

Text: John 1:29-51

Title: “Your ONE ... Who?”

I always feel a great sense of responsibility about the privilege that is given to me each week to stand here and preach. But I feel a greater sense of urgency about these last three messages I will preach as your Lead Teaching Pastor. I feel compelled by the Lord to call us again to keep Jesus’ main thing *our* main thing. If you were to ask Jesus, “What is Your main thing?” In ...

Mark 13:10 - And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.

If you asked the Apostle Paul, “What is your main thing?” He would say...

1 Corinthians 2:2 - For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

We have to keep the main thing the main thing. We can’t let lesser things distract us. Not lights or music or room colors or coffee. The main thing is the Gospel ... the proclamation of the message that God came to this earth in the person of Jesus Christ, lived the life we were supposed to live, died the death we deserved to die, and was raised from the dead to give us victory over sin and death, and to make it possible for us to have a relationship with God. And when that message is proclaimed it unleashes power like we could never imagine.

Romans 1:16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...

It’s the power of God for the salvation of *everyone* who believes. When that message is proclaimed in the name of Jesus it carries incredible power to change lives, no matter how far from God and messed up a person may be. When we trust in Christ there comes a new life and a new love for others. This is the making of disciples. And it is Jesus’ main thing.

J.D. Greear in his new book *Above All*, puts it this way: “We have a gospel too great and a mission too urgent to be distracted by any secondary thing. Everything we do in our own lives and in our churches must be run through the filter of how well it enables and deepens our gospel mission.”

Now the dilemma is that most believers think that the responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel and making disciples is on the shoulders of preachers and

missionaries. And the rest of the church sits back and applauds them as they work hard doing that. But the clear teaching of the New Testament is that the responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel and making disciples rests upon the shoulders of *all* believers, not just the professionals. And the true measure of the effectiveness of a church is not in the money we raise or buildings we build or the names we add to the rolls; the true measure is making disciples who make disciples. That's Jesus' main thing.

I get overwhelmed when I think about the millions of people there are to reach in our city, or the billions in our world. But it's a little easier when I bring it down really small and think about one person that God would use me to pray for and to love and to share the Gospel with in the hope that they may be saved and become a follower of Jesus.

So we're going to spend the next six weeks with this question before each of us: "Who's Your One?" And we're going to let the Word of God and the Spirit of God equip us and inspire us so open your Bibles to John 1:29. I want to show you from Scripture how the pattern for this approach was set by Jesus at the very beginning of His mission. Jesus' plan for building His church and expanding His Kingdom is to make disciples who make disciples. In John 1 we're introduced to a mighty man of God named John (the Baptist) who came to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus the Messiah. **Read John 1:29, 34.**

And John's mission is our mission ... to testify that Jesus is the Son of God. And here's how it played out. **Read John 1:35-37.**

So John was not just preaching to crowds; he's with a couple of his followers one day when Jesus passed by. And he said, "Look, that's the man I was telling you about ... the Lamb of God." And when they heard it they followed Jesus. So John has passed his faith to two of his friends. But it doesn't stop there. **Read John 1:40-42a.**

This Peter later became the most outstanding leader among the disciples; but it was his brother Andrew who brought him to Jesus. So now there's a third generation: John, Andrew and now Simon Peter. But it doesn't stop there. **Read John 1:43-46.**

So Jesus calls Philip to follow Him and he did. And the next thing we know Philip has found his friend Nathanael and told him about Jesus. And when Nathaniel raises an objection, Philip just says, "Come and see."

Do you see the pattern? Jesus' plan for building His church and expanding His Kingdom is to make disciples who make disciples. Here's how that happens practically speaking:

1. UNDERSTAND WHO JESUS IS AND WHY HE CAME.

We have to know and love Christ well enough that we can talk about Him personally and passionately. In v.36 John introduced Jesus to his friends: "Look the Lamb of God!" You see, every Jew, when they went up to worship in the Temple, saw lambs sacrificed to atone for their sins. John introduces Jesus as the One who came to be the final and ultimate sacrificial Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. No more sacrifices are needed.

And when Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus, notice how he introduced Jesus in v.41: "We have found the Messiah (the Christ)." The Jews had long expected the Messiah to come to deliver and redeem Israel from their sins. Andrew told his brother, "He's the one we've been looking for!"

And then when Philip brought his friend Nathaniel to Jesus notice how he introduced Jesus. **Read John 1:45.** You see, Philip understood that the Law of Moses and the preaching of the prophets in the Old Testament all pointed to one who would bring salvation. And those promises and prophecies were fulfilled in the historical figure, Jesus of Nazareth.

Remember that we are connecting others to Jesus, not to ourselves, not even necessarily to a church, though that is important. And our testimony is that Christ is all the Bible says He is. In Him we find life and love and liberty. And while we are more than mere customers, there is a sense in which we are satisfied customers of Jesus. The best advertisement for the Gospel is people who know who Jesus is and why He came. But also, to be a disciple-making disciple...

2. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR CIRCLE.

We all live in a circle of relationships. The Gospel spreads along the lines of relationships. In John's circle was Andrew and he pointed him to Christ. In Andrew's circle was his brother Simon Peter and he pointed him to Christ. Philip had a guy named Nathaniel in his circle and he pointed him to Christ.

