

Good Morning,

Our message today is going to help us to better understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Now that's a tall order to accomplish in one message, but today's reading in Luke will help us to simplify this understanding. Did you know that during Jesus' ministry over 80 people became His Disciple? There were the original 12 disciples and an additional 72 that Luke tells us about in today's reading. Many biblical scholars tell us that there were a lot of negative feelings towards Jesus' ministry but to have this many people answer a call to become a disciple shows just how much Jesus was loved and followed when he walked on this Earth. Our message today is also going to help us, as Christians, to be more aware of how we may have already been called ourselves to be one of Jesus' Disciples. Who knows, you may even discover that you have already been a disciple for quite some time now. And then there are some of you who may find out that God may be preparing you to be a disciple. And then there are some of you who may be just beginning to think about what it means to be a disciple. As we begin to think about what it takes to be a disciple of Jesus, do you ever wonder if you're even capable of being one? I don't know about you but there were many times in my life that I would never have even dreamed of being a disciple. In fact being a disciple of Jesus was the furthest thing from my mind. As I never thought it was even possible with all sins that I had committed to even think about being called. So what happened, how did I find myself later in life being called as a Disciple of Jesus? Actually, I didn't do a thing. My human side sort of wants to say that I did something but the reality is that I'm not even humanly capable to change on my own. You see in the first verse of Luke 10 we find Jesus doing all the work to call us as disciples. ***"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where he was about to go."*** This verse is at the heart of our message today as there are two very distinct parts to it. The first part is that Jesus does the appointing. You see, Jesus, knows who we are. He knows both the good and the bad about us. But Jesus sees beyond who we are in the present and sees who we will become in the future. Jesus sees our potential to serve as one of His disciples. And the fact that we may not be disciple material in the beginning doesn't prevent Jesus from calling us. You see the word; "disciple" refers to a learner or follower of Jesus. So when we are first called to serve as disciples it makes perfect sense that we're not really ready to be one. But Jesus knows more about our potential than we know about our potential; you see Jesus is sort of like a major league baseball coach. We are first recruited to the team. Then placed in the minor

leagues and then after we when have learned what needs to be learned we are brought up to the big league. I bet you never thought about being scouted prior to being called as a disciple. Over a couple of weeks ago, some of you may remember a couple of exciting moments for the Minnesota Twins and particularly one of their team players, Brian Dozier. What we may remember is when Brian hit a 9<sup>th</sup> inning home run to beat the Detroit Tigers 8-6 and when he hit a home run in the All Star game. And what even makes these events more exciting was Brian's humbleness when he told reporters in essence that he was just a **"team player?"** You see, what Brian is to baseball, is what we are to God's Kingdom. We are team players. We were scouted, called, trained and then sent out to win the hearts of non-believers to join Jesus' team. And now to the second distinct part of the first verse of Luke 10 where Jesus sends the disciples out **"to every town and place where he was about to go."** What makes this part of the verse interesting is that Jesus didn't just send disciples out to every town and place but sent them to people where "He was about to go." You see Jesus even knows before hand who He's sending them to meet. So if we think about it, Jesus knows whom He is calling and whom they are going to meet with. Now I know many of us probably brought our cells phones with us today and I can guess that most of us probably turned off the volume or even turned off the phone completely. But did you know that there's a third option that some of us may have considered? Just by chance, did anyone happen to think about placing your phone in airplane mode? So why am I talking about the settings on our phones when just a moment ago I was talking about Jesus knowing who He is going to call as a disciple. Well could it be that the two things are sort of related. After all before you call someone on the phone, don't you know whose number you are going to call beforehand? And could it be that Jesus is getting ready to call you? Actually I believe Jesus may have already placed a call to your hearts. But maybe some of us had the volume of our hearts turned down. Or maybe some of us had our hearts turned off completely, while some of us maybe just had our hearts in Airplane mode. So anyway let's take a moment for some quiet thinking and check out our hearts just like we would check out our phones to see if there were any earlier calls that we may be blocking out. So how can I tell when I receive a call from Jesus? First off, when Jesus calls He will ask you to do something, and secondly, Jesus' call will stay with you and thirdly, Jesus' call will give you a sense of working together with Him. So from our first reading today in Jeremiah we found a wonderful example what it is like to receive such a call from God. Normally in a message this would be a good time to re-read today's reading from Jeremiah. But I would like to try

