

Sermon Title: **“SCD 1: SEE, CREATE, and Disciple”**

Bible: **1 Kings 3:3-12 & John 6:51-55**

When: on the 13th Sunday after Pentecost, August 18, 2024

Where: about 25 people (plus YouTube Live viewers) at Gilroy UMC

### **Opening Prayer**

O Lord, let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

### **1. Learning from SCD (School of Congregational Development)**

As many of you know, I recently went to Chicago for the School of Congregational Development. I have been looking for a good time to share what I learned. After I looked at the lectionaries for this Sunday and the following Sunday, I decided to share what I learned both today and next Sunday. Very creatively, the theme of SCD, School of Congregational Development, was SCD: See, Create, and Disciple, which has the same initials. The See and Create parts are related to discernment about what ministry and what vision could be possible, which requires God's and our wisdom. As we read 1 Kings, it is the story of Solomon which tells about how he received his wisdom from God. Can you see some connection between See, Create and Solomon's wisdom? And when you read next Sunday's lectionary, especially the Gospel of John, it is about discipleship. To me, what a coincidence! So, I decided to share what I learned from the SCD: See and Create today, and Disciple next Sunday. Today's message is not intended for any decision-making process. I do not make any decisions, and I cannot make any decisions, even though I am your pastor. I am here to serve you and this community. But this might be a time to be aware of our possibilities, our vision, our mission, and our calling. What I want is for us to think together and pray together for our

church. That's because you are the church. God called you and me for this church. So, if we, as a church, discover a common vision, or a signature ministry, we might be able to do it together.

## **2. SEE and CREATE**

When I planned to attend the SCD in Chicago, one of my expectations was that they would teach me an easier way to do our ministries. I knew that they could not give me a fish, but at least I thought that they might teach me many new ways about how to fish. But what I learned is that there is neither an easy nor easier way to do our own ministries. If we want to do our own ministries, it requires our prayers, our time, our discussion, our decisions, our teamwork, our energy, our money, and perhaps ourselves. Maybe, the real question is: Do we really want to do our own ministry? There is no easy way. The path of ministry is challenging. But do we really want to do it? Are we called to do it? And are we willing to be called?

What made us come to this church? You might have come to our church for many reasons. But I believe that you came to our church because you found and met Jesus, the living bread of life. There is God's love, grace, and mercy here, and God feeds you day by day through this church, right? And our reason for being is not to maintain this church, but to share God's abundant and overflowing love and grace. And our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. How can we make disciples? Rev. Junius Dotson said, "We cannot disciple people that we are not in relationship with." Then, whom do we

want to have a relationship with? 1. Who are we now? 2. Who has a willing or similar heart? 3. What are our community hopes and needs? 4. Where is God leading us to co-create? Have you heard of these questions? These questions are not something new. But whom do we want to have a relationship with? Where do we want to serve? Where do we want to build community?

### **3. Four Churches**

There are four church models or ministries. One church's role is to pray and wait. Do we pray and wait? The second church's role is to become attractive. This church might have some interesting or attractive ministries and events. Do we have some attractive ministries? The third church's role is to be engaged. This church is working together with the community. And the fourth church's role is to go out into the world, to have relationships, and to build community. Sometimes it is not easy for new people to find their way to the church, because there are visible and invisible barriers between the church and the world. I believe that we have some examples of the first three churches here, and I can name some of the things that we do. But when I learned about the fourth church, I could not answer that. Where do we go and have relationships?

### **4. How Can We Discern?**

As you see, even after the SCD, I bring more questions, rather than answers. And some questions are not that new. But to me, these are very fresh and authentic questions. Somewhat it feels like seeing someone for the first time. If God asks us where we want to go with God,

what is our answer? Where do we want to go with our Lord? Whom do we want to go with for a cup of coffee or tea?

Do you have God's love? Don't you want to share God's Love? It might sound like asking someone out on a date. I know sometimes it is not easy to ask someone to go out. So, are we going to stay in our homes, in our comfort zone, and not ask anyone to do anything? If we do not ask anyone to go out, how do we know? Maybe, God is asking us, whom do we love in our community? Whom do we want to spend time with?

One of the ways to discern God's calling is to make a team. Please try to make a team of at least three people. If you can make a team or a small group, I believe that God's calling is present. Of course, God can call each individual, but when God calls us as a church, I believe that there is a calling for our church. And I believe that's how God works with us as a church. When you can make a team, please let me know. As your pastor, I will be there and go with you. You know our church and our community. You have God's love in you. Is that God's love abundant and overflowing? Whom do you want to share God's love with and build relationships with? May God's love and grace be overflowing through our church to this community!

### **Closing Prayer**

Loving and living God, thank you so much for calling us as your children. Thank you so much for calling us as your church. We want to see and we want to go where you are called to go. Please give us your wisdom, your love, and your teamwork. Please refresh your love in our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.