

Discipleship in the days of Jesus

By Pr Abri Brancken , 29 Jan 2017

Session 1

The Lord is busy building His house. If you want to build strong you need a solid foundation. God is strengthening this spiritual body by bringing the Body back to a greater understanding of its roots.

You live according to what you believe to be true. You become what you behold. Your belief determines your actions. Your focus becomes your reality. Therefore, it is important to have the right understanding of Scripture if we are to mature in the Lord and have the right focus in life.

Scripture – Matt 28

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations (ethnos), 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." Amen. – Matthew 28:18-20

What is your understanding of Biblical Discipleship? Unless we understand it correctly, we cannot truly live it.

9 Misconceptions About Discipleship

- Discipleship just happens

Discipleship is not something that just happens. It is a deliberate action, a process and a lifelong devotion.

- Discipleship is only for certain parts of our lives, one spiritual aspect

No, we need to be followers of Jesus in every area of our lives, not just certain areas. Family, work, pleasure, politics, everything must revolve around Jesus.

- Discipleship is a program or a church ministry

Discipleship is not a program, but a lifestyle.

- Discipleship is going to church

Just because you are coming to church services does not mean that you are truly a disciple. In fact, much good teaching can take place during church, but it is often too general and not targeted to the special needs of believers.

- Discipleship is primarily about gaining knowledge, being a student

It is not primarily about gaining knowledge, but about life transformation.

- Discipleship = salvation

Salvation is only the first step, but discipleship is the process that follows salvation.

- Disciples are a special class of believers

No, everyone is called to be a disciple. It is not optional.

- Discipleship is an optional ad-on to salvation

No, it is the essence of the Christian life. You cannot choose to be a disciple or not. Those that are truly saved are disciples.

- Discipleship = mentoring

Discipleship Is Not Mentoring. Mentoring has to do with what the mentor can offer to someone else through their own wisdom and experience. Discipleship has to do with what Jesus can offer to someone else through His wisdom and presence.

So then, what is Biblical discipleship?

How did the disciples understand discipleship?

Are we disciples of Jesus or are we just church goers?

Let's look at discipleship and what it was like in the days when JC walked the shores of Galilee.

Text:

Mat 4:18-20

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

Background information about The Sea of Galilee, Israel

This fresh water lake is the main source of water supply for Israel.

The lake (Sea of Galilee) holds about 650 million cubic yards of water.

About 53 km in circumference, about 21 km long, and 13 km wide.

Fishing was one of the main occupations in JC day. Farming the fertile grounds around the shores of the lake of Galilee was important to sustain life and could be done because of the water which the lake provided.

The people of Galilee were the most religious Jews in the world in the time of Jesus.

Due to the geographic location of the Galilee area, the Galileans had a lot of interaction with people and cultures travelling the trade route, much more interaction than the (Matt. 4:15) than the Jews of Jerusalem who were more isolated in the mountains down South. Due to the fact that they lived in a trade route, they constantly tried to resist the increasing pagan influences of Hellenism and other religious systems coming to them through the merchants travelling the area in search for better trade.

Generally, the Galileans in JC day were much more educated in the Scriptures and in its application than most Jews from other areas. History shows us that the Galilee, over time, produced more famous Jewish teachers than anywhere else in the world. They were known by those from near and far for their uncompromising reverence for Scripture and the absolute passionate desire to be faithful to it. They were totally devoted to family life, their communities and their study of the Scriptures.

They were passionate about scripture. To be a true Galilean was to be a true student of the Torah.

They had many synagogues. The Galilee area was the place of Rabbis and text. It was the place where rabbis and disciples were invented. They basically developed discipleship. It was not in Judea or any other area practiced as much as in the Galilee.

Jesus was born, grew up, and spent most of his life living among a people who knew Scripture by memory. Daily the Galileans debated Scriptures application, desiring to gain greater understanding of their God and his plan for them. Is it not interesting that God the Father sent Yeshua ha Massiah (Jesus the Messiah) to earth and placed him in such a context, the exact context needed by God to present his message of the kingdom of heaven.

Capernaum was one of the main cities where discipleship was exercised. About 10000 people living there in JC time. JC calls Matthew there. It was a discipleship centre. JC went there and exercised discipleship there.

How does one become a disciple?

One of the greatest honours that could be bestowed on any young Galilean man was to be accepted and counted worthy of being a disciple of a great Rabbi. In order to be a disciple of a great Rabbi one had to grow and develop in the heart of true discipleship.

There were different phases that children had to go through.

Next week (session 2) we will explore the process that they followed in becoming a disciple of a Rabbi