

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ The First Disciples of Jesus Christ

Last time...the faithful and true testimony of John the Baptist regarding Jesus Christ

This time...the first disciples of Jesus Christ

Jesus is going to be given by His Father (John 17:6) men into whom He will pour Himself for 3½ years.

They will see what the Father sent the Son to do and will hear what the Father sent the Son to say.

At the conclusion of His ministry, before He returns to the right hand of His Father, Jesus Christ commanded them...and us...to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20)

The Good Shepherd never commands His flock to do anything

1. He had not already done Himself
2. but that which He gives us the power (of God) to do

Now, after His baptisms and His temptation, Jesus starts to make disciples thru whom He will do a new work (Jer 31:31-33)...the Church, the Bride, the Body

We disciples would be wise to learn from Him how to do what He commanded us to do (and to examine ourselves...the Bulletin Message speaks to what a disciple is)

John 1:35-51

v35-37 Again the next day:

This is the 2nd day since Jesus returned from the wilderness temptation...

Temptation + 2...Baptism + 42

The scene is still down at the Jordan River near Bethany/Bethabara and Jericho

John...two of his disciples...stood:

The day before, upon seeing Jesus walk toward him as He returned from 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness, John the Baptist exploded with v29

This day, John and two of his disciples were standing...as if they were waiting for the arrival of Jesus Christ

When John spotted Jesus, he again, inspired by the Holy Spirit, proclaims,
“Behold the Lamb of God!”

No one else knew Who Jesus was (v26), but John the Baptist did
John knew/believed and “sowed seeds” into the hearts of his hearers

Faithful to his ministry, John the Baptist pointed his disciples to Jesus Christ
John did not command them to go, but they knew he was pointing them,
directing them, to follow the Messiah

The two disciples of John the Baptist

- knew and believed his message (Repent...kingdom of heaven)
- understood his ministry – prepare the way (hearts) for the Messiah
- responded – they chose to follow Jesus

The hearts of the disciples of John the Baptist were good soil for the seed of the
Word of God sowed by John

Making Disciples: the most important lesson a “learner” is to learn:
The one already demonstrated by John the Baptist and Jesus...

- Humility...beautiful in God’s eyes
- Submission...the foundation of Order

Who are these two disciples of John, these first two disciples of Jesus Christ?

v38 What seek ye:

Jesus is walking to His destination...and picks up 2 followers, who were walking
behind Him vs beside Him or in front of Him

Making Disciples: willing followers, not willful leaders
God’s words, will, and way vs God’s words and will, my way
“Follow The Leader” is not child’s play, it is God’s way

Jesus turns and asks the followers,
“What do you guys want, what are you looking for?
Why are you guys following Me?”

Jesus knows...
He is not investigating, digging for information
He is not telling them to go away and leave Him alone
Jesus asks them to state their motives...that He already knows

Making Disciples: motives count...and Jesus knows them!
“Why” is as important as “Who”, “What”, “Where”, etc

The two disciples respond with, “Master, where do you dwell?”
i.e. We desire to stay with You and to learn of You.

Making Disciples: only One Master, followers are His servants

Making Disciples: abide with the Master to be good students/learners

v39 Come and see:

Jesus' response is simple but remarkable: "Come and See"

Come: An invitation to join Him

Ps 34:11 Come, ye children, hearken unto Me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. (Word of God)

Ps 66:16 Come *and* hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul.

See: Prov 8:17 I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me.

Matt 7:7-8 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.

Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

Making Disciples: invite others to "Come and see" Jesus Christ

The only way to learn of Jesus Christ is to know Him

The only way to know Him is to come and be with Him...

- to hear His words
- to see His works
- to follow Him wherever He so leads

Later, these two ("Where do you dwell?") and the other disciples would learn

Matt 8:19-20...to not expect a material gain, worldly riches
(Prosperity gospel is a false gospel followed by false disciples)

John 8:31-32 and John 15:1-8...Jesus is our dwelling place

Timestamp on this day: 4pm

v40-42 Andrew...first findeth his own brother:

Now we learn the identity of one of the two disciples of John the Baptist that are now following Jesus Christ – Andrew, Simon’s brother

We should pay more attention to Andrew than perhaps we do

- had a heart of good soil for the seed of the Word of God
 - heard/believed/learned/followed the message of the voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way for the Lord
 - submitted to the baptism of John for the remission of sin
- heard John the Baptist’s testimony of Jesus...and believed it
- when pointed to the Messiah, he left John and followed Jesus
- went the same day to witness of the Messiah to his immediate family (own brother)...went first to the nearest and dearest, Acts 1:8-ish
- brought his brother to Jesus...”re-issued” invitation of “Come and see”

Making disciples: Find Christ and find others for Christ, starting at home
No “cobbler’s children”...those at home should get the first and the best of what Jesus gives you...THEN give it to others
Pour Jesus into your spouse, children, roomies, etc

Simon accepted his brother’s invitation...Simon chose to go and see for himself

Jesus knows all...the hearts, thoughts, and motives of every individual

He knows Simon...we will get to know (and love) him!

