



The Voice of Truth



July 26, 2009

Discipleship

By Jimmy Pettigrew

A Christian is God's obedient child: "as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in (the time of) your ignorance" (**1 Peter 1:14**). The Christian life is a lifelong life. Becoming a Christian is a beginning of one's discipleship to Jesus Christ our Lord. This is what He told the Jews, "As he spake these things, many believed on him. Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, (then) are ye truly my disciples" (**John 8:30-31**). We cannot be the disciples of Jesus, if we do not follow His words. In other words, we must "abideth in the doctrine of Christ (**2 John 9**)! The doctrine of Christ is that body of teaching which came from the Lord. It is that "form of teaching" which delivers from sin (**Romans 6:17**).

There are things that must be done if we are going to be disciple of Christ. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof" (**Matthew 7:21-26**). The entering of this gate (**Matthew 7:13-14**), requires obedience.

Jesus discussed the cost of discipleship, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (**Luke 14:26-27**). Commitment is what separates disciples from church members! In other words, to be Christ's disciple, one would have to put Christ first, before everyone and everything else in life, including life itself. To be a disciple of Jesus we must love Him more than anything in this world. To be His disciple entails and implies a willingness to make all sorts of sacrifices on the behalf of Christ, no matter what. Not once did Jesus lower His demand to appease the crowd or to get a single follower. "Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (**Matthew 16:24**).

Jehovah made great preparations for the coming of Christ (**Galatians 4:4**), and He will not tolerate excuses for the rejection of His Son. Obstacles such as the pursuit of material wealth (**Luke 18:18**), personal ambition (**John 12:42-43**) or family relations (**Luke 14:26**), will bring deadly consequences. Many will not be willing to sacrifice families, friends, possessions, and things of the flesh, much less be willing to die for Jesus in order to have a home in heaven. How foolish to start to build a building without knowing how much it costs and whether one has enough to finish the project. Likewise, it is just as foolish to start to live a Christian life without knowing there is a great cross to bear. The cross of sacrifice is heavy, and many don't realize how much of a load it really is. Discipleship demands commitment! Once that commitment is made, there is no turning back (**Luke 9:62**).

The cross has become the symbol of voluntary, self-giving, sacrificial love of our Lord

Jesus. Likewise, the cross becomes the symbol of our discipleship. A disciple becomes like His teacher (**Luke 6:40; Matthew 10:24**). Our cross is the voluntary acceptance of Christ's way of life as our own. That cross is the willingness to give up everything, even one's own life. This is what separates disciples from church members! Discipleship without total commitment is no discipleship at all. Like the Macedonians of old, we must first give ourselves to the Lord (**2 Corinthians 8:5**). Discipleship demands abandoning all of Christ, it is not easy.

We need to be wise enough to realize that heaven is worth the sacrifice of everything, even life itself. Help us, God, to focus our lives on the treasure which is eternal life with Thee. Help us to be true followers of the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world (**John 1:29**)! Are you truly a disciple of Christ?

"You Are In The Bible ..."

By Jarrod Jacobs

The last book of the Bible was written about 96 A.D. Since then, we have had 66 books of the Bible (39 Old Testament books, 27 New Testament books) to provide us with God's guidance and establish and strengthen our faith (**Rom. 10:17; Jude 3**). Of course, this is enough to do it (**II Tim. 3:16-17**). However, after 2000 years, folks are tempted to call the Bible "outdated," "unrealistic," and the like. Some folks wonder how we can make applications to our lives when using the Bible. Yet, as we study the Bible, it becomes clear that we can't *help* but apply Scriptures to ourselves when we see that we, in fact, are in the Scriptures!

What do I mean by this? Put simply, God in His providence saw down the stream of time, and inspired men to write things which are very much applicable to today (**II Pet. 1:20-21**). Let us look at some examples of the fact that you and I are in the Bible.

Galatians 3:26-29

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is nei-

ther bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Yes, this book is addressed to the Galatian Christians (**Gal. 1:2**). At the same time, this book is written for us! When one becomes a Christian (i.e., a child of God by faith, **v. 26**), it is due to the fact that this person has been baptized into Christ (**v. 27**). In becoming Christ's, we also are "*Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise*" (**v. 29**).

What promise is this? It is the promise God made to Abraham in Genesis (see: **Gal. 3:16**)! In other words, when someone becomes a Christian, he becomes "*seed of Abraham*", and therefore fulfils God's promise to Abraham where God said Abraham's seed would be "*as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies*" (**Gen. 22:17**).

Just think, every time one becomes a Christian, he takes his place in continuing to fulfill a promise God made so long ago. If you are a Christian (**Acts 2:38, 11:26**) then you are a part of this promise. *You* are in the Bible!

II Timothy 2:2

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Again, though this letter was specifically written to Timothy (**1:2**), what was written was written for us! In reading this Scripture, we see a progressive line of thought. Let us read this carefully and note the progressive thought.

"The things that thou hast heard of me" The apostle Paul taught Timothy (**Acts 16:1-5**; etc.); so the "*me*" in this verse is Paul. Where did he get his knowledge? He got it from Christ (**Gal. 1:12**). Therefore, what he was taught by Christ he then taught to Timothy.

