

Being Unconventional

It is safe and easy to do things the same way everyone else does. We get the same results. Jesus did things differently. Today we are talking about being unconventional.

Introduction

It is said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. I have found myself many times trying to solve something and I keep trying to solve it the same way and I keep coming up with the same wrong result. The problem finally gets solved and I get the result I am looking for when I change my thinking or my method. Frequently it takes being unconventional with our thinking to get the results we are looking for.

It took unconventional thinking to put a man on the moon. When scientists and engineers were trying to put a man on the moon they started out using the same procedures and engineering practices that had always been used. But the rocket ship they were building kept breaking apart during testing. It took some unconventional thinking and engineering practices to create a capsule for the astronauts that would not shake apart during liftoff or reentry. When the mathematicians were trying to calculate how to return the space capsule from orbit it took unconventional thinking and a new type of mathematics to make the calculations.

It is easy to do things the way everyone else is doing them. We can look to other people and their successes and try to do things the same way they are, hoping to achieve the same success ourselves, but it often takes being unconventional and using unconventional methods to achieve something new. We cannot do things the same way we have always done them or do things the way the church down the street does them if we are expecting different results. Jesus is a great example of being unconventional.

Jesus was unconventional in many ways; far too many ways to talk about during this short teaching. But let us look at a few ways in which Jesus was unconventional in his ministry here on earth and what we can learn from him in this regard.

Jesus Being Unconventional Calling His Disciples

When Jesus was starting his earthly ministry there were many teachers that had disciples. This was a very common practice then and still is today. In those days, much like today, if you wanted to learn a trade or learn to do something from someone, you approached them and asked them if you could learn from them whether that meant being a carpenter's apprentice or learning from someone educated. It was initiated by the person wanting to learn. Today, if you want to work as a plumber, electrician, or carpenter you find someone that you can ask to be their apprentice so you can learn the trade.

Jesus was unconventional in the way he obtained his disciples. He didn't wait for anyone to come to him and ask to follow him and learn from him. Jesus sought out the twelve that would be his disciples. He handpicked them. Luke 5:1-11 records how Jesus called the first of his disciples.

Luke 5:1-11

- (1) One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God.
- (2) He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by



the fishermen, who were washing their nets. (3) He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. (4) When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." (5) Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." (6) When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. (7) So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. (8) When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" (9) For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, (10) and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." (11) So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Jesus was already getting to be known and he was teaching the things of God along the shoreline when the fishermen were cleaning up from their last trip out fishing. They knew he was a great teacher and undoubtedly had heard him speaking and teaching before. We can see this just by their willingness to do what he told them to do even though they thought it would be fruitless.

Jesus performed a miracle that day. It was a financial miracle for the fishermen's families with all the fish that were caught and brought in and it was a change in thinking for Peter, James, and John. Then Jesus told them to not be afraid and to follow him.

The other disciples were called similarly. Jesus sought them out and then told them to follow him. He did not wait for them to ask him if they could be his disciple. Jesus was unconventional and sought out the 12 disciples he needed to accomplish his goal.

Jesus Being Unconventional In His Methods of Teaching

In Jesus' day, all religious teaching took place at the temple or in synagogues by rabbis who had been educated and gone through training under other rabbis. The people would go to the temple or synagogues weekly and learn from the rabbis.

Jesus taught as he went along. We do read that he did go to the synagogues as he traveled throughout Israel, but we also read about Jesus teaching large groups of people on the side of lakes, on the sides of large hills, and even door to door in people's homes.

The sermon on the mount found in Matthew's gospel in chapters 5, 6, and 7 is a great example of one of these teaching times. During these teaching times, Jesus was accomplishing two things. He was teaching the masses about the Kingdom of Heaven and the ways of God all the while he was also teaching his disciples how to minister to others. This is one of the chief ways Jesus was unconventional.

Jesus Being Unconventional Teaching His Disciples

It often took years to be educated and learn from the rabbis to enter rabbinical service and be a teacher of the law of Moses. The Apostle Paul was taught this way. Paul even says he is a Pharisee and the son of Pharisees in Acts 23:6 while on trial in front of the Sanhedrin, the Church Council so to speak. Paul was very educated and trained for life to be a teacher of the law and was very zealous about it.



Jesus didn't call disciples who had a lot of education or came from the right families. Jesus called unlikely men to be his disciples. He called fishermen and farmers. He grew up as a carpenter's son. Jesus immediately started teaching his disciples how to serve others and minister to them. They were taught how to rely on faith in God to meet their needs. Jesus brought to life Proverbs 3:6.

Proverbs 3:6

(3) in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

The disciples also only went through 3 years of training before Jesus left them to lead the Church that he birthed.

Jesus Being Unconventional In Other Ways

Jesus was unconventional in so many other ways from the way he taught his disciples to teach and preach to the way he taught them to completely rely on God for every need they had. Jesus went against tradition, sometimes on purpose to create a teaching moment, and even went against the extended law of the Pharisees. The Church that was started, which we read about in the Book of Acts, met from house to house and in the marketplace and was led by common everyday people. There was no designated church building until the third century. Jesus bucked against the system, and we believe this was all for a greater purpose.

Being Unconventional Today

The Church today has reverted to much of what it was before what we read about in Acts. Many have reduced themselves to a single weekly meeting each Sunday. The typical service looks almost the same regardless of the church group you are with. We typically have one or two people who are leading the group and they have been to college or university and then on to seminary and are very learned about scripture and teaching methods and the like. In this way, we have recreated the clergy class that Israel had with the Pharisees and Sadducees.

We see some church groups growing and we want that for our group so we try to replicate what we see them doing. We rely on our own ways and understanding instead of relying on what God has called us each to do independently.

The world has over 7 billion people now. There are no one or two ways to reach all of them with the gospel of Jesus Christ. It takes all sorts of people with all sorts of experiences to explain the greatness of God and a life lived in Jesus Christ to all of the people of the world.

We have the Holy Spirit whose whole ministry is to equip and counsel believers in the tasks God has individually given to each one of us. Please do not misunderstand us. We are not saying education is bad, or that we should not learn from others. Education is good, but not always necessary. Learning from others is good, but our methods should rarely be identical to others.

Conclusion

Do what God has called you to do and do it the way he has inspired you to do it. We were ministers with a mainline denomination for many years until God called us to start Cell Life Church. Cell Life Church, in all of its ministries, is fairly unconventional. I believe God is using us to reach people in ways the



conventional church cannot. Being unconventional is what makes us stand out and God is using that to reach people around the world every day.

