

Discipleship Moment

Text Acts 4:5-13

“Uneducated” and “ordinary.” This is how the disciples were described by the religious elite. There is something ideal about that description. I think Pastor Ben was right on when he said if these men were around today they would be, “flannel wearing, truck driving, tackle box carrying, Busch Light drinking guys.” The region of Galilee to those religious leaders, and especially for Roman officials, was the boondocks. It was the place that Nathaniel asked, “What good can come out of Galilee?” Think of it like Mississippi, West Virginia, or maybe even the Sauk Valley. These men were not impressive or spectacular by any worldly means. They were blue-collar business men, family business owners who worked with their hands to earn their living.

These men, like so many of our neighbors, are uneducated. But being uneducated doesn't mean someone is dumb. It takes a lot of wisdom, skill, and intelligence to operate a business, to build a boat, to operate an excavator or a freightliner.

Pastor Ben exhorted us to be “educated uneducated people.” Some of us may not have advanced degrees, but that doesn't mean we can't immerse ourselves in the Scriptures and in the life of the Church and be able to answer questions about life, death, and the problem of sin. We have coworkers at the construction site, the factory, the school, and the office who are suffering under guilt and shame because they don't feel like they are good enough, they are suffering under the stress of illness, broken marriages, and depression. You may not be educated, but you can point people to Jesus as the redeemer who clears our guilt, as the suffering God who was beaten and betrayed, and knows our pain, and the savior of our souls. The one who was resurrected from the dead has paved the way, so we can be resurrected, our bodies made new, and brought into eternal life with God.

But how can “uneducated, ordinary people” learn this knowledge? Well, how do we “uneducated, ordinary people” learn our craft? We learn by doing. In order to get certification in welding, you have to weld while a master welder is watching you. In order to learn to drive, you drive with a parent with you, watching you. In order to learn to change your car's oil, you change your car's oil while your parent is watching you. You learn by immersing yourself in the thing you want to learn.

It's not through textbooks or classes that we learn the Christian faith. But through worship, prayer, Bible study, and living life with other Christians. By being part of worship: singing the songs with gusto, listening to the Scripture and sermon, adding your mental prayers to the Pastor's prayers, contemplating Jesus' sacrifice as you go up to receive Communion, receiving Communion with trust that God has given his son for you.

When we live out the reality that we experience on Sunday (or Saturday) day to day, we add our prayers to the prayers from Sunday, and cultivate a desire for God in our hearts through family prayer and Bible reading. By getting our hands dirty with Jesus' body and blood at Worship, and our minds and hearts disciplined by prayer and Scripture reading, we internalize God's Word and Gospel. We find ourselves quick to prayer and touched by the Spirit's peace. We find ourselves under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who gives us thoughts, insight, and ideas in our day to day lives, we find, as Jesus told his friends about responding to criticism, “the Holy Spirit will tell you at that very moment what you must say.”

We learn the faith by getting our hands dirty, it's more like learning how to change the oil of your car, drive a truck, or how to weld than it is learning mathematics or history. Get your hands dirty with the Church. Devote yourself to worship, daily prayer, and Scripture.

Going Deeper

Use this resource to start conversations about this week's sermon for your personal devotions, with your family, or with your Life Group. You can use one question per day or all at once.

1. What are somethings your parents taught you when you were younger? How did they teach you those things?
2. Is there a difference between the way that your parents taught you to drive, do the dishes, change the oil, or mow the lawn and how you learned math or science? How were they different? Why do you think they are different?
3. How do we learn things at Church? Is it more like how our parents taught us or like a classroom? Why is it that way?
4. How are you currently immersing yourself in worship, daily prayer, and Scripture study? Do these things "get your hands dirty" like learning how to mow the lawn or change the oil? How?
5. What are some ways you can "get your hands dirty" that you don't currently do? Why would they be helpful?