

The Disciple's Challenge: Sacrifice of the Mind

Matt. 16:21-23

Introduction

Last week:

We learned that the challenge Jesus gives to everyone who wants to be His disciple is that the disciple must deny self; take up his cross; and follow Jesus. From Peter's life and experience we see how this can be done. The first aspect to sacrifice is our will. We cannot be a disciple according to our own will – it has to be according to His will. This is very important in a modern and humanistic generation that champions the human will.

Peter is a great example of learning to follow Jesus practically with the challenge of self-sacrifice, especially of the mind. Remember that discipleship is a process over time that has to do with our direct relationship with Jesus.

The Proposition this week:

Peter is still a great example of learning to follow Jesus practically with the challenge of self-sacrifice, especially of the mind.

Peter's Shock

The Build up

Peter had just experienced a tremendous revelation.

The Revelation about:

1. Jesus – the Christ, Son of the living God
2. Peter's calling: the stone (identity) and the keys (authority). These things are things essential for ministry and calling.

Jesus' Further Revelation

His Suffering and death (He spoke about it 4X in Matthew) yet the disciples didn't get it – they couldn't grasp it for some reason:

1. Their minds will full of wrong ideas about the Messiah and the kingdom. Ideas from religion and from people in general.¹
2. Then they didn't like what they heard, so they were slow to grasp it.²

¹ For Example in Act 1:6

² 2 Tim. 4:1-4

It was a Surprise / Shock to Peter

It shook him to his core! How could Jesus say these things? Was Jesus so hurt? Intense emotions and thoughts welled up in him and he blurted them out.

Peter's Struggle

The Reaction

Peter was still thinking about his own calling. He thought that he had “the right” to correct Jesus and to do it according to his own opinion, sentiment and impulse. Peter reacted, he did not respond.

His Actions:

1. He took Jesus aside – pulling him away from His path.
2. He rebuked Jesus – a blunt and forthright denunciation.

His Words: in effect he said something like this:

1. Don't entertain this idea, thought or truth. Don't think like that!
2. This won't happen to you! – push it away.

The Rebuke Jesus gave Peter

Don't be an adversary – an opponent or challenger.

In calling Peter “Satan,” we do not know if Jesus meant that Peter was demonized. Jesus certainly meant that Peter's actions and words were a snare and a stumbling block / obstacle to him (remember that the name Satan means adversary).

Don't get it wrong – Peter, you are the Disciple!

In rebuking Peter, Jesus was saying “Get back into line and follow me!”³ Jesus wanted Peter to get back into position i.e., the position we have in relation to Jesus is one of following Jesus, not one of prescribing to Jesus. Sometimes we get it wrong when we pray and try to get Jesus to do what we want, rather than what God wants. The call to discipleship is a call to come to Jesus and follow behind Him.

Peter had to learn this lesson more than once. He did not always follow Jesus in His thinking and had to be corrected. Remember with the foot-washing incident, Peter didn't understand then and Jesus corrected him more gently.⁴ All the disciples had to learn this lesson – remember the times that the disciples asked Jesus to explain His parables to them and also with the issue of the “leaven of the Pharisees.”⁵

³ Matt. 16:23 cp. Matt. 4:19

⁴ John 13:6-8

⁵ Matt. 15:5; 16:1-12

Jesus' Teaching

So in rebuking Peter Jesus taught that ...

About the Natural Mind

Has the wrong focus and condition

1. Peter's focus was wrong

The Greek term: *phroneo* means "to think; to be minded in a certain way; to exercise of the mind." His mind was focused on the things of men – human things / the concerns of people. This is very often also true of our lives. Everything gets a human focus and perspective.

2. Peter's state of mind was also wrong

Paul taught that the mind "set" either on the flesh or the Spirit.⁶ Those are the only 2 options. We exercise our minds either according to selfish, human desires or according to what the Holy Spirit wants. The disciple denies the mind when he puts his own opinion and desire to death (crucify it), not when he stops thinking. We follow Jesus when we set our mind on what the Holy Spirit wants.

The Bible describes many conditions of the mind

1. A Debased / Rejected Mind ⁷
2. A Carnal Mind ⁸
3. A Renewed Mind⁹
4. A lusting / sensuous mind – desire-driven / sentimental¹⁰
5. A Hostile Mind¹¹
6. A Depraved Mind: corrupt / perverted / twisted / completely rotten / ruined¹²
7. A Spoiled Mind¹³
8. A Wise Mind¹⁴

About the "Paraclete" (John 14:15-18)

Jesus was going away and the disciples were anxious because He had always been there physically to lead, explain and to guide them. Now, He would be leaving and they could not follow immediately. So He comforted them.

⁶ Rom. 8:6

⁷ Rom. 1:28

⁸ Rom. 8:5-8

⁹ Rom. 12:2

¹⁰ Eph. 2:3; Col. 2:18

¹¹ Col. 1:21

¹² 1 Tim. 6:5

¹³ 2 Tim. 3:8

¹⁴ Rev. 17:9

The replacement for Jesus in the Disciple's life

1. He would send the Holy Spirit as "another of the same kind"¹⁵
2. The Greek word: *parakletos* means "one called alongside, an advisor/advocate, a helper, a mediator."¹⁶

The Spirit of Truth

1. The Holy Spirit comes to teach, remind, and lead disciples into the truth.¹⁷
2. There are things that we can't bear or take up and carry and so we need the Holy Spirit working in our minds to help us¹⁸

Conclusion

The Key Issue

Self-sacrifice deals with the mind. It involves a decision, a choice to say no to that way of thinking. We make a mistake when we think that there is nothing more to learn (because we are familiar with a Scripture and know something about it). Discipleship is a life-time of learning and following (even over familiar ground).

The sacrifice of the mind and of our thinking involves 3 lessons:

1. We can oppose Jesus without realising it, especially when we are sentimental in our thinking and impulsive in our actions and words.
2. We are still on a journey, renewing the mind. It is a process that takes time and effort.
3. We must relate to the Holy Spirit if we are going to learn further.

Application in the Notes

1. Think about when you were shocked or surprised by what the Bible says. How did you react? If you had another opportunity, how would you want to react? Is this something that pleases God?
2. Does the "dying to self" mean that the disciple no longer thinks? Depending on your answer, how does one do it practically? Does your answer agree with other instructions of Scripture regarding the mind? Give examples.
3. What condition is your mind in at this time? Do you know why? What must you do to remedy it?
4. What things cause a struggle in your thinking? What is God's ord and will on the matter?

¹⁵ John 14:16. The Greek word Jesus used is *allos* that means "another of the same kind." He did not use the word *heteros*, which means "another of a different" kind. The Holy Spirit would exactly like Jesus.

¹⁶ John 14:16-17

¹⁷ John 14:25-26; 16:12-13

¹⁸ John 16:12

5. How can you open your mind to the Holy Spirit?
6. How can you practically apply what the Holy Spirit said to you as you listened to this message today?