**Fishers of Men: Lessons on Discipleship**

**Lesson 8 “God Is Not a Child Abuser”**

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.  Over the last three weeks, we have looked at what Jesus did when His disciples failed Him.  We have learned to sow love, kindness, affirmation and prayer to those who fail us.  When we do, we help them grow.

 B. Today we are going to shift gears and look at what to do when our leader/discipler is difficult and/or fails us.  We will not be able to study Jesus and the 12 because Jesus never failed them, however we are going to look at several biblical examples about how to respond we we have a difficult leader.  Why is this important?

1. Jesus was the only perfect leader.  This means all leader will fail at some point so we need to know how to respond so we grow and so we don’t get bitter.
2. God will put us in situations under difficult/imperfect leaders because He wants to refine things in us.  **God is not a child abuser.**  **Psalm 92:12-14 - The one who is rooted flourishes and brings forth fruit, not the person who jumps from church to church, job to job, relationship to relationship, etc.  The person who leaves every difficult situation never establishes a root system and they don’t grow.**
3. Before we go further, here is what I’m not saying.  I’m not saying we need to stay in every unhealthy situation.  When a leader tells us to sin, attempts to be physically or sexually abusive, or gets into major doctrinal error we need to get out of the situation (with honor).
4. Here’s what I am saying, unless we are a situation like I described above, when the Holy Spirit puts us in a situation, we need to stay until He tells us to leave even when we have a difficult/imperfect leader.

II.  God Is Not A Child Abuser

1. **Hebrews 13:17**The Bible says it’s unprofitable for us, not the leader when we don’t submit (come underneath with our attitude) and obey.
2. Examples:
3. **Genesis 9:18-27**Noah apparently had a bad day and got drunk and uncovered himself in his tent.  Noah sinned.  He was wrong, yet his son Ham exposed his nakedness and was cursed, while the other two brothers covered Noah’s nakedness.  This is what we need to do with a fallen leader. We need to cover their nakedness, not expose their flaws.
4. **Numbers 12:1-13**Moses and Miriam.  The irony is Miriam and Aaron were right in their criticism of Moses, but instead of praying for Moses and the people they brought accusation and tried to self promote.  This didn’t please God and Miriam was struck with leprosy.  (Important to remember this is under the Old Covenant).
5. **2 Kings 2:1-15**  Elisha learned from Elijah and developed his prophetic gifting under his tutelage, however Elijah wasn’t perfect.  God positioned Elisha under a moody, temperamental prophet with emotional problems.
	1. Elijah told Elisha to leave him multiple times (think about what had to be like to serve under).  Elisha didn’t quit.
	2. ***Verse 10***Elisha was positioned to ask for the double portion because he didn’t quit.  If he would have quit early the opportunity wouldn’t have arisen.
	3. Elisha’s first miracle was Elijah’s last miracle and he performed twice as many notable miracles as Elijah did.  None of this happens if we quits a difficult leader.

C.  What do when we are under the leadership of a difficult/imperfect leader?

1. We pray **1 Timothy 2:1-2.**
2. We serve them with a great attitude.  Sometimes our great attitude and service will convict them and change their heart. **Hebrews 13:17.**
3. **Matthew 18:15-17.**We go to them and talk to them about the issue. If they don’t hear, take an objective third party.  The goal is reconciliation and not retribution.  If the situation is really bad it can come before the church leadership and they can be removed.
4. We stay (until God releases us).Sometimes God puts us in difficult situations to refine things in us.  While it’s the word that brings change, God in His sovereignty sometimes has to put us in situations where we’ll apply the word and not just live with the head knowledge of it.

III.  Conclusion

1. Call Up Prayer Team
2. Pray Closing Prayer