

DISCIPLESHIP REVIVAL

The Great Awakening

In these days of apostolic restoration and reformation of the church, there is a great awakening occurring among the people of God worldwide. The Spirit is saying to the churches to “awake to discipleship”. It is time for a generation to awaken to the great need of true discipleship and the great desire of Jesus to make and have disciples! The great revival of our generation is a revival of discipleship!

The call of Jesus in the gospel

Jesus came to call disciples. Jesus came to call people willing to be learners, willing to be instructed in a new lifestyle and willing to imitate Him. Jesus wants us to ***“learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls”*** **Matthew 11:29**. The call to be a disciple is a call to learn from Jesus. The gospel is the call of discipleship to learn the ways of the kingdom by sticking like glue to the King.

Repent

When Jesus began His ministry He preached ***“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”*** **Matthew 4:17**. The revival for each one of us begins with the call to repent, to be willing to change. We need to be willing to change our minds, change our ways and change our attitudes in order to learn how to live in the kingdom of heaven. Discipleship is learning how to live in the kingdom of heaven while we are on earth. We must be willing to change!

The call into discipleship

After preaching of the need to repent then Jesus proceeded to call a few people out ***“And Jesus...saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fisherman. Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men”*** **Matthew 4:18-19**. It is possible and even probable that Simon and Andrew were hoping for this call. They had been a part of the revival happening at the Jordan River through John the Baptist (**John 1:35-42**) and Andrew had heard John declare Jesus to be the ***“Lamb of God”*** (**Jn.1:36**). They knew of Jesus. They knew what John had spoken of Jesus. Their hearts were yearning for the Messiah. Their hearts were prepared for discipleship.

The invitation

Today, something is happening in God’s people that is preparing them for discipleship. People want out to get out of the religious system and from being trapped in “church”. There is a yearning to follow the Messiah. There is a yearning to be more heavily involved in the kingdom and in the work of Jesus. There is a desire to be experiencing the reality of following Jesus every day as a lifestyle. The invitation is awesome! ***“Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men”***. We are to ***“follow”*** Jesus. We are to observe how He lives, watching His every move, so we can learn to draw others into His life. This is an invitation to learn to live ***“a new a living way”*** (**Heb.10:20**). It is time to stop what we are doing ***“immediately leave our nets and follow Him”*** **Matthew 4:20**.

What are you living for?

It is time to evaluate what we are living for. What are our motivations? What are our goals? Why are we alive? Jesus said ***“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me”*** Matthew 16:24. To ***deny ourselves*** is to no longer live for our own agendas or pleasures. To ***take up our cross*** is to ***“crucify the flesh with its passions and desires”*** (Gal.5:24) dying to our selfishness and wanting to gratify ourselves. It is to die to our selfish ambitions and living our own way. The word ***follow*** means: *to be in the same way with, that is, to accompany*. Jesus wants us to go on the journey with Him. Jesus wants us to accompany Him so we can learn to do what He does. In order to do this we have to give up everything else.

Losing our life to find it in Jesus

The awakening of discipleship is having a revelation that accompanying Jesus is worth the loss of everything else. ***“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it”*** Matthew 16:25. Life is found in discipleship. Eternal life is discovered as we lose our own soul life for the sake of following Jesus! What are you living for? The late Jim Elliot, a missionary who gave his life in the 1950s while reaching out to an unreached tribe in South America, coined a phrase *“he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep in order to gain what he can never lose”*. Jesus is all that matters. Let’s make the decision together to ***“count all things loss...that we may gain Christ”*** **Philippians 3:8.**

God wants everything

God has always wanted to be involved in everything. He never planned for us to compartmentalize our life into different areas. He wants to be in everything. The greatest commandment according to Jesus is ***“Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one! You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength”*** Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (Mk.12:29-30).

The greatest commandment begins with a confession of who God is, that ***Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one***. Jesus opened this up a bit more when He said, ***“I and My Father are one”*** John 10:30. Jesus is the revelation of this one God. He is Yahweh in the flesh, ***“being found in appearance as a man”*** Philippians 2:8a. We are to have a confession of Jesus as the one true God and we are to choose to love Him with all of our being. This is actively giving Him pre-eminence in all areas of our soul, all of our energy and labouring ability, and serving Him with our spirit.

Living the Lifestyle

After telling us the greatest command then God tells us through Moses the key of how to do this. It is by developing a lifestyle of surrounding yourself with Heaven’s way of life. ***“And these words ...shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your***

house and on your gates.” Deut. 6:6-9.

We are to surround ourselves with the Word. We are to talk the Word. We are to breathe the Word. We are to discuss the Word and teach it to our children, natural and spiritual. Every house is to be a place where Jesus is honoured. Every house is to be a place where a family is gathering around the Word to learn of Jesus and be instructed in His ways. Do you teach your children the Word of God? Whatever we do we are to view it through the Word and then do it all in the name of our Lord Jesus, for the glory of God (**Col.3:17, 1Cor.10:31**). This is the discipleship revival!

