

## Union United Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Lent2: Seeking, Finding, and Obeying God's Call**

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Genesis 12:1-8; John 1:35-46**

### 1. **Lent: Seeking & Finding**

Lent is a season of self-examination, repentance, and re-dedication of ourselves to God's Call on our lives as Christians. We are reminded of Christ's supreme sacrifice for the salvation all who would respond to Him. Like the first disciples, we should seek the Messiah and his power in our lives, and seek to help others meet Christ and experience the Messiah's love and transformative power. To achieve this, we should seek the Lord's will and purposes for our lives and live accordingly.

- **What are you looking for?**

"The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, 36and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" 37The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, **"What are you looking for?"**

John 1:35-38 NRSV

Each of us should examine ourselves and ask the question Jesus asked of the first disciples who followed him: what are you looking for?

- What am I looking for in life?
- What am I looking for in others?
- What am I looking for in my church and for my church?
- What am I looking for in my career?
- Etc.

While these are important questions, here is a more important question:

- **What is God looking for? In me, my family, my church, my nation, ...**
- **How am I responding to God?**

- **Seek and Find: Jesus promised.**

Jesus promised that if we seek, we shall find what we are looking for.

7 **“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.8For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.9** “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?10Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?11If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”

Matthew 7:7-11 NIV

The early disciples were searching for the Messiah, and they found him:

“One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41He first found his brother Simon and said to him, **“We have found the Messiah”** John 1:40-41 NRSV

- **Jesus promised rest to those who come to him.**

**“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29**Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30**For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”** Matthew 11:28-30 NRSV

- **God has a plan for us:**

We must remember that God has a plan for our lives. When we seek the Lord, we shall find answers that involve God's plan for us. It is in this plan that we find rest and fulfilment and happiness.

As the Lord promised the Israelites at a time when they were going into captivity, **“I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”** Jeremiah 29:11 NRSV

## 2. Lent: Heeding God's Call, Living in God's plan

God's plan includes what God calls us to do.

We should bear in mind that central to our call as individuals and as the Church is the call to go make disciples for Christ. How faithful are we in this calling?

While there is a corporate call to the universal Church, God calls us as a local church, and individually as well. We are to take steps of faith in obedience to what the Lord directs us to do.

Today we look at the example of Abraham and the call of the early disciples of Christ.

- **Abraham's Call**

1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

- **The Call of Jesus' First Disciples: "Come and See"**

"When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, **"Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?"** 39 He said to them, **"Come and see." They came and saw** where he was staying, and they remained with him that day."

John 1:38-39 NRSV

Unless we take a step of obedience, we shall not see the whole plan of God fulfilled, and neither shall we experience the full blessings attached to the call. Our experience of God will also be limited if we don't walk in the path the Lord has called us to walk in.

We see this in the case of Abram's call as well. When he obeyed and went to the land of Canaan, the Lord appeared to Abraham and gave him further promises and clarity about the future.

**"When they had come to the land of Canaan,** Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. **7Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."** So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him." Genesis 12:5-7 NRSV.

If Abram had not obeyed, he would never have known and experienced all that the God planned for him and his family for generations.

The Lord invites us to seek and find Him and His plan this Lent and throughout our lives. This is a Divine call that must be heeded if we are to live the lives God ordained for us since the foundations of the world.

Would you heed this call today?

Would you "come and see"?