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*Nazarene Essentials* Sermon #3
Chapters: “Our Nazarene Characteristics: Passionate Evangelism and Intentional Discipleship”

**Passionate & Intentional**

 The way we live our lives and decisions that we make are the culmination of our passions and intentions. Make no mistake about it, even when we choose nothing to be passionate about, by virtue of choice, we are then becoming passionate about something. Every person that has ever lived is passionate about something. Passionate people become intentional in their decisions and time management. The truth is, we all make time to do the things in our lives we are passionate about. We will even reschedule appointments and refuse to schedule anything that interferes with what we’re passionate about.

 As we begin to look at being passionate and intentional, a reflective question we should ask ourselves today is: What am I passionate about? Maybe it’s…

* *the workout you have to get in at 5 a.m. everyday*
* *the marathon you are training for*
* *the degree you are working on*
* *the book that you are writing*
* *the scene that you are painting*
* *the hiking you do each week in the woods*
* *the motorcycle you love to ride*
* *the sports your children are in*
* *the spouse that you love*
* *the college football team you love*
* *the grown children that you travel to see*
* *the grass in your yard that’s never been greener*
* *the flowers in your garden that you love to plant each spring*
* *the care of the car that you own because it is the car you always dreamed about*
* *the particular brand of cell phone that you use*

 Whatever it is, make no mistake about it, when we are passionate about something, we find ways and even invent ways to do what we like to do. The simplest definition of passion is this: *The object of our desire*. So to truly discover what we are passionate about, we have to look at our calendars and bank statements. If you have wondered what is most important in your life, the easiest way is to take an honest look at how you spend your time and money.

 Did you know that God wants us to be passionate and intentional? It’s true! God created you to be a passionate human being. Desire is a gift that has been put in our human spirits by God. God gave us the gift of passion. Our fallen image has corrupted this gift into materialism, status, attraction, and other wrong affections. However, the truth is, God wants us to pursue Him above all else in our lives. God wants us to be so passionate about Him that we live our lives with intentionality striving to bring glory to Him in all that we do.

 Over the last two weeks, we have looked at our Nazarene heritage and discovered how worship and theology are intertwined. Today, we will discover how we are to be passionate about evangelism and intentional in our discipleship.

**I. Passionate Evangelism**

 Our first general superintendent, Phineas Bresee, said, “We are indebted to give the gospel to every [person] in the same measure in which we have received it.” In other words, evangelism is the natural response to the grace and kindness of Jesus’ saving love.

Scripture:
2 Corinthians 5:17
*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”*

A. Before we move on too quickly, let’s understand what the definition of evangelism is. Evangelism is: *telling the good news of Jesus.* Evangelism is the natural response for a person who has been changed from old to new. The newness of Christ living in us is the compelling desire to share His love with others. Through His Spirit we declare that what He has done for us is so great that we can’t bear the thought of keeping it to ourselves. We have now become passionate about Him, and it leads us to share His life giving grace with others.

B. The passion that we have in our lives has now been directed to the power and presence of Christ within. The things we used to put a premium on, have become strangely dim in the light of what Christ has done for us. The result of the saving work of Christ is that we have now, “Set our minds on things above, not on earthly things.” as Colossians 3:2 points out.

Scripture:
Acts 1:8
*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

C. The newness within calls out to us to rely on the power of God and the strength of His Word. The power of Christ fills us as we share with others, giving us words of wisdom in our conversations and powerful compassion for their eternal home. His indwelling presence enables us to take Him anywhere our feet can go and to tell the story of His presence within.

D. What are you passionate about? What are you giving your time and your treasure to? Would you rather have Jesus than anything else in the world? Is there a desire deep within to share Him with others inside of you? Do you find yourself concerned that your neighbor, co-worker, family member, or friend doesn’t know Jesus Christ? Are you willing to set aside your own desires because the passion to reach them is greater?

 The Church of the Nazarene is passionate about helping others discover a saving faith in Christ, but it doesn’t end there. For telling others the story is just the beginning. Our passion for things above directs us to teach others and model for them what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. This is never done haphazardly. To model and teach requires great intentionality. It requires planning and preparation, and it requires a great deal of time.

**II. Intentional Discipleship** You may remember our mission. *“To make Christlike disciples in the nations.”*Our church has an intentional method for making Christlike disciples. In our study material we cover each facet of this method in detail. Today, we simply want to focus on one aspect of our method. This one aspect covers the reason we do everything we do in our church. From Bible studies, to Sunday school, to small groups, to Caravan, to Bible quizzing, to Youth Ministry everything in our church is done to aid us in making disciples. You see, every program, every ministry has at its heart, people. The call of God on our church is that disciples should be intentionally making disciples…people should be leading other people to Christ.

Scripture:
Mark 12:29-31

*29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’
31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

A. To be intentional about making disciples, it is our job to love God with all of who we are. To love Him with all of our heart (treasure), with all of our soul (appetites/desires), and with all of our minds (thoughts). To truly be intentional about making disciples requires that we build upon the passion and desire we have to know God, and surrender our hearts to Him, and our treasures. To humbly ask Him to transform our thinking and to renew our minds so that we resemble Him in all we do. When we do this, love for our neighbor follows.

B. What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? Neighbor in this passage is not just those who live next door to you or work with you. Neighbor refers to every person you come in contact with. Imagine caring about someone that you have never met, yet somehow you deeply care about them and where they will spend eternity. Imagine caring about someone enough that you make time to show them how to live as God intended. Imagine making the time to model right before their eyes what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Now imagine that person doing the same for someone else. Loving your neighbor as yourself is the realization that you are not the most important person in the world. Because of the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ, He died for every person. His love and grace compel you to love them so much that every time you look at them it is as if you are staring in the mirror at yourself.

**Conclusion**

 Christ has called us to be intentional about investing our lives into other and to be intentional about teaching others to follow Christ from our example. (Philippians 4:9)

 What about you? When was the last time you shared the love of Christ with someone else for the first time? When was the last time you were intentional about teaching someone else what it means to follow Christ? Is there any person right now that comes to your mind that God wishes for you to show His love? Would you like to pray?