

Today's is Father's Day. Father's Day is kind of a weird day. Most of us know what to do for Mother's Day. It's easy to show love to our Mothers. Kids make the cute cards. Mom's get taken out for lunch. More phone calls are made on Mother's Day than any day of the year.

Some people are sad on Mother's Day as they recall how their mother is no longer with them or, sometimes, sad because their children are gone or never born. At church you will hear lots of sermons preached on Proverbs 31 and the perfect woman in the Bible. Lots of Mother's Day celebrations.

But then what about Father's Day? Father's Day is a different story. We're not quite sure how to express love and appreciation to the men in our lives. The ones who do get cute cards from the kids get all emotional about it. But then as kids get older Father's Day becomes less important.

Taking the Father out for lunch just doesn't seem to be that big of a deal. Plus, it's the middle of June and, you know, there are fun summer things to do.

Whereas on Mother's Day we hear lots of sermons on Proverbs 31, in church on Father's Day you get lots of hymns like the one we will sing after the sermon. It's not hard to find hymns like, "This is my Father's World" which lift up God as a loving Father. That's an image from our tradition that works for many of us while others of us find that a disconcerting image due to strained relationships with our Dads.

With these mixed feelings on this Father's Day, let's turn to the Scriptures. In this passage of Scripture we will hear about Jesus addressing his disciples and you will also hear his 12 closest followers addressed as apostles. So what is the difference? Are they disciples or are they apostles?

The difference between calling someone a disciple and calling them an apostle is about function. The word "disciple" means learner or pupil while the word "apostle" means one who is sent. "Disciple" means learner and "apostle" means one who is sent.

In this passage the word “apostle” refers to the 12 closest followers of Jesus. The list of 12 occurs in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke but they do not include the same names for the 12. But there are always 12. 12 is an important number in the Bible.

There are 12 tribes of Israel who settle in the Promised Land after the exodus so 12 comes to represent a symbolic number of God’s salvation. The word “disciple” can refer to the 12 closest followers as well as others who are followers of Jesus.

Read Matthew 9:35-10:8

The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. As I was writing this sermon on Friday we were dealing with a major plumbing problem in this church facility. I learned on Friday more about this church’s septic system than I care to ever know about. It was a crappy day on Friday.

Clogged sewer lines are no fun for anyone except the plumbers and septic people that got to come out and earn some money for themselves. As I announced earlier the problem is not solved but everyone is welcome to use the children’s restrooms this morning. That can be a fun experience.

God bless David Updike for spending his entire Friday here dealing with plumbers and septic tank pumpers. I laughed and asked David, “So is this what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? Hanging around the church all day, calling plumbers, and trying to get an old septic system to work?”

I asked this while we smelled the joys of a clogged sewer system. But, if we think about it, that is exactly what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is hanging around a church all day and working with plumbers and with septic tank pumpers.

In this passage Jesus is described as preaching the good news but also healing the sick. Preaching and action. Discipleship, or being a good student of Jesus Christ, is about the things we say and the actions we do.

So what if we looked at all of our life as our witness? What if we looked at our entire life as a place where we are learning and growing as followers of Jesus Christ?

So when you are in a restaurant and you are interacting with your server or the person behind the counter, you are in a place of discipleship. Do you treat that person with respect? Are you a source of light to that person or are you a source of darkness? Do you make their life better or worse? Do you draw them closer to the presence of God by your actions or away from God?

When you are interacting with people at work, are you being a disciple and follower of Jesus Christ there? How do you treat people that you work with? Are you a source of light to others or are you a source of darkness? Are you a positive role model or one that people feel uncomfortable around due to how you act?

If you are teenager or a child, how are you treating others this summer including parents and other family members? Are you a source of light or darkness? Are you one that others admire and respect?

I recently heard a football coach from a certain team that won a National Championship say that to be successful you have to be the best at the little things. I've been thinking a lot about that quote as I have read this passage. Yes, being a faithful disciple is the big thing. But being a disciple of Jesus Christ is also about how we do the little things.

Are we kind to the person taking out the trash? Do we play with the child that is in our midst or do we brush them aside? Do we speak words of kindness to the elderly person or do we brush them aside with a hurried comment?

Do we stand up for what is right by telling the person that has made the hurtful or racist remark that you do not appreciate what they have said? How we handle the little things are, in fact, places of discipleship.

Today is Father's Day and how we interact with parents or children is an example of our discipleship. Changing diapers, doing hair, playing games, teaching something to a child are all places of discipleship. Staying in touch with our aging Dad or taking over his checking account when he can no longer do it is a place of discipleship. Seeing a simple need and doing something about it in an honest way is a place of discipleship.

When Jesus says that the harvest is plenty but the laborers are few, I wonder if Jesus meant that it was hard to find the people to do the simple acts of care and concern in a faithful way. That there are so many simple ways to show our faith in God and show our care for others.

Living out our faith does not have to be dramatic. It can as mundane as fixing sewer systems and making a visit to an old friend who is now confined to their home like I know Tommy Cook did this week.

So I pray that you leave today seeking to be the best at the little mundane acts of life. Do them with purpose. Do them with care. Do the simple and mundane tasks as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

As you do the simple acts for others you can be growing as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

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