



Vision and Commitment 2018
A year to focus on discipleship

Every day, in
everything
&
everywhere

Vision and Commitment Sunday - Sermon Outline

Bible Reading: 2 Peter 1:3-11 (key verses 3-4)

Main Point: Discipleship is our growth into living out God's life in us!

Intended Response: To lead into a time of response using the adult and children's commitment cards (signing/pledging to each other that we can be counted on to be travelling this journey with and for each other).

Introduction

It is helpful to note the contrast between chapters one and two of this letter. The first chapter is about the people of God and the life that they are called to live in belonging to God. In other words, although the word is not explicitly used, this is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Peter is also keen to make it clear that he is an eyewitness of Jesus, having been one of the disciples, and learned about these things, as it were, at the feet of the Master. Therefore he can be trusted as a true prophet of God.

In contrast, the second chapter is about false prophets and teachers with a false message and a lifestyle that is not a demonstration of what it means to be godly, and therefore to be true disciples of Jesus Christ. These people are in danger of God's judgment as deceivers of what is true. The final chapter then leads into an account of the eternal life with God that awaits those who faithfully persevere and search after all that is godly and pleasing to God.

Overall, we can see that disciples are those who trust the revelation that comes from true prophets, such as Peter, and are prepared to live against the flow of those around them who live simply to please themselves.

Context

- **Verse 3** introduces Peter's overall theme of learning to live godly lives, which is actually what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ (a disciple being an apprentice or learner).
- **Verse 4** is a key verse in which the phrase 'participate in the divine nature' makes it clear that we are called to a completely new life as disciples. The Greek word used for 'participate' is *koinonia*, which is variously translated in the New Testament as participation, partners, fellowship, communion and sharing. It comes





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from the idea of ‘holding in common’. It is the most extraordinary statement, that a holy God is prepared, through his grace, mercy and forgiveness, to draw us, unholy and selfish people, into the space that he opens up to us in the divine life!

- In **verses 5-7** Peter then describes some of the things that will mark the life of the person who seeks to live faithfully the new life that God makes available.
- While **verses 8-9** simply outline the contrast between the fruitfulness of the life of the disciple and the amnesia of the person who loses sight of this glorious opportunity.
- The challenge in **verses 10-11** is to set our focus completely on living this new life. Whilst it is possible that we may stumble along the way (in which case we need to humbly ask for forgiveness again), it is not inevitable if we keep trusting Jesus and, as the letter to the Hebrews suggests, keep our eyes fixed on him (Hebrews 12:2).

Key Headings

Begin by asking your congregation to consider moving from one mindset or way of thinking to a totally different one. It could be changing worldview, from one culture to another that is very different, or moving from one period of history to another, or as simple as moving from a black and white screen to a full HD 4K colour screen. As Colossians 1:13 reminds us, ‘For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.’ As disciples we are transferred to a different reality!

God’s Calling

Verses 3 and 4 are communicating the extraordinary reality that God has graciously reached out to us in order to draw us into the divine life - to give us a new life, to live in a new reality, to leave behind the old way of living, thinking and acting, to embrace God’s way of living, thinking and acting! We are in fellowship with, participate in and partner with (*koinonia*) God. If the full reality and joy of this experience has dawned on us, then the rest of our lives are given to learning to live in a new and godly life that demonstrates that we are God’s partners. It is something that consumes us ‘every day, in everything and everywhere’. Not just on a Sunday.

God’s Calling Confirmed

Since we belong to God, Peter’s letter encourages us to confirm this calling (v 10). In verses 5-9 we read about what the confirming of our calling looks like in everyday life. It means all these things: stepping out each day in faith, embracing what is good, growing in our knowledge and understanding of God, learning to control temptations to live selfishly, persevering when things are tough, keeping our eyes fixed on what it means to live God’s life, and learning to love each other deeply. Verses 8-9 contrast the fruitfulness and effectiveness of the godly life lived well ‘with the spiritual barrenness of a life lived just for ourselves’.





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Conclusion

When our eyes are fixed on Jesus, 'every day, in everything and everywhere', then we are learning to live in God's kingdom now, and forever (v 11).

Application

In order to ground what it looks like in practice to live faithfully in a new reality, it will be important to think about your congregation and their daily lives. What are some of the likely challenges that they will face in living in two worlds at the same time - living in the kingdom, yet still living in their everyday earthly surroundings with people who see a different reality from them? How do we interact with others who have different values, different expectations, different goals, without sounding as if we are 'holier than thou'?

Bob Dylan wrote a song which contained the words 'You're gonna have to serve somebody. Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord. But you're gonna have to serve somebody.' (*Gotta Serve Somebody*, 1979). If Jesus is our Lord, our Master, the one we are apprenticed to and whom we are following - then it is his voice that we hear constantly, his actions that guide us, his attitudes that inform us. Our overriding concern is to please God and not the people around us (Ephesians 5:10).

