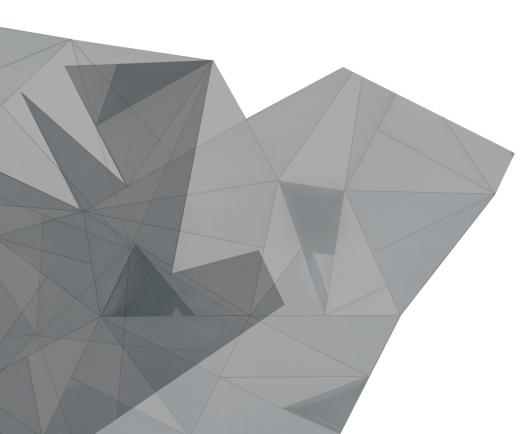
DEFINING MOMENTS





SERIES BOOKLET

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

FOLLOW

Mark 1:16-20

"The greatest issue facing the world today, with all its heartbreaking needs, is whether those who, by profession or culture, are identified as 'Christians' will become disciples – students, apprentices, practitioners – of Jesus Christ, steadily learning from him how to live the life of the Kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence."

— Dallas Willard

Sermon Notes:	

- Describe a time when you experienced a dramatic turning point in your faith journey (maybe, when you came to faith, or took ownership of your faith or it became more real and determinative in how you live).
- 2. In Mark 1:16–20, the lives of Simon and Andrew, James and John are forever altered, when they jettison the family fishing business to follow Jesus. Most people will not literally have to leave family or career to follow Jesus (Most of us are called to follow Jesus within the context of family and career!). However, every disciple is called to place Jesus at the center of life so that our supreme loyalty, core identity, and shaping values is determined by Jesus. To call Jesus "Lord" is to give him first place in our life. What, in American culture (in general) and your life (in particular) competes with Jesus for first place? What are the alternative places we go to find our core identity?
- 5. Discipleship to Jesus is summed up in one word: "Follow". Discipleship simply means following the life, priorities, and values of Jesus. Following Jesus means orienting how I use my time, money, house, car, etc. around the values of Jesus. It involves learning His way of life or as Dallas Willard said, "Learning to do the things that Jesus would do if he were you." In other words: If Jesus were a student at APU, what kind of student would he be? If he were a stay at home mom, what kind of mom would he be? If he were a landscape architect in Pasadena, what kind of architect would he be? Etc. Here is one thought experiment to discuss: If Jesus lived next door, what kind of neighbor do you think he would be? Describe. What might you learn from him about the kind of neighbor you should be?
- 4. Jesus trains us as his disciples to carry forward his mission of "fishing for people." At the heart of discipleship is mission. This means that our church, along with all of our resources (gifts, leadership, staffing, programs, buildings, property), exist for the sake of carrying forward the mission of God. What do you think cause churches to lose their passion for mission? What distracts you from the mission of God?

TRUST

Mark 9:14-29

"This kind cannot come out except through prayer."
— Jesus

"We have got to realize that however great 'this kind' is, the power of God is infinitely greater, that what we need it not more knowledge, more understanding, more apologetics, more reconciliation of philosophy and science and religion, and all modern techniques— no we need a power that can enter into the souls of men and women and break them and humble them and make them new anew. And this is the power of the living God."

— Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Revival
Sermon Notes:

Overtions for Deflection / Discussions

- 1. Share about a time when you were in over your head (situation at work, or as a parent, or some emergency, etc).
- 2. Describe a time when God showed up for you (when you were in over your head) and did what you, on your own, could never have done.
- 3. Dallas Willard says, "Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning. Earning is an attitude, effort is action. Grace, you know, does not have to do with forgiveness of sins alone." What do you think this means? Why might some Christians need to pay attention to Willard on this point?
- 4. The Bible makes it clear that strategy, hard work, planning, and effort are all extremely important as we participate in God's mission of justice and love (see especially, 1 Corinthians 9:19-27; 15:1). However, planning, strategy, and hard work alone are insufficient to bring about gospel freedom, healing, transformation, and joy. This depends on God and his power at work in our lives. "Unless the Lord builds the house those who labor do so in vain." During this next season in the life of our church we will strategize, plan, renovate, and build. We will work hard. However, the most important work is prayer. Please take some time in your group to pray for Christ Church. Pray that God would provide the resources we need to accomplish the work he has given us to do. Pray as we renovate our spaces, that God might fill them with children, students, and diverse array of people who will experience his love revealed in the gospel. Pray that God would provide for our operating budget and that he would use new staff and interns to lead our church family to faithfully bear witness to God's love in word and deed throughout our community. Pray that our church family would experience spiritual awakening, renewal, unity and joy.

