

21ST CENTURY DISCIPLESHIP: MOTIVATION

Follow Christ

Častá, 1st September 2017

παραγγέλλω [σοι] ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζωογονοῦντος τὰ πάντα καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ μαρτυρήσαντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν, ¹⁴ τηρήσαί σε τὴν ἐντολὴν ἄσπιλον ἀνεπίληπτον μέχρι τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

1Tim 6:13-14 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, ¹⁴ to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

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0. INTRODUCTION: DISCIPLESHIP AND MOTIVATION

0.1. THE DEMANDS OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

- Luther: *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott:*

Nehmen sie den Leib,
Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib:
lass fahren dahin,
sie haben's kein' Gewinn,
das Reich muss uns doch bleiben.

- Great decisions demand *great* motivation...

- **Luke 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.

0.2. COUNTING THE COST

- **Luke 14:28-35** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' ³¹ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. ³⁴ "Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? ³⁵ It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear

1. THE DISCIPLE AND THE POWER OF GOD OVER NATURE

- ζωογονέω *give life to, make alive* to produce, propagate, engender animals,...
- God and NATURE
- today: FEUERBACH's "god": man created god in his own image (quotation??)

1.1. GOD – THE SOURCE OF LIFE

God and nature (Deism; naturalism; physicalism; materialism;)

- **Ps 36:9[10]** For with you is the fountain of life;
- 21st Century explanations (everywhere present)
 - (1) creation? ...physicists → Big Bang,
 - (2) life? ...anthropologists, biologists → evolution,
 - (3) history? ...archaeologists → primitive society; ten thousands years of development
- ...
- **Where** is God in my motivation? **How big** is God in my motivation to follow Jesus?

1.2. GOD – THE KEEPER OF LIFE

- **Heb 1:3** he upholds the universe by the word of his power
- SCHLEIERMACHER feeling of *absolute dependence*? → CONFUSION
 - modern feelings of *absolute independence* at variance with reality of *growing dependence* on the environment...

1.3. DISCIPLESHIP AND PHYSICAL DEPENDENCE

- **Health** → **Ps 103:3** who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases (לְכֹל-תַּחֲלָאִיכִי לְכֹל-הַרְפָּאָה),
- **Finances** → **Heb 13:5** Keep your **life free from love of money**, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
- **Food** (agriculture) → giving thanks in supermarkets!

2. THE DISCIPLE AND DEATH

- **Rev 2:10** Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. **Be faithful unto death** (γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι¹ θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς), and I will give you the crown of life.
- a "taboo" topic today;

From the end of the eighteenth century we had been impressed by a sentimental landslide which was causing the initiative to pass **from the dying man himself to his family** - a family in which henceforth he would have complete confidence. Today the initiative has passed from the family, as much an outsider as the dying person, **to the doctor and the hospital team**. They are the masters of death-of the moment as well as of the circumstances of death - and it has been observed that they try to obtain from their patient "an acceptable

¹ **Acts 22:4** I persecuted this Way to the death (ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα ἄχρι θανάτου)

style of living while dying." The accent has been placed on "acceptable". An **acceptable death** is a death which can be **accepted or tolerated by the survivors**. It has its antithesis: "the embarrassingly graceless dying," which embarrasses the survivors because it causes too strong an emotion to burst forth; and emotions must be avoided both in the hospital and everywhere in society. (*Western Attitudes Toward Death*, p. 89)

2.1. JESUS' CONFESSION BEFORE PILATE

2.1.1. PERFECT HUMANITY

- Pilate: (1) "Ecce homo" **John 19:5** So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!"

2.1.2. PERFECT KINGSHIP

- (2) "INRI" **John 19:20-22** ...and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹ So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" ²² Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

2.2. DISCIPLE'S CONFESSION IN FACE OF DANGER AND DEATH

- (1) power to be *human*... (genuine self-control; presence of mind)
- (2) power to be over the circumstances... (genuine independence)

3. THE DISCIPLE AND THE HOPE OF ETERNITY

- [Abraham] **Heb 11:9-10** By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.
- **HOPELESSNESS** – the mark of contemporary psyche

"Kant essentially viewed eschatological knowledge as impossible, since the objects of such knowledge "lie wholly beyond our field of vision" (46). In the case of Barth, his "supra - temporal" view of God led him to embrace a concept of both the eschaton and of revelation that was more of an "epiphany of the eternal present" than an "apocalypse of the promised future" (57). Finally Bultmann, like Kant, could not conceive of eschatology as "a doctrine of the 'last things' in the world process ." Instead , " the logos of the eschaton " becomes the means " of liberating us from understanding ourselves on the basis of the world and of works " (62)."²

3.1. THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN HOPE

- **Heb 6:18-19** ...have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and **steadfast anchor of the soul**, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,
- **Heb 3:6** And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our **boasting in our hope** (ἐάν[περ] τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος [μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν] κατάσχωμεν).

3.2. PAROUSIA

- **2Tim 4:8** ...all who have loved his appearing (καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἠγαπηκόσι τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ).

3.3. HOW TO ENJOY THE UNSEEN

- **Heb 11:1** Now **faith** is the assurance of things **hoped** for, the conviction of things not seen ("Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐλπίζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων).
- **1John 5:4** And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.
- **1Cor 2:9-10** But, as it is written, "What **no eye has seen**, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"- ¹⁰ these things **God has revealed to us through the Spirit**. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

² <http://www.michaelgleghorn.com/documents/TheologyofHope.pdf> (31-Aug-17)

4. TO REMEMBER

- Discipleship is beyond anybody's ability. You need supernatural powers and motivation.
- All great and serious realities enter into the decision to be a disciple of Jesus: (1) God, (2) death, (3) eternity
- The motivation in your spirit is possible through the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus.