

Discipleship & Evangelism

Meaning

We would all agree that as Christians we are called to be disciples. Firstly, what does the word **disciple** mean?

- The Oxford Dictionary says "**a pupil or follower**".
- The greek word "***mathetes***", actually means "**learner, pupil, servant**".
- The **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** says this about the word "***mathetes***":

"In the widest sense, disciple refers to those who accept the teachings of anyone **not only in belief, but in life.**"

That is what it means to be a disciple! We must accept the teachings change our lives!

Jesus

But who do we follow? **Jesus.**

How? Let us read **Matthew 16:24**

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it".

Now we know from that introduction, that as a disciple of Jesus Christ we are to not only believe but put into practice His teachings and live our lives as Jesus lived. **Rabbi Illustration.**

- **The Lord is our pattern, to follow and to mimic.**

We know what Jesus came to do!!! Save the lost.

John 3:16,17

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him".

The song says "*you came from heaven to the earth to show the way*".

- Jesus left heaven and came to earth.
- He came to us.

- He left what was holy, to come and be among us sinners.
- He started the greatest outreach strategy ever!!!

What's the pattern here???? Jesus was the greatest evangelist ever. And we are His disciples!!

When I speak to my Italian nan on the phone it is harder to understand her because of her accent. Yet when I go and see her we can understand each other better because we can act out, in a sense, what we are trying to say.

- **If we do not move to tell others about Jesus then it is alot harder for them understand God.** People's misconceptions.

1) **Church or Club?**

Are we a church or are we a club?

What is a club?

Illustration: I play every Saturday for a football team. We have a **name**, Barnet M.O., we **meet regularly**, we have a **set routine** (*meet, change, warm up, play, shower, drink, leave*) we **pay our money** each week and we also have an **Annual Meeting**. Every year we realise we need new players. So the Chairman puts out adverts and encourages us to find new players.

Q) Now, you tell me the difference between our church and my club? If we cannot tell a difference then we are in trouble. EXPLAIN - Become a family - It's a lot more inviting

Let's go back to the beginning: we are **disciples of Jesus**. He shared the Good News so must we. He was "Church" everyday, not just Saturdays in the synagogue.

- **Church means PEOPLE not BUILDING.**
- **We are NOT a club but a group of Jesus' disciples.**

What happens is we become isolated within the church and start to lose the ability to connect with non-Christians.

We become: offended at their language.

: scared to confront & talk about Jesus.

: worried they might see us as we really are.

Q) How many non-Christian friends do you have?

I remember when I came back from Italy in 2002 I wanted God so badly. I found it hard to be around non-Christians. I felt they were distracting me and that my life with God was more important. What I realised was that by losing friendships with non-believers was actually making my Christian life **less authentic**.

How could I be like God if I did nothing to help His creation. My best friend isn't a Christian. I desperately want him to know Jesus.

Why pray for someone to lead him to Jesus when I can talk to him myself.

Ezekial 33:11:

"As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live"

1) God loves people. So must we!!

God loves people. so must we!! Do you love people?

2) True Evangelism isn't an obligation but comes out of love.

Jesus wept for people. He talk to them because He had compassion.

3) True Christianity is intimacy with God & involment in the world.

Jesus left us here to reach out.

Jesus says in **John 17:15:**

"my prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one"

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to make more disciples.

When we invest in evangelism as a church, God will bless us.

Listen to this quote from "**What's so amazing about grace?**":

He (*an exiled missionary to China*) had been among the 6,000 missionaries expelled after the Communists took over.

I asked this elderly missionary, now a renowned China expert, what had happened in the intervening 40 years. He said "*I would estimate there were 750,000 Christians when I left China*". And now? "*I think a safe figure would be 35 million believers*".....Chinese Christians devoted themselves to worship and evangelism, the original mission of the church...they concentrated on changing lives". (p.258)

• God is an entrepreneur. He wants to expand! *Stellios, Branson*

We however are like Peter. What did he do when he saw Jesus transfigured

on the mountain with Moses and Elijah. He tried to build a monument.
"Let's stay here where it's light and warm. We can have fanatastic fellowship here. I can even get their autograph!!"

Mark 9:2-7:

"After six days Jesus took Peter, James & John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There He was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus '*Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah*'. (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened. Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: '*this is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!*'"

What did Peter realise? That up here there is peace and light.

