

Make Disciples (Part 3)

The Christ of Discipleship

Selected Passages

Introduction: In this sermon series we are talking about discipleship: *This is the means by which we become more like Christ.* We have defined discipleship as (Let's say it together...) "*Discipleship is a lifelong relationship with Jesus that makes us like Jesus as we do what He tells us to do as we share our lives with others.*" A disciple is someone who has a desire "to know Christ and to make Him known." A Christian disciple is one who follows Christ, one who submits to His authority, one who hungers to learn His truths and follow Him through obedience. This is an opportunity every believer has, but not every believer takes.

My goal today is to show you how Jesus (who is the Christ of discipleship) approached discipleship and took mere believers to a deeper level of discipleship, and then sent them out to make disciples.

There are some tenets of Christianity upon which true discipleship rests. To see these, we have to turn to the founder of our faith, the resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ. *Two things that must be understood here.*

1. **His goal** – is the salvation of individuals by regeneration of their hearts through faith.
2. **His method** – For spreading the good news of the gospel is through making disciples.

I. Jesus' approach to discipleship: (Lk. 9:23)

We will notice a few key character traits of a disciple according to Jesus.

- A. **First, we notice "Who" Jesus is speaking to. (v.18)**
Jesus is encouraging believers to become committed, deeper, devoted followers.
- B. **Second, we notice what Jesus was saying?** *If anyone "desires" to do this, "let him..."* Jesus is asking for a decision that each one must make to become His disciple and follow Him.
- C. **Third, we see how Jesus says they can do this.** Jesus lays down three essential characteristics His disciples must do...
 1. **A disciple must deny himself** – *To deny means to say "no to someone or something."* (Some examples of this are... (Jn. 13:38; Heb. 11:124)
 2. **The disciple must "take up his cross daily..."** *a cross would have been a familiar sight to Jesus followers. They all knew the cross was a symbol of death.* (Rom 12:1-2)
 3. **The disciple must follow Jesus...** this is more than an invitation to tag along (as is obvious from the first two characteristics)

II. Jesus' approach was personal: (Jn. 1:35-42)

- A. **Jesus' concern** – *"What do you seek?"*
- B. **Jesus only cared about their motives** – *What are you after? Why are you following Me?*
- C. **Jesus' question** (v. 38) The first words the disciples heard from Jesus were, *"What do you want?"*

Jesus might ask us this same personal question this morning – *What do you want? What are you looking for? What do you want out of life? Why are you following Me?*

III. Jesus' approach was individual: (Jn. 1:40-42)

- A. **Jesus saw these men** - He saw them as individuals, and He saw their character and their potential. (*As seen in vv.40-42*)
- B. **Jesus did not call Peter by who he was** – but rather what by the grace of God he would become.
- C. **A further study of Jesus calling His disciples** shows us several other things about His approach to discipleship...
 1. **He concentrated on a few** not a massive following.
 2. **He was never in a hurry** He was calm, methodical.
 3. **He didn't use gimmicks or tricks** to try and get them to follow Him.
 4. **He did not force them in ministry before they were ready** – He first called them to be with Him before He sent out to represent Him. (Mk. 3:13-14)

Jesus prayed and carefully selected a few men with whom He could build a relationship with and in whom He could pour His life into, so that when departed they would not only continue the work – God would use to turn the world upside down.

This is what He want to do with you and me.

IV. Jesus' approach was applicable:

- A. **It is personal** - Meaning just as it was for these men, it comes down to the individual's personal evaluation of how deep they were willing to go and how far they were willing to follow –
- B. **It is practical** – It is easy to do a study like this, and never actually apply any of it to our own personal lives. (Let's not do that – it would a total waste of time). Instead let's see...
- C. **Its possibilities** - (See chart)
 1. **When we place our faith in Christ**, we are automatically placed into the large circle representing the family of God and the body of Christ (the church).
 2. **Within this circle** is a smaller circle representing the committed disciples of Christ.
 3. **God's desire is for the two circles to become one** – for all believers to become His committed disciples.
 4. **When we look at the first disciples of Christ**, look what God did with those who faithfully and fully committed to follow Christ back then!
 5. **The same God is looking today**, for those who will decide to become faithfully and fully committed disciples of Christ!

Conclusion: Most of us remember playing a game when we were kids called "Follow the Leader." For the believer – who *desires* to become a true disciple of Christ, there can only be one leader – Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Let him follow Him.*