

# Minster Bethel Congregational Church (MBCC)

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06/06/2021 -- Disciples in Question 7

## John – Towards Spiritual Maturity



Next week is our zoom

“Church & Chat”

A short church reflection with a hymn, reading, (children’s activity), prayer, “thought for the week” and then a time to chat. If you need help to join please ask any deacon

Join us next week at 10 am:

Topic: Church and Chat

Time: This is a recurring meeting

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75124173520?pwd=QVB4WUx6QXg3Y3hQc1NQYkxINmozZz09>

Meeting ID: 751 2417 3520

Passcode: Bethel2021

All lockdown services can be found at: [www.mbccs.co.uk](http://www.mbccs.co.uk)

If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. **1 Corinthians 13:3**

### Good morning and welcome to this week's thoughts.

Our 1<sup>st</sup> hymn for today is: "Come let us sing of a wonderful love"

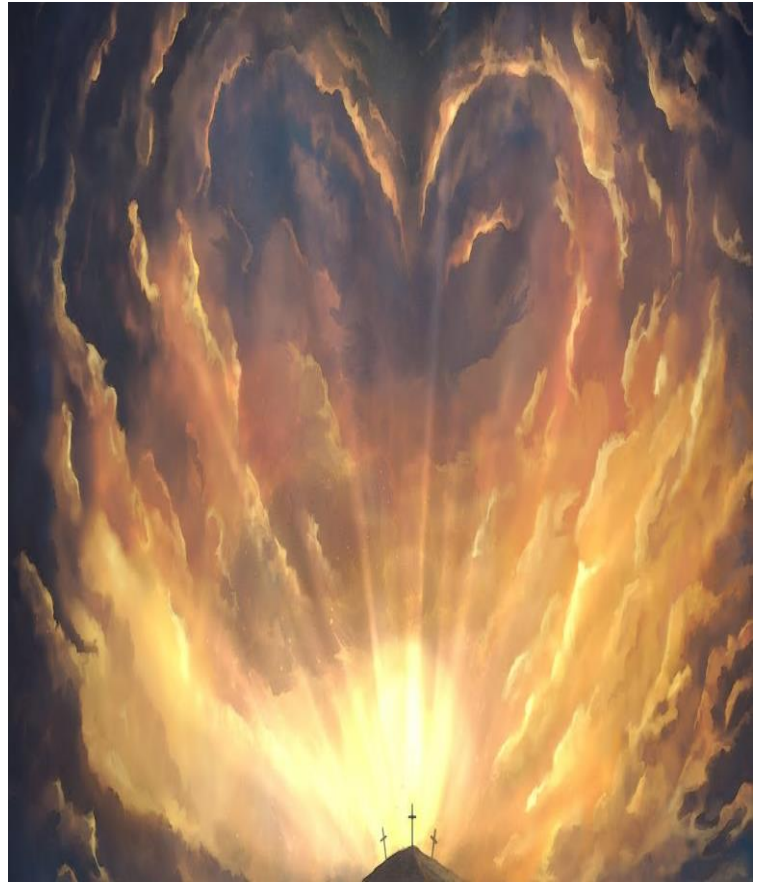
[Come let us sing of a wonderful love - YouTube](#)

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,  
tender and true;  
out of the heart of the father above,  
streaming to me and to you:  
wonderful love  
dwells in the heart of the father above.

Jesus, the saviour, this gospel to tell,  
joyfully came;  
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,  
sharing their sorrow and shame;  
seeking the lost,  
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;  
why do they roam?  
Love only waits to forgive and forget;  
home, weary wanderer, home!  
Wonderful love  
dwells in the heart of the father above.

Come to my heart, o thou wonderful love,  
come and abide,  
lifting my life, till it rises above  
envy and falsehood and pride,  
seeking to be  
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.



**The reading is Mark 9:1-13** [Mark 9:1-13 NIVUK - And he said to them, 'Truly I tell - Bible Gateway](#)



## **Developing in Spiritual Maturity**

Last week we looked at the lessons we could learn from James this week we are exploring how his younger brother developed as a disciple.

Jesus called 12 men of different personalities, passions and skills to follow Him and become His disciples. They were chosen to be Jesus' Missionaries to preach, teach, baptize and make disciples of all people.

Today we are looking at the life and ministry of the Apostle John. When he was chosen he was not a great missionary just a young fisherman. He was the youngest of the Apostles. John was the only apostle that died of natural causes. He died around the age of 90.

