
Sermon on
*“The Path of the Disciple – Learning to Grow:
Tell in the Light”*

∴ ZERO ∴

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

*“Grace to you and PEACE from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

1 Co 1:3. (NRSV)

∴ ONE ∴

Today we’re continuing with our worship series
‘The Path of the Disciple - Learning to Grow...’

Last week Kat spoke about,

‘The Weight of the Call’.

Pointing us to the fact that we are all called or
re-called to follow God and be builders *in* and
of his kin-dom—

and *not to wait* until *‘the final call’* because *we
would miss a great journey of faith* side by side
with God who might even carry us when we are
week.

Today the given theme is, '***Tell in the Light***'
It is about a further step in our discipleship.

The biblical reference for the theme you have already heard—in our second bible reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

It is part of the so called 'Mission Discourse' in Matthew's gospel.

I read again chapter 10, verse 27 (NRSV):

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

::: TWO :::

THE DARK

Now, I have a question:

Have you ever been in a big church, a cathedral—alone, at night time?

If so, try to recall the *feeling* and what you *saw*.

...

Years ago, I was part of the team leading the JugendAktionsTage in Würzburg.

We had our night lodging in the fellowship hall of St. Adalbero church not far from the UMC Christuskirche in Würzburg.

St. Adalbero is a Roman-catholic church finished in the year 1900 with 650 seats and 1200 standing room – so, hosting 1850 people max. Quite a church, I'd say.

The church was open 24/7.

So, at night when our youth event was over, I took the chance to have some quiet time in this huge church.

I remember sitting there, the eyes only caught by the eternal light and the prayer candles in the front.

It was an amazing feeling—somewhere in between trepidation and being overwhelmed by a holy silence.

The longer I sat there, the more comfortable and focused I got—focused on me in the presence of God.

::: THREE :::

LISTENING

When I hear Jesus words, “What I say to you in the dark”, immediately I am reminded of this experience—and silent ones, focused on Jesus’ words.

Reading the bible in silence. Praying in silence. Like listening to the whispering of God. This is such an important part of my faith, my spirituality.

And I say this as a person which likes to listen to good, and loud music, preferably *melodic or progressive metal* at the moment.

However, almost exactly one year ago, at my introduction service, I preached about Elijah on Mount Horeb and his listening to the ‘*sound of sheer silence – or, a voice of breathed silence*’.

Such an important moment, where God’s presence is felt, and in which he speaks to us.

∴ FOUR ∴

THE MESSENGER

Let us move on a bit. And when it comes to receiving a message, then *moving* to another place and proclaiming the message publicly, we're speaking of—yes, exactly—messengers.

And that's exactly what Jesus tells his disciples: *“What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.”* (Mt 10:27, NRSV)

But messaging can be a dangerous thing. The messenger by then was a person identified with the sender.

And there has been “an unwritten code of conduct in war, in which a commanding officer was expected to receive and send back emissaries or diplomatic envoys sent by the enemy unharmed.”ⁱ

However, there have been incidents where the message was so unpleasant that the messenger was killed due to the anger of the message's recipient.

And Jesus points his disciples to the fact, that his fate could become their fate too, being rejected, being scoffed at, being tortured, and eventually being killed.

But like him, they might lose their life in this world, but not their soul—and they will receive eternal life.

::: FIVE :::

THE TRANSPONDER

But one thing we have to make absolutely clear:

Faith in Christ and *The Path of the Disciple* is not about remaining in silence, keeping the good news, God's words to yourself, focusing on your personal piety and your own wellbeing.

The Path of the Disciple and *Growing in Faith*—'Sanctification' as John Wesley called it—is about becoming a messenger of God's kingdom.

The message you receive, your growing faith leads you to become a transponder of the gospel—to *all*.

This might not be an easy task, this might lead you to gaps where other people, even very close people, might turn their back on you and leave you behind, calling you a fool—or worse.

And we should not waste our time and energy on those who absolutely don't want to listen to the message we have to bring.

We go on proclaiming the Good News to those who listen, but maybe still praying for those who are unwilling to listen.

::: SIX :::

THE LIGHT

You might think, 'Is this really for me? I am not the person of great words; I am not the preaching kind...'

Maybe not. But this also is not what Jesus assigns his disciples to. It's not the preaching out loud. It is presenting and proclaiming the Good News for everyone in the light—so it might be heard but it surely will be *seen*.

And actions can speak much louder than words, although you still need the explanation to the force which is moving you—your faith in Christ.

A few chapters earlier Matthew has found such wonderful words for the proclamation of the Gospel:

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world.

A city built on a hill cannot be hid.

*¹⁵ No one after lighting a lamp
puts it under the bushel basket,
but on the lampstand,
and it gives light to all in the house.*

*¹⁶ In the same way,
let your light shine before others,
so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

Mt 5:14–16 (NRSV)

Here we are, here we act and preach—in the light.

::: SEVEN :::

As we're coming to an end of these thoughts about 'The Path of the Disciple' it is so important that becoming a messenger is not about being the master messenger right on the first call.

But the call is into 'Learning to Grow', learning to grow as a disciple. Yes, we are disciples as we follow Jesus, but we are also learners—on the path to Christian perfection in love.

And we will never cease to let...
the love of the Creator to
 his creation and creatures,
the Saviour to the struggling and lost,
and the Spirit to those who want to be inspired,
be known to all—
as we live and 'Tell in the Light'.

::: Amen.

ⁱ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shooting_the_messenger (2023-06-24)