Fishers of Men: Lessons on Discipleship

Lesson 6 “The Power of Prayer”  
  
I.  Review and Introduction

A.  Introduction - Jesus was the ultimate fisher of men.  His goal was to replicate Himself in disciples and by extension each of us so He could fill the earth with His glory.

1.  We have looked at how the real mission of the is replication not just leading people to salvation.  *Matthew 28:19*says to make disciples (devoted learners and followers).

2. Jesus began His ministry by selecting a small group of followers who He poured His life into.  He wanted to replicate Himself in them (by teaching, training, opportunities for experience) so when He ascended the church would outlast His time on the planet.  Spent more time with the 12 than the crowds to ensure His ministry would continue past His life on earth.

3.  Last week, we talked about how Jesus managed conflict when His disciples failed Him.  Specifically, we looked at how He washed their feet and fed them communion prior to His arrest.

a.  The main point was when leaders put the needs of their disciples first and care for them as people, they will inspire courage in their followers.  Ex: “Leaders Eat Last.”

b. All 12 of the disciples failed Jesus (they all abandoned Him), but Jesus seeded the ground for their restoration by putting their needs first.

1. John was the first to return (he had the greatest revelation of the love of God).  The others eventually did, including Peter who Jesus came to personally restore.
2. **Lest you all think I’m teaching greasy grace and no devotion/life change, when Jesus restored Peter, He prophesied that He would be executed for His faith in Christ.  10 of the 11 disciples who remained died martyr’s deaths.  I’m not teaching greasy grace so we can be lazy/sorry.  I’m teaching grace to empower you to obey (grace unlocks the key to heart change.)**

B.  Last week I said we’d talk about Judas’s end, Peter’s restoration, and what happened to John, but as I prayed this week, there is a portion of what I shared last week that I believe we need to focus on first: prayer.

1. Jesus prayed for His disciples when they were going through their greatest temptation.
2. The lesson we are going to learn today is how to pray for others so the Holy Spirit can bring breakthrough in their lives.

II.  The Power of Prayer

* 1. **Luke 22:31-34**

1. The word ask in this verse means to desire or make a demand on.  Satan wanted to sift Peter as wheat, which literally means to shake him apart with the goal of breaking him.
2. When wheat is sifted it removes the grain from the chaff.
3. Look at Jesus’s response.  He didn’t bind the devil or command him out of the room (that’s not wrong to do).  Jesus just wanted to go deeper.
   * + - 1. When people never have to face anything they don’t grow.  Growth doesn’t come from attacks, it comes from believing the word in the midst of the attack.
         2. Jesus prayed his faith wouldn’t fail.  Where does faith come from?  The word.  ***Romans 10:17.***I believe Jesus wanted Peter’s faith to grow in Jesus and not his own strength.
         3. My story from earlier this year.  Went through several demonic attacks particularly within our leadership.  Started out binding the devil, but have come to a place where I pray this scripture over all of them a lot (along with ***3 John 1:2***).
4. Additional verses
   1. **Colossians 4:12** - Epaphrus labored fervently (*agōnizomai)*that the church would stand perfect (mature) and complete in the will of God.
   2. **Galatians 4:19**- Paul is writing to Christian’s, not unbelievers.  He wants Christ formed again in their soul (mind, will, and emotions) as they had stepped out of faith in grace.
   3. Results of Jesus’s Prayer
5. Initially it got worse before it got better.  Everyone abandoned him.
   1. My Joyce Meyer testimony - when things get worse, God is moving because Satan comes for the word’s sake.
   2. **Mark 4:26-29**The kingdom comes as seed, not the full blown harvest.  We must  leave our seed in the  ground (don’t dig up our seed to see if it’s still there). We do this with our words.
6. Eventually 11 of the 12 returned (God does give people free will, which is why Judas didn’t return.  Still 11 out of 12 ain’t bad results).
   1. John returned when Jesus was at the cross (first to return).
   2. The others all eventually did.  It’s also important to realize what could have happened to Peter if Jesus didn’t pray for him.  Could he have committed suicide like Judas?  Jesus’s prayers seeded the ground for his restoration in ***John 21***.
7. A few weeks after these events Jesus ascended into heaven.  Instead of abandoning their calling this time, the disciples unified and prayed (**Acts 1:8-14**).  This is what they didn’t do in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested.  **The seed grew.**

III.  Conclusion - One of the most important and underrated parts of discipling someone is praying for them.  As much as we want to teach, train, coach, give feedback, etc, we need to remember to invite the Holy Spirit to open their eyes, open their ears, and transform hearts.  Seeds don’t grow without water.

1. Call Up Prayer Team
2. Pray Closing Prayer