

Discipleship Lesson 1 1Q 2008

An Overview of Discipleship

What is discipleship? When you think of being a disciple what comes to mind?

1.
 - a. One who embraces and assists in spreading the teachings of another.
 - b. An active adherent, as of a movement or philosophy.
2. One of the original followers of Jesus.
3. A member of the Disciples of Christ.

Whose disciples are we to be? Apollo? Peter? Paul? EGW? Graham? ATS? Billy Graham? Joel Olsteen? No, Jesus!

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

How can you tell a true disciple of Christ? Can you tell by their profession? By the food they eat? By what they drink? How they dress?

How can we tell? By the methods they use in the way they live their lives?

Another cause of dissension had arisen. At a feast it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of the guests, and on this occasion preparation had been made for the service. The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the feet washing; but no servant was present, and it was the disciples' part to perform it. But each of the disciples, yielding to wounded pride, determined not to act the part of a servant. All manifested a stoical unconcern, seeming unconscious that there was anything for them to do. By their silence they refused to humble themselves. {DA 644.2}

How was Christ to bring these poor souls where Satan would not gain over them a decided victory? How could He

show that a mere profession of discipleship did not make them disciples, or insure them a place in His kingdom? How could He show that it is loving service, true humility, which constitutes real greatness? How was He to kindle love in their hearts, and enable them to comprehend what He longed to tell them? {DA 644.3}

The disciples made no move toward serving one another. Jesus waited for a time to see what they would do. Then He, the divine Teacher, rose from the table. Laying aside the outer garment that would have impeded His movements, He took a towel, and girded Himself. With surprised interest the disciples looked on, and in silence waited to see what was to follow. "After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." This action opened the eyes of the disciples. Bitter shame and humiliation filled their hearts. They understood the unspoken rebuke, and saw themselves in altogether a new light. {DA 644.4}

What method do we see in this story revealed by the disciples?
What method revealed by Christ?

In this last meeting with His disciples, the great desire which Christ expressed for them was that they might love one another as He had loved them. Again and again He spoke of this. "These things I command you," He said repeatedly, "that ye love one another." His very first injunction when alone with them in the upper chamber was, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-

sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. {DA 677.2}

This love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. {DA 678.1}

How can we reveal this love in our lives? In our families? In our community? In our class?

SABBATH

Read entire day – thoughts?

What causes people to turn back from their Christian commitment?

1. disillusionment

- Believe one's security is bound up in one's choices, so as long as we choose to do right then we will be okay
- Health wellness gospel
- God is required to kill, God took mommy, God doesn't protect the innocent and many other lies about God

2. fear

- Fear of loss
- Fear of humiliation
- Fear of rejection

- Fear of what others will think
 - Fear of physical torture
3. cost of discipleship
- Family rejection, spouse leaves
 - Lose job
 - A child dies
4. deception
- A false religion pulls one away – David Koresh
5. never genuinely committed initially - Judas

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph “On the personal level...” thoughts?

How is Christ generally represented in the world by Christianity? What examples can you give that misrepresent Christ and what examples that genuinely represent Him?

Misrepresent –

- Christians who attack abortion clinics
- Christians who attach/picket homosexuals
- Christians who seek to coerce others to conform by law
- Christians who discriminate
- Christians who abuse their spouse or children
- Christians who use Christ’s name for political purposes
- Christians who preach as a way to personally get rich
- Preachers who present a distorted concept of God

Genuinely Reveal

- Marian and Barbie Fisher – offered their lives for others
- Charities which seek to relieve hunger, poverty, disease
- Individuals who give of themselves to help others without recognition
- Community of unity, trust and love

MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What is the primary subject matter we are to be learning from Christ? The Truth About God!

Can someone share with the class the truth about God you have learned from Christ? What difference has that made in your life?

If you are still struggling with learning the truth about God as revealed in Christ, if the old ideas about God from childhood, from tradition are still in your mind, don't be discouraged – look at Phillip – after three and half years with Christ he said to Jesus,

"Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. John 14:8-11

Read the dark middle section “Discipleship involves...”
Thoughts?

What does it mean to follow God's commands? To be one of God's disciples? What does God command us to do?

Explore three levels of obedience –

- Obey out of fear of punishment

- Obey out of love for the person and not wanting to hurt them
- Obey out of intelligent agreement

What level does God want from us?

John 15:15 – Jesus calls us into intelligent friendship

John 16:26 Jesus said he would not pray the Father for us because the Father himself loves us.

- If we are obedient to Christ will we believe this?
- If we follow Jesus as his disciple will we teach this?
- Can you be Jesus disciple if you teach things that oppose what He taught?

What are your thoughts regarding putting family second to Jesus, including your spouse? If a spouse were acting in such a way they were destroying their partner's fitness for God and His kingdom and would not change, would the partner have a God given responsibility to leave?

Read bottom green section – is there anyone more dangerous in the world that someone on a mission for God who doesn't actually know the truth about God as revealed by Jesus?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph "In most instances..." thoughts? Who has Christ called to be His disciples?

But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself." John 12:32

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time. 1 Timothy 2:3-6

Thoughts? –

Read last paragraph – “Even the response...” thoughts? Does this mean God determines who is saved and who is lost? Or does this mean that none would have any hope if God wasn’t working for our salvation, that we wouldn’t even have a knowledge or desire for anything better except God gives us that knowledge and desire, some choose to follow and live others choose to rebel and die?

WEDNESDAY

Read first four paragraphs – thoughts? What about Judas was he a follower of Christ? Was he considered a disciple? Was he sent out with the others and able to perform miracles? Why did he follow? Did he following willingly or was he coerced or pressured to follow?

Is it possible to follow Christ willingly and still not be a true disciple? Is it possible to follow Christ willingly for the wrong reasons or motives? What happens if you do?

What motivates people to follow Christ?

- Fear – of eternal damnation? What kind of disciple does this make?
- Status or position in society? What kind of disciple does this make?
- Love for someone who raised you to be a Christian? What kind of disciple does this make?
- Love for God with an intelligent appreciation of His character and methods – what kind of disciple does this make?

Which do you want to be? How can you become that kind of disciple?

THURSDAY

Last paragraph – thoughts? First is the sentiment an absolute truth? When Lucifer was in heaven in God’s presence did he become more and more like God? When Judas spent three and half years with Jesus did he become more like Jesus?

Is it possible to see God, spend time with him and still not want to become like Him? Does it matter how events are interpreted?

Judas interpreted Christ’s actions as weak, short-sited and unsophisticated, thus he saw the same evidence that the other disciples saw but rather than being transformed by it he was hardened because of his own interpretation of what he heard and saw.

A man brings his wife roses, she can respond with, “Oh, Sweetheart, I love you.” Or by saying, “Okay, what have you done?”

God has provided the evidence and He Himself has come to explain it, but we are still all free to interpret it for ourselves are we not?

With this in mind, after spending three and half years with Jesus, what was the “vision” of the future all of the disciples had? Jesus sitting on David’s throne, over throwing Roman power and establishing an earthly kingdom and each of them were vying for the prime minister’s job. Had they become like Him? Had they failed to interpret all they had seen properly?

Why? Because of preconceived ideas, prejudices, biases and traditions, what about today? What biases and traditions impair our ability to see with Christlike vision?

FRIDAY

Read questions 1 and 4 and discuss