"It is good for us to be here" He didn't want to go back. He had arrived. We can be the same. Church is nice. It's warm.

People agree that Jesus is God. Let's stay.

- **NO! We are called to follow Jesus into the world. It's hard but exciting.**

Examples:

Muslim lady on train!!

Muslim guy on street!!

- **People want to know the truth.**

More importantly, the Truth wants to know them!

As individuals we are called to be salt and light. Flavour this world and shine out.

2) Christ's Body

As we reach out we must remember we are not alone!

We are part of a **Global Body**.

This body is **scattered throughout the world**.

Think about it, we belong to a family that is:

INTERNATIONAL
MULTI-RACIAL
MULTI-CULTURAL
VARYING IN AGE RANGE
IN INTELLIGENCE

IN CLASS
IN PERSONALITY
SUPERNATURAL
ETERNAL
MOST OF ALL VISABLE

- **If one part stops, we all suffer.**
- **If Europe is the arm then it is badly deformed.**
- **If England is a finger, then it is badly broken.**

We need true Christianity again!

Isn't it exciting knowing that we belong to a global family.

Galatians 3:28

"there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"

Think of it this way.

We all belong to **Godnet**.

We are all connected.

My Web address: marcus@kingdomofGod.jc.uk

- **Free connection - Eph 2:8 "for it is by grace you have been saved (connected)**
- **Unlimited access - The curtain has been torn!**
- **Constantly Online - God has placed His Spirit in us**

3) 2 ways to sell a product

In someways we are promoting a product or in our case a **person**. The first way in which we can do this is:

1)Promotion. Some people like Billy Graham, Beni Hin, John Wesley, Apostle Paul constantly promote or promoted the idea of Jesus as God to thousands of people on a regular basis. Some of us maybe called to do that. Reinhard Bonke preached Jesus to millions in one meeting in Africa, Billy Graham the same in India and others in China & South America.

However not all are called to that.

Another way we can promote Jesus is:

2) Demonstration & Explanation

Matthew 5:16 says

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise you Father in heaven"

John 13:35 says

"By this all men will know you are my disciples, **if you love** one another"

1 Peter 3:15 says

"always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have"

God wants us to witness to others by the way we treat other Christians and by the way we live our lives at work.

- **We must walk the walk but also talk the talk!**

Conclusion

A story: In 1219 after 4 Christian crusades to recapture Jerusalem from the Muslims, Innocent III declared a 5th crusade to regain Jerusalem again. He started with an attack to capture Damietta in Egypt, one of the wealthiest muslim cities around. Hundreds of thousand of crusaders went to capture the city for Jesus. They started their attack in July 1219. At the same time Francis of Assisi left Italy with his brothers and arrived at Damietta in July. He stayed there, praying for the soldiers, attending to them and praying for the battle's end. Finally after 5 months of fighting, the Muslim sultan, Malik al Kamil, retreated leaving the silent city to the Christians. The city had 80,000 inhabitants. After 5 months only 3,000 remained. When the soldiers climbed in all they found were rotting corpses, dogs and a few children crying. The survivors had given up trying to bury their dead. The soldiers were shocked at what they saw. Disease and war had killed 77,000 people. This sadness didn't last long, they plundered the city, sold the children into slavery and turned the mosques into churches. When the city was finally dedicated, the soldiers invited thousands of prostitutes to come and live with them in Damietta. Malik who had fled into Egypt was furious and declared that anyone who brought the head of a Christian would receive gold. Francis however went and asked the Cardinal for permission to go and witness to the sultan. He denied them because they would surely die. However they carried on asking and eventually he let them go. Francis and his friend went by foot to see Malik, singing Psalms on their way. They were captured, beaten and taken to Malik. When they arrived Francis told Malik they were here to save his soul from being lost. Would he listen to them? If

he didn't agree he could behead them. His advisers said it was wrong to listen and that he should kill them right away! However he let them stay for 2 weeks and listened to them daily. Finally he sent them back to the Christian lands. So impressed was this sultan that he gave them an escort of saracen knights reserved normally for an emperor.

That is discipleship & evangelism.

Francis risked his life because he was fearful for the sultan's soul.

"Burden instead of duty"

Circle illustration

PRAYER