The Apostle John's life is an example of the Christian Life in Spiritual Growth and Spiritual Maturity. In John's life we see three levels of spiritual maturity.

The first level is spiritual immaturity.

Last week we heard about Jesus calling James and John the "Sons of Thunder." Here we see the spiritual immaturity of John who tended to be obnoxious, self centered, temperamental, and got angry easily. However, in spite of his weaknesses he was dependable, prompt and courageous, faithful and devoted. He was one of three closest to Jesus. John was the only disciple that followed Jesus all the way to the cross.

Many of us in our Christian life have struggled with some of the same spiritual immaturities that John struggled with. John in his spiritual immaturity had to face up to his spiritual pride and self centeredness.

John pride was evidenced in Mark 9:38-41 where John observed a follower of Jesus who was not part of the 12 driving out demons in the name of Jesus. John told him to stop. John bragged to Jesus what he had done. Jesus confronted John and rebuked him and told him not to tell him to stop. Jesus said, "Those who are not against us are for us." God's love and power are available to all.

We sometimes display spiritual pride without meaning to but when we compare ourselves to others who do not believe as we do. I remember once one of the girls when they were younger telling me that a friend was more of a Christian than I, which of course is not possible you either believe and follow or don't. But in her childlike way because someone appeared more religious they thought they were more Christian!

This pride quickly moves a person to becoming judgmental. If you don't dress like I do. If you don't like the music I like. If you don't worship as I worship. If you don't (you fill in your personal preference) you are not as good a Christian as I am.

John early immaturity was also displayed in his self-centeredness.

Last week we read of the time when the mother of James and John knelt before Jesus and requested that Jesus allow her two sons to sit with him when he established his Kingdom. James and John chimed in and said they would be honoured to sit on the right and left

hand of Jesus. They were thinking, "We are the greatest. We deserve to be at your side in as You reign over the Kingdom of God."

I read a story on the internet about this:

"The Lion boasted as being the greatest in the jungle. The lion was proud of his rule of the animal kingdom. One day he decided to make sure all the other animals knew he was the king of the jungle. He was so confident that he bypassed the smaller animals and went straight to the bear. "Who is the king of the jungle?" the lion asked. The bear replied, "Why, you are, of course." The lion gave a mighty roar of approval. Next he asked the tiger, "Who is the king of the jungle?" The tiger quickly responded, "Everyone knows that you are, O mighty lion." Next on the list was the elephant. The lion faced the elephant and addressed his question: "Who is the king of the jungle?" The elephant immediately grabbed the lion with his trunk, whirled him around in the air five or six times, and slammed him into a tree. Then he pounded him onto the ground several times, dunked him under water in a nearby lake, and finally threw him up on the shore. The lion--beaten, bruised, and battered--struggled to his feet. He looked at the elephant through sad and bloody eyes and said, 'Look, just because you don't know the answer is no reason for you to get mean about it!'"

We sometimes talk about living by the golden rule "Do unto others AS YOU would have them do unto you" but there are also other rules that people live by:

- The Iron Rule--Do unto others BEFORE they do unto you
- The Silver Rule--Do unto others AS they do unto you (an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth)
- The Platinum Rule--Do unto others AS THEY would have you do unto them
- The Titanium Rule--Do unto others AS CHRIST has done unto you

When we respond in times of conflict or disagreement with immaturity it is a reminder that we need to go deeper with the Lord.

We don't have to stay on the level of spiritual pride or self-centeredness. We can move on to the better way of Love.

Our second level of maturity then is the way of Love

The Apostle John looked at his own life of immaturity and witnessed the life of Jesus and realized he needed to move on toward Christian maturity. John saw in Jesus a new level of love - unconditional love.

John was an eye witness of the unconditional love of Jesus. He stood at the foot of the cross and saw how Jesus suffered and died.

John heard Jesus say, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." He heard Jesus promise to the repentant thief on the cross: "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

Later when John wrote the First, Second, and Third letters of John he had witnessed the resurrection of Jesus and experienced the filling of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. He wrote in I John 3:1 "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should



be called the children of God." V. 11: "This is the message you heard from the beginning. We should love one another." Vs 16-18: "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him. Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

Here we see John living out the message of Love. Through the life of John we know that Jesus loves us unconditionally no matter how selfish or arrogant we have been.

John was an eye witness of the love of Jesus. John saw the lives of people transformed.

In the life of John the Apostle we see spiritual growth from spiritual immaturity to a more excellent way of Love.

This led to the third level of maturity – leadership through service.