COSTLY GRACE

Mark 10:17-31

Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life.

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Sermon Notes:		

Questions for Reflection/ Discussion:
1 How was money/possessions treated in your family? Were your parents savers? Spenders?

- 1. How was money/possessions treated in your tamily? Were your parents savers? Spenders? Generous givers? Collectors? How do you think this affected you?
- 2. Jesus speaks about money as much as he talk about any other subject (11 of 40 parables are about money!). Why do you think Jesus talked so much about money to his followers? Why do you think we have such a difficult time talking openly about how we spend our money?
- 3. In the story, Jesus promises that those who make significant sacrifices will receive not only "treasure in heaven", but also "a hundred times as much in this present age" (10:30). What do you think he means? Have you experienced the truth of his words?
- 4. In their book, The Paradox of generosity, social scientists Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson state, "People rightly say that money cannot but happiness, but money and happiness are still related in a curious way. Happiness can be the result not of spending more money on oneself, but rather, on giving money away to others. The data examined here show this not only to be a nice idea, but a social scientific fact." Share about a time when you felt happier and more fulfilled as a result of generously giving your money away.
- 5. All of us have a different story and experience when it comes to giving/generosity/money. Ask a few willing people to share their own giving story (as it relates to giving, in general, and to our capital campaign, in particular). What has God taught them through the experience?

STEWARDSHIP

Matthew 25:14-30

If God was the owner, I was the manager. I needed to adopt a steward's mentality toward the assets He had entrusted – not given – to me. A steward manages assets for the owner's benefit. The steward carries no sense of entitlement to the assets he manages. It's his job to find out what the owner wants done with his assets, then carry out his will.

- Randy Alcorn

Sermon Notes:		

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- 1. What is the difference between a steward and an owner?
- 2. Why do you think Jesus taught us to view ourselves as stewards?
- 3. What are the implications of this for your own life?
- 4. The generations who have gone before us have entrusted us with a beautiful property and buildings in the heart of Sierra Madre. Have you ever considered yourself as as steward of these resources? What are the implications for us?

SERVE

Luke 10:25-37

Though Jesus was rich, he became poor. Though he was a king, he served. Though he was the greatest, he made himself the servant of all. He triumphed over sin not by taking up power but by serving sacrificially. He "won" through losing everything. This is a complete reversal of the world's way of thinking, which values power, recognition, wealth, and status. The gospel, then, creates a new kind of servant community, with people who live out an entirely alternate way of being human."

— Timothy Keller, Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City

ermon Notes:

Questions for Reflection/Discussion:
1. Share about an experience you've had serving in our community (Sierra Madre or LA), or

- 1. Share about an experience you've had serving in our community (Sierra Madre or LA), or maybe on a short term cross-cultural mission trip. In what ways do you feel it was beneficial to others? In what way was it beneficial to you?
- 2. Paternalism (when those who serve unknowingly feel/act superior to the ones served) and enabling (where the ones served are kept in systems of dependence) are common problems for "good samaritans". How can we guard our church and ourselves against these errors when we serve others?
- 3. How does it change things when put ourselves in the role, not of the Good Samaritan, but the man who is laying half dead on the side of the road, in need of a Good Samaritan? Have you ever found yourself playing the role of the person in need?
- 4. What makes you most hopeful/inspired as you consider Christ Church's future involvement in our immediate community, and the broader Los Angeles area?
- 5. In what ways, do you think, will our budget expansions and renovations better enable/equip our church to love and serve our neighbors?

COMMIT

Matthew 28:16-20

"The reality is, of course, as soon as you think seriously about it, that the mission field is everywhere, including your own street" — Chris Wright
God does not merely send the church on mission. God already is on mission, and the church must join him. This also means, then, that the church does not simply have a missions department; it should wholly exist to be a mission. — Tim Keller
— 1 im Ketter
Sermon Notes:

- 1. Over the last few weeks, what are some specific ways God spoken to you? What actions have you taken as a result?
- 2. Spend time in prayer for our church as we move together into a new season. Pray for our staff, our leaders, our work in the community, our presence in various neighborhoods in the San Gabriel Valley, and for our own spiritual life and vitality (that we would be awake to the love of God revealed in the gospel).

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