

Discipleship

INTRO: Video: Jewish Discipleship

With that, we have our introduction to our new series: Discipleship. We are going to talk about some of the things that the Rabbi talked about in the video throughout the series: modeling, understanding, living the life. I think this series is coming at a critical point for us in the life of our church. Understanding and living out discipleship will only strengthen every facet of the life of our church as well as our own lives.

So today, we are going to introduce this idea of discipleship from many of Jesus' own words. In the following weeks we are going to turn the corner on discipleship and head back into the OT to the command that started the whole idea off, the place where discipleship begins.

- I. So let's start with the rather infamous words of Jesus before He left earth to ascend into heaven - Matthew 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
 - A. The common mistake, as has often been pointed out, is that this passage does not say, "go and make converts"
 1. There is a big difference between a convert and a disciple
 - a) With convert the idea is persuasion - you have persuaded them over to your line of thinking
 - (1) There is no thought of action with the idea of convert
 - (2) There is no thought of a changed life with the idea of convert
 - (a) Which is why preachers have to work so hard at connecting the idea of salvation with a changed life
 - (b) It is not just a set of ideas to believe, it is a lifestyle to live
 - b) With the idea of disciple comes a follower of an individual's teachings
 - (1) With following there is action
 - (2) They do not just agree that what is said is true, they change their life around the teachings
 - (3) They literally pattern their life after the teacher
 2. So Jesus is not looking for converts, He is looking for disciples
 - a) How many of you have ever played "Simon Says?"
 - b) When Simeon says, what do you do? - Whatever Simon says
 - c) This is the idea with Jesus and being His disciple
 - (1) When Jesus speaks - we follow

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- (2) Do you remember the words of Ruth to Naomi that were spoken out of love and devotion, “Where you go I will go, where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die I will die...”
 - (3) If you are old enough, you may remember this commercial [EF Hutton]
 - (a) Applied to Jesus, When Jesus talks...people should listen
 - (b) The implication is that they follow His commands too
- B. Most of us know this about Jesus words - He is interested in disciples, not converts
1. It has been put in a variety of ways - convert vs. disciple
 2. More recently, fan vs. follower (If you have not read Kyle Idleman’s book *Not a Fan* or gone through the Bible study, you are missing out)
 3. These are opposite pairings. I want to show you what Scripture equates a disciple with
- II. All Christians are disciples - Acts 11:26 (p. 1104)
- A. Turn to Acts 11:26
1. Do you see what disciples are equated with - what they are called?
 2. They are called Christians!
 3. Before this point, all believers in Jesus Christ were called disciples!
 4. It wasn’t until Antioch that they began to be called Christians
- B. Somewhere into Christianity crept this idea that we have two separate classes of people
1. We have Christians - those that have acknowledged Jesus as Savior in some manner
 - a) They are your typical church goer
 - b) They love Jesus, but generally don’t make a big deal about things
 2. Then you have disciples - people that have also acknowledged Jesus as Savior, but these folks are more like pastors, missionaries, Christian workers of some kind - that is who disciples are
 3. That folks, is a lie from Satan himself, trying to sideline the many people that would be workers for Jesus
 - a) He is trying to make you think that you need special knowledge or education or something
 - b) “You are not like those people - those disciples. Yeah, you love Jesus - that’s all that matters.”
 4. Yet that is not what Scripture displays for us
 - a) “The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch”
 - b) That means that every disciple is a Christian and every Christian a disciple

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5. Allow me to show you a few more verses
 - a) Acts 11:29 - same passage - the disciples are providing for one another as they were able
 - b) Acts 14:20 (p. 1107) - the disciples (the Christians in that town) gathered around Paul
 - c) Acts 18:27 (p. 1113) - Apollos wanted to go visiting another town, and the brothers and sisters wrote to the disciples (Christians in Achaia) to set things up
 - d) Acts 19:1 (same page) - Paul found some disciples - disciples of what? Jesus - Christians
 - e) Acts 20:30 (p. 1115) - people may rise up to draw disciples away from Christ and to false teaching
 - f) All but the last are Christians being referred to as disciples
 6. The matter is well established in Scripture that there is not a division between Christian and disciple - they are one and the same
- III. So what do disciples look like biblically - what are some things the Bible says about them
- A. John 8:31 “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.”
1. The first way disciples are described is holding to Jesus teaching
 2. That makes sense from even the video we watched at the beginning of the message
 - a) A disciple of someone involves following their teachings
 - b) In fact, back in our home passage of Matthew 28, it says, “go and make disciples...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...”
 3. If you are truly a disciple of Christ, if you are truly a Christian (because they are one and the same), you obey what Jesus taught
 4. It is interesting the word that Jesus picked here - hold to His teaching
 - a) It’s as if Jesus knew it would not always be easy in life to follow what He said
 - b) So He asks us to hold - to grasp with a tight grip - to allow that teaching to guide us through, even the most dangerous of perils
 - c) Imagine yourself lost at sea in a bad storm
 - (1) You are exhausted and on the brink of giving up
 - (2) Then a boat comes along to rescue you
 - (3) They throw you a line
 - (4) That line represents your one hope for life, to live you must hold it and not let go - regardless of what the waves or the wind does - holding that rope means life

