

1. Disciples and Scripture (1Q 2014—Discipleship)

Biblical material: Luke 4:1–12, Matt. 12:3–8, 5:17–39, Luke 24:13–32, Acts 1:16–20, John 5:39.

Quotes

- Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*
- Jesus of Nazareth always comes asking disciples to follow him--not merely “accept him,” not merely “believe in him,” not merely “worship him,” but to follow him: one either follows Christ, or one does not. There is no compartmentalization of the faith, no realm, no sphere, no business, no politic in which the lordship of Christ will be excluded. We either make him Lord of all lords, or we deny him as Lord of any. *Lee Camp*
- The true teacher defends his pupils against his own personal influence. He inspires self-distrust. He guides their eyes from himself to the spirit that quickens him. He will have no disciple. *Amos Bronson Alcott*
- Not only did Jesus purposefully enter the wilderness on a regular basis but historically, God seems to prefer meeting with man in these desert regions. *Amy Layne Litzelman*
- When obedience to the Divine precepts keeps pace with knowledge, in the mind of any man, that man is a Christian; and when the fruits of Christianity are produced, that man is a disciple of our blessed Lord, let his profession of religion be what it may. *Joseph Lancaster*
- It is important not only to read God’s Word but to interpret God’s world in the light of the Word. *Cindy Jacobs*

Questions

Why as Jesus’ disciples do we value Scripture so highly? Is there a danger in becoming too “Bible-centered”? How can we best demonstrate our attitude to Scripture? How does this fit into the Great Controversy model? Why are there so many different ways of interpreting the Bible, and how do we decide which is correct?

Bible summary

Luke 4:1-12 details Jesus’ temptations in the wilderness, and how he responded by quoting Scripture. Jesus references the story of David and his men eating the consecrated bread in Matt. 12:3–8, and then quotes Hosea 6:6. In Matt. 5:17 Jesus declares, “Don’t think I came to abolish the law or the writings of the prophets,” and then goes on to comment further regarding the importance of the Old Testament. The story of Jesus’ “Bible study” given on the road to Emmaus is detailed in Luke 24:13–32. Peter references the Scriptures as he begins speaking in Acts 1:16-20.

Comment

The memory verse (John 5:39) is capable of differing translations and therefore interpretations because of the ambiguity of the Greek. It seems best to indicate that Jesus was reproving his hearers for relying on Scripture for eternal life, when it is only God

himself who can make this possible—as revealed in Jesus who came to show us the truth of God himself. Yet Jesus’ frequent quoting of Scripture reveals to us that searching the Bible is a vital activity for all true disciples. We hear God speaking to us, not only in words but also through the experiences of the Biblical characters. We not only receive instructions, but we also see *why* something is important. God gives us his wisdom in context, which helps us to see the underlying principles by which he runs the Universe.

The “road to Emmaus” experience gives us Jesus’ way of sharing the Bible. He makes no personal claims, but he allows Scripture to speak for itself, and to explain the truth—about God’s plan, about salvation, and about himself. In this way he invites discovery rather than imposing his authority.

The Emmaus experience is the model for us. For once convinced, and with their faith energized by evidential truth rather than Jesus’ personal presence, the disciples rushed back to Jerusalem. Their story was not based on compulsion or the miraculous, through Jesus’ “Bible study” that had re-established their faith..

In his compassion, Jesus waited for these two disciples from Emmaus to explain their experience to the others before he appeared to the group. He wanted the reasons for faith to be explained even before he returned to speak personally to his closest friends. As they excitedly talked about what has happened, Jesus appeared. He wanted to be with them immediately, but he chose to wait so the fundamentals of faith could be established before they were overwhelmed by the physical presence of their resurrected Lord.

Jesus wants our faith to be based on carefully-examined evidence. Our words must also have that same ring of truth, without the need to make appeal to gimmickry or emotionalism, signs or wonders, manipulation or authoritarianism.

The same appeal to evidence is seen in the disciples’ preaching—by Peter on the day of Pentecost, Philip to the Ethiopian, Paul everywhere he went. He preached Christ, and him crucified, as part of the whole panorama of God’s evidence that truth really is truth and does make sense. This is in strong contrast to the ‘mystery’ religions of the time that enshrined the principle that religion did not have to make sense, and was better if it did not make sense. That false religious concept is still very much part of modern ideologies...

In contrast, we believe in a God who has acted consistently throughout history, who wishes to reveal the truth, especially the truth about himself. We preach a revealed mystery, truth demonstrated through the evidence. We have the privilege of sharing our faith in a God who makes sense, who does not need to use any means to overpower us, but simply speaks to convict us of what is true and right, and who chose to die at our hands on a cruel cross to convince us of that supreme reality of truth.

Ellen White Comments

He [Jesus] maintained His disguise till He had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in His life, His character, His mission to earth, and His death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by His personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of His life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. When the object of His labors with the two disciples was gained, He revealed Himself to them, that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight. {ST Oct. 6, 1909}

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