



The Country Preacher's Newsletter

"...speaking the truth in love" Ephesians 4:15

What Is A Disciple?

By Randall F. Matheny

The Great Commission of Jesus to His apostles stands as a declaration of His victory over sin and death. The Shepherd had been smitten and the sheep had been scattered (Zec. 13:7; Mk. 14:27). Although the power that put Jesus in the tomb was great, an even greater power raised Him from death to live ever more (Rev. 1:18; 2:8). This victorious Jesus, in whom resides all authority in heaven and earth, has sent forth a command for making disciples until the end of the age (Mat. 28:18-20). Are you a disciple?

The word translated disciple is not an ecclesiastical term, but a word that was in everyday use among the peoples who spoke the common (*koine*) Greek language of the first century. "Disciple" is defined as "a learner; a pupil," but an examination of Jesus' use of the word shows that there is more to it than simply absorbing information. A true disciple never imposes his

preconceptions upon his teacher (Mat. 10:24), but wills himself to become like his teacher in all things (Mat. 10:25; Lk. 6:40). Discipleship presumes to know nothing until taught by the Master, and accepts the Master's authority in all areas of life (Col. 3:17). "Lord, what do you want me to do? (Acts 9:6)" ought to come readily to the lips of

Rom. 12:4-5) (see also Acts 11:26). It is impossible to discern the Head apart from His body, and the one cannot be loved while holding the other in disrespect. The body (church) without the head (Christ) is dead, just as members (disciples) apart from the body (church) are dead because they are separated from Christ who sustains all (Jn. 15:6).

"Lord, what do you want me to do? (Acts 9:6)" ought to come readily to the lips of every disciple...

every disciple, every breathing moment (Lk. 9:23), including during the regularly appointed hours of worship and Bible study. A disciple of Christ accepts His authority in matters of home and family (Lk. 14:26), which are never to come before loyalty to the Master, for when they do, the headship of God and Christ (1 Cor. 11:3) are rejected and the family becomes its own insufficient hope. The family without Christ at its head is doomed. A disciple of Christ sees the inseparable relationship between Christ (the head, Col. 1:18), the church (His body, Col. 1:18) and Christians (members of the body,

It is a tragic thing, but disciples can go back to the world and walk with the Lord no more (Jn. 6:66). But, a true disciple realizes that there is no one else to whom one may go for the words of eternal life, other than Christ the Lord (Jn. 6:67). Like Mary, let us choose the good part which shall not be taken away from us (Lk. 10:40-42), and never let lesser, though perhaps important, things come between us and our Lord. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10b).

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Will He Find Faith On Earth?

By Randall F. Matheny

At the end of the parable of the "Persistent Widow" (Lk. 18:1-8) Jesus asked a probing and intriguing question, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Lk. 18:8b). This has been said to be one of the more difficult sayings of Jesus, but is it really? Like the widow, faithful Christians must persevere in the just cause of Christianity regardless of sometimes seemingly insurmountable opposition knowing that Christ, the righteous Judge (2 Tim. 4:8) will administer justice in the end (2 Cor. 5:10). This persistence in the face of adversity and opposition seems to provide the answer to the Lord's question: He will find faith only if Christians are unwaveringly persistent in increasing their faith and in the consistent practice it. Each Christian must realize that he or she holds the key. Faith is possible for every person because faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17) and the word of God endures forever (1 Pet. 1:25) -- it will never pass away. As always, He leaves us free to either choose or reject it. The question that I should ask is, "When Jesus comes, will He find faith in me?"

The Lord will find no faith in me if I do not seek it like the apostles did (Lk. 17:5). He will find no faith in me if I do not hungrily consume the word (Jer. 15:16) for the joy and delight of it. He will find no faith in me if what I have learned from Him is never made complete in obedient service (Jas. 2:22-24). Real faith is not hammering out the tough issues of life, but surrendering body and soul to the will of God. When we do that, even the tough issues will begin to tumble down. Will He find faith in me? Will He find faith in you? What if He comes today? What if life ends before you have made up your mind? What if you give your life in obedience to Christ today and never look back? What if?

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Tidbits

"Don't dwell on what went wrong. Instead, focus on what to do next. Spend your energies on moving forward toward finding the answer."
 -- *Denis Waitley*

"The problem is not that there are problems. The problem is expecting otherwise and thinking that having problems is a problem."
 -- *Theodore Rubin*

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