Jesus modelled leadership through service many times. At the last supper Jesus took on the role of a servant and washed his disciple's feet. Then he said to his disciples: "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." John 13:15

John learned from ministry experience that it's okay to be second. During the time of Jesus, Peter became the key leader. However, filled with the Holy Spirit John did not complain or argue about who was first. He was a leader through service and proud to be part of the ministry team bringing glory to God. John felt privileged to love and serve as Jesus had loved and served.

As a leader through service we don't need to care who gets the credit. In fact many of the apostles gained a cruel cross for their efforts. The Apostle John was the only apostle that died a natural death at age 90.

As the Apostle John grew older he grew more and more into the character of Jesus. When all the other 12 apostles were crucified or martyred, John did not become bitter, but put his life in God's hand.

So how do you become Mature in Christ? John gives us the answer, We first have to overcome our immaturity and self-centeredness by allowing the Holy Spirit to fill us with the Love of Jesus. Jesus said you become great when you become like a child. In your heart you say "no" to self and "yes" to Christ.

Next we need to demonstrate unconditional Love. John the Apostle of Thunder became John the Apostle of Love. John surrendered his all to Jesus.

Today let's surrender our all to Jesus.

#### Gruesome Facts about the Apostles endings:

- **Peter** - crucified upside down June 29/July 12
- **Andrew** - crucified on an "X"-shaped cross, November 30/December 13
- **James** - the son of Zebedee - beheaded, April 30/May 13
- **John** - natural death in 100 AD, September 26/October 9
- **Philip** - crucified, November 14/27
- **Bartholomew** - crucified, flayed, beheaded, June 13/26
- **Thomas** - pierced with five spears, October 6/19
- **Matthew** - burned by fire, November 16/29
- **James** the son of Alphaeus - crucified, October 9/22
- **Thaddeus** (or Jude), the brother of James - crucified, August 9/22
- **Simon** the Zealot - crucified, May 10/23
- **Matthias** - stoned then beheaded, August 9/22 (Replacement for Judas)

Our next hymn is “I Surrender All” [All To Jesus I Surrender by Robin Mark Lyrics - YouTube](#)

All to Jesus I surrender,  
All to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him,  
In His presence daily live.

I surrender all,  
I surrender all.  
All to Thee, my blessed  
Saviour,  
I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender,  
Humbly at His feet I bow,  
Worldly pleasures all forsaken;  
Take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus I surrender,  
Make me, Saviour, wholly Thine;  
Let me feel Thy Holy Spirit,  
Truly know that Thou art mine.

All to Jesus I surrender,  
Lord, I give myself to Thee;  
Fill me with Thy love and power,  
Let Thy blessing fall on me.

All to Jesus I surrender,  
Now I feel the sacred flame.  
Oh, the joy of full salvation!  
Glory, glory to His name!

**Today's Pray:**

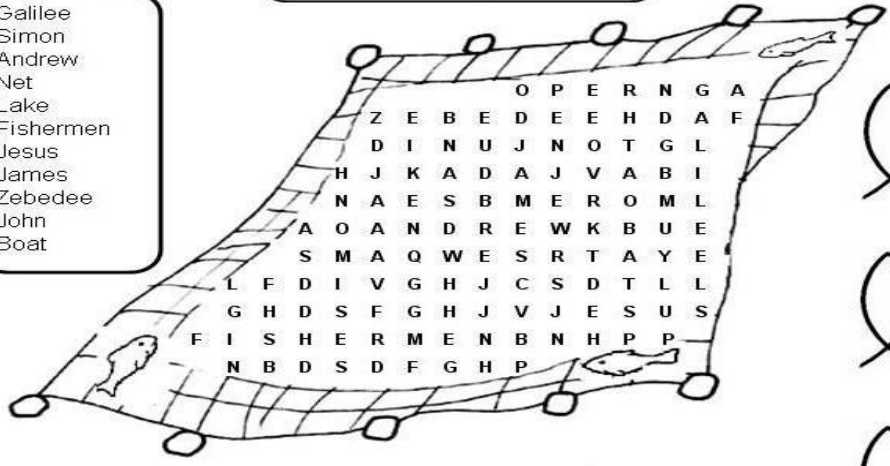
*Lord, Help us to grow in our Christian faith, take away our immaturity, pride and self-centredness. Help us display your unconditional love as we demonstrate our leadership through service and action so that we can surrender all to You.*

**Amen.**

# The calling of the first disciples

(Mark 1, 16:20)

