

Disciples

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Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 28:16-20, KJV.

We read this, memorize this, quote this, teach this, and set this as our goal, but do we really know what we are to do?

1 “Go ye therefore, . . .”

The Greek language had four words for “go” that were used in scripture. Bathmos, meant to walk, and primarily aimed at the mode of motion. Erchomai denotes motion or progress in general and of any sort. poreuomai spoke of general motions within limits and with the direction given prominence. Choreo emphasized the change of place or separation. The word that is used by Christ is poreuomai. Why mention this? Christ’s going does not require that you walk to do it (bathmos). Christ’s going does not require that you leave your location (choreo). Christ’s going is not any progress, and any way (erchomai). Christ said poreuomai! This was the word used of the marching of an army. Ordered. Following the exact directions of the commander. Each step was as the commander stated. It was not good enough to be just generally moving there. We are not to give them what we think is best or what they want to hear, we are to give them the gospel using the Bible’s language. The tense of the verb suggests to stay or continue on a path. When Christ enters our life He changes our direction (this is actually what repent means, but that is another study). He makes us to walk in His way (Psalm 23). This is the way we are to continue in. As pastor mentioned last week, true worship overflows into true evangelism. It is a continuation and natural progression of what came before.

2 “... Teach all nations,”

All nations is an interesting phrase. The phrase is penta ta ethne. It means parts of every people group. What is a people group? A division of humanity with a distinctive culture. What is Christ saying? Not just to send to each political unit called a nation. Not just a group of people with distinct features. Rather a much smaller grouping, a group connected by some shared distinction. Under the 12 tribes of Israel there were families, ethnes. This is how small we mean. God has people in each and every family line.

The word teach is not didasko, the usual word for teaching. The word is matheteuo, to disciple. What is the difference? Discipleship is more than learning. Discipleship is not a sermon. Discipleship is not having someone make a decision and pray. Discipleship isn't short. Real discipleship takes a long time. Jesus Himself spent three years training His disciples. Do we think we can do better? A real disciple is a true believer who has been trained in the way of Christ, and thus does things to please the Father. Consider one of the many teachings Christ gave on this. Consider Matthew 13. The discipling of the nations is explained in the next sentence.

3 “Baptising in the name ...”

Baptise is baptidzo, and it speaks of immersion that changes. The Greeks had a word for simple immersion - bapto. Bapto meant to immerse in a liquid. Baptidzo was an immersion that caused a change. Water baptism is the outer sign, the changing of the heart is the inner reality. Paul speaks of this heavily in Romans 6 and Colossians 2. Baptism speaks of the union with Christ, which changes lives.

In the name is an important idea. It means by the authority, not in the substance. Some now think of baptism in means baptism into. It does not mean that God is what we baptise into (as the substance). As strange as it sounds, some think this. Also, it is not the start of our Christian life, though it attests to it. The authority of God looks to the validity and assurance that is brought with the baptism God imparts.

4 Teaching them to observe...

This teach is didasko. Didasko has two ideas in it. First didasko means to instruct in sound doctrine. This is the what of the teaching. The teacher (all of us), should teach the truth of God undiluted by the opinions and desires of man. Note that it is not bad to consult commentaries, etc. Rather by an opinion I mean an idea that does not have its origin and basis in God's word. In other words, we are to teach what he says. No more, no less.

Second, didasko speaks of how. Question and answer style dialog.