it gets – Irresistible Invitation. Our immediate thought might be, 'How can an invitation be irresistible? I am free to respond however I choose to any invitation that I receive.' I wrestled with the same feelings as our team of editors pondered the possibility of this title. Then I went to the dictionary and found this definition: 'Irresistible: impossible to successfully resist.' That definition erased all my reservations. Of course we are free; we can resist. But we can't successfully resist God's incredible grace."

Mark 1:16-20

Mark's version of the call of the first disciples is the most popular one. It is repeated without significant change in Matthew. Its popularity is due not simply to its use in Matthew but to the fact that from the beginning it has been useful to preachers. It is not only an account of the first disciples but also a picture of the ideal response of every person. When the voice of Jesus calls, we should drop everything and respond. Note the double emphasis: verses 16-18 make the point first, then verses 19-20 repeat it.

Luke's version (5:1-11) expands the story with other material that appears elsewhere in the other gospels and John (1:35-51) has an account which is distinctly different from both Mark's and Luke's. The example of instantaneous response is apparently what Mark is emphasizing.

How will you respond?

How will you respond to the invitation of Jesus? Will you ignore the invitation because it demands too much or ask for too much commitment or change? Will you "go along" if you don't have something better to do? Will you say "yes" with no intention of really getting involved? Will you call ahead and offer to do whatever it takes for Jesus until all you know is a life with Christ?

Prayer Focus

Trietsch is a praying church. This morning, as you worship, one of our prayer volunteers is praying for everyone in each section of our worship center. We believe that prayer changes lives and hearts for good and for God.

We invite you to join these volunteers by praying for those persons around you. We believe these prayers will have an immediate impact on those for whom you are praying. **Remember... someone is praying for you. Have a great week!**

The following is to guide you in your prayers this week.

Isaiah 55

The Lord Invites His People to Come to Him

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| <p>¹ "Come, all of you who are thirsty.
Come and drink the water I offer to you.
You who do not have any money, come.
Buy and eat the grain I give you.
Come and buy wine and milk.
You will not have to pay anything for it.</p> <p>² Why spend money on what is not food?
Why work for what does not satisfy you?
Listen carefully to me.
Then you will eat what is good.
You will enjoy the richest food there is.</p> <p>³ Listen and come to me.
Pay attention to me.
Then you will live.
I will make a covenant with you that will last forever.
I will give you my faithful love.
I promised it to David.</p> <p>⁴ I made him a witness to the nations.
He became a leader and commander over them.</p> <p>⁵ You too will send for nations you do not know.
Even though they do not know you,
they will hurry and come to you.
That is what I will do. I am the Lord your God.
I am the Holy One of Israel.
I have honored you."</p> <p>⁶ Turn to the Lord before it's too late.
Call out to him while he's still ready to help you.</p> <p>⁷ Let the one who is evil stop doing evil things.
And let him quit thinking evil thoughts.
Let him turn to the Lord.
The Lord will show him his tender love.
Let him turn to our God.
He is always ready to forgive.</p> | <p>⁸ "My thoughts are not like your thoughts.
And your ways are not like my ways,"
announces the Lord.</p> <p>⁹ "The heavens are higher than the earth.
And my ways are higher than your ways.
My thoughts are higher than your thoughts.</p> <p>¹⁰ The rain and the snow
come down from the sky.
They do not return to it
without watering the earth.
They make plants come up and grow.
The plants produce seeds for farmers.
They also produce food for people to eat.</p> <p>¹¹ The words I speak are like that.
They will not return to me without producing
results.
They will accomplish what I want them to.
They will do exactly what I sent them to do.</p> <p>¹² "My people, you will leave Babylonia with joy.
You will be led out of it in peace.
The mountains and hills
will burst into song as you go.
And all of the trees in the fields
will clap their hands.</p> <p>¹³ Pine trees will grow where there used to be bushes
that had thorns on them.
And myrtle trees will grow where there used to be
thorns.
That will bring me great fame.
It will be a lasting reminder of what I can do.
It will not be forgotten.</p> |
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Invite someone to worship this week. You will be glad you did.

God is doing great things through the ministries of Trietsch.