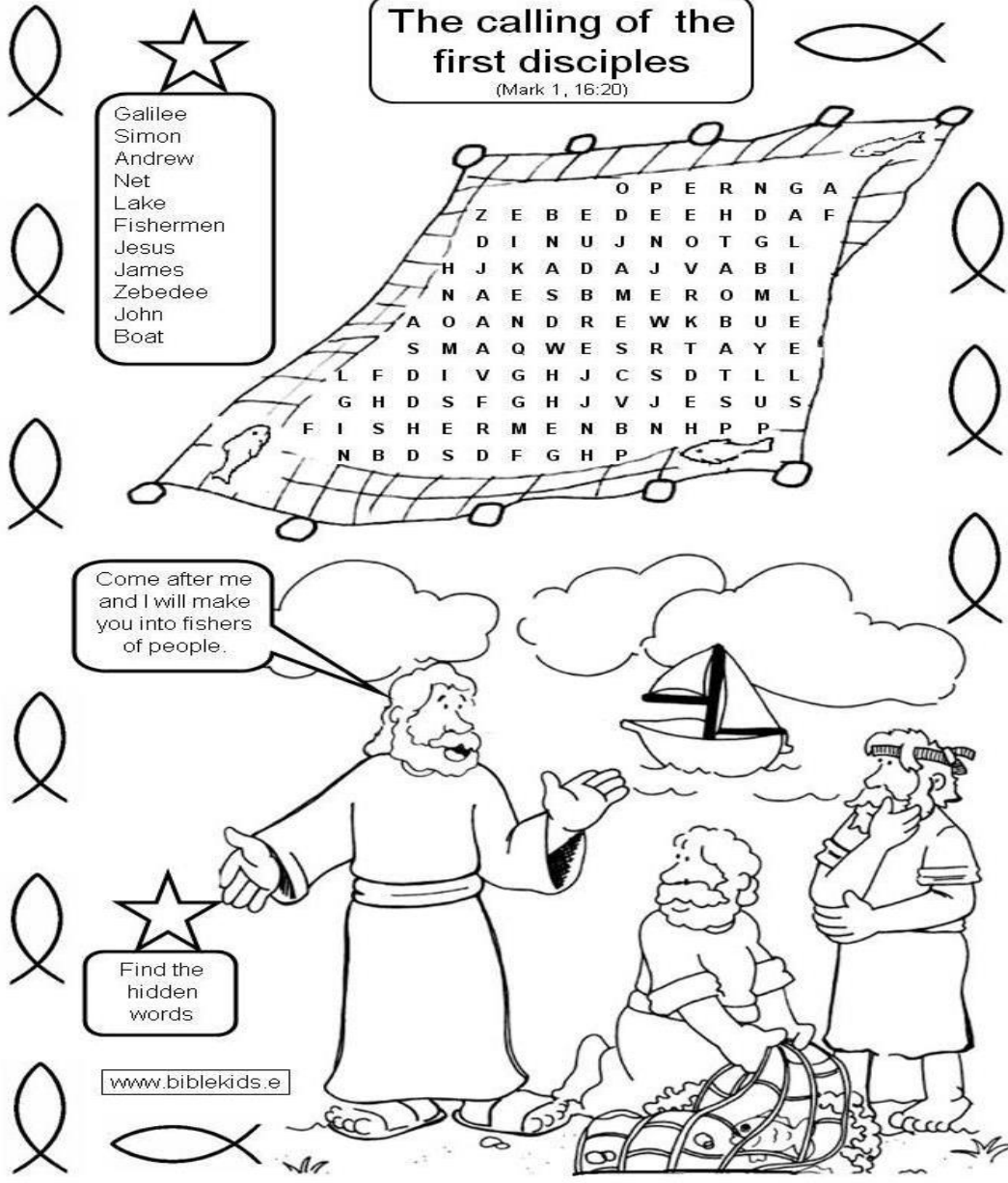
- Galilee
- Simon
- Andrew
- Net
- Lake
- Fishermen
- Jesus
- James
- Zebedee
- John
- Boat



Come after me and I will make you into fishers of people.

Find the hidden words

[www.biblekids.e](http://www.biblekids.e)



MAY GODS BLESSING SURROUND YOU  
 EACH DAY AS YOU TRUST HIM AND WALK IN  
 HIS WAY;  
 MAY HIS PRESENCE WITHIN  
 GUARD AND KEEP YOU FROM SIN.  
 GO IN PEACE, GO IN JOY, GO IN LOVE!