

Discipleship Moment

Text: 2 Timothy 3:10-16

My two-year-old son has entered into a new stage in life: the “astronaut stage.” He wants to read all the astronaut books he can, he wants to wear his space-themed pajamas (and sometimes refuses to take them off in the morning), and will randomly declare, “be astronaut.” Which roughly translates to “I want to be an astronaut” (although sometimes it means he wants to jump off the couch or have some other random burst of energy). For those of you with children, you will recognize this. Kids regularly go through phases in life where they nearly obsess over a particular work or character. It might be a princess, a cowboy, an astronaut, dinosaurs, Paw Patrol, etc. Kids are always ingesting and obsessing over someone or something and trying to emulate or be just like them. You could say that our children are “mentored” or “influenced” by the images of astronauts, dinosaurs, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and the like.

I wish I could say that we grow out of this as adults. But we still do this same kind of obsession and emulation. As adults, this comes out as a desire to be more like a sports hero, or a business executive. You might obsess over a politician, past or present. I still want to be John Wayne when I grow up. We are always being mentored by someone or something. It may be something far off, like a sports team, or John Wayne. Or it may be someone close, like a boss or parent. But we are always being influenced and mentored by something.

On Sunday Pastor Ben told the story of a young man name Timothy, who was mentored by an old man named Paul. We have two of Paul’s letters to Timothy recorded in the New Testament, and we get a peek into their relationship, and how Paul mentored Timothy. And Paul said this, “But you must continue with the things you have learned...you know who taught you” (2 Tim. 3:14, Common English Bible). Paul is referencing not only himself, but Timothy’s mother and grandmother. Paul writes in another letter that he, “I received a tradition from the Lord, which I also handed on to you...” (1 Cor. 11:23, Common English Bible). Paul received from Jesus, and then passed Jesus’ teachings and life down to those younger and newer to the faith than him. He was a mentor and a discipler (someone who disciples).

I want you to think about something: If you could be mentored by any person, who would it be? If you could be led and be taught by any person, who would you choose?

Each week in worship we confess together one of the creeds. The Ecumenical Creeds are three creeds that are agreed upon by all Christians, everywhere. In the Apostles Creed, we begin by confessing, “I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.” Later in the creed, we confess, “I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin, Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead, on the third day he rose again.” Jesus was dead, buried, and three days later came back to life. Before he did this, he told his disciples many times that this would happen. As far as I know, Jesus is the only person to ever predict his death and resurrection and then actually pull it off.

We start off by confessing that our universe is designed and intelligent, and that there is a spiritual realm. God is the architect of both. If you could be mentored by the architect of the universe, would you want to be mentored by him? Then, later, we confess that Jesus predicted and pulled off his resurrection. If you could be mentored by the only person who predicted his death and resurrection, and then actually did it, wouldn’t you want to be mentored by that guy?

You are being mentored by someone or something. You look up to an athlete, movie star, author, family member, sports team, politician, media person, etc. Why not listen to the designer of the universe and the guy who pulled off his own resurrection? It seems like they might know what they’re talking about. Jesus quoted the Old Testament as authoritative and true, and God has guided his Church to adopt the New Testament as the true, historical witness to Jesus. They hold for us everything we need to navigate the challenges we face daily. It just takes a lot of time, imagination, patience, and humility.

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. Who or what do you look up to? Who or what is your "mentor"? Why do you think they're impressive, why do you want to be like them?
2. What are the attributes or traits of Jesus that are impressive, who do you want to be like him?
3. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17, what does Paul say Scripture is good for. Write them down.
4. Read Romans 5:12-21. When Paul says, "the Law," he is referencing the Old Testament, and specifically the first five books of the Old Testament. How does "the Law" do some of the things that are in 2 Timothy 3:16-17? How does the work of Jesus do some of the things in 2 Timothy 3:16-17?
5. Think of one or two people here at New Life or your local church that you look up to. Ask them to coffee or lunch and pick their brains about their faith and how they follow Jesus.