



*Conversations around discipleship and call*

## **5-Week Sermon Series Outline<sup>1</sup>**

### **WEEK 1**

**Focus Scripture:** Exodus 3:1-15

**Theme:** Holy Ground

**Description:** The first sermon in a series on discipleship and call is designed to help us understand who we are individually and collectively as God's children, how we encounter God and what God calls us to do in response.

#### **Key Questions:**

- What does God's voice sound like to you?
- What do you believe/know/hope about God?
- How does your belief about God shape how you understand yourself and others?
- How does your knowledge about God motivate you to action in the world?

#### **Standing on Holy Ground:**

- Personal illustration of being barefoot and experiences with being on holy ground
- Being barefoot helps us connect to the ground, makes us more mindful, aware, intentional.
- Connection with creation.
- Deeper awareness of God

#### **Moses' Burning Bush Experience:**

- Exodus 3:5: Remove your sandals, you are standing on holy ground
- Didn't make total sense from a safety perspective... [Mt. Horeb](#) is a rocky surface. Burning embers? Is it safe to remove sandals?
- If Moses DIDN'T remove sandals, he would have missed a holy encounter with God.
- Holy Ground is ANY place we encounter God.
- Most often, beyond church walls
- List everyday places/encounters as examples.
- More than everyday holiness. More than ordinary. If we are aware to the Spirit, they become God encounters.

#### **Remember the Questions:**

- What does God's voice sound like to you?
- What do you believe/know/hope about God?

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<sup>1</sup> Sermon series developed by Rev. Molly Moore, 2018.

- How does your belief about God shape how you understand yourself and others?
- How does your knowledge about God motivate you to action in the world?
- These questions help us become more aware of our readiness to experience God and the Holy ground we are on. Open our ears, eyes, and heart to the Holy.
- Share an example of how God relates to you (silence, bold signs, voices of others, etc.) We can be invited to ground set apart as holy for times of spiritual rest and growth
- More often than not, God calls us to experience the holy in the everyday ground we walk on in faith.
- Keep spiritual sensors turned on so we don't miss the holy in the everyday. There is more holy ground than we are even conscious or aware of in our daily life.
- Include in our prayers that God would make us aware, as he did for Moses, when we are on holy ground so we can savor it and discover what God wants us to make of it.

## **WEEK 2**

**Focus Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

**Theme:** Spiritual Gifts

**Description:** God has gifted everyone in the community with a particular gift. This giftedness is given in the same spirit and we are to utilize our gifts in ways that are pleasing to God.

### **Key Questions:**

- Do you have a sense of your spiritual gifts and natural talents? What are they?
- Who has affirmed these gifts and talents in you?
- How have you used these gifts and talents to benefit yourself?
- How have you used these gifts and talents to benefit others?
- What do you want to do with your gifts and talents?

### **Gifted with Many Gifts and the Same Spirit:**

- List examples of giftedness in congregation – those things that make worship and mission happen.
- Many of us feel tapped out – working outside of our giftedness.
- We done our time. Given our gifts. Time to enjoy.
- NO. God's giftedness goes beyond time, age, ability, gender, etc.
- Bible mandates we serve throughout our life. (We don't "retire" from service/discipleship.)

### **Local Example: Talk about how gifts are being used in your congregation.**

- Internally vs. outwardly focused
- So often look at ourselves as a place of scarcity – never enough help or volunteers.
- What if we decided to change narrative and look through lens of ABUNDANCE?
- Look outside instead of inside... see all the people waiting to be loved, welcomed, and filled with grace. How can we use our gifts to reach those outside?

### **Fear of Evangelism and Invitation**

- We make it harder than it is.

- Ex: Grocery store encounter with my daughter. I noticed the women behind put 3 dozen cupcakes on the check-out conveyor belt. I commented about wanting to go where she was going. Her comment: “They are going to church and there’s a lot more there! Come join us!”
- It was so easy. She didn’t even bat an eye. No time to dread it. The invitation came with a smile. It was her using her gift of evangelism.

