

Feed My Sheep

As we read the Bible and look into the story of Jesus, we ultimately see that it is all about discipleship, and that each one of us is called to be his disciple and disciple others... to feed others who are his sheep, which is each one of us here and we're called to feed to take care of each other right? As its written here in [John 21:15-17 NKJV](#)

"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

So today we're going to talk about what it means to be a disciple, what it costs us, what the responsibilities are, and ultimately how we can be effective disciples of Christ, who are called to multiply and make more disciples...

But before we get into that, there is a common question that I have heard and many churches asked... and I'm sure we all have and so I asked this... "do we want to see People give their lives to Jesus before our very own eyes, be born again and gathered into our church... yes, of course we do... I myself would love to see more people to come to Christ, become new creations ,transformed, dead to sin dead to self and alive for God... we may have this desire in our heart to see this but the question is are we willing, each one of us to be discipled and trained, and disciple and be involved in healing and teaching the new believers, these new creations these new babes in Christ...

And if and when these newly saved actually Come into our church or come into our lives, they come with very rough histories and so much brokenness, character flaws, difficult people, it can be very hard to work with because they have been beaten and broken by this world and by sin, that only a few seem to want to get to involved, in healing in teaching and discipling such individuals, and ultimately discipling in its core, in simple terms is just taking someone and becoming friends

with them, loving on them tending to their needs... Showing love at the wrong times... and what I mean by that is we talked about this as it was written in Romans 12:20 and also written in **Proverbs 25:21-22** "if your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you."

Remember we talked about this where there's aggression anger hatred whatever it may be and how we respond when we respond with love heaps coals on their head, they get confused they naturally get convicted because we choose to respond in a way that is opposite of how the world responds...

But it's so unfortunate how few are willing to just take up one person, and the brokenness and just show them the light of God, it doesn't matter your age... your race your culture your upbringing your lack of... we all have something in common and that is our Lord Jesus Christ...

you know When I think of friendships, in the process of becoming friends with someone... we know that when we meet someone that we share a lot of things in common with it's natural that we just click you get attached. We can talk for hours we hang out we have a good time! But what I've learned is even in these friendships in these relationships, these common things that we have between each other don't even come close to the depth we can have with each other in Christ Jesus...

Let me put it this way... Jesus aside... we could talk hours about our day, work, struggles, life.... Things that we have in common with another.... But after a while we come to a point where we have said all we have said... come to know about each other all that we know about each other... and the relationship could get stagnant... this is why marriages can get very very difficult because we can learn all we need to learn about each other... there is nothing new... conversations can become just boring small talk and before we know it we can feel very disconnected.... This is why it is so important to have Jesus in our marriage in our lives...

Because what I've learned is when Jesus is the common factor of our relationships... there is no end to his depth... there's always something new and exciting that he does and is... we can talk about it not just for hours but for days months years lifetime... because he's so good to us, And that's why it's so

important for us to know who Jesus is on a personal level as we talked about last week... Because in order for us to disciple we must be disciples and the Bible says in John 13:35 "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

All will know, the world will see and understand... wait a minute there's something different about you, how you choose to love me and care for me even though I treated you wrong... when we have love for one another... We will be known as a disciple of Jesus... And if we call ourselves followers of Christ, if we are Christians, we are a disciple of Christ... it's not some special calling that only a few are called into, but every child of God who believes in him and chooses to follow him is a disciple, and when we become disciples of Christ we are given responsibilities.

It's not this Concept of I go to church, I believe there's a God, he saved me and now I can just sit comfortably every Sunday morning, and live my own life... this is not what we're called to do... If we follow Jesus we become his disciples and we are called to make disciples...

Lets look into what it means to be a disciple...

So right off the bat we know, since we just read that to be a disciple and even go as far as to be seen as one... we need to have love for one another... loving our neighbor as we love ourselves!

