

Theme: Jesus Chooses Us

Scripture Theme Verse: John 15:9-17

⁹Jesus said, As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I



have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. ¹²This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶**You did not choose me but I chose you.** And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

First Thoughts

How does it feel to be chosen? Remember a time when you *were or were not* chosen for something. What was it for—a job, a relationship, a promotion? How did you respond? Were you happy, disappointed, angry, or relieved? On the playground, children frequently choose teams for games. Someone will be chosen first, and someone will be chosen last. Usually the choice is based on personal friendships or athleticism or skill. This can be a tortuous childhood ritual for the one chosen last. When it comes to God,

we are never last, Jesus chooses us *first*. God's love and desire for us are not based on our friendships or how good we are at something. God chooses to lay down his life for imperfect, broken, and last ones—*you and me*—all for the sake of love. We see the depths of this love on the cross where Jesus' chooses to lay the burdens of the world—*your burdens*—upon his own broken body so that we may be friends with God in this life and in next. God has chosen you already, there is nothing that you can do to earn or to lose Jesus' claim upon you. The choice left to you is the depth of love you will offer the world in joyful response.

For Personal Reflection

What burdens do you have to lay upon Jesus? _____

How do you feel about being chosen to work at camp this summer? _____

Think of three specific commitments/actions that you will do to express your love for fellow staff and campers.

Prayer Points

- Ask God to take up your burdens.
- Thank God for the beauty of creation and for choosing you to work at camp.
- For God to show you how to love the world.

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Day One: Jesus Calls Us

Scripture Verse: Matthew 4:18-22

¹⁸As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen.

¹⁹And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."

²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

First Thoughts

Jesus calls the first disciples and us to follow in his footsteps. God has a history of calling people who initially don't seem like very good choices. Moses was a murderer. Jeremiah was too young to be taken seriously. Mary was a poor nobody from the middle of nowhere. All three objected to God's call at first, and asked, "God are you *sure* you want *me*?!" Paul was a religious fanatic. It took a dramatic act from the heavens- blinding light for a few days-to change his mind about Jesus. Simon Peter and Andrew are at work. Aren't they too busy to be bothered? Yet they immediately follow after Jesus.

God consistently calls people from all walks of life to be about God's work in the world, but there are a variety of ways in which people respond to God's call. Some respond immediately. Some feel like they have no choice. Some ask lots of questions. Some avoid it altogether. Some may already be at work doing the thing God is calling them to do, and they don't even know it.

However we respond to the call, the good news is that we have company along the way. Jesus calls a *community* of disciples, not just one person, to carry the load, to share in the work of the Kingdom of God. In fact, the people are a large part of what makes camp so joyful.

In the song "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" by Green Day, the vocalist sings,

"My shadow's the only one that walks beside me
My shallow heart's the only thing that's beating
Sometimes I wish someone out there will find me
'Til then I walk alone"

Christians never have to walk alone. Jesus has found us. Jesus is always with us - in front of us, behind us, beside us, sometimes carrying us. We share the call with many others. We walk in Jesus' footsteps together.

For Personal Reflection

Do you ever wonder if you are good enough to be called to do God's work in the world? What does God think? _____

Who has walked beside you in your faith travels? _____

What three things can you do to walk with others in their journey of faith this summer? _____

Prayer Points

- For the staff community who will walk together this summer.
- For the campers who long for community and direction.
- For the courage and faith to follow in Jesus footsteps even when communal life gets hard.



Day Two: Jesus Protects Us

Scripture Theme Verse: mark 4:35-41

³⁵On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said [to the disciples], "Let us go across to the other side." ³⁶And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" ⁴¹And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

First Thoughts

Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? "God, don't you care what is happening to me? God, don't you care about all the suffering in the world? God, do something!"

We have real fears and worries in our lives. Everyone can relate to feeling storm-tossed and swamped. Sometimes, we may feel like God is asleep on a pillow rather than actively at work blessing and saving the world. Notice, though, that Jesus is not in some heaven light years away. He is with the disciples - right in the middle of the danger, the fear, and the impending death.

Jesus looks like he is powerless to do anything about all this danger. Yet, the loudest winds, the roughest seas, and deepest waters are subdued by nothing more earth-shattering than a few words from Jesus.

Who has this kind of power? The One who was with God in the beginning. The One who created the heavens and the earth. The One who looked foolish and alone, broken and dying on a cross. The One who will roll the stone of death away. This One has the power of God to bring peace to our life, to our deaths, and to our world.

For Personal Reflection

What are your fears, worries, and troubles?

What enables you to entrust your worries and fears to God?

Name three things that you can do to help others through their fears and troubles.

Prayer Points

- Tell God about your worries, fears, and troubles. Ask for God's help and guidance.
- For staff and campers who are afraid or hurting.