Heavenly conversation

Our **“citizenship is in heaven”** **Philippians 3:20**. The word *citizenship* was translated in the KJV as **“conversation”**. Our conversation, manner of life, is to be heavenly. The purpose for surrounding ourselves with the Word is to **“then beware, lest you forget Yahweh”** (**Deut.6:12**). Disciples **“abide in My Word...and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”** **John 8:31-32**. This is the great awakening of discipleship. It is a change of lifestyle. It is not necessarily more “church meetings” to go to. It is a life to live. A life in the Word, breathing the Word so that the **“Word becomes flesh”** (**Jn.1:14**) in us and people then will see His glory!

More than a ‘good Christian’

Many people are held back from discipleship. The young rich ruler was like many Christians today who are looking to find the minimum requirement to be “saved”. **“What good thing must I do to inherit eternal life?”** **Matthew 19:16**. Jesus told this man to keep the commandments and the man heartily replied that he was doing that, but said **“What do I still lack?”** (v.20).

There is a great lack in the Body of Messiah. Many people are endeavouring to be “good Christians”. They believe in Jesus, pay their tithes and are good ‘church members’ attending Sunday services. Many can even be successful in various pursuits. *But there is something lacking!*

Do not miss the invitation

When the young rich ruler asked what was lacking, Jesus was able to answer him straight away, **“If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me”** **Matthew 19:21**. Jesus made a powerful invitation to this man. This man was a “good” believer in God. He was obeying the commandments but still lacking something. Jesus offered this man the opportunity of a life time – **“Come follow Me”**.

Jesus offered him discipleship. It meant that he would have to leave his normal life. It meant leaving his comfort and financial security, **“sell what you have”**. It meant no longer finding his life in his possessions, **“give to the poor”**. This was the eternal moment – but he missed it! He missed the offer of finding real life in the kingdom of heaven. He missed the offer of eternal riches of the glory of God, **“treasure in heaven”**. He missed receiving the understanding of the **“mysteries of the kingdom of God”** (**Matt.13:11**). He turned down the offer of discipleship.

There is great reward

There is great reward and satisfaction in taking up the call of discipleship. For the young rich ruler who turned down the offer, there was only sorrow, ***“But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions”*** Matthew 19:22. If we do not take up the call of discipleship we will be dissatisfied, sorrowful and regretful, and not enjoy the blessing of fulfilling the destiny and calling of God on our lives. But when we realise the greatness of the reward it should help us to lay everything aside. ***“Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life”*** Matthew 19:28-29.

The apostle Paul said, ***“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord”*** Philippians 3:8. The reward of discipleship is great. It leads us into our inheritance.

Apostles are to provide the example

It seems that generally in today’s “church” world there is still a great divide between “clergy and laity”, between the ministers and the people. This is not apostolic. This is not discipleship. When Paul spoke to the Thessalonians he said, ***“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power...as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord...”*** 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6.

As an apostle, Paul lived among the ones he preached to. He showed them a pattern of behaviour, conversation and lifestyle. He was also able to say that they ***“became followers of us and of the Lord”***. The word *followers* here means *imitators*. The Thessalonians were able to *imitate* Paul’s lifestyle as exemplified through him and the team with him. Apostles are needed in the discipleship revival as they can say ***“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ”*** 1 Corinthians 11:1.

Learn, receive, hear and see

When Paul wrote to the Philippians he was able to say, ***“The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you”*** Philippians 4:9. Apostles have been given to bring this pattern to the church. The church in the Scriptures is not an institution but a family and a company of disciples that are learning a new life. Apostles and leaders are to provide the example of how to follow Jesus.

- i) Disciples are *learners* – we must be willing to learn, be teachable and correctable
- ii) We are to *receive* from apostles, and other apostolic leaders, the impartation and anointing of the Spirit, by being with them (**Rom.1:11, 2 Tim.1:6**)
- iii) Disciples are to be *hearers* – being taught the Word, the apostles’ doctrine, thoroughly so that they can pass it on to others (**2 Tim. 2:2**)
- iv) Disciples are to be *seers* – watching and imitating the godly lifestyle and manner of life of the apostles and apostolic leaders (**1 Cor.4:16-17, 2 Tim. 3:10-11**)

It is time for disciples to multiply

The Great Awakening for our generation is here. It is time to return to apostolic Christianity, which is a Discipleship Revival. It will need great commitment. It will need submission. It will need accountability. It will need grace and apostleship. God has restored the apostolic ministry to the church to bring about a multiplication of disciples who know how to follow Jesus and live with a ***“conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Phil.1:27)***. With apostles in place and functioning ***“Then the word of God spread, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly...and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith” Acts 6:7***. If you have not joined already, it is time to join in this great awakening and enter the realm of real discipleship. Enter the Discipleship Revival!

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