

AN INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

“FOLLOW YOUR MENTORS”

JOHN 14:23-29

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The famous preacher and poet, John Donne said nearly 500 years ago, “No man is an island; no man stands alone. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less. Any man’s death diminishes me.”

When God Almighty created the world and everything that is in it, he failed to get it just right the first time around. He who made the beasts of the field and the birds of the air discovered Adam lacked a suitable helper. The Lord God said to himself, *“It is not good for man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him.”*

We are made for community. Without community, we find ourselves lonely, isolated, and limited. With apologies to Frank Sinatra, my goal in life is not to do it my way, but to do it God’s way. God’s way includes others: mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, and lots of others. So, on this Mother’s Day, I want us to think about “following the mentors” of our lives.

I begin with this simple observation: **WE NEED MENTORS.** They may be counselors, consultants, teachers or friends, spouses or lovers, but everybody needs somebody to lean on.

Our parents were most likely our first mentors. Abraham Lincoln once said, “All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my mother.” One thing we all have in common is a mother. Mothers come in all shapes and sizes, with all sorts of possibilities and problems. Some mothers think they are god, and try to be all things for all people. Other mothers fail to fulfill the fundamental responsibilities

of parenthood and even dump their babies in trash cans. Mothers, like all the rest of us, stand in need of grace, which God alone supplies.

Yet it is a good, right, and a proper thing to stop once in a while and give thanks to God that: somebody fed us when we could not feed ourselves; somebody clothed us when we could not dress ourselves; somebody taught us how to read; somebody gave us the tools to survive; somebody introduced us to God. And in many cases that somebody was our mother.

Mayor Bill Purcell reminded us this week that there are more than 1,000 children in foster care in Davidson County today. “They need caring adults to help them reach their full potential, and I believe our city’s faith community can be a stronger partner in their success.” I believe our mayor is correct.

Our mentors are significant others who cross our paths along the journey of life. In the last chapter of Romans, Paul makes a list of some thirty-four people who have helped him along his missionary journeys. The list is not exclusive; it is suggestive of many others. I want to point out that the list includes at least eleven women. How is that for a man who takes a hit from feminists who want to make him a male chauvinist. I know Paul told Timothy that women ought to be quiet in church, but he never seemed to practice what he preached. Pheobe was a deaconess, which in Greek means “minister.” Priscilla ran the church which met in her house at Ephesus. Junias was a female apostle. Tryphena and Tryphosa were dainty and delicate women who worked hard for the Lord. The mother of Rufus was like a mother to Paul.

Who can read this list without coming up with a list of their own? Ruth fed me chicken salad sandwiches when I was just a boy preacher. Kathryn had chickens that laid eggs wrapped in \$10 bills. Ida Mae was the first person to take me out of the U.S. and was kind enough to bring me back. Annie Laurie handed me her bulletin every Sunday covered with her corrections of my grammatical errors.

Mary Lou celebrated her 90th birthday the other day and is already making plans

for her 95th.

WE HAVE A SPIRITUAL MENTOR WHO SUPPLIES OUR EVERY NEED

When I think of God, the Creator, moving across the darkness of the deep, I think of God as our Father in heaven. When I think of Jesus sticking up for me at the throne of grace, I call Jesus my brother. When I think of the Holy Spirit - the Comforter, the Counselor, the ever-present Third Person of the Trinity, who loves us, who teaches us and grants us peace, I think of the Holy Spirit as my Mother. We have a Spiritual Mentor of a Divine Kind.

When the Holy Spirit is our Mentor, we have God's **PRESENCE**.

Listen to the teaching of Jesus in John 14, *"The Father will give you another Comforter who will be with you forever. You will know this Counselor for she lives with you and will be in you. We will not be left as orphans. God will come to us in the person of the Holy Spirit."*

When it is all said and done, I do not need a crowd of people asking me a ton of questions. I do not need a host of saints, who have all the answers. I would like a friend or two to come in and stay a while. Most of all, I want the Holy Spirit present, so I will not have to cross Jordan alone. The Holy Spirit can meet my need because the Holy Spirit is all I need.

When the Holy Spirit is our Mentor, we have God's **WISDOM**.

John 14:26 says, *"He will teach you all things, and remind you of everything I have said to you."* Could you use a little help like that?

One of my all time favorite prayers goes something like this: "Dear Lord, so far today, I have done all right. I have not gossiped, have not lost my temper, have not been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or even over-indulgent. But in a few minutes God, I am going to get out of bed. And from then on I am going to need a lot of help." Lord, help me know the truth about myself and others, help show

me guidance for the way, help me have strength for today and hope for tomorrow.

When the Holy Spirit is our Mentor, we have God's **PEACE**.

John 14:27 says, *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives to you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

Many of you know the story behind one of America's best loved hymns, "It is well with my soul." Horatio Spafford was a wealthy businessman from Chicago. However, the Chicago fire of 1871 wiped Spafford out financially. A couple of years later Spafford's wife and four children were traveling to Europe when their ship collided with another ship. The four children perished, while Anna survived. She later sent Horatio a telegram with these two words, "Saved Alone." Spafford, heartbroken and sad caught a boat to be with his wife. It was on that voyage that he wrote:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like a sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Have you found that kind of peace? You can, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

We are not alone. We live in God's world. And we are created to live in community with one another.

Thanks be to God. Amen.