Day Three: Jesus Speaks to Us

Scripture Theme Verse: Luke 10:38-42

³⁸Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴²there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

First Thoughts

Martha wants her sister to help with the work of hosting an important guest like Jesus, but we learn that Jesus does not need to be entertained or served in a lavish way. He is content to simply be at home with these friends.

Jesus comes to us when our rooms are messy, the food is not ready, the heater doesn't work, and our hair is in disarray. Jesus comes to us in the midst of our imperfect lives, and he has something to say to us. If God only spoke to us when things in our life were in order, the Bible would be a lot shorter.

Our lives are full of many activities and things we need to "do". Jesus' response to Martha shows us that listening to God's Word and being in the presence of Jesus is so important that we need to set aside other busy activities to do what Mary is doing. She is being with Jesus and not just doing many things. We call this "better part", or quiet attention to the teacher, *reverence*. To hear

what Jesus has to say to us, we need to take time to read Scripture, to hear it interpreted alongside other people, and to pray.

When we take time to listen, we hear that Jesus' words speak directly to our messy, busy, task-oriented lives. "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon yourself and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

It isn't wrong to offer hospitality or to show mercy or work hard; in fact, this is a good thing. Camp life is all about hospitality and hard work. However, we do what we do because we have heard this call through the Word of God as proclaimed to us through the words and actions of Jesus Christ. We know that our work is meaningful and necessary because *Jesus* has told us that our neighbor needs our help.

For Personal Reflection

What are some of the activities and things you are busy with these days?

How and when do you take time to read Scripture, pray, and hear God's word?

Name a specific way that you could be more intentional about attending to what Jesus has to say to you.

Prayer Points

- Offer to God your busy life and all your stresses.



- For the will and help to attend to Scripture and God's word.

Day Four: Jesus Changes Us

Scripture Theme Verse: Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. ²A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." ⁶So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." ⁸Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." ⁹Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

First Thoughts

Many of us think it would be great to be rich. We imagine all the things could do, and what we would buy if only we had millions.

Being wealthy wasn't that wonderful for Zacchaeus. People hated Zacchaeus not just because he collected taxes, but because they thought he was a traitor. He collected taxes from his fellow Jews to pay the Romans, the foreign occupying state. Not only that, but it was common practice for tax collectors to collect money above and beyond the tax rate to keep for themselves. Zacchaeus is rich because he steals from his neighbors. This

makes him a pretty lonely guy. Everyone considered him a lost cause.

Jesus could have chosen to have supper at the home of some well-respected person, but he didn't. He singled out the home of the infamous, traitorous, cheating, lonely one. When Jesus called Zacchaeus' name, everything changed. He went from miserly hoarding to wild abundance. He went from cheater to justice maker. He went from lost cause to chosen follower.

Zacchaeus' true identity is not as a greedy, corrupt tax collector. His true identity is that of a "son of Abraham"—a child of God. Being in Jesus' presence made him well and whole in a new relationship with God. This new relationship with God changed his relationship with others. This, Jesus says, is "salvation."

Salvation can't be bought and sold. Salvation is freely given when Jesus calls out your name.

For Personal Reflection

How has Jesus calling your name changed you? _____

How has Jesus calling your name changed your relationship with others?

Name three areas of your life (money, time, forgiveness, other people, etc) where you could practice wild generosity like Zacchaeus. _____

Prayer Points

- Thank for Jesus calling your name.



- Guidance and courage to be wildly generous with the abundance of God.

Day Five: Jesus Goes With Us

Scripture Theme Verse: Luke 24:13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." ²⁵Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

First Thoughts

The disciples thought that God had been with them. They saw and heard firsthand all Jesus' teachings, healings, signs, and miracles. Surely this man was of God! Then they saw him arrested, mocked, beaten, dead, and buried. Surely God would have had nothing to do with such a display of failure and weakness! Had they been wrong about God?

They were walking along the road of life, dealing with all the changes, and wondering where God could be found among a world of such great need. Though he seemed hidden among the fear and pain, Jesus remained, walking alongside them.

Sometimes, we are tempted to think that God only shows up in extraordinary people or events. But here, Jesus turns up on a walk, during the mourning of a friend, in the scriptures, at dinner, in bread and wine, in conversation among friends. Camp is a spiritual high for most people. This scripture shows us that Jesus is present not only during high times, but also during low times and routine days. Wherever the roads of life may take us, to camp or back home again, Jesus goes with us transforming suffering and death into surprising joy and life.

For Personal Reflection

What have been your "spiritual highs" when you were certain of God's presence?

What have been your spiritual lows, when Jesus seemed hidden? _____

Where do you need Jesus to walk alongside you now? _____

Prayer Points

- For God to go with you in all things.