

The Abiding Life – Disciple-making

4/21/24

2 Timothy 2:1-7

Sunday AM

Christians exist for nothing else but to draw men to Christ and to make them into little Christ. If they're not doing that, then all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, and the Bible itself, are a waste of time. God became a man for one purpose – to redeem people to release them into His service. C.S. Lewis

If you remember – when we started this series, I shared w/ you that I feared that what many of us have been taught thru-out our church experience about following Jesus is less than what the Bible expects.

Most of us have been taught that to be *saved*, all we have to do is accept that we're a sinner, say a prayer telling God we're sorry – and we're in! While that's part of it, that's not the full picture. Jesus gave His life for more than a faith nod but also for our willingness to follow Him – and these (2) ideas are inseparable.

I share this b/c following Jesus is a call to more than acknowledging the work of Jesus on the cross and living as you want thinking you're okay w/ God – it's a call to be His apprentice *to walk in His footsteps, to know Him, to be like Him, and to do as He did.*

In Matthew 7:21, Jesus said – *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **ONLY** the one who does the will of my Father...*

WHO? Only the people who seek/do the Father's will. Meaning – there's more to this thing called the Christian life than just acknowledging the existence of Jesus. There's a determined surrender to (1) *be* w/ Jesus; (2) *become* like Jesus; and (3) *live* as He lived.

Christianity is more than a theory about the universe, more than teachings written down on paper; it's a path along which we journey – in the deepest and richest sense – it's the way of life. Ware

This way of life is known as the **ABIDING LIFE!** The abiding life begins w/ knowing Jesus as our Savior and daily submitting to Him as our Lord. Dallas Willard calls it – the WITH-God life!

In John 15, Jesus said – *I am the Vine, you are the branches. If you abide in Me, and I in you, you'll bear much fruit, but apart from Me, you can do nothing.*

To **abide** refers to having a close, non-transactional, continual relationship w/ Jesus that involves staying connected to Him thru living under the influence and in alignment w/ the H.S. and w/ God's Word/will.

SO – for 11 weeks, we've been discussing the essential activities necessary to live the abiding life – *worship, prayer, Scripture, church, ministry, fasting*, and more. Each discipline serves a single purpose – ***to help us to remain in intimate connection w/ God so that our lives are powered by the H.S. instead of by ourselves.***

Today – as we close out our series, we're going to look at the ultimate expression of a Jesus follower – and that is, fulfilling the G.C. by giving away the Jesus in you to others by becoming a disciple who makes disciples

(What) *Go into the world and make disciples.* (How) *Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and H.S. and teaching them to obey all I've commanded.*

I call this the ministry of ***alongsiding***. We get the concept from when Jesus spoke of the H.S. as the ultimate alongsider. In John 14:16, Jesus said he was sending the ***paraclete*** to walk alongside us to serve as our comforter to guide/empower us.

If you love me, obey me; and I will ask the Father and He will give you another Comforter, and He will never leave you. He's the H.S. who leads into all truth.

In DM, ***alongsiding*** occurs when a maturing believer intentionally takes responsibility to come alongside another person to introduce

them to Jesus and walk w/ them to spur them along to maturity in the faith. Jesus modeled (2) types of *alongsiding*.

The first way we see Jesus *alongsiding* is when he met one-on-one w/ people in what I call ***Reactive Alongsiding***. This is a short-term encounter, where like Jesus, we walk w/ people thru a life event or need to care for them at the point of their need to point them to the truth/love of God. (Helping James this week)

I had such an occasion this week. While hanging at the Chick w/ one of my GROW groups, an elderly man walked up and asked us to pray for he/his wife as they had a tree fall at their home taking out the power. But b/c the tree didn't hit the house, insurance wouldn't fix it. As I sat there wanting to help but feeling helpless to help, I thought about who I might know who could help – so I sent a text to (2) of the men in our church who work for GA Power – and those guys made it happen. Long story short, last I heard, GA Power fixed the problem and the city of Atlanta was going to clean up the mess to help this couple get back into their home. This is ***reactive alongsiding*** – being available to do what you can do to help others in Jesus' name.

There's also ***Proactive Alongsiding***. This is what Jesus modeled w/ the (12). It occurs when we set out to intentionally walk alongside someone over a period of time to invest Jesus in us into them. This requires a much higher degree of relational engagement/effort spending concentrated time encouraging each other, dialoging over truth, and doing life together.

This is so much more than attending a church worship service or Bible study. It's a relational investment of yourself into someone else. Church services and Bible studies can support the DM process, but they can't replace it. Why? It's b/c disciples can't be made in bulk – it's a ***life2life*** endeavor – where we're willing to get our hands dirty by doing life w/ others – and life in a sinful, fallen world is often messy.

Discipling is done by someone, not something. It's done by persons, not programs. It's achieved by individuals, not institutions. It occurs when one maturing believer pours themselves and invests their life into another soul who is open to following Jesus.

God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth, and tell it in love – like Christ in everything. Ep. 4:15

WTM – turn w/ me to 2 Timothy 2:1-7 – where Paul invites his protégé Timothy to be a **disciple who makes disciples** by offering him a (4) pics of a true disciple.

You, my son, be strong in the grace that's in Christ – and the things you've heard me say in the presence of many witnesses these entrust to reliable men who'll be qualified to teach others also. Endure hardship like a good soldier of Christ. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete doesn't receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. 2 Timothy 2:1-7

I A Disciple is a **MENTOR**

...the things you've heard me say in the presence of many witnesses these entrust to reliable men who'll be qualified to teach others also.

