



small groups

Discussion Guide



Next Steps

Matt. 18:16-20

Ice Breaker

(2 minutes)

Discuss

- Barry Jones is the second IBC pastor, and one of at least six IBCers, to publish a book. How many authors can you name at IBC?
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Lesson Review

(50 minutes)

Barry started with an explanation of the cultural background for a rabbi's invitation to "come, follow me." Ask someone to recount that process of religious education among first century Jews.

Read Matt. 4:18-22

Barry said this cultural backdrop helps explain why the fishermen whom Jesus called would drop their nets and follow him. It was an invitation to matter, to have a mentor. It was a vote of confidence. Jesus was saying to them (and, by extension, to us) "I think you have what it takes."

Then Barry pointed out four aspects of Jesus' yoke – his way of living that was to be mimicked by his disciples.

1. Jesus Was a Boundary Breaker

Barry mentioned cultural boundaries (the woman at the well – John 4:1-26), relational boundaries (healing a leper – Matt. 8:1-4), and political boundaries (the calling of a tax collector and a zealot. Barry said this was akin to having a Tea Party activist and a blogger from moveon.org in the same small group.) Barry said, "Jesus touched the untouchable, loved the unlovable, forgave the unforgivable."

A modern example might be Kaci Hickox. Kaci was an IBCer before she moved to Maine. A nurse with Doctors Without Borders, Kaci recently volunteered to go to West Africa to help contain the ebola outbreak. Below is a poem Kaci wrote in her most recent Facebook update:

I feel like my head is clouded and pounding with raindrops of lead, and I cannot respond to the heartless words I have read.

'You aid workers are bringing Ebola to Dallas and the West', but what do you know of the suffering in these beds?

30 confirmed Ebola patients lying in my tent, I suffocate from the protective equipment in which I am sent.

They can only see my eyes and I feel so useless, with only an hour at a time to care for them it feels helpless.

But today I held the hand of a woman who was discharged and cured, while she has lost two children to Ebola she flights for her third.

The rains pounds on the tent that holds coworkers and friends, I have lost more in 4 weeks than I could ever before comprehend.

Then my phone rings and I hear familiar voices, Abibatu, Haja, and Lamphia – our first three family of successes. They lost their father and brother to this battle, but together they stand cured and each of their smiles all matter.

I can't ignore that this is a horrendous disease, it takes even those young and strong with such ease.

But fear will only fuel this flame, extend the suffering, multiply the pain.

We must fight this battle we once felt immune to, in order to prove that all lives are valued.

And I know you are scared, and I was scared too, but let me walk alongside with you. Let us fight as world united anew.

Discuss

- What are other examples of Christians embracing the call to be boundary-breakers?

2. Jesus Was a Shalom Maker

When Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matt. 5:9) the word for peace he would have used would have correlated to “shalom”. Jesus was saying, “Blessed are those who bring the shalom of God to broken places.” Barry said that all Jesus’ miracles are examples of shalom-making. Notice that Jesus’ miracles always restored what was broken to its original good design. He gave sight to the blind man, not X-ray vision. He made the lame walk, not levitate. Jesus’ miracles restored what was good in the garden. They pointed toward the “shalom bookends” of the Garden of Eden and the New Jerusalem.

Discuss

- What are other examples of Christians bringing shalom to broken places?

3. Jesus Was a People Keeper

Barry contrasted “people keeping” with Sabbath keeping. This was one of the issues that got Jesus in trouble with the religious establishment (Mark 3:1-3). Jesus insisted that people were more important than rules, even rules God himself established.

Read Is. 1:10-17

Discuss

- Why would God despise the very religious observances he commanded?
- According to the Bible, how are we to know when it’s important to follow religious rules and when it’s not?

4. Jesus Was a Wounded Healer

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

—2 Cor. 1:3-4

No one escapes being wounded. We all are wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not “How can we hide our wounds?” so we don’t have to be embarrassed, but “How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?” When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers.

—Henri Nouwen

Discuss

- Has God ever used someone else’s wounds to help you heal? Tell about that.
 - Has God ever used your wounds to help someone else? Tell about that.
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Application

(8 minutes)

Barry described three implications for his lesson.

- We are called to personal discipleship — taking next steps in our apprenticeship with Jesus
- We are called to interpersonal discipleship — inviting others to take next steps
- We are called to corporate discipleship — a church that plants churches

Discuss

- Of those three, which are you most interested in contributing to over the next year? Which arena holds your “next steps”?

Close in prayer for IBC’s discipleship in the coming year.