

104.28. TRUE DISCIPLES

Lord we thank you that in all your Holiness that you found us worthy to be called on as trusted disciples of your word & we ask Lord that you will fill us with the love, knowledge, patience, discernment & understanding that is required to minister to & love others, in the manner that you command, in such a lost broken world, we ask that you replace our pride & ego's with a spirit & burden to see the lost, broken, lonely souls in this world, brought out of the captivity, that is binding them & use us dear lord to bring them to your open forgiving loving arms; thank you for loving & using us, to advance your Kingdom.

In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, if I go & prepare a place for you, I will come again & receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also, John 14:2-3.

God said that this will be the new earth, that the Lord has been preparing for 2,000 years, for us, as all of Heaven & earth will be our Fathers & our new home of course is with Christ on the new earth.

This is where the church of the Kingdom of God, needs to pull all churches who teach Jesus Christ & Him crucified, as the way, the truth & the life, unjudgmentally back together, with the love that they once held for each other & which had transformed them into a once, great, strong, unified, societal whole. All God's people must get back to standing together, rescuing the lost broken souls throughout our communities, cities & countries, just as God had intended & of which has fallen by the

wayside, but that is waiting for a regeneration & rebuilding to once again share the power of God, with all His children.

Every week, millions of valuable souls sit in churches, praying, thinking, worshiping & doubting, with many others around them, near & far, in the same doubt, or disbelief, while thinking on the same things as the Apostles did; as doubt is a part of faith & without doubt, faith would be useless. Some doubt, along with worship is good, as long as it motivates us towards seeking, testing & proving the truths of God & Christ & turning that doubt into an unstoppable faith. Jesus also knew inner struggles, as He was human too, He knew & felt many struggles, as He faced crucifixion & death, for us.

We should be ready for & even expect doubts when working with others, on life changing truths & be ready to address all questions & doubts with a nonjudgmental Christian attitude, as well as to share our testimony & God's truths & proofs & a lot of love, prayers & understanding.

After Jesus' resurrection the disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted, & He came to them & said, all authority in Heaven & on earth has been given to me. Now go & make disciples of all, baptizing them in my name & teaching them to obey everything I have commanded, Matt. 28:16-20, this is known as the Great Commission.

The Disciples knew where their authority came from & acted on it, their fear didn't disappear, but it was overpowered.

The thing that all the church has been commanded to do & has been given authority to do, is to make disciples.

So, our goal, like Peter's, is so much more than convincing others to believe & to be baptized, but is to bring them into a community of believers, to learn from & grow with one another, with all the authority that Jesus gave us, to make disciples; though many in the church today don't seem to know how to act on this & as such have neglected this mission of making disciples, as they have become indoctrinated & comfortable in teaching already saved people, about all that Jesus did, while neglecting to encourage & equip them with the motivation & tools to answer the call of what Jesus commanded of us all, to make disciples.

If this sounds wrong, then I would challenge churches, that after Sunday service, take a poll & ask everyone in the congregation; How many are now inspired, ready & prepared to step out the doors & start discipling & saving lost souls to Christ & how many are just too busy & are done, with their planned time for God, for the week?

Now, how would we feel if God said that's okay, because I have done all for you, that I plan on doing for you, for the week as well, so good luck & see ya next week?

Discipleship should be modeled after Jesus' example with His disciples. Jesus entered into relationships & trained men during His earthly ministry; the disciples observed Him & questioned Him; He shocked them, scared them, explained His teaching to them & then told them what to do & how to do it.

They were connected to Him through His trust & belief in them & the authority of His call, the power of His life & His clear focus on His mission, for the Son of man is come to seek & to save that which was lost, Luke 19:10.

Jesus gave His disciples training & the needed personal time, that many leaders seem to be short of today. Many leaders spend much family, or alone time, or time with a few select members; leaving God's workers lost in the shadows, wanting to do, but not knowing how, what, or even where to start.

