



From Loving To Living To Serving (Luke 6:12-19)

I. INTRO

- A. Today I, along with our staff and elders, want to begin a conversation with you. It will take a few months to think, pray, and talk this through.
- B. Have you noticed that our world is not simple anymore? Our lives have become massively cluttered. We are overloaded with thousands of decisions, competing pursuits, and endless information, endless entertainment, and endless tasks.
- C. "Every age has its own characteristics. Right now we are in an age of religious complexity. The simplicity, which is in Christ is rarely found among us. In its stead are programs, methods, organizations, and a world of nervous activities, which occupy time and attention but can never satisfy the longing of the heart. The shallowness of our inner experience, the hollowness of our worship, and that servile imitation of the world which marks our promotional methods all testify that we in this day, know God only imperfectly, and the peace of God scarcely at all. If we would find God amid all the religious externals, we must first determine to find Him, and then proceed in the way of simplicity." –A.W. Tozer¹
- D. Here are seven signs that you're way too busy:²
 - 1. **Is it increasingly difficult for you to control your emotions?** Do you constantly feel anxious, irritable, depressed, and overwhelmed? (Over controlled emotions can be a symptom too.)
 - 2. **Do you suffer from a lack of self-care?** Are you too busy to plan healthy meals and get consistent exercise?
 - 3. **Do you suffer from regular (or even chronic) illness?** A lack of self-care can lead to ongoing (or chronic) illness.
 - 4. **Do you suffer from chronic lateness?** Do you have a tendency to say yes to too many activities and too many people?

¹ *The Pursuit of God*, Paperback 6733rd edition 2009: 17-18.

² Adapted from Alli Worthington, *Relevant Magazine*, Jan 28, 2016.

5. **Do you have a tendency to self medicate or binge?** Sometimes we can fool ourselves into thinking self-medicating is actually self-care — “I deserve that pint of Ben & Jerry’s!” But we need to ask ourselves if escaping reality just seems like an easier choice than living an intentional and focused life.
 6. **Do you find yourself neglecting important relationships?** Do you feel as though you are habitually letting down the people closest to you: your spouse, children, close friends, family, and work colleagues?
 7. **Do you find yourself neglecting God?** Do you begin your day with social media instead of time with God? Have you had regular times where you skipped church or small group because you were too busy?
 - a. Are you too busy to check in with those you have asked to hold you accountable?
 - b. Staying connected to God is what keeps us operating within our capacity and what helps us understand that God made us with limitations on purpose.
- E. Here’s how one author put it: As Christians, we cannot allow ourselves to be swept away in the undercurrent of the cultural stopwatch. Romans 12:2 says, *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”* --Romans 12:2
- F. Busyness can ruin our joy, it can rob our hearts, and it can cover up the rot in our souls.³ --Kevin DeYoung
- G. If we look at the NT through the lens of a **desire to simplify** we can see that Jesus stepped into a complicated and polluted religious scene.⁴
1. It was cluttered with Sadducees (liberals), Pharisees (conservatives), Herodians,⁵ Zealots,⁶ and Essenes⁷ – and Jesus refused to play by any of their rules -- and He couldn't stand their rule making or their hypocrisy.

³ Kevin DeYoung. *Crazy Busy: A (Mercifully) Short Book About A (Really) Big Problem*, Crossway 2013.

⁴ Adapted from *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples* by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, B&H Books; Upd Rep ed 2011: 16-17.

⁵ Hellenistic Jews.

2. Jesus was a subversive revolutionary – intent on turning the world right-side-up.
3. The religious leaders had developed a religious system with 613 laws.
4. They spent their days debating the accuracy of the laws and ranking the commands in separate divisions (kind of like Fantasy Football only with religious laws and not as fun).
5. Enter Jesus. Jesus has the ability to take the complicated and make it simple. Left to ourselves, we're the opposite – we take simple things and make them complicated.
6. Making things simple is the sign of a master teacher. A prime example is where Jesus gives what has become known as the Great Commandment. Let's look at it from Luke's gospel narrative: *"And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'²⁶ And [Jesus] said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?'²⁷ And [the lawyer] answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'²⁸ And [Jesus] said to him, 'You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.'"* --Luke 10:25-28
7. Boom! Jesus simplified the whole OT into one simple statement: Love God and Love people. Think about the significance of that...
 - a. He was not lowering the standard of the Law, He wasn't abolishing it – in fact His ministry on earth was to fulfill the Law.
 - b. He was capturing all its spirit, all of its essence, in one statement.
 - c. Jesus summed up their 613 commands into two. He took the complexity of the Law and made it very simple. He converted it into what we would call an elevator speech.

