



“Biblically Formed”

Week 1 | October 7, 2018

Matthew 5:17-20

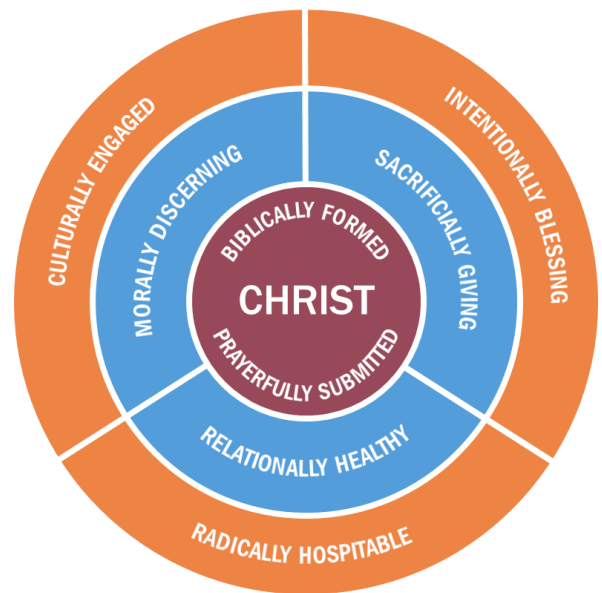
Series Overview: Both discipleship and disciple-making are intertwined, like the double helix of the DNA strand of the Christian life. In August we heard Jesus’ call to discipleship, and in September we looked at his commission to disciple-making. We defined disciples as those who live in such a way that their clear aim is to have the life of Christ reduplicated in them. We want all of Christ; we want to follow all his ways; we want to obey *everything* that Jesus commanded (Matt 28:18-20).

But *everything* is a pretty broad concept, so we want to encapsulate our discipleship aim and fit it into our mission as a church, which is “to love God, love each other, and love the world that Jesus—through his people—is working to restore.” So we are picturing our discipleship aim in three concentric circles, corresponding to the upward, inward, and outward dimensions of our mission.

We want to love God through Christ by being biblically formed and prayerfully submitted.

We want to love each other by being relationally healthy, morally discerning, and sacrificially giving.

And we want to extend that community love to the world by being radically hospitable, culturally engaged, and intentionally blessing.



Sermon Summary: Jesus had the highest view of Scripture imaginable. **He had faith in the Scriptures.** Jesus came not to abolish Scripture but to fulfill it, and to the minutest detail. Heaven and earth would pass away before the least bit was lost from God’s word. Likewise, our stature in the kingdom depends on loving and living the word. To dismiss any of God’s Word is to be least in the kingdom. To practice and teach the whole Word is to be great in the kingdom. “Scripture cannot be broken,” Jesus said in John 10:35. Even the so-called fables of Adam and Eve, Noah and the ark, Jonah and the whale, and others, are taken at face value by Jesus and used in his teaching. He had confidence in the Bible as the final authority in faith and practice, and so should we.

And therefore **Jesus was formed by the Scriptures.** His identity, mission, direction, attitudes, and values were informed and normed by the Bible. Nothing in his life was “free form” as we might imagine it, he only acted according to the Father’s will. Yet Jesus was the most free person who ever lived. In an age of technology, when our choices and values are being formed by algorithms and artificial intelligence, we do well to double down on our being both informed and formed by the wisdom of God and his Word.

The ultimate goal is to fulfill the Scriptures. In the Bible, the word “fulfill” is an important term. It carries the idea not only of completing, but of enhancing and enriching. This stands in contrast to how things are fulfilled in our world. When we order an item on Amazon, it goes to a “Fulfillment Center,” where it is added to someone’s “Do list.” They pick, pack, and ship the item, and then check it off as fulfilled. But when the item arrives, it hardly changes our life. It doesn’t truly enrich us.

But when Jesus fulfills Scripture he does both complete it and enrich us. He fulfilled the prophets—that is, God’s own “Do List” of how he was going to act to save the world. Over 300 Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah were finally completed in Christ. But Jesus also fulfilled the law—that is our Do List. The righteous requirements of the law that we couldn’t fulfill. But Jesus did. He not only obeyed God on our behalf, but he suffered the penalty for sin that the law prescribed. He did it all.

And that enriches us. Romans 8:1-4 says that we not only suffer “no condemnation,” having our sins fully atoned for; but we now receive the Spirit of life, “in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.” In other words, that we might be empowered to be the good, noble, righteous people that God intends us to be. We obey by the Spirit of Christ, given to us.

Discussion Questions

1. Look together the “discipleship target” which summarizes what we’re aiming at when we’re aiming to become like Christ. Obviously it can’t be exhaustive, but does it make sense? How does it express values and practices that we’re already aspiring to as a church?
2. Read Matthew 5:17-20 and Romans 8:1-4. How do these passages dovetail?
3. Do you have faith in the Bible as infallible and utterly reliable? Do you see it as the final authority for your faith and practice? If you have any questions or issues, share them with your group. Discuss what it means to really trust the Bible.
4. What does it mean to you to be “biblically formed”? What is that concept all about? Explain it as if you were talking to a brand new Christian, or to someone who was just inquiring about the faith.
5. What is one area in which you need to be more biblically formed?
6. Bart Ehrman, the notorious professor and opponent of the faith, says Christians don’t really trust in the Bible. If they did, they would read the whole thing, and read it most every day. If you were in his class, and just walking out from this lecture, what would you say to each other?
7. Christians love the idea of Jesus fulfilling the Law for them; but many get confused about his ongoing desire to fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law through them, by empowering their obedience (Romans 8:1-4). Somehow this feels like “legalism.” Does it feel that way to you? How do you explain and apply Romans 8:1-4 to your life?