

What's Your Type?  
First in a Series on Discipleship  
Luke 14:25-27  
January 16, 2022  
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Prayer - May the Spirit of God open our eyes, tune our ears, speak to our hearts, and clear our minds that we might better understand what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus. Amen

### Message

What's your type? What kind of qualities are you drawn to, what do you look for, or get excited about? What type seems to ignite a spark inside you? We all have a type: adventurous, academic, a go-getter, more relational, spirit filled & spontaneous, or maybe deep thinking?

It may have been awhile since some of you have thought about it. What is your type? I am speaking of course about your type of discipleship. How do you know discipleship when you see it? How do you recognize it and what speaks to your heart? I suppose before you can answer that, some of you may wonder what is discipleship? For some the word discipleship ranks right up there with heavy hitting words like incarnation, atonement, prevenient grace, and salvation.

We love our churchy words don't we?!

What do any of these words mean? How do you define any of them? Unless you are a long time Sunday school teacher, seminary student, pastor, or attended church your whole life, chances are, you don't quite know how to answer

my questions. AND as much as it pains me to say this, very few churches do a good job of explaining these words or concepts in a way that makes sense.

Today, I put a challenge before us - a challenge to clear up the muddy waters when it comes to this church word; discipleship.

Traditionally, in the church anyway and for those who believe in Jesus, the word means the process of becoming more like Jesus; the practice of following his example and learning his ways. How do we do that? How do we know the answer? How do we know if we are doing it right? What does it look like? Where does it happen? Who is any good at it? How does someone learn to follow Jesus? Does it just happen? Is there only one way to understand discipleship?

Maybe the beginning of the Chuck Knows Church video can help.

Watch video clip from beginning to 02:09

“Let them figure it out.” Not very helpful is it?

Sometimes that's what it feels like when trying to understand or define discipleship. Like we're just left to our own devices to figure it out. One person may think it's one thing while another thinks it's something else. Someone might think it looks one way or has to be done a certain way, while someone else thinks the opposite. Who is right? Which way is best?

Over the next five weeks we hope to unpack the word *discipleship* and bring about a better understanding of what it means, what it looks like, how each of us has a particular style of discipleship or approach to discipleship, and how we understand and live out our faith.

In her book, *Gospel Discipleship*, Michelle J. Morris presents the idea that each of the gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John represent a different understanding of discipleship; a different type of discipleship. Based on the style of writing, what we know about each author, how they viewed the world and the work of Jesus, what was most important to them, and how they, as best as we can tell, interpreted the way to live a life of discipleship Morris suggests their writing illustrates four types of discipleship. They were witnesses retelling what they saw and experienced.

Interestingly, Morris uses the last words of Jesus as recorded at the end of each of the gospels to base her conclusions. She writes, “It is somewhat surprising, all four Gospels have different last words. It is a surprise because wouldn’t you pay really close attention to the last thing Jesus said, and then collectively remember and agree on that? Except that is not how humans work. We remember the things that mean something to us. And the four Gospels are written to four different communities, and they are written by four different authors.”

In other words, different people see things differently. That is why four different people can witness the same accident, trauma, or moment of beauty and inspiration, and all remember it differently; because they see, feel, hear, relate to, experience, and remember what matters to them and their personal interests, convictions, and understandings. Morris suggests then that each gospel writer ended their description of what happened a little differently because of what was important to them as they listened to Jesus share his final words. Those endings serve as a lens, and if you look through those lenses you see in the Gospels four

different understandings of discipleship. Hence four different types of or approaches to discipleship:

At the end of Mark, we read,

“And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover” (17-18).

Talk about spirit filled, arms waving, world shaking evangelists! Markan disciples are Holy Spirit-inspired disciples — unbound, creative, wanting to change things, believing in miracles, messy, spontaneous, demon casting out, calling on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit kind of people.

These are the people less interested in the practical teachings of Jesus and instead captivated and motivated by the miracles of Jesus - the very power and presence of Jesus. They tend to lean into and seek a faith that doesn't so much help them make it through every day, but that changes the everyday into the extraordinary. They want radically new and remarkably powerful (Morris 24-25). They are ready for action and they respond to the immediate needs around them.

Markens want to bring the miraculous to the mundane and transform people's lives by showing them the powerful, life giving, life saving presence of Jesus Christ.