### **Extraordinary Giftedness vs Everyday Giftedness**

- How would our church look different if we lived into the gifts we’ve been given?
  - As individuals
  - As a community
  - As brothers and sisters in Christ
- Handout Spiritual Gifts Inventory of your choice (e.g. FREE online assessment at <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/spiritual-gifts-online-assessment>). Offer time during the rest of message to complete and turn in with offering as a sign of our giving.
- Close with a prayer and blessing for our individuality, our giftedness, and a petition to utilize our gifts in ways that are pleasing to God.

### **Remember the Questions:**

- Do you have a sense of your spiritual gifts and natural talents? What are they?
- Who has affirmed these gifts and talents in you?
- How have you used these gifts and talents to benefit yourself?
- How have you used these gifts and talents to benefit others?
- What do you want to do with your gifts and talents?

## **WEEK 3**

**Focus Scripture:** Micah 6:6-8

**Theme:** Passion

**Description:** Use this session to recap where you have been thus far in the series. The Passion Conversation in 5 Cups of Coffee helps people connect their gifts to their greatest joy. “Vocation is the place where our deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.” (Frederick Buechner)

### **Key Questions:**

- What is something you do well and enjoy doing?
- What social justice issues really fire you up or bother you?
- If you could give a million dollars to someone or something, who would it be and why? What would you hope they do with the money?

### **Micah’s Context:**

- Judah had become corrupt believing they could buy God’s favor.
- Micah helped them to be aware of what God wanted. Reconciliation through awareness of sinfulness.
- Message in these verses actually sum up the message of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BCE prophets:

- Amos called for justice; Hosea emphasized kindness; Isaiah urged obedience and walking humbly.
- People are expressing their desire to be at peace with God. Asking Micah how to be reconciled to God. “With what shall we come?” Worship, prayer, pure hearts.
- People ask, “What do I have to do to please God?” THAT is the question of the day: What do we have to do to please God?
- We aren’t so different from the people of Judah thinking we can do something to EARN God’s pleasure and love. NO, it is simply given to us.

**Unearned Grace:**

- If we aren’t working to earn anything from God, what do we do with this life that God has given us?
  - Share the love and grace with others. Micah shows us how: Love kindness, do justice, walk humbly with God.
- Love kindness
  - Share examples of what kindness looks like and your experience of it.
- Show mercy
  - Refer to opening question about social justice issues. What is their issue?
  - Go beyond kindness and DO something to bring forth the kingdom of God.
  - How do we get out of comfort zone to help those who struggle against the systems of injustice?
  - How do we do more than shine hope into the dark places, but also work to break the systems of oppression?
- Walk Humbly
  - Negative perceptions of Christians in the world.
  - Righting those perceptions through humility.

**Remember the Questions:**

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- What social justice issues really fire you up or bother you?
- If you could give a million dollars to someone or something, who would it be and why? What would you hope they do with the money?

**WEEK 4**

**Focus Scripture:** Romans 12:1-2

**Theme:** Growing with the Holy Spirit

**Description:** Week 4 of the series offers us the chance to dig deeper and ask us to think about how our gifts and passions help us connect with God.

**Key Questions:**

- What would it look like for you to connect with God daily? How do you make that happen? How would you spent that time?
- Who in your life could you commit to staying accountable with in spiritual practices?
- What do you want from God in your spiritual life?
- What does offering your life as a “living sacrifice” mean?

### **Unique, Just Like Everyone Else**

- Share an example of when people hear very different things.
- Game of telephone?
- The Laurel vs Yanni debate of Spring 2018  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDiXQI7grPQ>)?
- “Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else.” (Meade’s Maxim, not Margaret Mead)

### **Paul’s Message to Us**

- Reread the scripture, asking congregation to concentrate on the words that stick out to them. Share what stuck out to you.
  - We hear different things... different words pop out to us.
  - That’s the Holy Spirit working and how scripture works and why we study it time and time again... because what we hear changes.
  - But the message doesn’t change. It stays steadfast.
- The world pushes us in many directions - telling us what to think, how to behave. Who and what to care about. How to react. And it is easy to get swept up into the group think that the world offers. IN fact, it is the norm... what PEOPLE expect of us...
- As Christians, we are called to a different life.
  - Don’t conform, be TRANSFORMED
  - Holy Spirit work
- Renew our minds – what are we doing to RENEW OUR MINDS? What faith practices are we doing to help this process?
  - Studying scripture
  - Prayer – LISTENING more than talking
  - Journaling
  - Covenant relationships
  - Others?

