

Articles and Sermons :: The Pathway Of Discipleship -poonen

The Pathway Of Discipleship -poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/9/25 10:12

The Pathway Of Discipleship

by Zac Poonen

According to Mathew 28:20, the disciples must be taught to obey and practice every single command given by our Lord. This is the pathway of discipleship. One has only to read Mathew 5,6,7 to see some of the commands that Jesus gave – that most believers do not even bother to obey.

A disciple is a learner and a follower. The need is for people who have been gripped by the calling to proclaim the whole counsel of God, who are themselves obedient to all that Jesus commanded and who eagerly desire to teach others too to obey all of Jesus' commands and thus build the body of Christ.

Jesus said that all His disciples would be identified by one mark - their love for one another (John 14:35). Mark that! The disciples of Jesus Christ are identified, not by the quality of their preaching or their music nor by their speaking in tongues nor by their carrying Bibles to the meetings, nor by the amount of noise they make in their meetings!! They are identified by their fervent love for one another. The evangelistic meeting that brings people to Christ must lead on to the establishment of a church in that locality, where the disciples love one another.

Yet the sad thing is that in many places where repeated evangelistic meetings are held year after year, it is difficult to find even one church about which it can be said that the members there do not fight with one another or backbite against one another etc. but love another. One can understand it if new converts are unable to live such a victorious life immediately. But what shall we say if strife and immaturity characterize even the elders and Christian leaders in the churches? This is the clearest proof that the most important part of great commission mentioned in Mathew 18:19,20 – discipleship and total obedience to the commandments of Jesus has been totally ignored.

The first part of the great commission (Mark 16:15) alone is usually emphasized everywhere. There, the emphasis is on evangelism, the message being confirmed by signs and wonders done by the Lord.

In Mathew 28:19,20, however, the emphasis is on discipleship – the disciple's life being manifested by total obedience to Jesus' commandments. Multitudes of Christians are taken up with the former, but very very few with the latter. Yet the former without the latter is as incomplete and worthless as half a human body. But how many have seen this. ?

In Jesus' ministry, we read that great multitudes followed Him, because of His evangelistic, healing ministry. He always turned around and taught them about discipleship (See Luke 14:25,26) Would that Today's evangelists would do the same – either themselves or in cooperation with apostles, prophets, teachers and shepherds who can complete the work that the evangelists have begun.

Why are preachers hesitant to proclaim the message of discipleship? Because it will reduce the numbers in their congregation. But what they don't realize is that the quality of their churches will become far better!!

When Jesus preached discipleship to the multitudes, it soon dwindled down to a handful of only eleven disciples (Compare John 6:2 with John 6:70). The others found the message too hard and left Him (See John 6:60,66). But it was with those eleven disciples who stayed on with Him, that God accomplished His purpose in the world finally.

As Christ's Body on earth today, we are to carry on the same ministry that those eleven apostles commenced in the first century. After people are brought to Christ, they must be led to discipleship and obedience. Thus alone will the body of Christ be built.

The way to life is narrow and few are those who find it. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.