In Jesus' final prayer, in the Garden of Gethsemane; He mentioned His followers more than 40 times & asked His Father to take care of them, as seen in John 17:1-26, because He considered them the key to His mission to redeem & restore the world.

Jesus made sure that time was His most important investment in people & required leaders to do what He did, to spend much time leading by example, don't worry about failure & don't go for what is easy, challenge yourself, your family, your friends & your community & let God do the work through you & the worrying through Him.

We are going to experience some frustration & disagreement, when working with others on life changes, as change is usually difficult, but we can't say that we care about others eternal lives, if we are afraid of hurt feelings, or disappointment. When it comes to seeking & saving those who need God, it is worth the personal ego risks, as God has promised to stay with & to uphold us. I am with you always, even to the end of the age, Matt. 28:20, if the world hates you, know that it hated me first, as you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, that is why the world hates you, John 15:18.

Discipleship demands sacrifice & though Jesus has called all people, many reject the call, as they cannot exchange, or put to death, their own ideas, plans, & desires, as following Him is easy when life is happy go lucky, but true commitment is shown during trials & Jesus assured us that trials will come, John 16:33.

So are you willing to face the loss of friends, family, reputation, career & maybe your life, for Christ & the Kingdom, as this is what Jesus meant when He said, take up your cross & follow Me, as His cross meant death, from the evils of this world. Jesus asks that we take up our cross & follow Him, Matt. 16:24, which means dying to our self & our worldly desires & surrendering to Him, to symbolically die to this world, with Him. Jesus said, for he who wants to save his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for Me, will save it, for what good is it for a man to gain the world, if he loses his self, Luke 9:24.

Watch out for false prophets, they come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ferocious wolves, Matt 7:15.

Jesus means what He says & says what He means & He's looking for those who are willing to listen to & heed the unaltered truth, just as He gives it, not by what the world wants to decipher of it. He has given us the Golden keys to the Kingdom, through His words & we need to be careful with them, as the more man polishes them up, the duller & more distorted they become, to the point of opening different doors, than they were created for & God will not accept ignorance, through accepting man's interpretations & wrong inferences as gospel, as an excuse for opening up the wrong door.

Here's a quick account of the First of Jesus apostles/disciples & the 1st leaders of Christianity, which helped start the spread of the gospel throughout the world. Peter, Andrew, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Jude, Simon, Judas Iscariot, James, + Matthias who replaced Judas & Paul/ Saul who didn't meet Jesus, bodily, but who wrote many books of the New Testament, after his miraculous conversion.

Peter, a.k.a. Simon Peter, Cephas, or the Rock that Christ would build His church on. Peter, a fisherman & a prominent leader of the early church. Peter walked on water, Matthew 14:28-33, denied Jesus to avoid persecution, Luke 22:54, addressed the crowd at Pentecost, Acts 2:14-41, visioned a church of Jews & Gentiles together, Acts 10, was a pillar of the church, Galat. 2:9.

James the Greater, son of Zebedee & a fisherman, nicknamed by Jesus, with his brother John, as the sons of thunder, Mark 3:17. The Camino de Santiago, in Spain, where James is said to be buried, is a popular Shrine & Christian pilgrimage.

John, son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved, a student of John the Baptist, a fisherman & a son of thunder, Mark 3:17. He was a pillar of the church, Galatians 2:9 & is credited with writing 5 books of NT bible, including Revelation. Think about the honor involved with this next verse, Jesus asked John, from the cross; to take care of His mother, 19:26 & that is love & trust.

Andrew, Peter's brother, was a fisherman. Andrew told his brother, we have found the Messiah, John 1:41-42. He was a disciple of Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist. When he 1st saw Jesus, he said, look the Lamb of God, when the two disciples heard this, they followed. In the feeding of 5,000, Andrew is the one who finds the boy with the bread & fish, John 6. Andrew was said to have been crucified on an X shaped cross, now known as Saint Andrew's Cross.

