



BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

PO BOX 552 • BELLVILLE • 7535
 LINGEN STREET • BELLVILLE • 7530
 TEL: 021 948-2417 / 021 948-2529
 FAX: 021 948-2419
 e-mail: bellville@presbyterian.org.za

THE LIFE OF JESUS

CALLING THE DISCIPLES

Mark 1: 14 – 2:17

~ **Brent Russell** ~

26TH FEBRUARY 2006

- **Contemporary society has much to offer the church**
- Modern life has given us much from which the life of the **church can profit**
 - We manage our **finances** with good business accounting principals
 - We use some **psychological** principals in our counselling
 - We use some **sociology** ideas to understand how society around us works
 - We use some of what the **marketers** teach to make ourselves 'user friendly'
 - We use modern **music** instruments and sound systems to reach young people
 - We have **technology** to help us **worship** God
- **The modern Church has embraced much of what modern industry and society holds to be valuable**
- We have brought some of the ideas out of modern life into church often to **great benefit** to us
- **The church is learning, sometimes far too slowly for it's own good that we use anything and everything we can to impact the world for Christ**
- **Rod still handwrites everything – poor man in time he'll learn to type**
- **The church must take everything that is good and useful and we use it to make the body of Christ more effective**
- **We use these things to share the fact that Jesus loves the world**

- **One of the things that we have learned from society is to be task oriented in everything we do**
- **From the business world we have learned to:**
 - have **vision** statements
 - **Mission** statements
 - **Managerial** structures
 - We run **Programs**
- **We love programs and training courses**
- The modern church has **heaps of courses** to help us do things for God
- There is the '**Network**' course teaching us about spiritual gifts
- There is '**Contagious Christian**' and '**Share Jesus**' without fear to help us pass on the message of Christ
- There is the '**purpose driven church**' to help congregations become more purpose oriented
- There is '**purpose driven life**' to help us find out why on earth we are here

- I did a **web search** and there are scores of courses offering to help us do this and do that
- **I received in the post this week information about courses at Pretoria University to help me become a better minister**
- Offering courses on **church growth, counselling, evangelism** and **youth work**

- **There is more and more stuff to help us to DO something or other in the life of the church**
- **Rod and I Sunday after Sunday try to help you DO things for God**
- We have pushed you to make Christmas **less materialistic**
- We have pressed you to **build houses** for the poor
- We have tried to get you to be **more compassionate** for the destitute
- And we have helped you become **extraordinarily generous**
- **As much as we can we try to get you to understand as James teaches us that faith and action work together to prove real our belief in Christ**
- The risks is that we can become so **focused on the tasks we forget the goal**
- We can become so single-minded on **DOING** things for Jesus that we forget to **connect with Jesus**
- **At thirty years old Jesus calls 12 men to follow Him**
- **Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James and brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James , and Thaddeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.**
- **Uninspiring, not particularly bright guys**
- Not the kind of people **modern management gurus** would get us to choose if we wanted to start and organization to take over the world

- **This was an eclectic mix of ordinary men**
- **Tax collectors to fishermen**
- **Great news for all of us – That Jesus would choose twelve rather ordinary people to do a most extraordinary thing – to share three years of His life**
- **And in time, to start the church**
- **As Jesus calls these twelve men it is initially not to do anything**
- **But first and foremost Jesus calls them to "Come! Follow me!"**
- It is an **instruction, a command and a call**
- And it is not to do anything – that comes later
- **But to become something – a disciple, a follower of Christ, a friend of Jesus**
- **And Jesus want us to BE and BECOME**
- **1 Corinthians 1:9** *"God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful."*
- **DO will come later**
- **And so the scriptures tell us that as Jesus calls them, they leave everything and follow immediately**
- **James and John leave their dad Zebedee in the boat with the nets**
- **Levi leaves his tax booth and follows**
- **There is something that arouses a deep passion in us when Christ calls**
- **And it is not to DO anything but just to follow Him**
- **And so today I am not going to push you to DO anything for Jesus**
- I am not going to give you a **purpose**
- I am not going to assign you a **task**
- I am not going to give you some **goal** to reach or some **objective** to attain
- **Instead I want to convince you today to simply BE a follower and a friend of Jesus**
- **I am not going to talk you into to DOING anything**
- **I want to persuade you again just to BE a disciple of Jesus**
- **To come and follow him**
- **In the three years that the disciples followed Jesus there is little recorded that they did**
- **The book of acts gives explicit detail of their lives after Jesus ascended**
- If you read the gospels almost every reference to them is them **asking stupid questions**
 - Hey Jesus who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?
 - Hey Jesus how many times must I forgive my brother?
 - Hey Jesus we don't understand the parable?
 - Hey Jesus how did you make the waves and wind stop?

