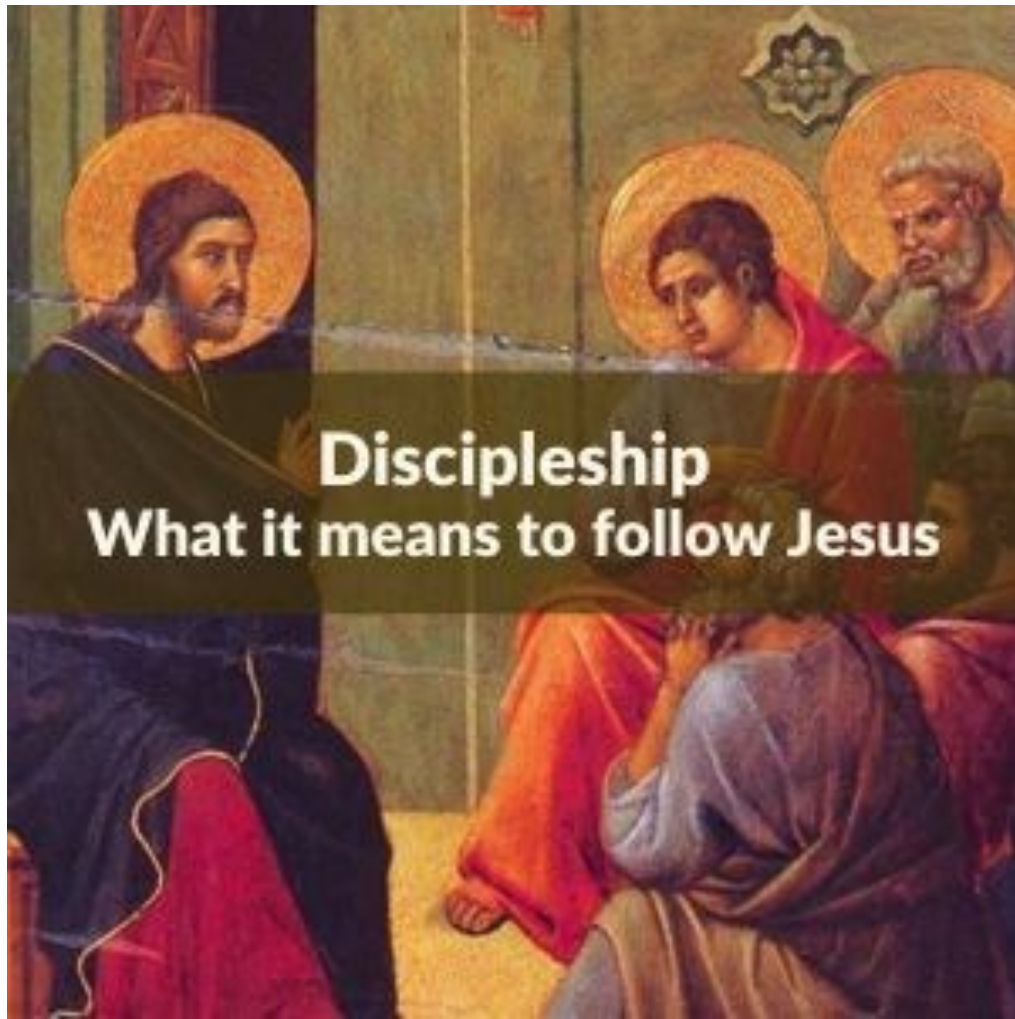


Handouts

Including

Notes and Questions



Discipleship

What it means to follow Jesus

Yvon Prehn, teacher

YOUR NOTES

When Jesus called His disciples

- The first thing He said was, ***“Follow me.”***
- The foundation of being a disciples is spending time with Jesus.
- Though we can't do that physically now, we can do that by reading the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
- If you are on the Bible805 reading plan you are finishing the first three and will read John near the end of the year.

Discipleship wasn't just for a select few back then

- It is vital, essential to understand that DISCIPLESHIP, which we are going to look at in more detail in this lesson, was not just for a select few back in the days when Jesus was on earth.
- We see the all-encompassing call to be Disciples in Jesus' final words to his earthly disciples in Matthew 28:18-20, NLT
- ***Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”***
- I hope we've paid attention as we've read through the Gospels because we're supposed to teach it to others.