But to be a disciple there is also a cost... a price that we unfortunately have to pay... there has to be some things that we have to sacrifice... let go of... whether it be ourselves... our pride, our upbringings... the things we so desperately hold onto... our knowledge.. ultimately our lives...

Luke 9:57-62 "now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, Lord I will follow you wherever You go. And Jesus said to him, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head. Then He said to another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord let me first go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God. And another said Lord I will follow you, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house. But Jesus said to him, no one having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven."

Store up treasure in heaven where neither moth or rust can destroy, for where your treasure is there your heart will be also... As it is written in Matthew chapter 6...

so when this first man declared to Jesus...

I will follow you wherever you go, immediately Jesus tells him the cost. I'm homeless are you willing to be homeless as well?

And then he turned to another and says follow me and the person says don't let me first go and bury my father ... Jesus respond with the dead bury they're dead and we might think whoa, but doesn't Jesus love us and care for us why does that sound like such a blunt response? The thing is this translation what it's saying is the person wanted to go and take care of their father until they passed away and buried them and then would follow him. So Jesus respond with the dead, bury the dead let the spiritual dead bury the dead because if we don't follow Christ and those who don't follow, Christ are gonna be spiritually dead. And again, Jesus shows the cost of following him is putting our self aside even our family aside for the sake of Christ and that is an even more difficult topic... I've seen this happened so much in my life, whether it was in my own personal life or seeing other families where the will in the call of God upon children were hindered because the parents would get in the way, because the parents became the idol were kids felt as if they could not do anything with their life until they took care of their own until they passed away and were released... now I'm not saying or trying to tell us how to parent because I understand. I have one child and there's so much for me to learn about parenting. But upon reading the word of God, we as parents and I'll have to learn this one day is to release our children into the hands of God, trusting him and trusting our children to go and do the work of God to follow him and not follow us. When I look at my son and he's just a boy now and I just remember him as a precious little baby. I just think I do not anticipate the day or let him go whether it's into the call of God or handle over in marriage... try understand there's a selfish part of me where I cared for him and loved him and maybe want him all to myself, but I also anticipate the day to see God use him and move him in his life while he's on this journey of following Jesus, not me because it's not about me and I don't want him to be like me. I want him to be like Christ and all my children that are to come... and Jesus understood the family morals of the Jewish culture. They're very family oriented. But he had to explain the cost of following him, and sometimes like in this situation, this man chose his family over following Jesus and how often I've seen this happen in families and either the parents or the children grow weary because they're not where they're supposed to be...

Jesus turns to a third person, and this person says to him, I will follow you but let me go first and do this or this and this... in this case they wanted to go back to their house and bid

them farewell... in Jesus says no one putting their hands to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven...

That's a pretty hard read when I think about that I want to be fit for the kingdom of heaven , I want to be a part of this kingdom. I want to be effective for the kingdom. I want to be a good fit. We hear Jesus makes it clear if we say we're gonna follow him but we keep looking back. We keep wanting our old life we keep going back to our old ways which I understand. Sometimes we fail and we act out in the old ways but we get up and we keep moving forward. He's not talking about that. He's talking about this concept a lukewarm Christian, who's sitting on a fence and can't decide what side they want to be on... this Outlook that's rather brutal, but true that God isn't good enough to follow and what he has to offer isn't good enough to Chase to walk towards to run towards so we keep looking back, thinking being deceived by the enemy that somehow we had in the past was better... but I don't know about you what I had in the past doesn't even compare to what I have today... yes I have my moments when I turn around and try to walk back and I stumble and quickly realize nahhh... that's not me anymore, I want nothing to do with that, I wanna be on the winning side, the side where there's victory and freedom... but there's a cost and it's letting go of ourselves... ultimately it's letting go over our flesh...

