

TEXT SERMONS
DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

Message #11

“EDUCATION IN DISCIPLESHIP”
Luke 9:23

Theme Verse: *“If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*

Jesus instituted the first Christian Education Program. The first students were the twelve enrollees whom He called “disciples.” They are the most famous students in the School of Christ. He directed that His Christian Education program become world-wide. He said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching** them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Discipleship involves everything that pertains to the Christian life. Jesus said, “Come unto me ... and **learn of me.**” (Matt. 11:29) Discipleship is a learned lifestyle. It is learned as we style our lives, or I should say, as we yield to the Holy Spirit’s conforming ministry as He styles us, after the life of the Lord Jesus.

The moment we come to Jesus and trust Him as our Savior, that moment we are enrolled in the School of Christ as His disciple. Are you a “disciple/student” in Christ’s School? In Christ’s Discipleship School:

- Enrollment is free;
- The classroom is the whole world;
- The course is lifelong;
- Graduation is guaranteed;
- And post-grad school is literally “out of this world”!

Jesus spent most of His three year earthly ministry pouring His life into twelve men. He chose three of the twelve for some very special lessons. They were: Peter, James and John. On four occasions He had special class sessions with them. These are lessons for us also as we observe the Master Teacher in real life show-and-tell situations. Let us observe Peter, James and John in class as follows:

I. THE THREE BY THE SEA TO LEARN HIS PURPOSE. Mark 1:14-20

“As He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him. When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.”

Why is Jesus with these men by the sea? He is there to recruit them and to remind them and us of His purpose in coming into the world. What they were doing was analogous to what His purpose was.

A. Their Occupation.

Mark 1:16 - "As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen."

Mark 1:19-20 - "When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, mending their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him."

I do not believe that this meeting was a chance meeting. He, too, was fishing -- but not for fish! Jesus did not pick his disciples in a careless manner, but they were carefully chosen, hand picked. What were they doing when Jesus called them?

Casting nets. Peter and Andrew were casting nets. Hereafter, they always seem to be casting nets for souls. The great evangelistic messages in the New Testament are preached by Peter. Andrew is seen bringing individuals to Jesus. They are great examples to us: there are public speakers and private seekers, both are essential in propagating the gospel.

Mending nets. "He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets." The Greek word translated "mending" is "katartizo" and means, "to mend; to repair; to prepare." Six leading translations use the word "mending." In their later ministries we see James and John involved in spiritual "net mending". Their writings are also of this nature.

If what you are doing is honorable work, God can use that training and experience to bring souls to Himself and build them up in the most holy faith.

B. Their Opportunity.

Look closely at v.17- "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." This is the key to discipleship, "I will make you." No disciple is a "self-made" person. On the contrary, a disciple is a "Master made" person; as we follow we are fashioned into His likeness.

Here by the sea, He is teaching these men His purpose in coming *into* the world and their purpose in going *out* into the world. In Luke 19:10 He said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save the lost." This is life's most important work!

C. Their Obedience.

Mark 1:18 - "At once they left their nets and followed him." The King's business requires haste! They denied themselves, took up their crosses and followed Him in obedience.

Illust. Emily Post, the etiquette Queen of years gone by, was asked how one should respond to an invitation to dine with the President of the United States. Her reply

appeared in her newspaper column as follows: “A White House invitation is a direct command – drop everything and go!” Following Jesus without hesitation is more important than an invitation from the President. Drop everything and obey the Lord’s call!

What are you now doing, that in eternity you will be glad you did?

II. **THE THREE ON THE SUMMIT TO LEARN HIS PERSON.** Matthew 17:1-6

“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

Everything Jesus did with His disciples was for the express purpose of training them for the mission for which He had called them. Here on the mountain top, He wanted to isolate them with Him in order that they might focus on His Person and be thoroughly convinced as to Who He was. After this mountain top experience they would not soon forget Who He was. This was certainly a heavenly mountain top experience for them! Think about:

A. **The Heavenly Visitors.**

Matt 17:3- “There appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.” Among other things, this mountain meeting proves:

- That the Old Testament record is true;
- That Moses and Elijah were real people;
- That there is life after death.

What did they talk about? Luke 9:31 tells us: “And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

Wouldn’t you have loved to have been within earshot of this historic conference and to have heard the conversation? Peter was a type “A” personality! He said, in essence, “This is great! Let’s make some shelters and stay up here!” I don’t fault Peter; his response was very human. Following Jesus is never dull and is full of surprises!

B. **The Heavenly Voice.**

Matt 17:5 - “While he (Peter) was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” God interrupted Peter. I would have loved to have heard Peter telling the other nine disciples, about God telling him to “shut up!”