Consider how important this is

- Jesus' primary mission was to die for our sins.
- Could have been taken care of rather quickly.
- A massive rebellion when he first appeared on the scene would have worked—he could have easily gotten himself arrested and crucified.
- He could have then died, rose, and immediately returned to heaven.
- But He didn't do that.

He spent 3 years on earth

- Living with a group of disciples, healing, teaching, and interacting.
- Even after his resurrection— Jesus did not immediately ascend into heaven.
- Spent 40 days with His disciples, teaching, encouraging, and finally giving them the charge to share the message of salvation and make disciples.

It seems obvious He wanted more than a group to grab the goodie of salvation and then do whatever they wanted with their lives

- He wanted to train, to teach, to create a specific kind of people.
- ***He wanted to make Disciples***
- He wanted a group of people who knew Him well, who understood the values of the Kingdom of God that He has come to make real.
- And who would share the totality of that message with the world; who would live out the message of redeemed people He demonstrated to them.

The most important thing we can then do in response is

- To become a disciple.
- The Gospels are a start in our training, and we'll examine one passage in more detail for how to begin.

- What we will read next—in the start of the church in Acts and then in the Epistles, the letters written to believers early in the life of the church, will fill out more of the details.
- First, one of my favorite definitions of a disciple—

What is a disciple?

- ***We need to clear in our heads about what discipleship is. My definition: A disciple is a person who has decided that the most important thing in their life is to learn how to do what Jesus said to do. A disciple is not a person who has things under control, or knows a lot of things. Disciples simply are people who are constantly revising their affairs to carry through on their decision to follow Jesus.***
<http://www.dwillard.org/articles/individual/rethinking-evangelism>
- We'll look at a passage that will help us understand what it means to be "constantly revising our affairs on our decision to follow Jesus."
- We must do that because becoming like Jesus, growing as His disciple does not come naturally.
- Almost everything in our world today, even good things are opposite of what it means to be a disciple.

We'll do this by looking in detail at Luke 14:15-35

- We'll do this in two sections—Luke 14:15-23, ***Parable of the Great Banquet***
- And then Luke 14:24-35—***The Cost of Being a Disciple***
- These two need to be considered together because it is easy to think if we just jump into the "Cost of Being a Disciple" section that to be truly serious about discipleship means you must commit yourself to a miserable life.
- That is a lie from Satan.
- Anything worthwhile in life is seldom achieved with ease and no effort.
- If that's true in everything from losing weight to having a successful career, to writing books or creating any form of significant art, how much more is it true in how we shape our eternal souls?

Luke 14:15-23, Invitation to a Great Banquet

- **The Parable of the Great Banquet**
- ¹⁵When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."
- ¹⁶Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. ¹⁷At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'
- ¹⁸"But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'
- ¹⁹"Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'
- ²⁰"Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'
- ²¹"The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'
- ²²"'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'
- ²³"Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

That's why the first passage is about a party

- In the various passages about the Great Banquet, commentators often focus on the excuses people make for not attending, even though they had previously accepted the invitation.
- The excuses include business transactions, buying something, a relationship—all common excuses today that people have for not following through on their initial acceptance of Jesus.
- ***But what they miss is the ultimate banquet, the incredible joy of an eternal relationship with God.***
- ***Wm. Barclay said, "People thought they were going after better things, but they weren't."***
- Jesus is a God of Joy who started his ministry turning water into wine and who gives us a final picture of heaven as a great banquet.
- We must remember our future joy, our eternal reality as a foundation to all the Gospels have told us and all ahead of the demands of discipleship we'll look at next.

