

Theological Equipping Class – What is Discipleship?

What is Discipleship?

We use “Discipleship” all the time

- Parkway Mission Statement – “Glorifying God by making Disciples”
- But what does it mean?

Disciples in the Bible

1st Century Disciples:

- The word “Disciple” simply means a “pupil” or “student”
- Rabbis (Teachers) in the 1st century had disciples that followed them and sat under their teaching
 - John 1:35-40 – *“The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus... ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.*

Rabbi Jesus: There’s something different about this Rabbi

- Jesus calls His disciples (not the other way around)
 - Matthew 4:18-22 – *“While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.”*
 - Matthew 9:9 - *“As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.”*
- Who Jesus calls: The lowly. The sinners. The rejects
- Cost of Following Him
 - Matthew 16:24 – *“²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”*
- He’s the Messiah:
 - Matthew 16:13-20 – *“¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven... ²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.”*
- Jesus and Scriptures:
 - John 5:39-40 – *“³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.”*
 - Luke 24:25-27 – *“²⁵ And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”*
 - *“Jesus is the true and better Adam, who passed the test in the garden and whose obedience is imputed to us (1 Corinthians 15). Jesus is the true and better Abel, who, though innocently slain, has blood that cries out for our acquittal, not our condemnation (Hebrews 12:24). Jesus is the true and better Abraham, who answered the call of God to leave the comfortable and familiar*

and go out into the void “not knowing whither he went” to create a new people of God. Jesus is the true and better Isaac, who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us all. God said to Abraham, “Now I know you love me, because you did not withhold your son, your only son whom you love, from me.” Now we can say to God, “Now we know that you love us, because you did not withhold your son, your only son whom you love, from us.” Jesus is the true and better Jacob, who wrestled with God and took the blow of justice we deserved so that we, like Jacob, receive only the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us. Jesus is the true and better Joseph, who at the right hand of the King forgives those who betrayed and sold him and uses his new power to save them. Jesus is the true and better Moses, who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant (Hebrews 3). Jesus is the true and better rock of Moses, who, struck with the rod of God’s justice, now gives us water in the desert. Jesus is the true and better Job—the truly innocent sufferer—who then intercedes for and saves his stupid friends (Job 42). Jesus is the true and better David, whose victory becomes his people’s victory, though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves. Jesus is the true and better Esther, who didn’t just risk losing an earthly palace but lost the ultimate heavenly one, who didn’t just risk his life but gave his life—to save his people. Jesus is the true and better Jonah, who was cast out into the storm so we could be brought in.” - Tim Keller, Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism

- He’s God

- John 20:26-31 – *“²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” ²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” ³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”*

Jesus’s Disciples:

- Union with Christ (“In Christ”)

- Ephesians 1:3-14 – *“³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”*
- Ephesians 2:1-10 – *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath,*

like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

- You are Transformed:
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”
 - Romans 6:5-11 – “⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”
 - Galatians 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Jesus’s Disciple’s Disciples:

- John 17:18-21 – “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰ “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”
- Matthew 28:18-20 – “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- 1 Corinthians 11:1 - “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

Being a Disciples of Jesus

Biblical Discipleship is about a Person, Jesus Christ

- Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is simply loving and knowing Him
- Colossians 3:1-4 – “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

Growing as a Disciple of Jesus Christ

NOT by turning to your own effort

- Galatians 3:3 – “³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”

Growing Deeper

- “Growing” as a disciple of Jesus is going deeper into what you already have (Who you already have)
 - “To grow as a disciple of Christ is not adding Christ *to* your life but collapsing into Christ *as* your life.” – Dane Ortlund, *Deeper*
- Ephesians 3:14-19 – “¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”
- We grow in Christ as we “Look to Him”
 - Hebrews 12:1-2 – “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”
 - “Learn much of the Lord Jesus. For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ. He is altogether lovely. Such infinite majesty, and yet such meekness and grace, and all for sinners, even the chief! Live much in the smiles of God. Bask in his beams. Feel his all-seeing eye settled on you in love, and rest in his almighty arms. Let your soul be filled with a heart-ravishing sense of the sweetness and excellency of Christ and all that is in Him. Let the Holy Spirit fill every chamber of your heart; and so there will be no room for folly, or the world, or Satan, or the flesh.” - Robert Murray McCheyne

How do we grow Deeper? (Rest of TEC Semester)

How to “Look to Him”

- Rest of the semester is the means by which we “look to Him”
- Reading, Memorizing, Studying the Bible
- Prayer, Fasting, Rest
- Physical Health
- Missions/Evangelism
- Study/Thinking
- Work
- Conflict resolution
- Solitude, Silence, Meditation, Gratitude
- The Gathering, Community, Serving