

Sunday, Mar. 12

1. Have you continued to (or begun to) engage in the “Simple Living Challenge?” What has that been like, and what has God revealed to you?
2. In Luke 5:4, Jesus instructs Simon to let his nets down in deep water. Then, in vs.5, Simon responds with “we worked all night long” and caught nothing, but yet he still lets the nets down where Jesus instructs. What do you sense in Simon’s response to Jesus? Have you ever felt God leading you to do something that you felt you’ve already done with different results, or something that you “know” the outcome of? Have you ever been surprised by what God did in those cases?
3. Simon’s response to his nets breaking, to Jesus filling the nets is a response of “Go away, I’m a sinful man!” (vs. 8) Have you ever had a similar response in the face of Jesus showing up in your life? Have you ever been overwhelmed by the presence of Jesus? What was that like?
4. In verse 10, Jesus says something that we see a lot of in the Gospels; “Do not be afraid.” How might you receive that if you were Simon in this case? How do you receive that today, in light of the things you face today, and in the ways God shows himself to you?
5. In vs. 11, Jesus tells Simon and the others that from now on, they will “catch people” (NRSV). Other versions say they will be “fishers of men and women.” What does it look like to partner with Jesus in “catching people?” What does this fishing analogy stir in you? Who was it in your life that caught you, or who was it that was fishing for you when you first came to know Jesus?

Sunday, Mar. 19

1. At this point in “The Jesus Way” sermon series, what is standing out to you? How has the Holy Spirit stirred in you through Luke’s Gospel?
2. The centurion in Luke 7 is quite bold in sending people to Jesus to request that Jesus heal his slave. What does the centurion’s boldness (and Jesus’ response) stir in you?
3. In verse 13, Jesus sees the widow mourning her son’s death, and Luke says that Jesus “had compassion for her.” What does this tell us about Jesus and the Jesus way? Can you think of a time you were moved to compassion for someone like Jesus was?
4. In Luke 7, both the centurion and the widow (and the son) are outsiders. Jesus blasts through cultural norms to be with both of them. What sort of cultural norms stand in the way of our being with people, specifically people “outside” the church or “outside” the NW Iowa norms?
5. Leslie Newbigin says that the church is called to be “healed and healing.” In what ways have you been healed? Or maybe how are you praying for healing today? And in what ways do you think the church can be about the healing of our community/country/world? In what ways are you seeing that happen already?

Sunday, Mar. 26

1. How has your “Simple Living Challenge” gone thus far? What have you “tried on?”
2. Peter declares that despite what others are saying about who Jesus is, he believes Jesus to be the Son of God. Knowing how bold a statement this was for Peter, what do

you imagine it may have been like to hear Jesus then say that he must undergo suffering and die?

3. What stirs in you when you read Jesus' words, "If any want to become my followers let them deny themselves, and take up their cross daily and follow me?" What does it mean to take up your cross?
4. In what ways are you tempted to "gain the whole world, but lose yourself?"
5. In verse 27, Jesus says "there are some...who will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God." The Jesus way is a glimpse into the Kingdom already here. Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God break in even now?

Sunday, Apr. 2

1. It's Palm Sunday, what stirs in you today as we continue to move toward Easter?
2. The Scribes and Chief Priests continue to try to trick and trip up Jesus, and yet Jesus remains true to his identity and call. What does it say about the Jesus way, that Jesus continues to hold to that call and purpose even in the face of growing opposition? What does this and the Jesus way show us about how we engage with those who may disagree with us, or who may be different from us?
3. The Jewish way was to view their lives as loyal to EITHER God or the empire (even paying taxes was seen as "loyalty"). One or the other. But Jesus says give to the empire what is theirs AND to God what is God's. What do Jesus' words teach us about how we show up in the world, and how we allow our faith and discipleship to impact all areas, even the secular?
4. Are there times when you're tempted to isolate into compartments of sacred and secular? If the Jewish way was to isolate from the secular, and the Empire way was to assimilate and give allegiance to the empire, how does Jesus' "3rd way" of living faithfully in both arenas speak to our lives today? How might that "3rd way" be fruitful in our neighborhoods?
5. In what ways might Jesus' words feel freeing to you today?

Sunday, Apr. 9

1. It's Easter Sunday! It's also the last Sunday in "The Jesus Way" sermon series. What has the Holy Spirit been stirring in you over the season of Lent as you think about living the way of Jesus?
2. Just a couple of weeks (and chapters) ago, Jesus shared with his disciples that he would be rejected, he would suffer, and he would die, and that all who followed him would share a similar future. But now, we see the culmination of that story, that while his followers share in suffering, so too do they share in resurrection! What does that mean for you/the church today?
3. What do you think the significance is around the fact God used Mary Magdalene, Joann, Mary and "the other women" (vs. 10) as the first to find the empty tomb and the first to share the news? How does that align with the rest of Luke's Gospel and what we've seen as the way of Jesus?
4. Previously in Luke's Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples about his dying and rising. But here in chapter 23, the disciples don't believe the women who come tell them what they've

experienced at the empty tomb. What do you want to say about that? And, Luke doesn't explicitly say what motivates Peter to "go and see," but what might have caused Peter to do so?

5. What learning or practice from this sermon series/Lent do you want to keep alive beyond this season? How will you put that into action? What do you need?

Sunday, Apr. 16 (New Series on 1 Peter begins)

1. As we begin this series on 1 Peter, one of the things we know is that the Christian church in America is in decline. One thing that means is that Christianity, in many places, is no longer the center of culture. How might this be an opportunity to humbly show the world "another way" of being the followers of Christ that doesn't include being at the center of culture, or being "in power?"
2. Peter writes his first letter to "the exiles of the Dispersion" (vs. 1). While "exile" may be too strong a word for 2023, In what ways have you felt the church decline in our region begin to feel like a shift in how you experience the church and the world around the church? Have you experienced anything that might begin to feel like "exile?"
3. It's striking that Peter's letter to exiles begins not with pity or even sadness, but with a blessing of God the Father, and with a note of hope! How does "new birth into a living hope" (vs. 3) shape how we, the church, live into this season of what may sometimes feel like exile?
4. Peter writes that this new birth is a reason to rejoice! (vs. 6) In what are you rejoicing today?
5. It's natural for us to want to respond to the church's decline today with a desire to want to "get back" to where we once were in terms of Christianity's prominence in the culture. Some Christians in fact, respond by fighting to get back. It seems though, that there is no going back, we can only go forward. It also seems that the trajectory of Peter's letter to the exiles is not "fight back and get back." How do you keep from fighting, and instead focus on living the way of Jesus faithfully right where you are?

Sunday, Apr. 23

Sunday, Apr. 30