

12th May 2019 Sermon Notes

The Good and Beautiful God Chapter 1

John 1: 38-42 What do you want?

We often want to change, to grow, to become more the people God want us to be, but we struggle.

Jesus says that we can change, but that it doesn't happen through willpower, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit uses 3 things to help us change: Stories, especially the story of Jesus and the stories Jesus himself told; practice and community.

This week's Soul Training exercise is Sleep. If we believe that everything depends on us we will find it hard to switch off and go to bed. We will work and work and try to control everything. Going to sleep is an acknowledgement that God is in control, that we depend on him.

- If you have been able to try the soul training exercise, how did you find it? If you haven't, what would make it easier for you to try it? What do you expect to happen? What did you learn about God or yourself from this exercise?
- Have you ever tried to change anything about yourself? How did you try to do it? What was the result?
- We talked about stories, practice, community and the Holy Spirit as things which help us to change. Have any of these been part of the way you have tried to change in the past?
- We talked about how stories and narratives shape the way we live. To help explore this, can you think of a story which explains what success looks like for you?
- Many people have been taught that we practice spiritual disciplines to please God, when they are actually ways of transforming our souls. How does that alter your approach to the practices you already have?
- When has a small group or community spurred you on?-

Read John 1:38-42 aloud

- Listen to Jesus words. Imagine you are the disciple answering the question. What are you looking for?
- When Jesus tells you to come and see, what emotion do you feel?

Some words from the book:

When the Spirit has changes our narratives sufficiently, we begin to think differently. As a result we begin to believe in and trust a good and loving God who is strong and powerful. We begin to see how Jesus lived a perfect life that we cannot live and offered that life to the Father on our behalf, setting us free from having to earn God's favour and love. And as we engage in soul-training exercises - especially in community - our confidence that God is at work in us and among us increases. This creates an inward change that manifests in outward behaviour. Now when we are faced with an airport delay, we can take a deep breath and remember who we are... We can endure these trials with love, joy, peace, patience and kindness. (p31)

Next week we will be thinking about God's goodness. The Soul Training exercise will be spending 5 minutes a day in silence, paying attention to the created world.