Philip the Apostle is mentioned 8 times & brought Nathanael to Jesus. Nathanael is only mentioned in the Gospel of John, but many assume that He is a.k.a. Bartholomew. Jesus tests Philip, asking him where will we buy bread for the 5K to eat, John 6:7.

Matthew, a.k.a. Levi, was a tax collector who made money by saying people owed Caesar more than they did & then kept the extra; tax collectors were hated. So, it was a big deal that Jesus asked Matthew to follow Him, Matthew 9:9. Matthew's inclusion as an Apostle shows how God can use all kinds of people, for His purpose & good. Jesus had dinner at Matthew's house & He ate with sinners. This bothered the Pharisees who were always trying to make Jesus out to be a fraud & they asked, why does He eat with sinners? Jesus heard this & said, it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick, Matt. 9:12. The Pharisees unknowingly, rightly see this as a reflection of his character, as He was demonstrating God's mercy towards the outcasts.

The Twin, called Thomas, or Doubting Thomas, doubted Jesus' resurrection & said, unless I see the nail mark & put my finger in there, I will not believe, John 20:25, & Jesus appeared & offered to let him do that. After seeing Jesus in the flesh, Thomas proclaimed; My Lord & my God; Jesus responded with, because you have seen me, you have believed, blessed are those who have not seen & have believed, John 20:28. Thomas' cautious approach & doubt set the stage for evidence-based faith & for the teaching of "by Faith alone".

James, son of Alphaeus, all we know is that he was an Apostle. James the Just, Galatians 1:19. One of Jesus half-brothers, which included Him, Joseph, Simon & Judas, Matthew 13:55 & it is believed that he wrote the book of James?

Jude a.k.a., Judas of James. Possibly Jesus' half-brother & the writer of Jude, but the Bible doesn't confirm this?

Simon the Zealot, is in lists of the apostles & mentioned in early church writings, but we know very little about him.

Judas Iscariot, betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, leading to Jesus' death. He was the treasurer for the Apostles. At the Last Supper, Jesus said one of the disciples will betray him, & then tells Judas, do what you are about to do, John 13:27. Judas met with the priests & agreed to betray Jesus, Matt. 26:14–16, Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, Judas arrives with an armed mob & points out Jesus, Matt. 26:47–49. Judas regrets betraying Jesus & tries, but fails to return the money, Matt. 27:3–4, Judas commits suicide & his death becomes one of the nay sayers picking points in the Bible, as the Gospel of Matthew says he hung himself & the priests used the money to buy a field, as blood money couldn't be put in the treasury, Matt. 27:5-10, but Luke says, Judas bought a field where he fell & his body burst open, Acts 1:18–19. So some think Judas hung himself & then the rope broke & he hit the ground, bursting open, or he hanged there until his body decomposed, which still doesn't say if he bought the field, or it was bought for him, either way it was his money & he died a horrible death in what became known as the field of blood & evidently the details are not relevant to us, in God's plan for us. One point of contention that is relevant to us is that God had nothing to do with the fact that Judas was an unrepentant unbeliever. He was not set up as a scapegoat & had free will just as all of us, to choose to follow Christ, or the world. Judas was a treasurer, who faked a commitment to Christ, which Christ of course knew about, but even once he betrayed Jesus over to the enemies, Judas still could have repented & been forgiven, though there is no mention of this, the same as all sinners, but Judas true fate is not for us to decide, as only God knows what went on between them & this is between Judas & God.

Matthias, replaced Judas, as he met Peter's requirements for a new member of the Apostles, Acts 1:21–22.

