

VOCATION

Contribution



SESSION 1: THE JOURNEY & THE INNER LIFE

Main Text:

Luke 5:1-11

John 21:15-19

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Sermon Dates:

April 12

April 19



OPENING EXERCISE/DISCUSSION

What are one or two words that others would typically use to describe you? Can you share a time when you acted in a way that wasn't in alignment with that?

Quick Debrief:

- How did that make you feel? Was there anything going on internally that you became more aware of?

OPENING PRAYER

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your hearts to God's Word, to reveal where he may be inviting you into quiet faithfulness, and to form you more deeply into the image of Christ for the sake of others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Take ample time to read the passages slowly and aloud. Take note of observations and questions that emerge.

In these sermons, we were reminded that God cares deeply about who we are becoming, which shapes what we do and how we do it. We journeyed through pivotal moments in Peter's faith journey that remind us that transformation is not immediate—it is a process. Peter faced many moments of fear, doubt, and confusion that revealed areas of uncrucified ambition in his life. Over time, these moments refined his character, trust, and faithfulness.

Read Luke 5:1-11 and John 21:15-19 aloud.

- What stands out to you from Peter's responses in these two passages? What do you think we learn about him, and about his relationship with Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus re-stated his initial invitation to Peter in John 21:19? What might we learn about the deeper formation that God is seeking in our lives from Jesus' interactions with Peter in these two scenes?

When Jesus called Peter, he didn't just invite him into a mission—he invited him into a journey of transformation. Throughout Peter's journey, Jesus patiently drew Peter to himself and, over time, formed within him a deeper faithfulness and dependence on him. In these passages, we are reminded that Peter's calling hadn't changed—he was still sent, entrusted with responsibility, and invited into meaningful work. Who he was becoming was reshaping how he showed up.

As our inner lives are transformed by Jesus, our outer lives become an expression of that transformation. In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul reminds us that our inner life shapes not just what we do, but how and why we do it, so that our daily work is an opportunity to partner with God in the renewal of all things.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.

- Why do you think Paul connects ambition with a “quiet life”? How might this redefine what it means to live a meaningful or successful life?
- What might Paul's instruction to “work with your hands” reveal about the fruit of a life that is transformed by God from the inside out? How do you think your work (paid or unpaid) would look different if your focus shifted from what you accomplish to how you do it?

Additional Questions:

- What difference do you think it would make if you focused on cultivating a quiet, faithful life? How might that change what people would notice in you, or what might be different about the way they experience you?

TAKE HOME EXERCISE: From Ambition to Faithfulness

Read through these instructions for the take home exercise aloud as a group. Talk through any questions that may arise. Commit to trying this out before the next group meeting.

Part 1 - Audit

Take an honest look at this past week and identify moments where you experienced alignment and misalignment with who you are becoming in Christ. This is simply an opportunity to notice and assess what happened without judgment or criticism.

1. Take note of any moments from your week where you found your actions aligning with who you are becoming in Christ—an integration of your inner and outer life. (e.g., Where did my heart and my actions align? Where did I respond with patience, gentleness, or kindness this week, even when it was hard?)

2. Write down some moments where you experienced misalignment with who you are becoming in Christ—a disconnect between your inner and outer life. (e.g., Where did I notice a gap between the way I showed up externally and the way I was feeling internally. When might I have pursued recognition, success, or personal gain over faithfulness?)



3. Looking back at these moments of alignment and misalignment, what do you sense about the ways your inner life is shaping your outer life? What might God be wanting to form in you?

Part 2 - Pursue Hidden Faithfulness

Spend some time over the next few weeks meditating on, and even committing to memory, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12: *...make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*

Prayerfully choose one hidden act of faithfulness that you can do this week. To take this further, see if you can find a way to work it into your daily or weekly rhythms.

Choose something you can do to seek shalom around you—something meaningful that no one will know about. Shalom means peace. We often reduce this to the absence of conflict. However, the biblical understanding of shalom (peace) is a state of wholeness, harmony, and total flourishing. One way that we can partner with God in the renewal of all things is to lean into small, ordinary opportunities to bring order to chaos, to mend what is broken, and to cultivate spaces where others can flourish.

Possible ideas:

- Clean or organize a shared space
- Fix something broken
- Clarify a confusing system
- Encourage a struggling coworker or classmate
- Initiate a hard conversation you've been avoiding
- Wash your car, or someone else's
- Take care of a neglected plant or an outdoor garden space
- Volunteer a skill in your local community
- Join someone in their work, or collaborate on a project

SESSION 2:

THE OUTER LIFE

CALLING & CONTRIBUTION

Main Text:

Exodus 31:1-6
Jeremiah 29:1-7

Sermon Dates:

April 26
May 3

OPENING EXERCISE/DISCUSSION

When you think about the places you spend most of your time (work, school, home, neighborhood), what are some ways that you often contribute to these spaces? Conversely, where might you slip into being a consumer?

Quick Debrief:

- What is one practical way you can use the gifts, abilities, and opportunities God has uniquely given you to help those spaces flourish?

OPENING PRAYER

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your hearts to God's Word, to reveal how he is already at work around you, and help you become the kind of people who faithfully contribute to flourishing wherever he has planted you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As you move into the study portion of this discussion, take ample time to read and even re-read the passages, slowly and aloud. Take note of what you observe and what questions come to the surface.

Read Exodus 31:1-6 together as a group.

- What stands out to you about the way that God describes Bezalel and his work? How might this shape your understanding of the type of work that God considers to be excellent and beautiful?
- Sometimes we can elevate some types of work over others, or even assume that "spiritual" or meaningful work is connected with teaching, preaching, prayer, or studying the Bible. Does this passage challenge that assumption? Explain.
- What are some of the ways that your work (paid or unpaid) points to the goodness of God?

Read Jeremiah 29:1-7 together as a group.

- Even in exile, God tells his people to build houses, plant gardens, settle, and seek the peace and prosperity (shalom) of the city. What do you think this reveals about God’s heart and vision for us as partners with him in the renewal of all things?
- Where do you believe God has called and planted you? What is your biggest prayer for those places (work, school, home, community), and where do you see opportunities for renewal?

Additional Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think the instructions in Jeremiah 29:1-7 might have been challenging for God’s people to receive? How have you experienced God using faithful, ordinary, everyday actions to bring about renewal both within you and around you?
- How might the Holy Spirit be inviting you to participate in the spaces God has planted you for the flourishing of others, and not just your own gain?

TAKE HOME EXERCISE

Read through these instructions for the take home exercise aloud as a group. Talk through any questions that may arise. Commit to trying this out before the next group meeting.

Part 1: Notice Where God is Already at Work

Take time this week to ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to where God is already at work—in your home, work, school, or community. Write down 1-2 of the ways you are sensing his presence and activity in those places.

Part 2: Identify and Pray Over Your Contribution

Choose one specific way you can partner with God by actively seeking the shalom of the city you live in. How has he uniquely positioned you and gifted you? What is one specific way he is inviting you to offer your time, talents, or treasures? Is there something you can do to care for and bring order to a shared space, resource, or environment? Is there a specific way you can encourage, mentor, or invest in someone? Invite the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you.

Part 3: Take Action and Reflect

Reflecting back, what did you do to take action, and how did that enable you to partner with God in bringing shalom? How did it feel to contribute in this way? Where did you experience resistance (fear, distraction, hesitation)? How might God be inviting you to trust in him and lean on his strength as you continue to partner with him in the renewal of all things?