- **There is very little recorded in the three years with Jesus that these twelve did very much at all, other than being a little 'dof'**
- **They simply spent the three years mostly being the friends of Jesus**
- **Their ministry would come in time**
- **And so I want to remind you again to "Come!! And follow Jesus"**
- **It is not about DOING but simply BEING a disciple of Christ**
- **It is about deep and real relationship with the Son of God**
- **So what did these guys get up to for three years?**
- Well they did what friends do
- **They walked, talked, laughed and ate and drank together**
- **And Jesus is calling us again to come and follow Him**
- **And He is saying hey Friends: come lets walk, talk, laugh and eat and drink together again!**

Walked

- There where **no cars** 2000 years ago
- And these guys where **poor, so they walked**
- **Miles and miles of long dusty roads in open leather sandals**
- **The twelve would have spent many, many hours on the road with Jesus**
- They would have **followed His directions moving to cities and places that he wanted to minister**
- **Listened to his advice and teaching about life and eternity**
- They would have watched him **interacting** with them and with others as he **spoke, taught and prayed**
- **And they would have seen his power as he healed those who came to him**
- **It must have been incredible, to walk with Jesus and to learn his ways**
- I imagine them as **OLD men remembering with fondness** the times they travelled with Jesus for three years
- **Recalling the places** they went and the things they saw
- **And so Jesus urges us to come and follow him**
- **He wants to walk with us, to make his ways our ways**
- He wants us to **stop where he would stop** and to **travel to where he would travel**
- Jesus does not want us to walk with Him
- To learn to **walk in his steps**
- **To love as he loves, to care as he cares to live as he lives**
- **Two of the Great men of faith Noah and Enoch where attributed with this commendation: "They walked with God"**

Talked

- **Friends talk to each other, they share life in this way**
- **I wonder what the disciples spoke about?**
- I guess they talked with each other and Jesus about all sorts of things about life
- They would have told **funny stories**
- They spoke about **events that happened** in their lives, **reminiscing about the past**
- They wondered together about **what the future held**
- **They talked about each days goings on asking Jesus about the wonders they had seen**
- They talked **about their families** and wondered how things where back home
- And as Jesus chose these twelve to be his companions
- **He wants us to speak with Him**
- **And we do this in prayer**
- **The elders on Tuesday night spent a full hour in prayer**
- We prayed about our **own spiritual lives** and shared communion
- We prayed about **some of our ministries** in BPC
- **We prayed for you the congregation**
- **It is easy to DO things for Jesus**
- **Yet the call to Come and follow him is a call to talk**
- **To sit together with Jesus and to reflect on life**
- To reminisce with him about the past and about meaningful things and people in **your life**
- **To talk with Jesus is to allow yourself to dream with him about your faith about your family and about your future**
- **That is what being a disciple of Jesus is about 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to "Pray continually"**

Laughed

- **When my friends and I get together there is lots of laughter**
- We tell **jokes**, we **tease each other**
- **There is an ease in laughter that bonds people together**
- **And I imagine that the disciples and Jesus must have laughed together many times around the fire at night**
- And Jesus wants to **share the good times** of our lives with us
- He wants to laugh with us
- **Don't make Christianity out to be too serious**
- It is a **celebration of life**; Jesus tells us he came to **"give us life and life the full!"**
- **The Christian faith is a fulsome celebration of all that life has to offer**

- I think many of us find it easy to seek God in the **bad times**
- When things **get rotten** it is easy to call out to God for help
- To ask for **provision**
- To ask for **protection and healing**
- **Yet being a follower of Jesus is to share the good times with Him**
- **To share the celebrations and parties with him**
- Next time you **eat out for dinner to celebrate** anything or simply for a treat invite Jesus to the table to share the good time with you – say grace
- When you **get a windfall** like I did a couple of weeks ago when I got money BACK from the tax man! Invite Jesus round to say thanks and to laugh together about your good fortune
- **When good things happen get on your knees and celebrate with Jesus**
- **Being a follower of Jesus is inviting him to share in your joys and your celebrations**
- **It is about inviting Him to share in your laughter and in your festivity**
- **It is about sharing your good times with Him**
- **It is that kind of intimacy he desires with us all, it's that kind of intimacy he shared with the disciples**

Ate

- **The disciples ate many meals with Jesus**
- In caring for people Jesus **multiplies fish and bread** so that the people might share a meal
- The first time the disciples see Jesus **after the resurrection they share a meal of braai'd fish on the beach**
- **Jesus was known as one who ate with sinners and the outcasts**
- **There is something great about sharing meals with someone**
- **We have braai's with friends laughing talking and eating**
- We invite **family for dinner** to keep in touch
- We **celebrate special occasions by eating out** at nice restaurants
- **In every society meals are points of meeting, sharing and interacting with those dear to us**
- Or with those we hope to **become dearer** to us if we are on a date
- **Meals provide the centre of our homes and our families**
- **They are powerful moments of unity and bonding between people**
- **And we eat to share an experience of life and of love**
- **And in the family of God it is no exception when it comes to meals**
- **Jesus shares meals with those who "Come and follow Him"**
- **Not those who DO anything for Him, but simply those who come to Him and desire to have relationship with him**

- And nothing has changed in 2000 years
- Jesus himself tells us in **Revelation 3:20** *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."*
- **And as we come the table and share communion this is the most powerful reminder Jesus has given to us that we are his friends**

Conclusion

- **It is in these most simple shared things**
 - **Walking**
 - **Talking**
 - **Laughing**
 - **Eating**
- **That we recognize Christ**
- **It is in these simple shared actions that we respond to the instruction to "Come and follow me!"**
- **As we close, please turn to Luke 24:13 and let us read**
- **They walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus**
- **They talked with Him and spoke of things of eternal value**
- **They shared a meal in which they recognize the risen Christ**
- **In the broken bread they finally see Him as we do in communion**
- **And in great celebration and laughter they tell the others about this great news**
- **That JESUS is ALIVE!!!!**