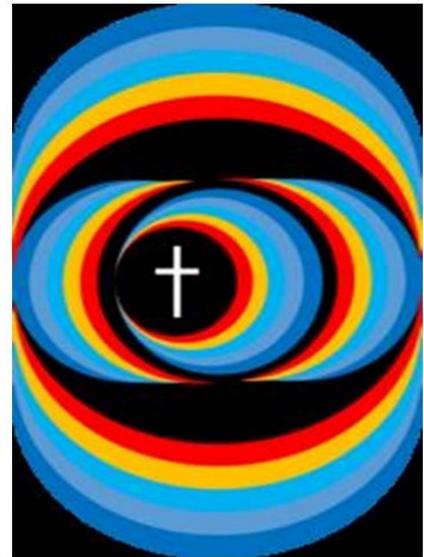


The Inside Out Church:

MOVING TOWARDS A disciple-MISSIONAL MODEL

The Inside Out Church is a church that balances the inside with the outside. What does that mean – balancing the inside with the outside? It is well understood that a church is a gathering of peoples who share the same faith, in the same God, and potentially share the same worldview. The church consists of people who gather inside a building, but who live outside of that building – they gather to worship Jesus Christ, but they scatter to live, work, and play in the world out there.

The Inside Out church seeks to give clarity to how and why we live, work, play, and worship the way we do. The pages you are about to read are a chapter excerpted from the full Doctoral Project book as written by Dale Melenberg. The first two chapters (3&4) utilized for this Study are chosen to reveal the worldly influences on our lives, in and out of the church. The next two chapters (5&6) will reveal the biblical impetus for how we are live our lives, in and out of the church.



Since these excerpts are taken directly out of the completed Doctoral Project, please know they are written to satisfy the academic standards for which they were intended. These chapter excerpts are supplementary to the Sermon Study Series and are not compulsory for reading before or after each study session. They are provided as additional resource only.

CHAPTER 6: THE DISCIPLESHIP ROLE OF MISSIONS

The word disciple simply means pupil or learner, and the church is commissioned to “make disciples” in its efforts to reach the ends of the earth. Matthew 28:19 and 20, commonly referred to as the Great Commission is yet another instance of where Jesus speaks of *going* in his sending out of the church to participate in the mission of God. The making of disciples can be seen as a work of the Triune God throughout the Bible. God, in his triune state, calls selected peoples to first be his disciples before they embark on witnessing to his presence and providence. This Trinitarian work by God is recorded in pre-Jesus times, during Jesus’ time on earth, and post-Jesus times.

The Pre-Jesus Call to Discipleship

The Abramic blessing, as discussed previous, clearly shows the role that God places on his chosen people for the blessing of the world. God is sending them out, but they must first learn to listen and follow God’s leading. Abram certainly demonstrated his willingness to follow when God first called him (Gn12:1,4), but Abram also demonstrated the need to listen to God first before acting. Time and time again Abram goes ahead of God taking the situations into his own hands. The conception of Ishmael (Gn 16) and the twice spoken half-truth of Sarah being his sister (Gn 12 and 20) are but three occasions of Abram going ahead of God; Abram needed to learn to trust and follow God’s lead. God was indeed a patient teacher, even when the next two generations also demonstrated Abram’s tendency to get ahead of God. It was not until after the Exodus that God decided to spell it out for his chosen people on how best to listen and follow him.

When Moses was introduced to God on Mount Horeb, God declared that after his people were freed from Egyptian slavery that they, the Israelites, would come to worship God on the very same mountain (Ex 3:12). But it was at Mount Sinai that God delivered his teachings to the Israelites. The Ten Commandments, along with numerous other laws and codes, were to instruct the Israelites on how to listen and follow God. These commandments could easily be established as the law of the land for the Israelites, but God wanted more than compliant obedience, he was desirous that these become foundational to the way of life for the Israelites. Moses declared it as much when he reviewed the law with the Israelites in his final speeches to them. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 records how Moses promoted the law as a way of living.

⁴Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Moses promoted the commandments of God as a way of life, a way of learning, a way of teaching the next generation. Moses promoted a way of life expressing gratitude to God for his salvation. God's call upon the lives of the Israelites was to listen and to follow his lead – God was discipling his chosen people to represent him to the rest of the world.

The Jesus Call to Discipleship

Jesus did not hesitate to pick up on the call of discipleship that God first institutes with the Israelites. "Follow me" is the discipleship invitation that Jesus gave out. The Gospel according to Matthew shows Jesus' first act of ministry (after preaching that "the Kingdom of God is near.") was to call unto himself disciples (Mt 4:18-22). The Sermon on the Mount follows right after, exemplifying that in being chosen you must first learn to listen. The Sermon on the Mount reveals Jesus not only reinstating the commandments but raising the bar of expectations in meeting them. The sermon describes various aspects of life that call for exemplary living as expected by God. Jesus' call to discipleship includes high expectations of learning to live according to God's ways.

The Sermon on the Mount included instructions on murder, adultery, divorce, the making of oaths, the loving of enemies and giving to the needy; but all of this and more was preceded by Jesus' call to be salt and light to others. "You are the light of the world." he said to his disciples (Mt5:14). This statement along with "You are the salt of the earth." (Mt 5:13) equates to the missional call placed on the disciples. Jesus highlighted this call on their lives when he said, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Mt 5:16). Jesus knew that his disciples must first learn to listen and follow before he could send them out. This is further demonstrated in Luke 9 and 10 where we read about discipleship followed by apostleship – being sent out.

