

The life of a disciple

A worldly kind of person came to the preacher, defending her practice of attending worldly entertainments. She said, “But, pastor, I can take Jesus Christ with me wherever I go.” The pastor after a few moments of thought quietly replied, “Indeed, is that so? I didn’t know that was the order of the Bible. Is it for you to lead Jesus to where you want to go or for Him to lead you where He wants you to be?”

Acts 1: 1 – 11

1) Walking with the risen Christ

- The life of a disciple is based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- We are disciples of the living Christ not the historical Christ
 - Jesus rose from the dead and met with His disciples and spoke to them about the kingdom of God
- Most religions of the concept of “disciple” where someone becomes a disciple of the teacher
 - In Hinduism it is the “Guru-Shishya” relationship where the Guru is the teacher and the Shishya is the disciple
 - When the teacher dies he leaves behind his principles and values in his writings or in other ways for disciples to follow after his death
 - Such a disciple does not have a living relationship with his teacher but rather becomes his disciple in following his teachings, values and principles.
- Being a disciple of the historical Jesus would be such a disciple
- However Jesus Christ rose from the dead and we as his disciples enjoy a living relationship with our Teacher, Lord and God
 - There is a difference between devotion to principles and devotion to a person. Hundreds of people today are devoting themselves to phases of truth, to causes. Jesus Christ never asks us to devote ourselves to a cause or a creed; he asks us to devote ourselves to him.
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 - He rose giving convincing proofs that He was alive.
 - He is not alive in some metaphysical sense but in reality in a way that He interacts with His disciples, speaking and eating with them – and us.
- It is not a different Jesus but the same Jesus who walked with His disciples, taught them, healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out demons and proclaimed the imminence of the kingdom of God
 - When Jesus met with His disciples He spoke about the Kingdom of God.
 - His focus was on the kingdom of God and He was getting His disciples to focus on the Kingdom of God
- As Jesus had and preached taught about the kingdom of God throughout His three and a half years ministry what would He have spoken to His disciples about regarding the kingdom of God after His resurrection?
 - In His pre-death and resurrection ministry Jesus did the work of the kingdom with His disciples helping and at times being empowered to do the work when Jesus sent them out to preach the gospel and He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits, and heal every disease and sickness. (Matthew 10: 1). But now He was talking about them receiving power when the Holy Spirit comes on them Power to do the work of the kingdom.
 - Jesus also spoke of the character of the kingdom such as in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 5 – 7). But it is only after being filled with the Holy Spirit that the transformation to live out that character was released.

- Besides the work of the kingdom the scope of the kingdom changed. When He sent them out in Matthew 10 He commanded them to go to the lost sheep of Israel. Now He commanded them to “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16: 15).

2) Living in obedience to the living Christ

- It is no use to the kingdom knowing the work and scope of the kingdom of God if we do not walk in obedience to the living Christ – the king of the kingdom
- Being a disciple of Jesus Christ means that we don't just accept His teachings and principles but we recognise His authority over our lives and we submit to His Lordship.
 - To say “no Lord” is a contradiction in terms.
 - Matthew 7: 21 – 23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"
 - It is easy to call Jesus “Lord” with our lips but not do what He commands us to.
- In our very hyperactive world we always assume that we are going to be commanded to do something active. But Jesus gave His disciples 2 commands
 - The first being: Do not leave Jerusalem but wait for the gift my Father promised.
 - The second follows on in that we will be witnesses of Jesus throughout the world
- We live in an active world where waiting means patience and patience isn't a virtue in our modern society.
 - We have emphasised the command to “go” to the detriment of the command “wait”.
 - Without waiting the disciples wouldn't have been empowered to go.
 - Once being empowered to go we dare not disobey the command to do so. It is through His disciples that the kingdom of God is extended on earth.
- These are the two basic commands of Christ to His disciples after the resurrection but we need to be walking with the risen Christ to hear His voice and be obedient to all that He wants of us throughout life.

3) Living in expectation and hope

- After Jesus had given them His last commands He ascended into heaven.
- Two angels told them that He will come back in the same way that they saw Him go into heaven.
- This was an assurance that, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we live in that expectation and hope of His second coming.
 - If a man gets put into prison for 10 years he knows that his prison term will end. He has the assurance that one day he will walk out a free man. He lives in expectation and hope for that day to come.
 - A disciple of Jesus Christ does not live in despair of the trouble and wickedness of the world in which he is a pilgrim but lives in hope and expectation of the return of the king.
 - He knows that the return of Jesus has a great amount of significance for himself as it will be the consummation of his salvation in his body being changed to be like Jesus – the mortal will put on immortality, the perishable will put on the imperishable, the weak will be raised in power and the natural will put on the spiritual forever.
 - With this in mind the disciple of Jesus Christ lives in faithfulness to Him wanting to be found diligent and obedient to Him when He comes.