Some quotes on this

- *"God can't give us peace and happiness apart from Himself because there is no such thing."*
— **C.S. Lewis**
- *Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favourite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end. Submit with every fibre of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in."*
— **C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity**

The passage goes on about the cost of being a disciple Luke 14:25-35,

- **Four Sections**
- What to love less, v. 25-26
- Carry your cross, v. 27
- Count the cost, v. 28-33
- Stay salty, v. 34-35

Barclay commentary on the background on these passages

- ***When Jesus said this he was on the road to Jerusalem. He knew that he was on his way to the cross; the crowds who were with him thought that he was on his way to an empire.*** That is why he spoke to them like this.
- In the most vivid way possible he told them that the man who followed him was not on the way to worldly power and glory, but must be ready for a loyalty which would sacrifice the dearest things in life and for a suffering which would be like the agony of a man upon a cross.
- We must not take his words with cold and unimaginative literalness. Eastern language is always as vivid as the human mind can make it. When Jesus tells us to hate our nearest and dearest, he does not mean that literally. He means that no love in life can compare with the love we must bear to him.
- (what we learn from this passage)
- It is possible to be a follower of Jesus without being a disciple; to be a camp-follower without being a soldier of the king; to be a hanger-on in

some great work without pulling one's weight. Once someone was talking to a great scholar about a younger man. He said, "So and so tells me that he was one of your students." The teacher answered devastatingly, "He may have attended my lectures, but he was not one of my students." It is one of the supreme handicaps of the church that in it there are so many distant followers of Jesus and so few real disciples.

Luke 14:25-26—the challenge to “love less”

- ***A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, “If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.”***
- Thayer’s Greek Concordance, translates “hate,” as “to love less”
- Jesus before all natural affections. All other than Jesus we are to “love less.”
- Challenging obviously for those who become Christians from a hostile faith.
- More challenging for “Family First” Americans.

David Guzik’s, commentary on this section

- *“The greatest danger of idolatry comes not from what is bad, but from what is good—such as love in family relationships...the greatest threat to the best often comes from second best.”*
- Honest prayerful evaluation is needed here.
- And wisdom as to what do our priorities show the world as to what is most important?
- What is best for you to give to your families? Stuff? Special activities? Or prayer, challenges, Christian opportunities?

Carry your cross, v. 27

- ***And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. (NLT)***
- Referred to the cross beam carried on the way to crucifixion—a certain death ahead.
- “Your own cross” We all have different ones and we ought to never compare ours with others.
- Your cross—what in you that you know needs to die before you can progress as a disciple?
- Willard, “constantly revising your affairs”
- No matter what the interpretation, the point is that being a disciple is not easy, not a what’s in it for me in this life.

Count the cost, v. 14:28-33

- ²⁸ ***“But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? ²⁹ Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. ³⁰ They would say, ‘There’s the person who started that building and couldn’t afford to finish it!’***
- ³¹ ***“Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? ³² And if he can’t, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away.***
- ³³ ***So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.***

Two areas—building and war

- As one commentator said— “two areas of life where we always underestimate the cost.”
- Jesus wasn’t begging people to follow Him, it says at this time there were, “large crowds were traveling with Jesus.”
- He wanted them to consider what following Him really meant—and things would not go as they wanted.
- A number of thoughts and applications follow.....

On counting the cost—when you share the gospel

- When we share the gospel—we need to be honest that there is a cost involved.
- ¹ *Cor. 6:19* *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.*
- Spurgeon would not allow people to accept Christ when they first wanted to respond—they were told to go home and think about it

If someone is a new or young Christian

- When they (you) first hear that there is a cost involved perhaps after you accepted the “free gift” of salvation, that you might need to give up previous thoughts, beliefs, preferences, practices.
- You may feel like you are a victim of bait and switch – ***and you may be***, most likely unintentionally by the person who shared the good news of Jesus with you.
- It is both true that salvation is a free gift in that you cannot earn or deserve it, but it is also true that you have obligations once you accept it

Now that you know there is a cost involved, what are you going to do about it?

- Just like you rarely do a budget once and then you are done in your everyday life, sitting down to count the cost needs to be a continual thing in your Christian life or to do if you haven’t done it before.
- Sit down and go over your life, the priorities of your life and time and consider what “rearranging” you might do to progress, to grow as a disciple of Jesus.
- It isn’t an optional thing to do that, because this section ends with a serious warning—

On giving up everything

- ***Calvin’s Commentary on the Bible***
- **Luke 14:33.** It would be absurd to insist on a literal interpretation of the phrase, as if no man were a disciple of Christ, till he threw into the sea all that he possessed, divorced his wife, and bade farewell to his children. Such idle dreams led foolish people to adopt a monastic life, as if those who intend to come to Christ must leave off humanity. Yet no man truly forsakes all that he possesses till he is prepared at every instant to leave all, gives himself free and unconstrained to the Lord, and, rising above every hindrance, pursues his calling.
- ***Thus the true self-denial which the Lord demands from his followers does not consist so much in outward conduct as in the affections; so that every one must employ the time which is passing over him without allowing the objects which he directs by his hand to hold a place in his heart.***

Stay salty, v. 34-35, NLT

“Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again?”

