

21ST CENTURY DISCIPLESHIP: FAITH AND SOCIETY

Follow Christ

Častá, 31st August 2017

πὼς δύνασθε ὑμεῖς πιστεῦσαι δόξαν παρὰ ἀλλήλων λαμβάνοντες, καὶ τὴν δόξαν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ οὐ ζητεῖτε;

John 5:44 How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

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4. TO REMEMBER**0. INTRODUCTION: DISCIPLESHIP THEN AND NOW**

- two dangers: (1) completely different today → “modernism”; (2) absolutely unchanged → “traditionalism” ⇒ the necessity of *discernment*...

0.1. 21ST CENTURY

- interpreting times (**Lk 12:56** You hypocrites! You know how to interpret (οἶδατε δοκιμάζειν) the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?)
 - TILDEN: “Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is **revelation** based upon information.”¹
- special conditions affecting Christian discipleship:
 - (1) instant, on-line, → lack of patience;
 - (2) information age; audio-smog; death of privacy; visual, film-life, Disney-like trivialization; advertising → lack of depth
 - (3) extreme expectations [good-bad] (→ Houellebecq); secularised eschatology ↔ catastrophes → lack of certainty, assurance, commitment [confusion rules];
 - (4) no pain; no sacrifice; SELF-realization gods → lack of faithfulness; lack of stability

[HOUELLEBECQ] What men considered a dream, perfect but remote,

¹ TILDEN, F. *Interpreting Our Heritage*, Chapel Hill : The University of North Carolina Press, 1977, p. 9

We take for granted as the simplest of things.

Ce qui était pour eux du domaine de l'inaccessible et de l'absolu,

Nous le considérons comme une chose toute simple et bien connue

- **2Thes 2:7** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work (ὁ γὰρ μυστήριον ἤδη ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας). Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way

0.2. WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

[WILLARD] The word “disciple” occurs 269 times in the New Testament. “Chris tian” is found three times and was fi rst introduced to refer precisely to disciples of Jesus—in a situation where it was no longer possible to regard them as a sect of the Jews (Acts 11:26). The New Testament is a book about disciples, by disciples, and for disciples of Jesus Christ. (*The Great Omission*)

- the term: **μαθητής, ὁ learner, pupil, disciple;**
- the New Testament: **Lk 14:26** "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own **father** and **mother** and **wife** and **children** and **brothers** and **sisters**, yes, and **even his own life**, he cannot be my disciple.

- **12 NEVER-MENTIONED STEPS TO DISCIPLESHIP** (David O James Sr):²
- Step 1: To be a Christian disciple a person must first know the meanings of the words disciple and Christian (disciple = “Christ-follower”)
- Step 2: To be a disciple or follower, a person must be able to **identify** his leader or master. (→ the Good Shepherd, John 10)
- Step 3: To be a disciple a person must **know about** his leader (→ Mt 11:29; Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;)
- Step 4: To be a disciple a person must **know his leader** (→ Rom 8:14 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God)
- Step 5: To be a disciple a person must **believe and accept his leader** (→ John 8:30-32 “As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”)
- Step 6: To be a disciple, a person must **understand** and know **the vision and mission** of his leader (→ Luke 4 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; He has anointed Me to tell the good news to the poor. He has sent Me to announce the release of the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to set oppressed people free.)
- Step 7: To be a disciple a person must be obedient and **committed to the leader and his mission** (→ Philippians 3:5-10 “Have this attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men.” 8 “Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” 9 “As a result, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”)
- Step 8: To be a disciple a person must **desire and pursue the same purpose, mission**, and outcomes as his leader. (→ Matthew 9:36 “When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they were exhausted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”)
- Step 9: To be a disciple a person must **demonstrate his allegiance to his leader by his lifestyle**, his fruitfulness and his faithfulness. (→ John 13:34-35; “A new commandment I give to you, that you love (value) one another, even as I have loved (valued) you. 35 “By this love all men know that you are My disciples.”)
- Step 10: To be a disciple a person must **count the cost and prepare**. (→ Luke 12:51-53 51 Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. 52 For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. 53 Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”)
- Step 11: To be a disciple a person must exercise faith in God through Jesus Christ to keep, protect and provide for him as he activates the mission. (→ Luke 22: 30-32; “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32But I have prayed for you, that your faith fails not: and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren.”)
- Step 12: If you have decided to follow the 11 steps mentioned above, then this step is for you. (→ Acts 1:8

² CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.)

