

The Road of the Discipleship

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This season of Lent is a time to look deeply into our lives as we journey with Jesus. You and I have joined him on this road to Jerusalem and to the cross. It is vital that we reflect on our faith to see where we are as his disciples.

There is no turning back from our commitment to serve and praise the Lord. You and I made a conscious decision to follow him no matter where he leads us. If we chose to follow our own way and to leave the path of believing in him then we move along a byway of wandering. Deciding on Jesus is a life changing event.

While on the road with his disciples, Jesus taught them about what he was to endure from the religious leaders in Jerusalem. Peter did not like what he was hearing and rebuked Jesus. Jesus knew this was to happen to him and there was no turning back to a safe place. This was his destiny and the fulfillment of prophecy.

The Lord made it known to Peter **“Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”** Peter was reminded that his mind must be on the divine and the holy rather than on the human and personal.

Jesus went even further to teach the disciples and others that one must go beyond oneself in following him. This continues to be true for us today. Jesus said, **34...“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.** The follower of the Lord must center one’s entire being and thinking on him as he calls to us every day to faithful discipleship.

Jesus also said **35For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.** He is asking us to give our all to him, to the Gospel and to the divine living. **36For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?** Each of us must give our all in following Jesus and not reject him in our daily lives. He is the Good News of Salvation for all who believe.

There is a story about an evangelistic revival meeting a few decades ago at a football stadium with about 20,000 people. Those folks were sitting on cold bleachers waiting to hear Billy Graham. During his sermon, he related “a story about how he arrived in a small village where he was going to preach. He needed to mail a letter and asked a little boy how he could get to the post office. As the boy gave the directions, Billy Graham invited the boy to come to the meeting where he was going to preach on how to get to heaven! To which the little boy replied, "I am not sure I will come. You do not even know how to get to the post office!"

Well, my friends, the Reverend Billy Graham, a good and faithful servant is now home with God. He was a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ and gave his all

to preaching and teaching the Gospel, the Good News. He gave his life to Christ at an early age and then invited millions upon millions to hear and accept Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. He may have needed directions to that post office but the way he lived his life for Christ he knew he was heaven bound. There is no doubt.

God appears to Abram in the Genesis passage today and asks Abram to lead a life committed to serving him through a covenant or promise. God said, **1...“I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. 2And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.”**

Then God changed Abram’s name into Abraham which means “Father of many.” Sarai’s name was also change into Sarah which means “Princess”, the one who will become the blessed one. She becomes the mother of Isaac and eventually many other kings over the multitudes of many generations.

The covenant of God that is given to Abraham is one where he is given the right to become the father of a multitude of nations. He also led the faithful on the road of fulfillment.

Friends, God through Christ invites us to follow the road of faithfulness and of service by becoming a disciple for life. Of course, many of us wonder if we are truly ready to follow Jesus or if we have the qualifications. Let me share with you a letter from a management consulting service after they had reviewed the qualifications of people who served an organization.

The letter comes from Tim Hansel’s book called, *Eating Problems for Breakfast*, (Word Publishing, 1988, pp. 194-195.)

“To: Jesus, son of Joseph
Woodcrafter's Carpenter Shop
Nazareth 25922

Dear Sir:

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for managerial positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests; and we have not only run the results through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant.

The profiles of all tests are included, and you will want to study each of them carefully.

As part of our service, we make some general comments for your guidance, much as an auditor will include some general statements. This is given as a result of staff consultation, and comes without any additional fee.

It is the staff opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capability.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the

sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew had been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind, and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious, and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man. All of the other profiles are self-explanatory.

We wish you every success in your new venture.

Sincerely,
Jordan Management Consultants”

Those first disciples had all of those qualities or lack thereof. But still, Jesus still invited them to follow him.

My dear sisters and brothers, no matter who we are or what we bring to the Lord, may we follow him with dedicated hearts and minds to serve faithfully. May our decisions be made with the blessing of a God who loves us dearly and wants the best for us as disciples.

May our journeys of faith be filled with blessings which multiply daily. Together, let us serve Jesus on the road of discipleship. We owe our lives to him because he gave up his life for each one of us. He went to the cross for you and for me. With Glory and honor, we praise him.

I close with a faithful statement by Bill Graham that can further point us to where Christ is inviting us to be. May it guide your life as well.

**“Someday you will read or hear that Billy Graham is dead.
Don’t you believe a word of it. I shall be more alive than I am now.
I will just have changed my address.
I will have gone into the presence of God.**

Let us pray: Thank you, God, for calling us to follow your Son Jesus with our whole being – mind, body and spirit. Help us to overcome our timid natures and reluctant hearts to follow our Savior on the road of life. In his name we commit ourselves and rededicate our lives to follow him. In his name we do pray. Amen.

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Scriptural support:

Genesis 17:1-7 & 15-16 (NRSV)

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.”

³Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴“As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

¹⁵God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”

Mark 8:31-38 (NRSV)

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “**Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.**”

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “**If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.**”