



abclinks

connecting personal and small group studies with this week's sermon

For the sermon on June 21-22, 2008

Part Two of a Three Part Sermon Series

"Into the Waters"

this week's coreverse

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28.19-20



When I let my mind drift for a moment, I could almost convince myself that I was on a tropical island somewhere. It was one of those days! The air was warm, the water was clear, the sand was white, and I was surrounded by beautiful rocky cliffs. Atlantic Ocean, you ask? Would you believe Lake Superior in Northern Michigan? It was one of those rare days when the UP seemed more like a tropical paradise than frozen tundra.

A group of my extended family had taken inflatable rafts and tubes out on the big lake and around some rocky cliffs. They returned excited about the caves they had found that were cut from years of water beating the rocks. I had stayed back, a bit cautious as I'm not a strong swimmer and a bit lazy wanting to enjoy the beach. It was such a fabulous beach and the weather was so wonderful we returned a day or two later. This time, I had to do "the caves," they told me. Caught up in their excitement, I agreed. We paddled out on our little rafts and headed to the rocky wall. Within 10 to 15 minutes of easy swimming, we reached the caves. They were incredible! One even cut all the way through the rock, opening up into a protected cove. There, the water was even warmer and very still. We enjoyed this little hideaway for quite some time, jumping off the rocks into the clear water or just floating in the sun. But, our tranquil afternoon would soon turn rather adventurous.

Something back in the cave caught our attention. Water was now crashing all the way through the cave. What we didn't know was that the winds were picking up on the other side of the rock. The cove was still protected but our path back to the beach was becoming treacherous. With a bit of urgency, we climbed back through. As we came to the mouth that opened to Lake Superior we realized the 1 to 2 feet waves were now 4 to 6 feet and the wind was pushing them right into our face. We clung to our rafts as we jumped in. I had the bad idea of staying close to the rock wall. My plan was to use my hands and feet to work my way around the rock. But when the waves pummeled me from all sides, I was forced to push away to deeper water. We swam hard but tried not to overexert knowing the challenge we would have to get back around the rock. The strong swimmers abandoned their rafts to better cut through the waves. My son and I clung to ours as if our lives depended on them. Fear and fatigue set in but after an hour of fighting the wind and waves, we were able to collapse on the dry beach like a couple of shipwrecked sailors.

There are times when my day in Lake Superior seems like a good analogy to describe our relationships with people. Often we jump into relationships hoping for fun and adventure; but, eventually, chaos breaks loose. Water, in the Old Testament, is often a metaphor for chaos. Water, like relationships, can be warm and tranquil but can quickly turn adventurous, even chaotic. But God calls us to grab a raft, jump in and find the adventure in the chaos of relationships. Ask Jesus' disciples. They knew all about chaos.

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Personal Bible Studies (inside pages)

- Personal studies explore Scripture passages related to this week's sermon. They are broken down into three or four days. Some days, you will simply read, meditate or think about a passage from scripture. Other days, you'll be asked to dig into a passage through reading, studying and answering questions.

Small Group Discussion (back page)

- Small group questions that connect with the sermon and your personal Bible study. This series of questions acts as a funnel to help your group discussion flow in a purposeful point.
- If you are not in a small group, contact one of our small group staff members for more information on ABC Small Groups or go to adabible.org>ministries>small groups.

See adabible.org for abclinks archives.



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daily readings



dayone

Read Matthew 28.18-20

These words of Jesus are some of the last He had for His disciples before ascending into heaven. It's often referred to as the Great Commission. Take a few minutes to think about the chaos and the adventure this assignment caused in the lives of the disciples.

What three things does Jesus ask His disciples to do? How does this commission apply to you? How could this task get messy in your world?

daytwo

Read Act 3-4

After Jesus left, the disciples began their adventure of sharing the Good News. Their lives became very interesting as they jumped into some challenging relational waters.

How do Peter and John handle the rough waters that arise as they taught and performed miracles?

What rough waters are you facing as you attempt to serve God and love people?

daythree

Read Acts 16

Paul was another New Testament character who embraced adventure and chaos.

As you read, think through these questions: How did God lead Paul and his friends into chaos? What was the outcome? How did Paul and Silas respond? Who benefited because Paul and Silas obeyed?

Who are you willing to jump into the chaos for? Who are you fighting for?



small group discussion



leanin

When has water scared you? Share the adventure with the group.

lookdown

Have someone read the Great Commission (Matthew 28.18-20). What are the three elements of this important assignment?

From the stories in Acts 3, 4 and 16, how did the Apostles embrace their commission? What adventures or chaos did they need to embrace as well? How did they handle it all?

lookout

Comfort and ease can easily become our life's objective. How could this thwart our calling to make disciples?

lookin

Making disciples is a relational task. How do you feel about God leading you into chaos? What relational challenges, chaos or adventures have you faced as you attempted to help someone grow? What chaos have you caused someone else as they have helped you grow?

Who are you helping fight through rough waters? How are you helping them grow through chaos?