

# Discipleship Moment

After the joy of worship, it can be hard to connect our faith and our daily life Monday to Saturday. The work of recognizing and receiving God's love and promises in our daily life is called *discipleship*. The Discipleship Moment email is for you to explore this connection during the week. Each week you will want to read your Discipleship Moment to stay up to date with the church calendar, find ways to deepen your spiritual conversations with friends and family, and hear directly from one of our pastors on how Christ is impacting them through our weekly Scripture. Expect this email every Monday morning (unless there is a holiday), automatically as a member, and feel free to let us know if someone who isn't an official member yet would like to be added to the list.



If you had to miss the weekend services, you can catch up by listening to the sermon on our website at:

[www.nllutheran.com/2018-sermons](http://www.nllutheran.com/2018-sermons)



**Sermon Text: Matthew 19:13-15, Acts 2:1-12, 41**

Sara and I moved to Madison in June 2017. We moved into a neighborhood that was largely forgotten by the wider community. Madison is a large, metropolitan community—highly educated and wealthy. Not only does it house the largest university in Wisconsin with millions of dollars for research and education, but it is the seat of the state government as well. All the state representatives and state senators, the governor, and other politicians all have homes and offices in Madison. Is it, indeed a powerful community.

The neighborhood Sara and I lived in for that year (until we moved to Dixon) was much different. The brown and black faces we saw in the neighborhood parks and neighborhood sidewalks were much different than the white Scandinavian-American faces that walked around the capitol building, and even more different than the young, vibrant faces of the college students on the University of Wisconsin campus. Our neighborhood was primarily Latino and primarily Spanish speaking. The neighborhood elementary school was bi-lingual—Spanish and English—and the families that filled the junky, under-cared-for apartment buildings were poor—these families are just trying to squeak by. The neighborhood was under-resourced, it didn't have clean tap water and its residents have lived in violence, lack of medical care, despair for generations.

Our church population was about half neighborhood families, and half families that drove in from nicer parts of town. When we got into Madison and started meeting the families and ministry leaders in our congregation, it was clear to me who were the people I could rely on. There were two families in particular from good backgrounds and they had money to donate and make ministry happen. *These are the folks*, I thought, *that will get things done*. We also had a lady (we'll call her Jenny) in our congregation who had anything but a good background, she was a recovering alcoholic, came from an alcoholic family, was on fixed income because of disability, she was loud, gregarious, and charismatic. *Good grief*, I thought, *this lady is going to give me trouble*.

To make a long story short, in the year we were in Madison, Jenny introduced six people to Jesus. That's right, six individuals met Jesus Christ, received the promises that come from his life, death, and resurrection, and were Baptized into the Kingdom of God. And the two families that I thought were going to be doing all the productive work? They pushed back against almost every decision or change I made. Not only did Jenny evangelize six people, but we baptized 10 others while I was there, all of them black, poor, and from our under-resourced neighborhood.

I fell into the trap of looking at people the way the world does, by color, socio-economic status, and by family background. But God confounds all our expectations and used the very people I looked over (at first) to build His Kingdom and make a positive difference in the neighborhood. And as we heard in the teachings this Sunday, Jesus dearly loves those who society deems unlovable, and God gives us the Holy Spirit so that all people, different colors, countries of origin, languages, can meet Jesus and be transformed by his presence.

May we see others the way God sees them—as beloved children.

**Pastor Erik +**



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. If you attend church regularly, what are some of the habits you have: do you sit in the same spot? Park in the same spot? Talk to the same people? If you don't attend church regularly, do you have these kinds of habits in your life?
2. When was the last time you had a conversation with someone of a different race, class, political opinion, or ethnicity? How did that conversation go? Was it awkward? Exciting? Fruitful?
3. What are some of your fears when it comes to speaking to someone that is much different than yourself?
4. Can you think about a time that you were afraid of a change, but it brought about a positive experience? What was it, and what made it positive?
5. Using the Prayer Request card from the bulletin, pray for each person on the requests list, even if you don't know them. If you do not have a Prayer Request card, pray for those you know who are suffering.
6. Read Acts 1-2, what changes did the disciples experience? How did they handle these changes? What good things happened because of these changes?