

Interactive lesson



picture from from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/hispanic-girl-whispering-secret-on-ear-of-friend-7168996/>; photo credit: Eren Li

Did anything interesting happen to you this week?

Who did you tell about it?

Why did you tell them?

Do you tell everyone everything? Why not?

What happens when God speaks?

When God spoke, creation happened.

When God spoke to Moses,

everyone was terrified to look at Moses.

When God spoke to Job, Job groveled.

Did God leave Job groveling in the dirt?

I believe God wants a loving relationship with each of us, and with all of us as society. Yet if the presence of God and even the voice of God is too overwhelming for us, how can God develop that relationship with us?

God came to earth as Jesus, fully human and fully divine, to talk with us, teach us, and to show the love and life available to us from God.

When God spoke in darkness, light was created. We have heard of God's love and live in that light; how do you think we should respond?

If you told someone what happened to you this week,

did you also tell them about what God has been doing for or with you?

What holds you back from telling others about the love of Christ moving in your life?

May we all recognize the opportunities before us to tell about the love and glory of God, put aside our fears of embarrassment or rejection, and share the Good News with all open hearts that we encounter.

Gospel lesson

Last week we heard Jesus sent out twelve disciples. This week we hear more of His mission discourse to them, the instructions before they set out.



*picture cropped and reversed from
[https://www.freebibleimages.org/
illustrations/gnpi-051-disciples-sent/](https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-051-disciples-sent/)*

Matthew 10:24-39

NRSV

²⁴ "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master;

²⁵ it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

²⁶ "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret

that will not become known.

²⁷ What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.

²⁸ Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

³⁰ And even the hairs of your head are all counted.

³¹ So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

³² "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven;

³³ but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

³⁴ "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

³⁶ and one's foes will be members of one's own

household.

³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;

³⁸ and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

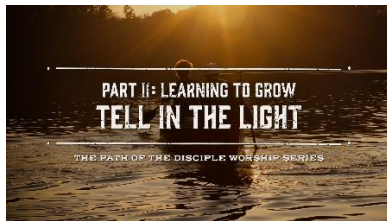
³⁹ Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn “His Eye Is on the Sparrow”

TFWS #2146>

Message: Tell in the Light



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/the-path-of-the-disciple-learning-to-grow/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Great Teacher who tells us what we need to know when we need to know it,

as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may learn what You teach us

and proclaim Your Good News to the world. Amen.

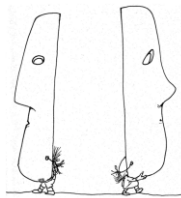
As disciples “Learning to Grow,” this week we are challenged to “Tell in the Light.”

““What you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops” (Matthew 10:27). This week, we’ve got whispers and we’ve got shouts. That seems like a common human experience, doesn’t it?”

So how often do you talk with folks about your faith?

MASKS

She had blue skin,
And so did he.
He kept it hid
And so did she.
They searched for blue
Their whole lives through,
Then passed right by –
And never knew.



*poem and picture from
Silverstein, Shel, Every Thing
On It, (New York: HarperCollins
Publishers, 2011), pp.20-21.*

There is a poem, “Masks” by Shel Silverstein (published in 2011 in the book “Every Thing On It”) which reads:

She had blue skin,
And so did he.
He kept it hid
And so did she.
They searched for blue
Their whole lives through,
Then passed right by -
And never knew.

Some analyses I read about this poem online talk about it as describing how people hide [what is an integral part of themselves, even though it is important to them]. As a result, they miss out on sharing something wonderful with those like them.

Given that God created us as varied and good, I would ask why people hide things about themselves, but I know that we live in a sin-filled world.

In order to get along, people need to have common expectations about how to live. Jesus tells us these should be love for God and for one another. But sin pushes the common expectations to be more physical, such as the way we dress or the things we collect. We miss out on sharing love when we reject people merely for looking or sounding different than us.

As a result of that sin-filled push for common material attributes:

- † Many people feel like the psalmist, poor and needy, wanting a sign from God so that they are not the ones put to shame in the community.
- † Some are jealous of others, like Abraham's wife Sarah was of Hagar, afraid that there will be less for themselves if the others are allowed access to what they have.
- † Still others are afraid that if they show [the truth about themselves or what they believe to be right], they will be hurt or rejected by others.

Certainly the disciples were nervous about going out to proclaim God's kingdom to their people – and the Chosen people were supposed already to be glad to celebrate God's presence with them!



picture from MMMS collection

Yet we hear Jesus reassuring the apostles, telling them to let the truth be known, and God will take far better care of them than of sparrows (who flourish in God's care). Look at how God took care of Hagar and her son in the desert!

That is not to say there will not be challenges in sharing the Word. People have a God-given right to choose for themselves whether to follow Jesus or not. Not following the laws of love is self-destructive and destructive to society.

Paul tells the Romans that turning to Jesus is such a complete change that it is as Jesus did, dying to sinful ways and coming back to new life, free from sin and able to live (filled with God's love). It is much healthier and happier for us and for society!



picture from
[https://www.pexels.com/
photo/multiethnic-women-having-
conflict-at-home-6382676/](https://www.pexels.com/photo/multiethnic-women-having-conflict-at-home-6382676/)

If we love someone and we see them hurting themselves or their lives, what do we do? We may try confronting them about their behavior; does that always go smoothly? Yet we try, because we want our loved ones ultimately to be healthy and happy.

Now we know that following Jesus is the best way to be healthy and happy, so we need to share that Good News with all who will listen - but we cannot force them to choose Christ. Thus, Jesus talks about discord that comes when the Word is proclaimed.

However, fear of conflict is no excuse for keeping quiet. We hear Christians put down in society because of what some self-centered people have pushed on others in the name of Jesus. We need to proclaim the truth, to confront people about their sin, to tell about the wonder and joy of our God of life and love!

God has invited us to be part of the network of light and life across the universe. We strengthen and build further that network when we invite others to join us and nurture them to do so. Our religion is NOT a private thing, it is the basis for healthy society.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/the-path-of-the-disciple-learning-to-grow/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-a-graphics>

So take what you have heard from God in quiet prayer, silent meditation, the dark of night, and let the world know about Jesus in your life. Tell it to those in your everyday life, that all who hear have the option to choose the love of God over the pain of sin. Tell it in the light of God's grace and mercy, and trust God to take care of you. Amen.