I'm gonna choose. I'm gonna make a choice today. We take it one day at a time we give it our best one day at a time we might be struggling might be so lame and sick so weak then maybe we can only make one or two steps but it's so important no matter how weak we are no matter how sick we can get no matter how far we fall and we get up and we make the choice to walk as far as we can walk as far as we're able to walk that's all God wants, and he will carry us the rest of the way amen? He's so good. He's willing to carry us all the way to the finish line. He's our strength when we are weak, but he wants us to walk. He wants us to learn how to walk. He wants us to use our feet and follow him. Just as a child when they're just a baby they're crawling around they're rolling around and we cheer them on as they're learning to walk because we want them to walk. It's such a joy to see a child go from crawling to walking. it's so common that the baby's first steps Bring such a joy... think about Jesus how much he rejoices and cheers us on because he loves us so much when we his children born to become people who get up and walk and follow him...

And that is all it takes to be his disciple to follow him .. granted, as we follow him as we can see by the Scriptures there's some things that we have to let go ourselves, our selfish desires, our flesh. But the cost the cost that we have to pay compared to the return that we get back or comparing pennies to trillions of dollars and even that comparison doesn't even come close.

We're giving up nothing because this flesh is nothing this world and what's in it. What's it worth? As it says in Matthew chapter 16.

"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. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Matthew 16:24-26 NKJV

What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, he has a beautiful place to sleep, wonderful family and friends, money power everything that's good. What profit will it be only to die and when we die, we take nothing with us except our soul, but what profit would bring to gain everything and to die and lose our soul, this is not her home. This is not where our treasure is may the Lord help us and help me live in a way where we are willing to count the cost and follow him into whatever he calls us to.

After all... maybe you haven't heard this ever or for a while.... But we have a mission statement.... Love mend train send... church God wants to rise up His people here in this place... I see... that through this church... leaders... ambassadors of the truth, carriers of light will rise up! And God wants us to RISE up! And be sent... I don't know where... maybe to another city... maybe another state... maybe even another country.... The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few! Church it's time to awake! It's time to press into the Spirit... it's time to become the people that God called each one of us to become... each of you...: has something so special within you that if only you knew... if only we knew how much we are loved and cherished by God... if only we knew what calling each of us have... we wouldn't be looking down upon each other, comparing each other, fighting with each other... but loving and uplifting and encouraging each other!

But sometimes we would rather prefer to gather to just gather together, in warm fellowship with the ones we know and are comfortable with... and there is nothing wrong with that, but at the same time if that is ALL we do... then it does indeed become wrong... people come into the church, become a part of Gods family from all sorts of backgrounds, many still very freshly wounded, fresh out of addiction or demonic control, or abuse... it's these children of God that Paul is talking about here... he's telling us believers who are growing in maturity..

receive one who is weak... be gentle... not criticize... I think we do a pretty good job at that, in showing love to the newly redeemed, despite the fact that they might have some very visible struggles and sins... and if you are a newly redeemed person here... I gave my life to Jesus 5 years ago... I'm still newly redeemed and have things God is working out of me, leading me on the process of sanctification... transformation... helping me become more like Jesus... if you're just fresh... don't be discouraged... maybe you got some bad characteristics, habits, sins you struggle with... press into Jesus and He will overtime transform you... but it's important that you keep pressing in, getting up, and making the choice to follow Him....

And if you are a mature Christian... and if we see.. a brother or sister... maybe they still be struggling, with curse words... smoking, drinking, anger, lust, even homosexuality... struggling with a sin that's physically visible,, it's our job to judge and criticize but rather up lift, love and disciple... living out the word of God with them... not to them...

Yes of course there is a biblical level of confrontation with a brother and sister who is in active sin... but we need to be cautious and patiently wait for the Spirit to speak to the newly redeemed before we do...

Pray and allow and trust the Holy Spirit to do His work and not get in His way!

In this passage Paul addresses both the strong and weak in faith... telling them to love each other! For the strong not to despise the weak and the weak not to judge the strong. But Paul also turns his attention to the strong...

He said this to the church or Rome... and this can be said today....

Unless we choose to welcome the weak AND... be a part of their healing... the church will stop growing...