- ***Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown away. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!”***

Barclay’s comments on this

- Jesus uses salt as a symbol of the Christian life. What, then, are its essential qualities? In Palestine it had three characteristic uses.
- (i) Salt was used as a preservative. It is the earliest of all preservatives. . . . Without salt a thing putrefied and went bad; with it its freshness was preserved. That means that true Christianity must act as a preservative against the corruption of the world. The individual Christian must be the conscience of his fellows. . . . He must be like a cleansing antiseptic in the circle in which he moves. . .
- (ii) Salt was used as a flavouring. Food, without salt, can be revoltingly insipid. The Christian, then, must be the man who brings flavour into life. The Christianity which acts like a shadow of gloom and a wet blanket is no true Christianity. The Christian is the man who, by his courage, his hope, his cheerfulness and his kindness brings a new flavour into life.
- (iii) Salt was used on the land. It was used to make it easier for all good things to grow. The Christian must be such that he makes it easier for people to be good and harder to be bad. We all know people in whose company there are certain things we would not and could not do; and equally we all know people in whose company we might well stoop to things which by ourselves we would not do. There are fine souls in whose company it is easier to be brave and cheerful and good. The Christian must carry with him a breath of heaven in which the fine things flourish and the evil things shrivel up.
- ***That is the function of the Christian; if he fails in his function there is no good reason why he should exist at all; and we have already seen that in the economy of God uselessness invites disaster. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear.***

Being a fruitful Christian is serious

- Warning of being “thrown away” in this passage.
- Challenge in John 15: 5,6 *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.”*
- 2 kinds of fruit: Fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness, self-control
- Fruit of life actions—good deeds, kindness, charity, evangelism, hospitality
- True salvation should result in a fruitful life.

We’ve only scratched the surface of what it means to be a disciple

- But it is incredibly important.
- Go back over what you’ve read in the Gospels, read and pray over carefully what is coming up in the rest of the New Testament
- Take time to ask yourself these questions:
- ***What do I need to love less?***
- ***Where can I be salty?***

- **Where and how can I answer Jesus' invitation to joy?**

- And be encouraged by.....

The future of a faithful disciple

- *"Your place in heaven will seem to be made for you and you alone, because you were made for it—made for it stitch by stitch as a glove is made for a hand....."*
- *We are to be remade. All the rabbit in us is to disappear—the worried, conscientious, ethical rabbit as well as the cowardly and sensual rabbit. We shall bleed and squeal as the handfuls of fur come out; and then, surprisingly, we shall find underneath it all a thing we have never yet imagined: a real Man, ageless, a son of God, strong, radiant, wise, beautiful and drenched in joy." C.S. Lewis*
- **Whatever the work, whatever the cost of pursuing discipleship, it is worth it.**

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- **Links to:**
- Podcasts, blogs, and eBooks
- Printables & merch of Bible verses & encouraging sayings
- Chronological Bible-reading schedules

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discipleship, what it means to follow Jesus

Important suggestions: be sure everyone in the group gets a chance to contribute—freely share YOUR thoughts, insights, questions—truly interact with each other and God’s Word.

1. What does the Great Commission, Matt. 28:18-20 tell us about discipleship? What are we supposed to do in light of it?
2. Why is the Parable of the Great Banquet important? What does it warn us about? On the other hand how important is it for us to remember our God is one of joy, who has a joyous future planned for us?
3. What is the background of this section on what it means to be a disciple? How was Jesus’ final trip to Jerusalem going to be different than what the people expected?
4. How can we “love less” (not hate in our usual understanding of the word) the people closest to us?
5. What does it mean to count the cost to becoming a Christian? How can we apply that?
6. What is our eternal future that makes all the struggles we go through worth it? Do we truly believe that and live like it? Discuss—not just yes or no.....