H. For our mission statement as a church we combined the Great Commandment with the Great Commission. Here's Luke's version of the Great Commission: *"And [Jesus] said to them, 'Thus it is written, that*

⁶ A political movement which sought to incite the people to rebel against the Roman Empire and expel them by force.

⁷ A Jewish ascetic sect who lived in highly organized groups and lived communal lives.

the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’” --Luke 24:46-49

- I. Here’s the KHC reaffirmed mission statement: We exist to bring glory to God by loving God supremely, loving people unconditionally, and making passionate disciples of Jesus in the South Bay and beyond. To further simplify it we could say we want to: Love God, Love People, Make Disciples (elevator pitch).
- J. Do you see how our mission statement as a church is taken right out of the gospels and is thoroughly biblical?
- K. With that somewhat lengthy introduction I’d like us to look for a few minutes at Luke 6:12-19. I’ll read it, pray, and then point out the process Jesus employed to love God, love people, and make disciples: *“It was at this time that [Jesus] went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. ¹³ And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: ¹⁴ Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; ¹⁵ and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; ¹⁶ Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. ¹⁷ Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸ who had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. ¹⁹ And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all.”* –Luke 6:12-19

II. BODY

- A. With the time I have left I’d like to do three things:
 1. **I’d like to identify the three-stage process that Jesus used to keep His life simple and focused.**
 2. **I’d like to point out what I believe is the genius point in our desire to simplify as a church.**

3. **I'd like to show you a two and a half minute video introducing a class we are hosting and that will begin in a little over two weeks.**

B. Let's take these one at a time...

1. **What is the three-stage process that Jesus used to keep His life simple and focused (Jesus' life was not simple but the process was).**

- a. First of all it's important to note that the word *disciple* (v.13) and *discipline* come from the same word – in fact, we could make a case that they ARE the same word.
- b. One well-regarded theologian says, "The word *discipline* means 'the effort to create some space in which God can act.' Discipline means to prevent everything in your life from being filled up.⁸ We are to employ spiritual disciplines in our faithful attempts to become true disciples of Jesus.
- c. So, the question is what disciplines are characteristic of a true disciple? Jesus shows us three: devotion, community, and ministry – and each one is built upon the former.
 - 1) We see **DEVOTION** in v. 12. Jesus spent a significant amount of time in devoted prayer.
 - a) Devotion is where we spend time with God alone. Devotion is a dialogue. Yes, we are pouring out our hearts to God, asking for specific things, as well as for wisdom and discernment...
 - b) But devotion is also taking the time to listen FOR God. What are we listening for? We are listening for the voice of God calling us His beloved.⁹
 - c) The work obedience literally means "to listen under." To listen from a place of humility and submission. THAT is devotion.
 - d) There are many voices in our ADD culture. If we're honest, there are many voices in our head pulling us in all sorts of directions.

⁸ Henri Nouwen, *Moving From Solitude To Community To Ministry*, Leadership Magazine Spring 1995: 81-87.

⁹ *Ibid.*

- e) One theologian said, “Our inner life is like a banana tree filled with monkeys jumping up and down.”¹⁰
 - f) Moving toward strong and steady devotion will simplify our lives because it will become an anchor in our soul (Heb 6:19) – knowing God’s love will keep us focused and steady. It is where spiritual ministry begins.
- 2) The second thing we see in our passage is that Jesus came out of devotion and **FORMED A COMMUNITY** in vs. 13-16. He had many followers yet He chose 12 to do life together with Him. And three became especially close.
- a) Community is not an organization; community is a way of living: you gather with people in order to remind each other that you are the beloved sons and daughters of God.
 - b) Community is not easy. Somebody once said, "Community is the place where the person you least want to live with always lives."
 - c) Jesus lived out community with Judas Iscariot who would eventually betray Him.
 - d) Community is hard and community is beautiful. Community is where we learn the disciplines of forgiveness and celebration. We can't really celebrate until we learn to forgive.
 - e) We all feel **lonely** and **useless** and **rebellious** from time to time and we need people in our lives who will call us out of that – and point to God.
- 3) The third thing we see is that Jesus came out of devotion, He formed community, and then the community engaged in **EFFECTIVE MINISTRY** together (vs. 17-19).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

- a) Jesus took His community with Him and together they began to minister to the poor, lost, marginalized, and broken-hearted.
- b) Jesus committed to train them. And Jesus will lead and train us as well.
- c) Something magnificent happens when we realize that the troubles of life – the setbacks and the heartaches are labor pains that God uses to form His life IN us – and then THROUGH us.
- d) Ministry means to help people become grateful for life even with pain. The most effective ministry goes where the pain is not because we are masochists or sadists, but because God is hidden in the pain.