Knowing this man’s character, now and later, Jesus gives Simon a new name – Peter

Simon, son of Jonah: “dove”...emblematic of timidity and skittishness and instability

Cephas (Syriac) or Peter (Greek): “a small stone”...symbol of firmness and steadiness of character

New names for disciples/followers/learners:

- Abram – Abraham
- Sarai – Sarah
- Jacob – Israel
- Simon – Peter
- Saul – Paul
- disciples of Jesus Christ – Christians
- overcomers (by faith, 1 John 5:45) – Is 62:2, Rev 2:17, Rev 3:12

v43-44 The day following...Philip:

The next day...Temptation + 3...Jesus went north to the Galilee

There He found Philip (the Evangelist, Acts 21:8) and issued a simple, direct invitation: "Follow Me"

"Follow Me"...where?

- On a narrow, less traveled path that leads to (eternal) life
- On a long, hard, and humbling journey
- To the Cross...to/thru suffering before glory
 - Matt 16:18, 24
 - Acts 9:15-16
 - Phil 1:29
- To have your heart tilled of thorns and rocks (Self) so that it bears abundant fruit pleasing to the Father
- Wherever Jesus so leads (Heb 11:8-ish)

Making Disciples: Count the cost of following Jesus Christ!

Philip accepted Jesus' invitation

The Holy Spirit tells us that Philip is from the same home town as Andrew and

Simon Peter...Bethsaida, on the north shore of Sea of Galilee

So...who is the other disciple of the John the Baptist?

John

- never mentions himself by name in "his" Gospel
- business partner with Andrew and Simon Peter
- also from Bethsaida
- Andrew found his own brother first...
before John found his own brother, James

Back to Philip...

v45 Philip findeth Nathanael:

What was the first thing Philip did after accepting Jesus' invitation be to a follower/learner/disciple?

He "re-issued" the invitation to someone close to him, Nathanael

Making Disciples: Be discipled by an "elder" AND disciple a "younger"
The "chain" of discipleship

As with Andrew's invitation to his own brother (v41b), Philip's invitation to Nathanael includes Truth heard and believed –

Jesus of Nazareth is

- The Prophet promised/foretold by Moses in the Law (Deut 18:15-19)
- The Messiah, The Christ promised/foretold by all the prophets

By two or three witnesses the truth shall be established –
the Law and the Prophets bear witness of the identity of Jesus

The imperfection of their belief at this very early stage in Jesus' ministry is captured in "the son of Joseph"...as it was supposed (Luke 3:23)

Making Disciples: A process, growth comes by the Word of God
(pace of the process is a function of submission..."Step 1")

v46 any good thing...Come and see:

Nathanael's thinking:

God is good,

Nazareth is bad, a "dog house" (pervasively Gentile),
so nothing good can come from Nazareth.

Yet the Word of God (prophets) says Is 9:1-7
that light = the Son of David, Son of God, King of Israel, King of kings

Notice Philip's response:

- he does not argue/debate the point about Nazareth with Nathanael
- he does not get into a "sword fight" (Heb 4:12) with Nathanael
- he gives the very best answer: Come and see! (v39)
- he merely, humbly "re-issues" the invitation extended by Jesus Christ Himself

Nathanael accepted Philip's invitation for personal contact with Jesus

v47-49 Jesus saw Nathanael coming:

Jesus knows the hearts, thoughts, and motives of all men

He bears witness of Nathanael – no guile, no deceit, no craftiness but
simplicity and honesty of heart

Nathanael has never seen Jesus until this moment and hears Jesus assess his
character

“How do you know me, have we met before?”

“Before Philip called you to follow Me, I saw you under that fig tree.”

“You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

Which might seem at the moment to be a radical over-reaction by Nathanael
Why did Nathanael call Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God and King of Israel?

Jesus saw where he was, what he was doing, what he was thinking.
Only the all-knowing God could have known those things

Q: When did Jesus see/know Nathanael?

That day...Temptation + 3?

The previous day...Temptation +2?

Eph 1:4 and 1 Peter 1:2a

Making Disciples: is a matter of personal choice

God chooses AND man must choose

Not mutually exclusive truths but complimentary truths...

2 like-minded volunteers in a loving relationship

v50-51 thou shall see greater...ye shall see heaven open:

Jesus gives Nathanael more evidence for his well-placed faith –

He tells Nathanael what he was thinking about underneath that fig tree...