For some of you, your circle is full of people far from God. Take responsibility for your circle. But for some of us (particularly if we've been a Christian and church

goer for a long time) our circle is pretty small and includes practically no one who is not already a believer. If I asked you to pull out your phone right now and text someone who doesn't know Christ, you might not be able to do it.

So what do you do? You expand your circle. How do you do that? Well, just think about it. You can vary your traffic pattern. Join a service organization like Meals on Wheels. Volunteer at a pregnancy center or the Mercy Clinic. Sign up for Kids Hope to mentor boys and girls. Meet people in restaurants, at the cleaners or in a waiting room at the doctor's office. For many of you, your work is a great place to connect with people who are far from God.

ILLUSTRATION – We have a guy in our church who owns an engineering company with many employees. Last week he and his wife went to see the new movie, *Overcomer*. It's a powerful Christian film with a great Gospel message. This man went home and emailed all of his employees and encouraged them to go see the film, and offered to pay their way and buy them a coke and popcorn. The employees who had a company credit card could just charge it to their card. He can do that; he's the boss. The rest could turn in their receipts and be reimbursed. That's what it looks like to take responsibility for your circle.

Research consistently reveals that around 80-85% of people who come to church or come to Christ have come through the influence of family members and friends. Take responsibility for your circle. People in our culture today who don't have a relationship with Christ are probably not going to see an advertisement about our church and think, "Wow, I need to go to church to hear that new sermon series or their cool music." The first step toward Christ will probably involve someone in their circle who has shown them the life and the love of Jesus. Obviously, it is Jesus who does the drawing and the saving. But he chooses to use us in that supernatural process.

ILLUSTRATION - And by the way, don't let the haters keep you from speaking up. Maybe you saw on social media what New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees did. He's a strong Christian and he simply encouraged students to just take their Bibles to school with them. Well you would have thought that he had asked them to take guns with them to school. Haters popped up on the internet and said he was just trying to stir up animosity against gay and lesbian students. Well that was as far from Drew Bree's intention as it could be. But he's not backing down. The Bible we carry tells of a Savior who doesn't condone hate; He loves all of us just as we are. But He loves us too much to leave us as we are.

So take responsibility for your circle. Then...

3. PRAY AND PLAN FOR A GOSPEL CONVERSATION.

Again, Jesus is the One who alone can save someone. So talk to Jesus about your loved ones and friends who are far from God. What if God answered every single prayer you prayed in the past week? Would there be any new people in the Kingdom of God because they are in your circle and on your prayer list? Whenever you meet a new person, start praying for them by name with the thought that you could have a serious conversation about Christ.

Talk to Jesus about your friend, and then talk to your friend about Jesus. Build the relationship. Become involved and interested in their lives. But remember that the goal is for them to know Christ. Start with a casual conversation and then move deeper. Start with the physical and move to the spiritual. Start with religion and then move to the Gospel. Invite them to church.

What did John do with his friends? In v.36 *he told them* Jesus was the Lamb of God. When Andrew found his brother Simon Peter in v.41 *he told him* that Jesus was the Messiah. When Philip found Nathaniel, in v.45 *he told him* about Jesus.

You see, if something or someone is important to us it's easy for us to talk about it, even with total strangers. You easily talk about how your college football team is doing, or what's happening with your kids or grandkids, or who you're going to vote for in the next election. Prepare yourself and pray for the right time to have a serious conversation with your friend about the Gospel. Explain to them that God came to this earth in the person of Jesus Christ, who lived the life we were supposed to live, died the death we deserved to die, and was raised from the dead to give us victory over sin and death, and to make it possible for us to have a relationship with the God of the universe.

You feel awkward. Sure, most of us do. Someone has described evangelism as one nervous person talking to another nervous person. Don't worry about saying the wrong thing; God can fix it if your motivation is right. The Holy Spirit living in you gives power for witnessing. Trust Him to give you words. You don't have to have all the answers or to say everything exactly right. It's one thirsty person telling another thirsty person where to find water.

And something else: The disciples being made in John 1 became leaders of the movement. We want to make disciples who make disciples. Our disciple-making is

not just “dunk ‘em and drop ‘em.” We’re not making church members who sit in a pew; we’re making apprentices to Jesus who make a difference in their world ... disciples who make disciples. So pray and plan for a Gospel conversation with them. Then ...

4. TRUST YOUR ONE TO JESUS.

When we introduce our friends to Jesus He says, “Ok, I’ll take it from here.” When John connected his friends to Jesus, in vv.38-39 Jesus looked back and saw them walking behind and He said, “Come on. I’ll show the way.” When Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, Jesus said in v.42, “I know you. You are Simon, but I have chosen a new name for you because I have big plans for you.” Isn’t that amazing? Jesus already had future plans for Simon. And when Philip brought Nathaniel to Jesus, In v.47 Jesus said, “I know you.” Jesus knew what was in his heart. And when Nathaniel asked, “How do you know me?” Jesus replied in v.48, “I knew you before Philip ever came to talk to you about Me?”

Believe it or not Jesus knows your ONE better than you do. He loves them even more than you do. Before you ever thought to make them your ONE Jesus already had them on His mind and heart. He is already at work. This whole process of disciples making disciples succeeds because of Jesus. You can trust your ONE to Him.

I want you to see this connected to your own relationship with Jesus. This isn’t about just recruiting people to a cause. It’s all about our love and passion for Jesus and the difference the Gospel has made in our lives. Stop to think about this: At some time you were probably somebody’s ONE. Now, who’s your one?