

Word On Worship – January 22, 2012

Matthew 28:18-20

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Jesus taught His disciples that faith was required to follow Him. In the beginning of their travels with Jesus, the disciples saw many people come and follow Jesus. Some were following Jesus because He fed them, some because He was performing miracles, still others because where ever Jesus was, there was great attention. They agreed intellectually with Jesus and they got along to go along. But somewhere along the way they stopped following. To be a disciple is not a short-term program, but a way of life.

Discipleship means to learn from and to follow a particular teacher. As a Christian, our teacher and the One we follow is Jesus Christ. As we grow and become more and more like the One we say we follow, then we are to bring other people to that same relationship. That is the heart of the command of Jesus- make disciples. Jesus could have left us with a restatement of the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37-40), with the need to be in prayer, but He didn't. He told us to go and make disciples of all people- but somewhere along the way the Church confused discipleship with programs, with showmanship and with good works. As the fog of confusion grew in the Twentieth Century, the church began shrinking in size, influence and voice. The Church of Jesus Christ needs to get back to what Jesus wanted to be the heart and soul of His Church.

The problem is we want to reap the harvest of a disciple without paying any price. We all want humility and growth, without being humble or working to grow. William Law wrote, “Christianity is not a school for the teaching of moral virtue, or forming us to live a life of decency and gentility. It implies an entire change of life, a dedication of ourselves, our souls, our bodies unto God in the strictest and highest sense of the words.” (*The Works of the Reverend William Law*, Vol. 3, Pg. 263). Making disciples is not a matter of winning others to a philosophy, to make them nicer people who smile more often. The Great Commission begins as a rescue mission that leads to a marathon.

For us to reach out in evangelism, we need to understand the task God has called us to will require us to stretch ourselves out of our comfort zones, to humble ourselves to speak with people we may not have imagined and trust that God can use broken vessels such as ourselves to bring Him glory. All who believe in Jesus Christ receive marching orders with full authority from God to be able to carry out those orders. Discipleship involves saving people from themselves and from hell for all eternity.