Gen 28:12

Nathanael was meditating on, asking God about, Jacob's Ladder

Jesus revealed to Nathanael that He is Jacob's Ladder,

He (God become man) is the One who “connects” heaven and earth

And He promises Nathanael that he shall see greater things than these

“introductory” things

John 14:12

John 16:7

Making Disciple: Following Jesus is an adventure!

An adventure in faith.

3 days after returning from His wilderness temptation, Jesus has 5 disciples, all Galileans

1. Andrew
2. John
3. Peter
4. Philip
5. Nathanael aka Bartholomew

How many will He have after 3½ years of doing His Father's will?

11 men and a handful of women

According to the world's measure of success, Jesus Christ was a...
a good man but a tragic failure

According to God's measure of success, Jesus was
a faithful Lamb...and a majestic success (John 19:30)

Faithfulness...not numbers...is the eternal measure of success

What does this mean to us when it comes to making disciples as Jesus commanded?

- Being a disciple...examine our own status
 - Motives count and Jesus knows them – exam our motives for “Why”
 - Count the cost of following Jesus Christ – it enormous...All
Salvation is the gift of God...following Jesus costs everything we have
 - Following Jesus is an adventure...now and forever!
Jesus is NOT a buzz kill...He is the greatest High!
 - Continue in the words of Jesus and abide in Jesus to grow as a disciple
 - Every Sunday morning vs when convenient or sporadically
 - Heb 10:25 and Prov 27:17
 - Men's Study
 - Women's Study
 - ME
 - Women's Retreat
 - Men's Retreat
 - Holy Spirit in the early Church
 - Holy Spirit in the end times Church
 - Perilous/fierce times
 - Days of Lot/Days of Noah
 - Great falling away from the faith
 - Deception at every turn

Bill Koenig: No longer going to speak/share at churches

- not teaching the Word of God, no prophesy
- false teachings, liberal humanism
- anti-Israel
- do not want to hear what he has to say
- “It has gotten so bad so fast.”

What was mainstream Christianity not that long ago is now considered extremism

e.g. Christianity is embracing homosexuality as acceptable in God’s eyes

When the Supreme Court makes homosexual marriage the Law of the Land, the flood gates will open... the gates of hell will break forth in USA against “extremist Christians” and we be outlaws, faithful to a Higher Law

John 16:2

Issue: faithfulness to the Word, fear God or man

- Urgency of being a disciple of Jesus Christ
 - The Word of God changes not
 - The invitation is still open (Is 55:6)
 - Time is short!
 - Judgment of God is coming, which precedes the Kingdom of God
 - Lawlessness is rising (Summer 1968 do-over)
 - “Bubbles will be bursting.”
 - Why stay in this fellowship, why invite others to come to this little fellowship?
 - We are resolutely determined to stand firm on the Word of God by the power of the Spirit of God
 - We are determined to not fall away, to withstand the world’s mounting pressure
 - We will be organic Christianity – no additives!
 - We will be counter-culture
 - We will be counter-lukewarm-ear-tickling-Christian-culture
 - We will be ear-tingling and encouraging to Finish Well
 - We will preach and teach Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world... for John 3:16

- Making a disciple of Jesus Christ
 - “Re-issue” the simple, humble invitation: Come and See
 - Every disciple is responsible to go, speak, invite...we are personally involved in the work of God
 - point to Jesus Christ
 - pour the Word of God into those who accept the invitation
 - “I invite you to come to our gathering, you will be introduced to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.”
 - Every person is responsible for their own choice – to accept invitation or not
 - following Jesus is not a forced march
 - God always initiates the invitation, it is given to man to respond to it
 - John 6:44
 - Luke 10:22
 - the inviter is not responsible for the choice of the invited

If you are not a disciple of Jesus Christ (of the Bible), I invite you to become one right now

1. Learn the most important lesson to be learned: submission and humility
2. Willing follower, not willful leader
3. Servant of the One Master
4. Motives count
5. Abide with the Master as a good student/learner
6. Count the cost of following Jesus Christ
7. Begin the process whereby growth comes by the Word of God
8. Is a matter of choice...by 2 like-minded volunteers in a loving relationship
9. Following Jesus is an adventure!

If you are a disciple, start making a disciple by ...

1. Re-issuing Jesus’ invitation to Come and See
2. Find Christ, find others for Christ, start at home
3. Be discipled by an “elder” AND disciple a “younger”
4. Point “your” disciples to Jesus Christ

Come and see!

Make Jesus known

Make known your discipleship of Jesus

Simple enough, isn’t it?

Just submit...”Step 1”