

## ***Loving Our Lord -- Living His Gospel -- Making Disciples***

Jesus Christ is the **source**, the **foundation**, the **center**, the **model**, the **goal**, the **focal point**, and **sustaining inspiration** of our lives.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT)

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.*

Through Jesus Christ we understand **God's character**, what He **wants**, how He **works**, and the **ultimate purpose** of our lives individually and together.

Colossians 1:19, 20 and 2:8-10 (NLT)

*For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself.*

*Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.*

We want to **guided** and **transformed** by what Jesus has taught us to do and to be, by both His words and example.

Romans 12:2

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind*

We understand everything we do is in relation to Jesus Christ:

What He has done **FOR** us -- moves us to **Love Our Lord**

What He is doing **IN** us -- guides and empowers us to **Live His Gospel**

What He wants to accomplish **THROUGH** us -- is to **Make Disciples**

The acronym for these three prepositions is **F.I.T.**

Our Mission Statement guides:

1. **What** are we doing? **Activities and Goals**

We seek to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord so that others can clearly see what He is like and the beauty and joy of following Him.

We want to be His disciples ourselves and help others to become His disciples, as He commanded us.

2. **Why** are we doing it? **Motivation**

We are moved by gratitude for what He has done for us.

John 4:10 (NLT)

*<sup>10</sup> This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.*

From the BCP- General Thanksgiving:

*We bless thee for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life, but above all for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace and for the hope of glory.*

3. **How** do we do it? **Methods**

We live the gospel by following Jesus ourselves, with transparency and integrity: demonstrating His love in action, telling others what He has done for us, pointing them to Him, always drawing our life from Him (John 15) and depending on the Holy Spirit (Acts 1, 2).

From the BCP – General Thanksgiving:

*Give us such a due sense of all thy mercies that our hearts may be unfeignedly (sincerely) thankful, and that we show forth thy praise, **not only with our lips but in our lives**, by giving up ourselves to Thy service and by walking before Thee in holiness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Our Mission Statement tells us not just to **what we do**, but **who we are**.

We desire, with God's help, to become the kind of people who live it from the heart, from the "inside out".

Focusing on the third phrase of the Mission Statement: **“Making Disciples”**:

Key verse: Matthew 28:18,18 (NLT)

*Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in (into) the name (full identity) of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

Definition: What is a disciple?

A follower      but following for a purpose.

A learner      but learning in a certain way – by apprenticeship -- in order to become like the Master.

Thoughts from Dallas Willard:

*Generally, a disciple or apprentice is someone who has decided to be with another person, under appropriate conditions, in order to become capable of doing what that person does or to become what that person is.*

*A disciple of Jesus Christ is a person who has decided that the most important thing in their life is to learn how to do what Jesus said to do.*

*A disciple is not a person who has things under control, or knows a lot of things. Disciples simply are people who are constantly revising their affairs to carry through on their decision to follow Jesus.*

*No one goes sadly into discipleship with Jesus. No one goes in bemoaning the cost. Rather they understand the opportunity and grasp it eagerly.*

Consider Jesus’ parable of the “Treasure” and the “Pearl” in Matthew 13:44-46

*“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”*

*As long as we think anything may be more valuable than transforming fellowship with Jesus in his kingdom (under his kingship), we cannot begin to learn from him. Ambivalence and uncertainty will block the process.*

*When we clearly see that what we receive as His apprentices is infinitely better and more desirable than every other thing that might be valued—that is when transforming discipleship can begin.*