something a little bit different. I would like to read a paraphrased version of the story. This version reflects a more contemporary approach to the conversation between God and Jeremiah. Here goes! Hello Jeremiah, this is God calling. God, is that really you? Yes, Jeremiah, You may not know me but I know you and In fact I even knew you before you were born. You see, I prepared you back then to answer the call that I am about to now give you? Really, you did all that before I was born! Yes, Jeremiah, and now I would like to place a call, on your heart, to be my messenger. "God, you're kidding me right? I have no experience! I have no idea how to be your messenger! Are you sure you have the right guy? "Jeremiah, I'm not kidding you, and yes I have the right guy, you see Jeremiah, as my messenger, I will send you to those who need to hear my message. Now this is important Jeremiah, you are to have no fear in what you are about to do. Please know that I will always be with you and I will always take care of you! Ok, Jeremiah, I want you to deliver this message to these people. Oh, by the way, Jeremiah, before you go, please know that My message that you deliver will make people uncomfortable, angry, frustrated and broken. But God what if they come after me and take out their anger and frustration on me. What if they kill me? Jeremiah, did you already forget that I just told you to have no fear, remember that I will be with you and I will provide you with the knowledge, strength and courage to do what I ask. Now go, and deliver my message! So what are we to take learn from this conversation where God calls Jeremiah to be His messenger? To answer this question we will look at four key experiences within their conversation. These key experiences will give us examples to draw from when we may experience our own call from God. These experiences are: (1) That we can hear God's voice; (2) that we were prepared to serve God before we were born; (3) that we are fearful and feel inadequate to fulfill God's call, and (4) that we can only answer God's call with His help. As we look at the first key experience about hearing God's voice it is important that we are aware of how to hear the voice of God. First off, we should know that we are entitled to hear God's voice; we should know that Jesus tells us, that we are His sheep and we will know His voice; we should know that John Wesley tells us that we can hear the voice of God when we read and study the bible; we should know that, the disciple, Paul tells us that we can hear from God's voice in messages and sermons, and we should also know that we can hear God's voice through that little voice that we hear in our thoughts. So when we know that Jeremiah can hear God's voice, we too, are able to hear His voice! Hearing God's voice is not just limited to those mentioned in the bible but His voice is ever present, today, in our lives. Our next key experience gives us an understanding that "we were prepared to serve God before we were born". I would like

to read a verse from today's reading Jeremiah 1:5 ***"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart"***. This verse is pretty direct in telling us that we existed in some manner before our birth, and by God setting us apart, He had in mind a purpose for us and he prepared us so we may fulfill that purpose when we are called. Our third key experience is an experience in which "we feel fearful and inadequate to fulfill God's call". This appears to be a very common feeling among those who receive a call from God. When God told Moses that he was to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses "trembled" and could not understand why God would call him since he was a just a shepherd and a murderer. He even questioned God and said to Him, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" Moses was not the only one who reacted in this way to God's call. We also find a very similar response when God called Gideon to defeat the Midianites as he responded to God "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasse, and I am the least in my father's house." But despite their fears and inadequacies we know that both Moses and Gideon went on to successfully fulfill God's call. So how did Moses and Gideon accomplish God's call, when they felt so fearful and inadequate? We find the answer to this question in our last key point experience, "that we can only answer God's call with His help." The bible tell us in Mark 10:27 that ***"With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."*** Now, what I would like for us to take away from today's message is that if we really think hard about our relationship with Jesus it's a relationship that we did not initiate. You see Jesus appointed his disciples and followers to be in a relationship with him. And as Jesus appointed them over 2000 years ago he's still appointing disciples and followers today in our modern times. And then there's our example of Jeremiah, Moses and Gideon being called by God. In these examples we found that it was not their idea to do God's work. So what is it that our stories of Jesus appointing his disciples and followers and God calling Jeremiah, Moses and Gideon have in common? What is common between these two stories is that everyone accepted their appointment or call. You see they faithfully answered their phones with trust and accomplished what they were called to do. So when your heart's phone rings and you see it's a heavenly call, don't hang up, but answer it knowing that you are doing exactly what God prepared you to do in your earthly journey. Now as we close our message today, keep this verse from Jeremiah in your thoughts, ***"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart"***. Amen

**Worship Service Readings for July 26, 2015**

Jeremiah 1:4-10

The Lord gave me this message: “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.” “O Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I can’t speak for you! I’m too young!” The Lord replied, “Don’t say, ‘I’m too young,’ for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. 8 And don’t be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!” 9 Then the Lord reached out and touched my mouth and said, “Look, I have put my words in your mouth! Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms. Some you must uproot and tear down, destroy and overthrow. Others you must build up and plant.”

**Please stand and join together as we sing, “Glory Be To The Father” #70**

Luke 10; 1-4

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two[a] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2 He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. 3 Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4 Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

**Please join together as we sing Hymn No. \_\_\_\_\_**

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