

Sermon for FBC Sept. 24th, 2017

This is the way of Christ and His Apostles

Good morning!

Today we are continuing our look at 'This is the way of Christ and His Apostles.' Last week we considered the calling of the twelve Apostles, and now we will look at 'Learning Time', the teaching from Jesus to the Disciples.

First, what is a Disciple and an Apostle?

Vines Dictionary defines two words for disciple:

Mathetes -a learner, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor.

Didaskalos – one who follows one's teaching. It is used of the 'disciples' of Jesus. The Jews who became His adherents, especially the twelve apostles, all of whom manifested that they were His disciples by abiding in His Word. A disciple is not only a pupil, but an adherent; hence they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher. ¹ Jesus commented on this several times.

John 8:31 NIV

31 *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.*

John 15:8 NIV

8 *This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

We are Jesus's disciples if we adhere to His teachings and bear much fruit. Thought accompanied by endeavor. Then we will be spoken of as imitators of our teacher!

Vines also gives information on 'apostles':

Apostolos – one sent forth – the twelve disciples chosen by the Lord for special training were so called.

Apostole – a sending, a mission, signifies an apostleship. ²

Smith's Bible Dictionary gives us this view of 'apostles':

The original qualification of an apostle, as stated by St. Peter on the occasion of electing a successor to the traitor Judas, was that he should have been personally acquainted with the whole ministerial course of our Lord, from His baptism by John till the day when He was taken up into heaven. They were chosen by Christ himself. They had the power of working miracles. They were inspired. (John 16:13). Their work seems to have been pre-eminently that of founding the churches and upholding them by supernatural power specially bestowed for that purpose. The office ceased, as a matter of course, with its first holders. All continuation of it, from the very conditions of its existence being impossible. ³

Jesus announced why He had come to earth, and used Isaiah's words to make it flow with God's plan. This was the plan that would involve the apostles and all of God's disciples.

Luke 4:16-21 NIV

16 *He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read,*

17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18 *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,*

19 *to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 He began by saying to them, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

Now we look at how Jesus taught the apostles and disciples during the three years He walked and talked with them. Jesus used many methods to teach - 29 Parables, 30 miracles, Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7, Luke 6:20-49), by example, hands on training, teaching to pray, listen and obedience.

Alexander Bruce, in his book "The Training of the Twelve," gives us this thought to dwell on:

These twelve, however, as we know, were to be something more than travelling companions or menial servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were to be, in the meantime, students of Christian doctrine, and occasional fellow-laborers in the work of the kingdom, and eventually Christ's chosen trained agents for propagating the faith after He himself had left the earth. From the time of their being chosen, indeed, the twelve entered on a regular apprenticeship for the great office of apostleship, in the course of which they were to learn, in the privacy of an intimate daily fellowship with their Master, what they should be, do, believe, and teach, as His witnesses and ambassadors to the world. Henceforth the training of these men was to be a constant and prominent part of Christ's personal work. ⁴

Jesus worked with these men to build a team that would go on growing Christianity after He left. Let us start our look with a part of the Sermon on the Mount called 'The Beatitudes.'

Matthew 5:1-12 NIV

1 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,

2 and he began to teach them.

(The Beatitudes)

He said:

3 *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

4 *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

5 *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

7 *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

8 *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

11 *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*

12 *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

These last two verses were for all the disciples, and particularly the twelve, to grab hold of and hang on to. It clearly tells them, and us, that when we stand for God, there will be persecution but it brings great reward.

Why do we stand for Jesus?

Colossians 3:10, 16 NIV

10 *and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

16 *Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.*

As Jesus taught the disciples/apostles, they grew in knowledge and understanding. They had to mature over the three years to be able to be ready to lead the church forward. Much like we have to mature in our Christian walk to be effective in leading the church today.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12 NIV

9 *For we know in part and we prophesy in part,*

10 *but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.*

11 *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.*

12 *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

Unfortunately, we stumble and plod our way through life without reaching the level of maturity needed. God wants us to understand and grow into mature, vibrant Christians who can show the rest of the world the way to Him.

Hebrews 5:11-14 NIV

11 *We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand.*

12 *In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!*

13 *Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.*

14 *But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

We do not have Jesus physically walking beside us teaching us like He did with the apostles. We have God’s word and the Holy Spirit to guide us once we allow Jesus to be in control of our lives. We need to

continue to grow in our understanding of God's plan for us and mankind. We need to become, or continue to be, the light to the rest of the world for God.

Are you still learning? Have you begun to mature in God? Are you ready and willing to become all that God desires for you to become?

Take a lesson from the apostles and disciples and concentrate on God's plan for you. Walk with God's word daily, pray asking Jesus for wisdom and faith, and trust the Holy Spirit to guide your steps and words.

¹W.E. Vine, pg. 171

²W.E. Vine, pgs. 30, 31

³William Smith, pg. 46

⁴Alexander Bruce, pg. 30

Bibliography:

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