

St Martins C3 – March 3, 2024

Relationship with The World – Discipleship Explored

Sermon Notes:

Today concludes our series Discipleship Explored. In this series, we have been exploring the growth process for all followers of Jesus.

A disciple grows by becoming more whole in one of four relationships: relationship with God, other Christians, ourselves and with the world.

What we mean when we say our relationship with the world is the way disciples bring God's life to those around them. It's seen in evangelism, looking after God's creation, creating healthy cultures, defending the poor and oppressed, and doing great work that serves the world. It's living out faith.

Our survey shows that the area we most need to grow at St Martins C3 is our relationship with the world. So, we have to ask ourselves why our relationship with the world appears low.

- 1) We might still value our relationship with the world highly
- 2) Our impact on the world may be the last thing for us to see progress in.

Read 2 Peter 1:5-7

- 3) It's hard to have an impact on the world

Our relationship with the world is a very important aspect of our discipleship growth. Because bringing God's life to the world is such a priority for Him we will give all we have to make it a reality for us. We will work to bring God's love to the world.

To move from a growth area to a strong area we go through three phases:

We Want To

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11

Our impact on the world begins when we grab God's missional heart for the world. When we understand what He has done for us we long to give that same grace to others.

We Plan To

It's not enough for us to know it is a good idea, we need to actively look for the ways to bring others to know Him. We need to go. That is what Jesus commanded us.

Read Luke 10:1-16

We Do

Read Ephesians 2:10

A good relationship with the world is seen when we persevere to see the fruit of lives changed, people cared for and everyone who possibly can have a saving relationship with Jesus. That is what we want to do as individuals and together as a church. Look for ways to get involved.

Connect Group Material:

Key Point:

A great relationship with the World is worth the effort and will change us as much as those around us.

Key Question:

How can we grow in bringing God's life to the world?

Other Questions:

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

Why do you think Relationship with the World might have been the greatest area for growth amongst St Martins C3 members?

How would you know if you are having an impact on the world around you?

How much do you long to see Christ transform those around you?

What plans do you need to put into place to make it happen?

How are you already reaching and serving the world around you? How does this positively impact you?

What are the challenges you face in bringing God's life to the world? How can you grow in this area?

What will you do as a result of this message?

Monday Devotion: The Aroma of Christ

Read 2 Corinthians 2:14-15

We have in Christ the greatest love the world has ever known and if we can be all in then the love of God will flow through us and change the world.

We should aim for St Martins C3 to be a church that is so full of God's love that we stink of it! Paul encourages this early on in 2 Corinthians.

There should be an aroma that comes from this place and it is the smell of Jesus' transforming life. To some people who come into this place it will stink – they reject Christ and so we smell like doom. But to others, this place will be a life-giving perfume. There are even some amongst us who have come in and there has been something that they can't explain. It is the life of God that their nostrils smell.

As we declare his praises, as we live out changed lives it is a sign to the world of who Jesus is and why people need to come to him. That is what we get to be as the Church and that is why we are all in.

Pray and ask God to help us be the kind of people who smell like Him. May this be attractive to those who observe our church.

Tuesday Devotion: Praying for Others

Read Mark 8:22-26

One thing our survey showed us was that people would be happy to pray for those who need healing.

If you believe in miracles, you are not alone. Our world is open to the supernatural. A survey from 2017 showed that 60% of UK adults believe that some form of miracle is possible. Furthermore, 72% of people aged 18 to 24 believe miracles can happen — more than any other age group.

As we pray for others we can look for miracles of healing, freeing people from demons, miracles over nature, and provision. As Jesus did with the Blind Man in Mark 8, we pray and then pray again for God to come through in big ways.

These miracles are signs. They were signs that Jesus was God and what His Kingdom was all about. For us, they are signposts that point people in the right direction.

Today, think about your neighbours and the people in your community. What are the struggles they face? What are the joys they share? And what do you want to see God do in their lives? How can you pray for them?

Pray and ask for opportunities to pray for others in your life. Ask Him to give you courage and follow through with them.

Wednesday Devotion: It's All About Relationship

Read Colossians 4:3-6; 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Bringing God's life to the world must come from a place of loving relationship, not judgment. Judgment over people's points of view or lifestyle is not our job. It is God's. If you are rejecting people as soon as they reject your point of view, then you need to really question whether you care about them.

Sharing your faith is not being a salesperson where you:

- Learn your sales pitch
- Deliver it
- Close the deal

It's about bringing the best news ever to people you really care about. Selling is not what caring about someone looks like and it does not work in this world devoid of trust.

We care about more than people's souls and we avoid bringing an agenda to the relationship, but instead, we care about them.

This is what the apostle Paul did. He shared his very life with those around him. In our busy worlds it can be easy to be surrounded only by Christians. We as a church want to provide opportunities for you to surround yourself with people who don't know Jesus. Consider getting involved.

Pray and ask God to show you where you can begin building relationships with others.

Thursday Devotion: God's way of Life Now

Read Matthew 6:9-13

When Jesus was asked how to pray, He gave us what is known popularly as the Lord's Prayer. This was more than a prayer; it was an outline of His mission on earth.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." This coming together of Heaven and Earth should be what we are after now as well. This will radically transform all parts of our world.

Notice that Scripture never calls to just convert people to get them into heaven, recruit people to grow the church, or even help people change our society to be godlier. All of these things are great and are an important part of it, but the long-term goal is for more people to follow Jesus by putting his upside-down loving ways into action.

Making and growing disciples is not our only job as God's people. The Bible also calls us to look after God's creation, create healthy cultures, defend the poor and oppressed, do great work, serve others, and love our enemies. But making disciples is perhaps our most important mission and will contribute to these other mandates as more people truly follow Jesus.

Let's seek His Kingdom in all we do this week.

Pray and ask God to show you what it would be like if His way of life invaded our world today.

Friday Devotion: Shine Like Stars

Read Philippians 2:14-16

The Church has moved from the place of being in the centre of society. Once the whole community was built around the church, now the Church is on the fringes of society. Rather than being a problem, this is an opportunity.

The podcast “The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea” tells about a conservative church that created a music events centre that became tremendously successful.

A secular magazine did an article on them and instead of focussing on the good they were doing, said they were trying to trick people into church. They then described some of the beliefs of the church, particularly around sexuality. The article destroyed their reputation and they had to close the venue.

So, they asked: “What do we do now?” They concluded that the margins of society are where cultural change actually starts. They decided to stay on the margins as a prophetic voice. To say to the world, “You might be struggling with getting everything you want and getting nothing that you need, but we are over here and we are holding up the truth that will bring you to a better and deeper life.”

We too need to shine like stars holding up the life of Christ as an alternative to the me-first way of the rest of the world.

Pray and ask God to give you his ability to shine.