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- d) Same is true in the storms of our lives
 - (1) Life gets rough, it is difficult to know what to do, we can become exhausted and feel like giving up
 - (2) Yet Jesus asks us to hold to His teaching - because His teaching means life
 - (3) Yes, life may get rough and try to knock us from our grip, but we must hold on
- B. John 13:34-35 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
 - 1. We are known as Jesus’ disciples by our love for each other
 - a) We have talked about the one another in the past
 - b) That is in reference to fellow disciples
 - 2. This love is marked by specific things
 - a) Jesus said “As I have loved you...”
 - (1) That is to be the measure of how we love people
 - (2) How God loved us
 - (a) God’s love is sacrificial
 - (b) God’s love is undeniable
 - (c) God’s love is unstoppable
 - b) Not only that, but our love is to be visible - Jesus said, “By this everyone will know...”
 - (1) Everyone will see it
 - (2) A disciple’s love for fellow disciples is so evident in life that everyone will know because we love them like Christ loves us
- C. John 15:8 “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”
 - 1. If we are disciples, we bear much fruit
 - 2. And it says “much fruit”
 - a) This is not the occasional good deed
 - b) This is a lifestyle of serving Christ wherever you are, you take the opportunities to glorify God in what you do
 - c) Matthew 5:16 “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven”
 - 3. If we are disciples, then good deeds that bring praise and glory to our heavenly Father are a part of that life
- IV. I want you to see what Jesus called His disciples to
 - A. To be clear, in most of these verses we will look at, Jesus is speaking to the original twelve disciples

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1. Understand that this same call, is a call for all disciples
 2. It is the call when Jesus invites you into His family - there is no difference
- B. Matthew 4:18-20 (p. 968)
1. Peter and Andrew were working on their trade (fishing) and Jesus gives them a simple call - "Follow Me"
 2. The call was not specifically about being fishers of men
 - a) Jesus was using their trade as an example of what Jesus was calling them to
 - b) Jesus would train them to reach men and women for the kingdom of God
 3. His call was simple: Follow Me
- C. Matthew 9:9 (p. 973)
1. Did you notice, the call is the same - follow me
 2. Jesus did not refer to fishing for men, because Matthew was not a fisherman
 3. I suppose being a tax collector Jesus could have said that He would make Matthew a collector of men
 - a) But that sounds a bit creepy
- D. Matthew 19:16-22 (p.
1. This is the story of the rich young ruler
 - a) This man is rather proud of his abilities to keep the commands in the OT
 - (1) I can give him never steal, murder or commit adultery - those are pretty large
 - (2) However, you mean to tell me that you have never lied, never dishonored your parents (in that culture maybe not), and always love your neighbor as yourself?
 - (3) I think he had a high view of himself
 - b) Jesus cuts to the heart of the man's problem - his love for his money and possessions
 2. Notice what he tells this man - follow me
 - a) In context the idea is, "your money is holding you back from following me, so let that go."
 - b) Then the simple command to follow Jesus
 3. Put yourself in this man's shoes
 - a) Even if you think that you have been following the commands well
 - (1) You haven't killed anyone
 - (2) You don't lie (generally speaking)
 - (3) You honor your parents