"The same commit thou to faithful men" Now that Timothy had heard and obeyed

the truth, he needed to be active in teaching others the truth (I Cor. 4:17; I Thess. 3:2-3; I Cor. 16:10). Just as Timothy would be able to take the gospel to lost souls, as well as to a generation of people after Paul's death; so also, he needed to be preparing people to spread the gospel to places he could not go.

"Who shall be able to teach others also...." This phrase shows how the "cycle" continues on. Those Timothy taught needed to be able to teach "others" so those folks could teach still "others" and so on. Therefore, that "chain" of "others" who were taught the gospel began in the first century and reaches forth to this present day! Thus, the need for our generation to teach "others" ! We are a "link" in the chain that will continue to grow until the end of the world. Yes, you and I are there in II Timothy 2:2.

Matthew 5:32, 19:9

"But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

Though some folks have tried to say that these passages apply only to those under the Law of Moses, Jesus actually applied it to people who were going to be living under the New Covenant when He said, "whosoever". These verses apply to every person in every time and in every society since He spoke those words.

For those who insist that Jesus' words were spoken to somehow "correct" those under the Old Testament, how do we explain the fact that Jesus' statement concerning marriage (without the exception) is repeated in **Romans 7**? If Christ intended for what He said to be applied only to those living under Moses' Law, then why is it taught by the apostle Paul to the Romans who were living after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, under a new law (law of Christ, Gal.

6:2)? In fact, in showing the Romans that the Law of Moses has passed away and we are under Christ's testament (will), he used the illustration of a widowed woman who gets married again! Talk about "convenient"! No, Christ's law for marriage was not something given to "correct" those living in Old Testament days. It is for us today.

You are in these verses if you are married or are contemplating marriage. Christ declares that we are not to divorce for any cause. The rule is that once married we stay married until death. The only exception to this rule is in the case where a spouse has been unfaithful through sexual immorality (fornication). This command concerning marriage continues to this present day!

Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ".

So long as there is one person still in sin upon this earth, the Lord's plan of salvation is in force. It demands that we believe in Christ and be baptized so that we can be saved from our sins. There is no other way. If you are in sin, you are in these verses because they reveal what is necessary to be saved. If you are already saved from sin, then you are in these verses, for this is the instruction you followed in order to receive the remission of sins. Too, these are the passages you can use to show others how you were saved.

Conclusion

These passages are just a sampling of passages which show us the providence of God and how God's word applies to us this day. The Bible is not antiquated or out-dated. Rather, it is a relevant, vibrant book. It is *"living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword"* (Heb. 4:12, ASV), whose principles are just as needed and as up-to-date as the day that they were originally penned. What other Bible passages are you in? There

are more than you think! Yes, you are in the only God can provide (**Acts 3:19**).

Bible! *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com*

Edify One Another By David Padfield

At the close of Paul's first letter to the church at Thessalonica, he exhorted them to "edify one another" (**1 Thes. 5:11**). The word "edify" comes from the Greek word *oikodomeo*. This word occurs thirty-nine times in the original text, and all except eight times it is translated as "build" or "built." Our Lord chose to use this word in **Matthew 7:24** when He spoke of the wise man who "built his house on the rock."

The idea Paul had in mind was that Christians should "build" one another up in the faith. After defining the word, Thayer comments that it is "the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christians wisdom, piety, holiness, happiness" (*Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament*, p. 440). W. E. Vine said the word is "used metaphorically, in the sense of 'edifying,' promoting the spiritual growth and development of character of believers, by teaching or by example, suggesting such spiritual progress as the result of patient labor." (*Expository Dictionary Of Biblical Words*, p. 194).

One of the highest duties that a Christian has is to encourage others. In a world filled with pessimism, violence and despair, our need for encouragement is great. It is all too easy to let the "ways of the wicked" become our ways. The happy man is the one who refuses to "stand in the path of sinners" or "sit in the seat of the scornful" (**Psa. 1:1**).

After a week of listening to the gripes and complaints of this sin-sick world, Christians should look forward to an isle of retreat on the Lord's day. A place where the name of God is blessed, not cursed. A place where we can enjoy the "seasons of refreshing" which

It is truly a shame the Christians do not spend more time in each other's company. The Hebrew writer bids us to "consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" (**Heb. 10:24**). After the command, he tells us how it is to be accomplished, i.e., "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" (**Heb. 10:25**).

In the days of Haggai, the people of God grew discouraged while the working to rebuild the temple. God commanded them to get back to work, then gave them comfort by saying, "I am with you, says the Lord of hosts" (**Hag. 2:4**). Consider what it meant for those Jews to whom Haggai spoke to know the Lord was with them. Surely they could remember the stories of how Jehovah had been with their fathers as they passed through the Red Sea. They knew that God had "led them by the hand" through the wilderness on their way to Canaan. In view of God's goodness, how could they doubt Him now?

In a similar vain, Jesus has promised to be "in the midst" of His disciples when they assemble (**Matt. 18:20**). What a thought! The Son of God in our midst every Lord's day. He has also promised to be with us as we carry out the great commission (**Matt. 28:20**). Do you desire to be in the presence of the Lord and His people?

As we run our race toward eternal glory, let us continually encourage each other and "run with endurance the race that is set before us" (**Heb. 12:1,2**). *Credit: www.padfield.com*

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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