



## **WEEKLY STUDY January 28-February 3, 2024**

(Use this guide to individually or with a group dive deeper into this week's sermon.)

### **No Time Like the Present**

**Our sermon series for January is: No Time Like The Present.**

**It's a new year with new opportunities. As disciples, Jesus invites us to a life of growth, transformation, greater purpose and deeper meaning. We are invited to get started today and be led to all that Jesus has in store for us, our families, and our communities.**

**Our scripture this week is: Matthew 8: 18-22**

"Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. A scribe then approached and said, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' Another of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.'"

- 1)** This is week four for our January theme: "No Time Like the Present." Week one, Pastor Sam talked about the visit of the Magi and reminded us that they bowed down and worshiped the child Jesus. She asked, "What might change if we were to bow down and worship Jesus." In the second week we continued the theme with Jesus calling his first disciples. Sam talked about this important aspect of those callings: those called immediately left what they were doing to follow Jesus, using the talents, gifts, and skills they already possessed. Last week we turned our attention to the teachings of Jesus as he instructed the disciples on what they needed to do. Sam summarized the message of the scripture from this Sunday by saying, "I think Jesus is saying that living a kingdom life is a daily trust exercise." This week our scripture points out the urgency of Jesus' mission. Sam emphasized the importance of realizing we often have to say no to something in order to say yes to something else. In the scripture Jesus asked the inquiring disciple to say no to burying his father in order to say yes to following Jesus.  
**Question: Re-read today's scripture. This is among some of the most difficult passages in the gospels. For many of us it is counter to what we expect Jesus to say or do. What thoughts and feelings do you have about this scripture? What did you hear in Sunday's sermon that helps you better understand what Jesus had to say here.**
- 2)** What we have in this scripture is a request from Jesus to the one questioning to say no to what would have been the traditional path (delaying coming with Jesus until after the

burial of the father) in order to say yes to the path of joining Jesus in ministry. Pastor Sam led us in exploring several statements related to what we might feel if we say no. I for one was nodding my head to these statements Pastor Sam said in her sermon: “We feel bad about saying ‘no’ to a request. “We worry about what others might think of us.” “We don’t want to disappoint others.” We don’t want conflict or confrontation.” “We want to be liked.” “We want to be needed.” She said these in relationship to times when we say yes to a time commitment, to an activity, to a request when we really should stop and consider how to say no. Sam told us about Brene Brown’s ‘boundary ring’ that Brene would spin 3 ties around when asked to do something before responding. The question Brene considered was this: I can choose the discomfort over saying no (even knowing it is the correct answer) or the resentment of saying yes (because I do not have the time/energy/bandwidth/talent to do what is being asked of me). The spinning of the ring helped Brene Brown take time enough to consider her response and the impact it would have on her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

**Question: Did the statements Sam made regarding to why we say yes when we should say no resonate with you? In what ways? What technique do you use (or plan now to use) to enable you to (when it is the best answer for you) say no instead of yes to a request.**

- 3) Pastor Sam also told us that saying no has benefits. A no can lead to less exhaustion. A no can lead to greater depth. A no can lead to better focus on mission (in the case of our church).

**Question: When has saying no led you to a better choice? A new adventure? A better use of your time and talents?**

- 4) In scripture there is always a “but before that” and a “and then after that.” Pastor Sam reminded us what happened after this scene. The disciples got into the boat to go to new territory and they were caught up in a sudden storm. Jesus was asleep and they woke him because of their fear. He calmed waves and they were amazed. Sam said we can say yes to Jesus and still run into storms and setbacks. But saying yes can also be hopeful, and exciting. She reminded us that saying yes can lead us to a life that is more than we could have ever asked for or imagined.

**Question: In what ways has your walk with God led you to decisions that – although stormy – have enriched your life?**

**Prayer:** (As we think about balance, about life lived well, about life lived in the moment, about saying yes to God’s call, the prayer I feel helps us the most day by day is The Lord’s Prayer) Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen

**Weekly Challenge: This Sunday we welcomed the following new members into our church family: Carly and Zach Wheeler; Ginger Lynn-Abolins; Donna Ray Anthony; Amanda and**

**Adam Fermstad, and Scottie and Graham Tudor. Surround them in prayer this week as we celebrate their commitment to BMUMC. Consider decisions you are trying to make. Use ODAT to help you discern your decisions, asking yourself, “Do I have the following: Opportunity; Desire; Ability; Time?”**

*(Weekly study guide prepared by Rev. MaryJane Pierce Norton)*