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- (4) You even love your neighbor
- b) What would Jesus pick out as the thing or things that are holding you back from following Him?
- E. In fact, let's look at another passage that may help here - Luke 9:57-62 (p. 1040)
 - 1. Jesus is laying out what discipleship costs
 - 2. Before we dig in here, look back at the few verses before this 9:51-56
 - a) Jesus is rejected here by society
 - b) We often focus on James and John's temper tantrum, wanting to call down fire from heaven, but I think that may be the very reason these verses follow Jesus rejection
 - c) The Sons of Thunder wanted to call down fire for the rejection of Jesus
 - d) And yet Jesus is about to lay it out that if you follow me, you will have to pay a high cost as well
 - (1) If you want to have association with Me, it will cost you
 - (2) This is not a life of privilege you signed up for
 - (3) Yes, I am the King, but it will not be that kind of Kingdom
 - 3. So here we have three individuals all with a drive to follow Jesus
 - a) The first guy is confident that he will follow wherever Jesus will go
 - (1) Jesus reply is a little odd - "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head."
 - (2) Sounds like Jesus is inviting himself over for the night
 - (3) What Jesus is really saying is, "Following me may mean giving up creature comforts. I don't have a place to live. We will likely be sleeping out under the stars. Can you handle that?"
 - (4) The guy is probably thinking more like the Jewish Rabbis
 - (a) I will follow your teaching
 - (b) I will follow you all around and learn from you
 - (c) But he probably is not thinking about leaving home to do it
 - b) The second guy is approached by Jesus and asked to "follow Him"
 - (1) His reply was to please allow him time to bury his father
 - (a) If you know anything about Jewish culture, even today, they bury people within 24 hours
 - (b) This seems like a reasonable request
 - (c) In fact, Jesus request would actually be outrageous to a Jew at that time
 - (d) His reply of "Let the dead bury their own dead" is akin to Jesus other statement of "If you do not hate your mother or father...you cannot be my disciple."

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- i) In other words, discipleship takes precedent
- c) The last guy has a similar request - let me say goodbye to my family
 - (1) Jesus seems again rather harsh - "Those that look back are not fit for the kingdom"
 - (2) His point is, those who clinging to life on earth as it is, are not ready for the reformation of salvation
- d) Allow me to give this section a more modern application that may help us understand it better
 - (1) Let's use the military for example
 - (a) When a soldier is in the military they train for service
 - i) They are away from their families for long stretches of time
 - ii) During training you might even here the drill sergeant say something like, "Your mama ain't here boy!"
 - iii) When they are placed into service during war time, families don't generally know much as to where they are or what is going on - they don't get to call home every night
 - iv) Much like the commitment to serve one's nation, is the commitment to serve one's Savior
 - (b) Our personal agendas end up suspended like they would be during national emergencies
 - (2) How about training camp in sports
 - (a) Kids are pulled out of daily life, away from family and friends so they can build themselves into a unit
 - (b) They have to be dedicated to getting and being in shape
 - (c) Discipleship is the same way with a couple of differences
 - i) The camp and your team is the church
 - ii) And the training never ends
 - iii) As disciples of Christ, we must always keep ourselves in shape
 - iv) The advantage to this type of camp is you can have your family and friends along
 - (3) One more analogy: marriage
 - (a) Before you are married, you are subject to your parents
 - (b) When you establish a new home, that new set of relationships takes priority
 - (c) It's not that your parents and the rest of your family don't matter, but your focus, your time, your energy is spent on these new family priorities
 - (d) In discipleship, your relationship to God becomes your defining priority

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- i) Other relationships matter
 - ii) But your relationship to God becomes your highest priority
- V. Which leads us to the big question: has Jesus become your highest priority
 - A. Be careful how you answer
 - 1. If someone was to look at your life, would they see that Jesus is your highest priority?
 - 2. Would that be something that is so visible in your life that there is no doubt to people looking at your life that Jesus is the center of your life?
 - a) Outsiders may only see a facade
 - b) Insiders know the real you - can insiders see that your highest priority is your relationship with Jesus
 - B. In future weeks we are going to fill in this grid of discipleship
 - 1. It is like concentric circles that we will talk about in future weeks
 - 2. Our base passage will be Deuteronomy 6
 - 3. And the focus will be on Family Discipleship
 - a) What are some ways families can work on discipleship
 - b) If you are a parent, what can you do to be discipling your kids at home amidst a busy and crazy schedule
 - c) If you are a grandparent, what can you do to help disciple your grandkids in a busy life
 - d) Even singles, there are ways for you to participate in this as well
 - 4. We want to get very practical about what discipleship can look like in the home for your family
 - 5. I hope you will make the time to be here, and I hope that you will be inviting others that may want or need to hear this information as well