2. **Where are the genius points in our desire to simplify as a church?**

- a. The genius point is that we have realized that we don't need a lot of statements – specifically, we don't need a vision statement or a purpose statement.
 - 1) Why not? Because we want to simplify and make our mission statement our method.
 - 2) Again here's our mission statement in elevator speech language: Love God, Love People, Make Disciples
 - 3) At KHC we want to do three things VERY well – come alongside of people to help them, encourage them, (even) admonish them to LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS, and FIND A PLACE TO SERVE. This forms the basis for our discipleship model.
 - 4) We'll unpack this more in the weeks to come but our staff and elders would like you to consider committing to three things:
 - a) **Commit to being at a weekend service weekly.** (One of the main purposes of the Saturday night service is an alternative if/when your family has activities on Sunday.)

- b) **Commit to doing life together in a small group or study group.** (Life Groups will probably become Community Groups.)
 - c) **Commit to seeking out a place to serve regularly** – either in the church or in the community.
- 5) If you are currently doing those three things: congratulations, you are on a stable pattern of discipleship. It's not all there is to discipleship but these three commitments are foundational to ongoing discipleship.
- 6) Our staff and elders would like this simplified approach to church to be a topic of conversation in the weeks and months to come. Our desire is to build a consensus to simplify.
- b. A second genius point of simplifying is to provide you with the time to invest in the lives of your unchurched family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

3. **Two and a half minute video...**

- a. We have had a two and a half minute video produced to provide you with a visual of what I have been talking about...
- b. <https://vimeo.com/182350833>
- c. For those who are already consistent in attending worship services, Rooted is the next step in engaging our discipleship process.
 - 1) Rooted serves as a bridge to community. Rooted only meets together as a large group 2-3 times. Most of the classes will meet in a small group context here on campus.
 - 2) During the class you will study God's word together, pray together, and serve together in small groups.
- d. If you are new here, it's a great way to connect with other King's Harbor members.

- 1) If you are looking to join a small group, it's the first step to getting connected to a group.
 - 2) If you are interested in leading a small group, this is a great primer on what a small group should look like and how to do it.
- e. If you are a life group leader, taking your group through it is a great way to refresh and refocus your group and possibly gain some new members. Space is limited...
 - f. As a church we are moving back toward an active membership. Rooted will be a prerequisite to membership – and no one will be “grandfathered” (or “grandmothered”) in.
 - g. There will be two sessions of the Rooted class – one will start on Tues Sept 27 and the other will start Thur Sept 29. The Thur night Rooted class will have a children’s Rooted curriculum.
 - h. So check out the website

III. CONCLUSION

- A. *“But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”*
--2 Corinthians 11:3

P.A.S.S. Questions For KHC Group Leaders

Sermon Dates: 9/10-11, 2016

Sermon Title: Simplify #1: From Loving To Living To Serving

Sermon Passage: Luke 6:12-19

Group Leaders: Don't feel like you need to get through all the questions. Pick one participation question and 2-3 others. Also, feel free to adapt or ask your own questions. The main objective is to underscore the main points of the sermon in an interactive/dialogical way – and certainly leave room for prayer.

P - Participation (get everyone involved in the dialog)

1. Complex often coincides with busy. What 2-3 things seem to clutter or complicate your life the most?
2. In 21st century culture, how have people responded to simple? (Think the Google homepage, Southwest Airlines, Apple product design, etc.)

A - Application (makes it personal)

3. Why do you think it's so important for the Great Commandment to fuel the Great Commission?
4. In the three-stage process that culminates in effective ministry, why do you think it may be important to intentionally move from DEVOTION to COMMUNITY to MINISTRY?

S - Scripture (thinking biblically is a learned behavior! :-)

5. What might be the benefits of 1) making a commitment to attend a worship service weekly, 2) develop ongoing biblical community in a small group context, and 3) finding a place to serve consistently be?
6. What might "*the simplicity and purity of Christ*" (2 Corinthians 11:3) look like for you?

S – Sharing (aim for a time of honest reflection, authenticity, and transparency in a safe atmosphere modeled by you). [Choose one of the following as a final dialogue question.]

1. As a group watch the video as a group watch the video together:
<https://vimeo.com/182350833>
2. If you were to ask for prayer regarding one of the seven signs that you're way to busy, which one would it be?