Paul the apostle, a.k.a. Saul of Tarsus, was not one of the Jesus' original disciples, but did write 13 of the 27 New Testament books, after his conversion as a persecutor of Christians. He was a Pharisee, a religious elite, who opposed Jesus & persecuted His followers. Saul was present when the 1st martyr, Stephen, was stoned to death, Acts 8:1. On the road to Damascus, where Saul was going to arrest Christians, Jesus supernaturally appeared to him, asking, Saul, why do you persecute me, Acts 9:4, He then said, go into the city & you will be told what you must do, Acts 9:6, then Saul/ Paul was struck blind, but Jesus used another man to restore his sight. So, Paul saw the light & became the apostle to the Gentiles, Romans 1:13, as Jesus called him to reach the non-Jews, Acts 22:21 & he became one of the greatest in carrying the church & gospel to the world.

Luke the Evangelist, a.k.a. the Physician, Saint Luke, believed author of the Gospel of Luke & the Book of Acts. He wasn't an apostle, but was an educated, thorough, companion of Paul & claims to have investigated everything from the beginning & had access to many eyewitness accounts & pertinent information, including the Gospel of Mark.

Mark the Evangelist, a.k.a. believed to be John Mark & the author of the Gospel of Mark.

These unpaid disciples carried the gospel to the world, as commanded, right up until their deaths, they were Martyred for their faith & for preaching the gospel, as they gave all, to reach, teach & get lost souls saved, just as we should be doing today.

Jesus said that if we love Him, we will obey all that He commands, John 14:15, a few of the acts of necessary obedience in following Christ & making disciples are as follows.

As you pray, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you, but if you do not forgive, neither will your Father forgive you, Mark 11:25-26.

Get rid of whatever causes you to sin, Matt 5:29. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds & praise your Father in Heaven, Matt 5:14.

Do Not Swear to anything, I tell you, do not swear at all, either by Heaven, for it is God's throne, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King & do not swear by your head, for you cannot even make one hair, James 5:12. Simply let your yes be your yes & your no, be your no, Matt 5:34.

You have heard an eye for an eye & tooth for a tooth, but I tell you, don't resist an evil person, if one strikes you on the cheek, turn to him the other, Matt 5:38. Love your enemies & pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven; who causes His sun to rise on the evil & the good & sends rain on the righteous & the unrighteous, Matt 5:43.

Don't do acts of righteousness to be seen by man, or that will be your reward & you will have no reward in Heaven & pray in private, not to be seen of men, when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues & on the street corners to be seen by all. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward. When you pray, go into your room, close the door & pray to your Father, who is unseen, then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you, Matt 6:1.

Do not store up treasures on earth, where moth & rust destroy & where thieves steal, store up treasures in heaven, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be, Matt 6:19-21

Do not worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will worry about itself, each day has enough trouble of its own, Matt 6:34. Put God first, seek the kingdom of God & His righteousness & all things shall be added unto you, Matt 6:33.

Do not judge, or you will be judged, as with the measure that you judge, it will be measured to you, Matt 7:1-2.

I was hungry & you gave me food, I was thirsty & you gave me drink, I was a stranger & you invited me in, I needed clothes & you clothed me, I was sick & you looked after me, I was in prison & you came to visit me, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it to me, Matt 25:35-40.

Do not exalt yourself, for you have one Master & are all brothers & have one Father in Heaven & one Teacher, Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant, for whoever exalts himself will be humbled & whoever humbles himself will be exalted, Matt 23:8. See that you don't despise the little ones, for I tell you that their angels, in Heaven, always see the face of my Father, Matt 18:10. Love each other as I have loved you, John 15:12. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful, Luke 6:36.

John said, we saw someone driving out demons in your name & we told him to stop, as he was not one of us. Do not stop him, Jesus said, for no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, Mark 9:38-39. Whoever is not against us is for us.

So now it is up to each & every one of us, Jesus has given us the authority & the spirit of God has given us the power, to bring people into the family of God, in a world that most assuredly needs to be reminded that Christ is coming back, soon & once the clock runs out, it will be too late to repent & were going to have to make account for why so many, of our family, friends, neighbors, coworkers etal. were so badly deceived, or misled, due to our being too busy to test & prove God's truths & then to preach & teach them to the lost souls in the world, that we were put into to help evangelize.