There was a rather interesting situation that was happening in Rome at this time of the text... the Church of Rome was growing... God was bringing in people from various backgrounds.. Both Jews and gentiles... who came with their own culture... struggles of legalism and laws, paganism which was gentiles who had other beliefs from other religions... and they were all coming together learning to know God and also learning to love each other as Paul is leading them to do so...

So if you have your hand out... we're going to go verse by verse and with a simple answer we're going to understand what Paul is trying to say...

V1... "Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things."

Romans 14:1 NKJV

Draw close to the newly redeemed.

It's important that we make sure we enter a true friendship with that person and not just watch for an opportunity to criticize because we think they're doing something wrong... live with them, disciple them....

V2-3 "For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him."

Romans 14:2-3 NKJV

Be patient with those who are less knowledgeable or have painful histories.

Some newly redeemed might have beliefs that mature folks could look at and think that's so stupid.. why would you think or believe such a thing... or a lie from the enemy... strongholds that were built by pain.... They can be hurting and crying but we must be patient

V4 "Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand."

Romans 14:4 NKJV

Focus on what really matters...

and that being... what does Jesus think about us, not what others think of us... God knows what is going on in each person's heart and we could never know... and may we remember this and be encouraged... Jesus is completely committed to us... to love us, help us, take care of us, never fail us... He will never abandon us because we are weak... because

we fail... we fall... He waits so patiently, with so much mercy and Grace... working with us to remove our fears and build up our faith until we can learn to walk and learn to stand firmly in Him... as a good good Father who loves His child so much, wanting them to be able to walk and stand... grow and prosper...

V5-6 "One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks."

Romans 14:5-6 NKJV

To the best of your ability... do what you believe to be right.

There were conflicts.. of which day to gather for worship... Jews want Saturday for sabbath, maybe we gentiles like Sunday... it doesn't really matter what day worship is happening as long as what we do is biblical and we believe to be right to the best of our ability... many cultures have a different way of praising God... dancing, standing, sitting, clapping... or praying, on the knees, laying face down to the floor.. standing with arms up... do what feels right between you and God...

V7-8 "For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."

Romans 14:7-8 NKJV

In everything that we do... may that reason be to please Jesus.

We as Followers of Jesus must do everything or one reason and one reason only... and that is to please Jesus... and it actually is a great sin to move and work in a way to please what others might think of us rather than what God thinks... the Bible says God resists... opposes... is against.. the proud... but blesses the humble... I don't think I would want to stand head to head against God... would you? It is imperative, crucially important that as believers, followers... our deepest desire is to please Him even if it leads us to death...

V9 "For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living."

Romans 14:9 NKJV

Jesus became the Lord. The High priest, over everything in this life and the next.

Jesus being fully man and fully God died and rose again... and took the power of fear and death from the devil... and now the one who rose from the dead lives in us... and we can boldly proclaim His truth to the face of adversity... the face of fear and death and the devil...

And declare this very scripture written in I Corinthians 15:55-58 NKJV

""O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Hallelujah... thanks be to God! Who gives us victory! Through our Lord Jesus Christ! We have access to that victory today my dear friends... we have access to that freedom... do you believe it?! Do you want it?! Take hold of it!

V10-11 "But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.""

Romans 14:10-11 NKJV

Let us not forget

He is the Judge.

It won't be up to us who decides who belongs to Him and who doesn't... let us live in a way where we don't judge... but instead disciple and empower others to get to know Christ... for there will be a time where every knee shall bow.... Every tongue will confess... that He is the KING!

And finally v12 "So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."

Romans 14:12 NKJV

He will evaluate everything we have done.

When we stand before the judgement seat of God... He will reveal to us our true motives... this rather scary fact should cause us to examine our own hearts rather than judge others.. He will look to see whether we have selflessly loved people especially those who are weak... broken... poor...

I want to read one more scripture to solidify verse 12 and we can come to a close....

""When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'""

Matthew 25:31-46 NKJV