It all begins w/ a commission to **entrust** the Jesus in you into the life of another person.

Paul was inviting Timothy (and us) to do what Jesus had done w/ the 12 – **which was to take a group of people on a journey to discover who He is and who He wanted them to become**. The intriguing truth to me is that Jesus met them where they were – mostly lost and religious – and led them to true faith in Him.

Paul was inviting Timothy (and us) to join him in a ministry of **perpetual generational regeneration** – that is – *to be a mentor of mentors who pay it forward.*

The key is learning to **entrust** in **reliable** people what has been entrusted to you.

entrust was a banking term in the Greco-Roman world – *to deposit something valuable for safekeeping.*

In this instance – the priceless gift of God’s love expressed in the sacrifice of Jesus that lives in us is to be deposited into another soul for safekeeping.

But notice also that this gift is to be invested into the lives of **reliable** people – that is, into the lives of people who show an interest/appetite for God – people who’ll take what’s been deposited into their lives who’ll pay it forward by sharing it w/ others too.

A disciple is a mentor who entrusts Jesus to others.

II A Disciple is a **SOLDIER**

Endure hardship, like a good soldier of Christ. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.

Notice (3) things are expected of a disciple of Jesus:

A They **FIGHT** thru Difficulty

endure hardship is to fight thru and never give up no matter how difficult the opposition. It’s being faithful under great pressure b/c you’re committed to the task.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12

A disciple realizes they're in a war and not just a walk in the park – they're on a battleship and not a cruise ship – and God's mission is a battle for a person's soul.

B They **FOCUS** on the Mission

Paul says a soldier isn't get entangled in civilian affairs – in things distracting from God's mission. Instead, he remains focused on the mission at hand.

entangled is to get caught up/tripped. The picture is of a soldier whose weapon was entangled in his cloak.

As ordinary citizens, we often miss this b/c we see life as **free agents** – meaning we make our own decisions and involve ourselves in whatever extra-curricular activity we desire – **but not a soldier**. A soldier can't entangle himself in anything that might interfere w/ his duty. He must avoid anything that'd prevent him from being single-minded/focused on his duty.

A soldier doesn't have the luxury of telling his commanding officer, "I'm sorry, but I can't go to war b/c I'm going on vacation, or I have a soccer game, or I've planned a relaxing evening watching TV.

C They **FOLLOW** their Leader

pleasing Him refers to one whose ambition is to satisfy the heart of God – *to put a smile on God's face*.

To please God in such a manner requires we live each day in a manner that's considered worthy of/for God following His leading and obeying His Word/will.

POINT – as a Jesus follower, we're in a war. *If we approach the Christian life casually, then we will likely become a spiritual casualty.*

III A Disciple is an ATHLETE

Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete doesn't receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules.

As a former competitive athlete, this picture resonates w/ me b/c I understand that winning requires great **drive**, **discipline**, and **determination** – and the same is true as it relates to following Jesus.

To have **spiritual drive** means you have a great **internal motivation** to win at this thing called the Christian life. You don't want to just finish, you want to finish first. God desires this kind of drive.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to win the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that'll last forever. Therefore, I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I've preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

*Drive leads to discipline. **Discipline** refers to doing the necessary things like eating, working out, getting rest, and so on so you're fit/ready for the real competition. It's what you're doing when no one else is watching so you can be at your peak when everyone is watching.*

What am I saying? I'm saying your Christian life will never be greater than how you spiritually work and discipline yourself to seek after God when no one is watching.

Have nothing to do w/ godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:7-8

POINT – if you want to win in your Christian life, you have to be determined to put in the spiritual effort each day when no one is

watching. It doesn't just happen. Spiritual muscle/stamina requires effort.

IV A Disciple is a **FARMER**

The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.

In comparing a DM to a hard-working farmer, Paul is giving us insight into the challenge of making another disciple. It requires *fortitude, patience, time, and a conviction to wait* for the harvest.

DM doesn't occur quickly or overnight – but over time w/ intentionality.

DM, like farming, requires being *diligent* and *deliberate*. It requires starting early, staying late, and working until the job is done.

It requires **prepping** the soil, **plowing** the field, **planting** the seed, **providing** the nourishment, **pruning** the unnecessary, **protecting** from pest/weeds – and ultimately, **participating** in the harvest.

R. Kent Hughes sums up the farmer's life well...

- Early/long hours b/c he can't afford to lose time
- Constant toil to plow, sow, tend, weed, reap, store
- Regular disappointments w/ frost, pest, and disease
- Much patience – as everything happens slowly

POINT – Like farming, DM will have its ups/downs. Sometimes the harvest will be plentiful and at times it'll be scarce b/c we're not in control of the harvest, but we are in control of living a life that works to make disciples by planting Jesus in us into others – the key is being faithful to the task.

I'm reminded of when the missionary John Williams was speaking in Edinburgh. His audience was spellbound by his thrilling account of God's work w/ the tribes of the New Hebrides Islands. After he finished, a soft-spoken missionary took the stage and in a low,

trembling voice said, “Friends, we haven’t seen remarkable success like Mr. Williams. Yet we’ve labored for Christ in a far-off land for many yrs w/ only small results. But I have this comfort: When the Master comes to reckon w/ His servants, He won’t say, ‘Well done, good and *successful* servant,’ but ‘Well done, good and *faithful* servant.’ So, I’ve determined to be faithful and to leave the fruitfulness to God – and I encourage you to do the same!”