Matthew concludes with the words:

And Jesus came and said to them, “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. God therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the ather and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Known as the Great Commission (go, make disciples, baptize, teach) these words read like a to-do list of a series of actions. Mattheans are hard working, driven disciples — paying attention to detail, having a plan, getting things done; they are the tangible hands and feet working for Christ, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, making a list and checking it off. They are all about seeing the physical transformation of the world around them and stand on the conviction that faith without works is dead. These are the people who often stand between physical labor and doing right by our faith. Works vs. Grace. Doing and being. Action and contemplation. Matthians love to be taught and to learn but for the sake of doing not just for the sake of learning. Matthians like to know the vision and have a plan to get there.

Luke actually ends in Luke 24 and Acts. 1. There we read:

He (Jesus) said to them, “this is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and a change of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to these things. Look, I’m sending to you what my Father promised, but you are to stay in the city until you have been furnished with the heavenly power.” As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?” Jesus replied, “it isn’t for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

In these words, Jesus tells the disciples to start in Jerusalem with the people they know, then go to Judea and Samaria to the people they kinda know, and then go to the ends of the earth to the people they don’t know yet. Lukans are relationship centered disciples — love of God and love of neighbor are the heart of everything. These are the potluck planning, picnic organizing, coffee shop going, fellowship gathering, small group growing, community connecting, everyone is welcome kind of people.

These are the followers of Jesus that have the capacity to love everyone. They want to welcome everyone and be welcomed. They want to live into their call of love and help people understand what it means to love and how loving others has its great joys and challenges. Lukan disciples prefer to walk WITH others on the journey and get to know their fellow faith walkers. At the heart of the Lukan disciple is the story of the least, the last, the lost, and the good

samaritan. For these disciples it is all about their relationship with Jesus and with those around them.

That leaves us with John, where we read:

When they finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love more than these?” Simon replied, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” Jesus asked a second time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Simon replied, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Take care of my sheep.” He asked a third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was sad that Jesus asked him a third time, “Do you love me?” He replied, “Lord, you know everything; you know I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed by sheep.” After saying this, Jesus said to Peter, “Follow me.” Peter turned around and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them. This was the one who had leaned against Jesus at the meal and asked him, “Lord, who is going to betray you?” When Peter saw this disciple, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?” Jesus replied, “If you want him to remain until I come, what difference does that make to you? You must follow me.” (John 21:15-17, 19b-22).

John ends with Jesus and Peter at the lakeshore. Jesus tells Peter what he needs him to do, Peter asks about the other guy on the beach, Jesus tells Peter not to worry about that guy and just focus on what Jesus needs him to do, which is follow Jesus. Johannines are mentor-apprentice nurtured disciples — they look to the Great Teacher (Jesus) but in his absence Scripture and a great pastor will suffice. They are deep students of the Bible, have high expectations for leaders, able to mentor others when they have a level of expertise they are comfortable with, and they are lifelong students focused on soaking up the wisdom of the Master kinds of people. These are the folks that value learning for the sake of learning - for the sake of keeping traditions and hierarchy, for the sake of wisdom and knowledge. They want to know *who* Jesus is, not just *what* Jesus is or what he

did. They have high expectations of themselves and of others claiming to follow Jesus. They reach people through one on one encounters, teaching, studying, and holding themselves and others accountable.

After hearing this brief introduction and summary, I ask again, what's your type? Did you recognize yourself in any of those descriptions? Could you relate to any of the approaches or resonate with any of the characteristics?

We are all given the opportunity to follow Jesus. We all have a responsibility, once we say yes to Jesus. It is not always simple and easy. After all, hear how Jesus put it in the gospel of Luke 14:25-27 READ TEXT.

Each week over the next four weeks we will take a closer look at each type of discipleship and discover its strengths, weak spots, and how each type lives out discipleship a little differently. We invite you to pick up a copy of Michelle Morris's book, Gospel Discipleship (in the lobby) and follow along, do some of your own study and exploration of this idea, and perhaps uncover the type of discipleship that most resonates with you.

The goal is to raise some awareness around what discipleship is and is not, to open conversations and create pockets of discussion around the concept of discipleship and begin to understand what it looks like at Grace Church. We pray it helps you find a way to connect and engage in ways that are meaningful for you and the way you are "wired" (if you will) for discipleship. When we better understand the concept and meaning of discipleship, and can better recognize it in practice and daily life, we are better equipped to be the church, parent, employer /

employee, spouse, friend, relative, follower of Jesus, the community God has called us to be.

Whether you are new to our church, new to faith, or have been around for a long time, we hope and pray you will find this study and series a meaningful way to answer the question, “What’s your type?” And in the end realize, it takes all of us to do and be the work and presence of Jesus. Let the learning and discovery begin. AMEN