C. **The Heavenly Verification.**

““This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him.”

These three disciples, ever after, had no doubt as to the nature of the Lord Jesus

Christ. After this, it was impossible for them to doubt that he was truly the Son of God. Later, Peter wrote about this mountain top experience in his 2nd letter as follows: “We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.” (2 Peter 1:16-18)

These three disciples would never forget the lessons of this day. They knew beyond a shadow of doubt who Jesus was! If we are to follow Jesus Christ, we must be fully persuaded that He is Who He claimed to be – God of very God! And He demands and deserves our loyal discipleship!

III. THE THREE IN SEMINARS TO LEARN HIS POWER.

In Mark chapters 4 and 5 there are four situations that could be called seminars for the disciples, in which Jesus demonstrated His power.

A. Seminar #1 - He Has Power over the Depths. Mark 4:35-41

The disciples were in a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee when a storm arose and Christ calmed the storm. He spoke and the storm subsided. What a demonstration of power the disciples witnessed that day.

B. Seminar #2 - He Has Power over Demons. Mark 5:1-20

When they had crossed the Sea of Galilee, they were met by a demon possessed wild man. Jesus cast the demons out of him and sent them into a herd of pigs nearby. The pigs ran over a precipice into the water and were drowned. The man who had been delivered from the demons was now calm, coherent and converted to Christ. Again, with but a word Jesus cast out demons. What a seminar this was!

C. Seminar #3 – He Has Power over Death. Mark 5:21-24 and 24-43

Jairus, one of the leaders of the local synagogue, had a daughter who was very sick. In fact, while her father was talking to Jesus, word came to him that his daughter had died. Jesus went with Jairus to his home and, taking Peter, James and John with him, entered the home and restored the daughter to life. I wonder if the word “Wow!” was in the Jewish vocabulary back then? If it was, I can imagine the trio of disciples who witnessed this miracle saying to each other, “Wow!” The expression, “Wow!” originally meant, “Wonder of wonders.” The disciples, in the daily seminars conducted by Jesus in His Discipleship School, were seeing one wonder after another and learning that Jesus had all power in all realms.

D. Seminar #4 – He Has Power over Disease. Mark 5:25-34

In this section of scripture, a woman who had a bleeding problem that had plagued her for a dozen years merely touched the hem of Jesus’ garment and was healed. In the three previous demonstrations of power, Jesus had spoken and His power changed the situation. But here, in the case of this woman, He healed without a word.

This was just another day in the classroom of Christ. What a powerful Person! No doubt that Peter, James and John were awed by what they had witnessed in these seminar sessions. They had learned about His purpose, His Person and His power. There is one last class session that we will monitor:

IV. THE THREE IN THE SHADOWS TO LEARN TO PRAY. Matthew 26:36-41

“Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, “Sit here while I go and pray over there.” And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

The Master Teacher has been teaching now for about three years. His teaching days are about ended; school is about over. But He has one last lesson for these three, Peter, James and John. He wants to teach them how to pray when facing trials. Transparent praying is learned in the crucible of trials. On one occasion, one of the disciples had asked Jesus, “Lord teach us to pray.” (Luke 11:1) He had taught them a number of things about prayer. This lesson on praying is different.

A. The supplication He offered.

This is night school – in the Garden of Gethsemane – in the shadows of night. There He agonized in prayer: “Let this cup pass “

In this prayer, He teaches them about the prayer of resignation: “Not my will, but Yours be done.” Jesus takes these students to the Garden of Gethsemane. There in the lengthening shadows of evening, He prays the most agonizing prayer of His life.

*’Neath the stars of the night
Walked the Savior of light,
In the Garden of dew laden breeze:
Where no light could be found,
Jesus knelt on the ground,
There He prayed ‘neath the old olive trees.”*

B. The submission He showed.

“Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done.”

Jesus was teaching these disciples to pray fervently but submit to God’s will humbly! In the life of every believer there comes times of shadows. It is then that the person of genuine faith relinquishes any and all control over their lives to the One Who has always been behind the scenes. At the end of our prayers we should pray, “Nevertheless, not my will but Yours be done.”

CONCLUSION

In these schooling scenes that we have reviewed, Jesus is teaching all of His disciples, those present and those future, vital lessons essential to a life of victorious discipleship. What a Master Teacher! He knew exactly what they and we would need to know in order to be well taught followers. To know God's purpose, person, power and how to pray is an education to be received only as we walk in the footsteps of Jesus. All of life is a classroom in the School of Christ. Are we following him and learning the lessons he wants to teach us? Let's not fail the course!

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