

## Sermon Transcript

**Mark 1:14-20 and Jonah 3:1-5, 10 | January 21, 2024 | Third Sunday After Epiphany |  
Pastor John Klawiter, preaching**

Grace and peace to you my friends in Christ,

Legendary UCLA men's basketball coach, John Wooden, won 10 national championships in 12 years. (**image of Wooden**). That's pretty good.

Wooden was famous for his inspirational messages to his players—they were usually short and memorable. The messages applied to the task at hand, basketball, but were actually life lessons that his future players would apply to the real world.

One of his players, Andy Hill, shared a few of those nuggets in a book he wrote with the coach.

One of those quotes is “**failing to prepare is preparing to fail.**” So simple, yet it makes so much sense.

And this nugget: “**the team that makes the most mistakes... wins**”

Really? Doesn't that seem counter to the goal of a game?

No, what Wooden was teaching his players is that if you are mistake-free, you're probably sitting around doing nothing.

You have to take a chance knowing you might fail in order to accomplish anything. Mistakes are an essential part of getting better.

Practice and preparation are keys to improving. Willingness to try. An ability to listen to coaching and make adjustments.

My Grandpa John who lived in LA and was a fan of Wooden's, gave me this book when I was in college. He knew I loved sports, but he was also looking for ways to help me grow as a young adult. He wanted to give me tools to be a better leader by learning from a leader in life.

The details mattered. Yes, John Wooden found success through victories on the court. You could argue that his biggest accomplishment was the quality of character that he instilled in the men who would eventually step off the court.

**Organizational psychologist Adam Grant** would call this behavior having confident humility.

**When adults have the confidence to acknowledge what they don't know, the pay more attention to how strong evidence is and spend more time reading material that contradicts their opinion. The most effective leaders are**

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**confident and humble. They have faith in their strengths, but are keenly aware of their weaknesses.**

We are reading Adam Grant's book "Think Again" as part of a book club that met on Friday and I asked the group

**"Have you worked for or with a leader who had confident humility? What was it like to work on that team?"**

I have. While a member at Shepherd of the Hills in Edina in my mid-20's, I was drawn to the leadership style of Pastor Dan.

I served on the church council with him and other leaders in the congregation. His approach was warm and invitational. He welcomed everyone into the group.

When difficult conversations needed to be addressed—especially around conflict, financial decisions, or future direction of the church—Pastor Dan allowed room for the ideas to be shared openly.

We would present different courses of action to take. We talked about where we'd seen mistakes made in the past and how we might try things differently. We listened to the opinions of new voices who had ideas that were never tried before.

It was a great environment for me to learn and to understand how effective leadership influenced how decisions were made and guided the direction of the group.

Some decisions took months of back-and-forth that we'd revisit and consider.

Some decisions needed to be quickly. These decisions could be made because of the trust established within the group from day one.

In Mark's gospel, a level of trust with Jesus is also established on Day one. Jesus calls four disciples in this short passage—fishermen—**and immediately Simon and Andrew (PICTURE of fishermen/Jesus)** left their nets followed him.

Then, James and John are mending nets and immediately, he called them and they left their father in the boat with the hired servants.

Immediately.

What's the rush?

I mean, especially when compared to the response of someone like Jonah. Jonah was called by God and "immediately" is not exactly the term we'd use to describe his response.

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What is it about Jesus that these four men could already feel a connection—that they believed in him enough to put everything aside and follow him?

I can assume that Jesus must have had a presence of confident humility.

When you're around someone with confident humility, there's a level of trust and ease that we feel in their presence—even when things are tough, they don't get flustered, they put the mission first.

Someone with confident humility doesn't make you feel like an idiot if you're not getting it right away or have questions.

That's why I think Jesus is able to call his disciples to join him so quickly.

How does Jesus do it?

He prepares his disciples. He teaches them separately, as well as the lessons they'll learn when he speaks with authority to the crowds, but also to audiences opposed to his methods.

Jesus will also send them out in pairs... go out and try. You might fail or be rejected. That's ok! Move on, try again.

Then, come back. Regroup. Ask more questions. Humble yourselves.

Are we willing to do this? Can we admit when we've not been successful or missed the mark?

Andy Hill, **the writer of Wooden's book (BOOK)**, did. He called it "Be Quick, but don't hurry." When making decisions, if you wait until you're 100% sure, you'll be too late. But remained balanced in the decision-making.

You see, he wasn't a star. He was jaded at how Wooden treated the starters differently than the bench. Hill won three championships, but played sparingly. He did not go to the NBA.

He did, however, become a successful executive with tv executive with CBS—he was the president of CBS Productions, responsible for Touched by an Angel and Dr Quinn, Medicine Woman. One day, it hit him. He'd missed the mark.

He was holding anger towards Wooden, when it dawned on him that everything he knew about getting the best out of people had been taught to him by the Coach. On the gym floor. While a back-up, frustrated at his lack of playing time.

He approached the long retired Wooden, who was gracious and friendly. After forming a friendship, the idea of a book was Andy Hill's way of sharing the coach's confident humility.



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The culture of our congregation is one of confident humility. Can a “people” have confident humility, you might wonder???

You sure can.

Faith Lutheran, we’ve been the leaders to recognize solutions for homelessness—talking about how to provide shelter and support for families and individuals for years. While the solutions weren’t what we thought they’d be—a family shelter in Forest Lake or Tiny Houses on our property—the positive outcomes could not have happened without the leadership of members of this church advocating for the needs of others.

You helped make the **Hugo Family Shelter possible (picture)**. And sustainable.

You helped make Sacred Settlements at **Mosaic Christian Community (picture)** and Prince of Peace **Roseville (picture)** possible.

Faith Lutheran, you’ve seen the needs of the refugee—someone new to this community—and welcomed them, befriended them, even when the process hasn’t gone smoothly.

Faith Lutheran, when it comes to the needs of each other—through illness, death, loneliness, friendship—you’re there for each other.

You lift each other up. You love like Jesus taught you to love. You are humble in your ability to discern what’s next.

But most importantly, Faith, we are confident.

We are confident because we know that Jesus has got this. When Jesus says, “Follow me” we trust that we aren’t facing our next challenge alone. We know that Jesus has prepares us. Teaches us. Encourages us.

**Follow Jesus (picture... then pause)**... we do. With confident humility. Amen.