It is unfortunate that the division of chapters occurs where it is placed at Luke 10, for it divides two stories that otherwise might be seen more as complimenting each other. Luke 9: 57-62 tells the story of Jesus' emphasis on discipleship; Luke 10:1-23 reveals the emphasis Jesus placed on sending out of the disciples. The New International Version of the Bible places a heading before Luke 9:57-62 naming it as *The Cost of Following Jesus*; the heading might have been better stated as *The Importance of Discipleship*. Luke 10:1 then states, "After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go." (italics mine) Mission follows discipleship; discipleship precedes mission. The disciples needed to learn to listen, follow, and trust the Lord before Jesus was willing to send them out. "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." Jesus says before he sends out the seventy-two. Jesus' call to discipleship is clearly seen to be a precursor to the call to missions.

The Post-Jesus Call to Discipleship

The Great Commission, whether taken from Matthew, Mark or Luke's Gospel, or taken from Acts 1:8, all reveal the call to missions placed upon the disciples. The rest of the New Testament, especially the Book of Acts, describe how the mission unfolded in reaching the ends of the earth, and this, made possible through the engagement of the Holy Spirit. It is within the Epistles, though, that the call to discipleship is shown more clearly. Each church that received a letter from one of the Apostles has within it clear instructions on how to listen, follow, and trust God more fully. Each letter is written to further instruct the new disciples in the ways of living that Jesus and his Father ask of them. What follows is a simple extraction of texts and phrases taken from the Epistles that demonstrate the call to discipleship and the call to missional living – the call to living in such a way that others "may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Mt 5:16)

The Apostle Paul in his writings uses various phrases throughout his letters to depict discipleship and missions. To the Romans he informs them that "A righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets can testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." (Rm 3:21,22) This righteousness that Paul speaks of is none other than right living, made known to us because "we have the mind of Christ." (1 Co 2:16) The mind of Christ, given to us by the Holy Spirit, also enables our differences of gifting, service and workings to be for the common good of the people (1 Co12:4-6). And the common good of the people is that they might be reconciled to God, "and he has committed to us the message of

reconciliation.” (2 Co 5:19) Paul highlights God’s missional call when he further stated that “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God was making his appeal through us.” (2 Co 5:20) Right living always precedes God’s sending, as is noted in more of Paul’s Epistles.

Paul’s letters to the churches of Galatia, Ephesus, Colossae and Thessalonica, all call for the newly-made disciples to a life of right living, for the purpose of being a Christ ambassador. The Galatians were encouraged to “not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Ga 6:9) The Ephesians were encouraged to “Live as children of the light” (echoes of Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:16), “for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.” (Eph 5:8,9) The Philippians, beloved church of Paul, to them he wrote, “shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.” (Php 2:15,16) The church in Colossae received rules for holy living penned by Paul because they are “God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved.” (Col 3:1-17) The church in Thessalonica were instructed in “how to live in order to please God ... so that [their] daily life may win the respect of outsiders.” (1 Th 4:1, 12). Paul clearly saw the life of the disciples as being the light that others may know God.

James, Peter and John also identify right living as the call of discipleship in order to witness to the ends of the earth. James’ letter is fraught with a call to right living out of a life of integrity, but it hinges on submission to God. (Jm 4:7) Peter calls the disciples to live according to the will of God, urging the disciples to “use whatever gift he has received to serve others.” (1 Pe 4: 2, 10) And John repeatedly bases a disciple’s life on the command to love one another, reinforcing that love in the same way that Jesus himself promoted, “that we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” (1 Jn 3:11, 16) John’s second letter furthers the call of listening, learning, and following Christ when he wrote, “And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.” (2 Jn: 6) John’s encouragement to walk in love following God’s commands harkens back to Moses’ promotion of a way of life that exudes from a life lived as a response to God.

The role of discipleship is key to the mission of God. The disciples must first learn to follow Jesus and obey all that he has commanded before they can be sent out like lambs among wolves, displaying God’s presence for all to see. The role of discipleship, although not called that until the New Testament, is clearly demonstrated in the Bible as a life that has learned to live according to God’s ways. The early church continued this call on the believer’s life, so much so that a compendium of the Apostle’s teachings was captured in the first century as *The Didache and Kindred Documents*.

Commonly known as *The Oldest Church Manual called the Teachings of the Twelve Apostles*, this document promotes the way of living that demonstrates God's holiness.¹

What the chronology of discipleship reveals is that God instructed his chosen people all along the way, beginning with Abram and continuing in the first-century churches. God instructed his disciples in a manner that was fitting for their time and place. The Israelites, just removed from their captivity, needed to know who God was, and how to live in response to his salvation in order to reveal God to the neighboring nations. The Israelites suffering under Roman rule needed to learn how to rise above their oppressors in a way that demonstrated that God was Lord, and not Caesar. Jesus' teachings gave them boldness and confidence to face the culture of their day, and not hide the light of God within them. The Apostles continued this pattern of becoming disciples first before sending out people to the ends of the earth. The early church did the same. The expectation of today's church is no different.

¹ Phillip Schaaf, *The Oldest Church Manual* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885).