- Discipleship = complete commitment to Jesus (*Absolute Surrender*)

[CHAMBERS] Discipleship and salvation are two different things: a disciple is one who, realising the meaning of the Atonement, deliberately **gives himself up to Jesus Christ in unspeakable gratitude**. The one mark of discipleship is the mastership of Jesus—His right to me from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot. (*Disciples Indeed*)

- “We are not now Christ's disciples merely but His purchased property ; and Christianity before it is a discipline is a salvation.”³

1. FAITH AND PEOPLE

1.1. POSITIVE ROLE OF PEOPLE IN FAITH

- **2Tim 1:5** I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your **grandmother** Lois and your mother **Eunice** and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.
- community of faith → testimony; reality; support;
- history, tradition, interpretation...

1.2. NEGATIVE ROLE OF PEOPLE IN FAITH

- **Prov 29:25** The **fear of man** lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.
- **Mt 6:1** "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

2. FAITH AND MIND (THE HEART)

2.1. FAITH AND SOCIETY WORLDVIEW (THINKING)

- Ps 19 → Jesus and nature:
- **Mt 5:45** For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
- **Mt 6:30** ...if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven.
- **Mt 10:29** ...two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

- ...
⇒ What is the authority of the Bible in my thinking?

2.2. FAITH AND SOCIETY VALUES (EMOTIONS)

- Prov 1 → Jesus, joy, anger, appreciation...
- **Luke 16:15** "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an **abomination** in the sight of God.
- **Lk 10:21** In that same hour he **rejoiced** in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.
- **Mark 3:5** And he looked around at them with **anger**, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

- my feelings: source of joy? (or pleasure?)
- source of anger? (justice, or selfishness?)

- ⇒ What is the power of truth in my emotional responses?

³ FORSYTH, P. T. *Faith, Freedom and the Future*, London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1912, p. 276

2.3. FAITH AND SOCIETY DAILY LIVING (DECISION MAKING)

- Ps 1 → Jesus and advice (king making; Peter; pharisees...)
- **Mt 4:3** "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."
- **John 6:15** Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.
- **Mt 16:22** And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! (ὐλεώς σοι, κύριε·) This shall never happen to you.

3. FAITH AND JESUS

- BONHOEFFER *Nachfolge* [The Cost of Discipleship] → Lk 9; Lk 14;...

3.1. THE REALITY OF GOD

- [WILLIAM TEMPLE] Your religion is what you do with your solitude ... "the very life of religion is an intercourse with God"⁴
- **Mt 6:6** But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

3.2. THE WILL OF GOD

3.2.1. WHAT IS PLEASING TO GOD

- **1Thes 4:3** this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;
- **Rom 12:1-2** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- **John 8:29** ...I always do the things that are pleasing to him.

3.2.2. JESUS – OUR ALL

- [CHAMBERS] The one great enemy of discipleship is **obstinacy**, spiritual obstinacy. We deify independence and willfulness and call them by the wrong name.
- **Mt 17:5** "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."
- **Lk 14:33** So therefore, any one of you who does not **renounce all that he has** cannot be my disciple.

3.3. CONTACTING THE LIVING JESUS

- the Holy Spirit: **John 14:18** "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

4. TO REMEMBER

- Discipleship is complete commitment to obey the living Jesus whatever the cost may be. Jesus discouraged light minded followership.
- Opposition comes both from the world and from the well meaning Christians.
- Encouragement and power for learning and living in Jesus comes in the Holy Spirit in whom Jesus is personally present.

⁴ TEMPLE, W. *Studies in the Spirit and Truth of Christianity*, p. 28.