### **Spiritual Growth goals ≠ New Year’s Resolutions**

- Start with SMALL goals so as not to overwhelm.
- Master things little by little. Add more as it feels right.
- Don’t beat yourself up for missing a day or a week. Get back up and get to it!
- Share examples of what practices you are good at and what practices you struggle with. Share how we feel when you succeed and grow, and how you feel when you fall off from practicing and growing.

### **The Holy Spirit helps us in this work.**

- Spirit Holes – European cathedrals with holes in ceilings for the Holy Spirit to enter in. Making room for the spirit to move.
- Spirit descends on us even today... even without a spirit hole in our ceiling.
- Moves us from work within to walking with Christ. Towards spiritual disciplines that help us GROW in our discipleship.

- Spirit helps us to NOT conform but to be transformed. TO live IN the world, but not OF the world.

**Paul also says that we should offer our life as a living sacrifice.**

- What does that look like?
- Read Romans 12:1-2 from The Message
- Paul and Holy Spirit are asking us this: do we have space for the spirit to come and enter? Are we willing to sacrifice our time and life as a gift to God?
- When we practice the spiritual disciplines that help us grow in faith, we WILL be transformed. Are you ready for it?

**Remember the Questions:**

- What would it look like for you to connect with God daily? How do you make that happen? How would you spent that time?
- Who in your life could you commit to staying accountable with in spiritual practices?
- What do you want from God in your spiritual life?
- What does offering your life as a “living sacrifice” mean?

**WEEK 5**

**Focus Scripture:** Colossians 3:14-17

**Theme:** Taking the Next Step

**Description:** The conclusion of these series allows us to offer an opportunity to the gathered community. This is a highly focused call to action session. Offer a chance for the congregation to respond.

**Key Questions:**

- Has anyone ever given you an opportunity that allowed you to use your gifts in leadership and service? Why did they offer it to you?
- Who do you know that has your “dream job” or “dream service opportunity”? What would you say to them if they were here now?
- What kind of opportunities are available to you in using your gifts, talents, and passion in the world in the month(s) ahead?
- What are you willing to do to create more opportunities?

**In the Groove**

- Share an example/illustration of a team working its best because everyone was working within their giftedness, and doing it well.
- Recap where you have been the previous 4 weeks.
- Re-read scripture (Colossians 3:14-17)
  - Ask congregation to shout of words ad phrases that stick out to them. Allow a moment of silence for them to start pop-corning their answers out. Affirm their responses. Share the words that stuck out to you.

**Love Binds**

- Love binds everything together in perfect harmony.
- Not the “I love you because I have to” love; rather, it’s the love that trusts we are all doing the very best we can and we raise each other up in that.
- Love that picks us up when we fall down
- When we have peace of Christ in our hearts, when we can trust God to supply for our needs, we can want the best for others and help them achieve it through love.

### **One Body**

- We work TOGETHER for the good of the church and the good of the kingdom.
- We don’t leave the work to one or two people, we all work and give based on our giftedness and abilities.

### **Be Thankful**

- For the community of saints. The community around us. For opportunities to live and give our best back to God and the church
- Paint a picture of what your church can look like when these verses are being fully lived into. Diversity. Strength, richness of giftedness.
- Offer a time of response – create a *tabula rasa*, a “blank slate” for people to create new opportunities by writing on a blank roll of paper down the center aisle, create a Say Yes board with opportunities to serve for people to grab/sign up for.
- Close with prayer asking for God to continue speaking our names, calling us into service. Pray for open hearts, open ears, and open minds to how we can EACH be active and contributing members of God’s glorious kingdom.

### **Remember the Questions:**

- Has anyone ever given you an opportunity that allowed you to use your gifts in leadership and service? Why did they offer it to you?
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