

Module 1



The Essence of a Disciple

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LEARNING OUTCOMES :

On completion of Module 1 you will be able to know what is The Essence of a disciple

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES :

On completion of this Chapters you will be able to know:

+ Chapter 1

What is a true disciple

+ Chapter 2

How to become a true disciple

+ Chapter 3

How to define a true disciple

+ Chapter 4

The heart of the disciple

MODULE 1

CHAPTER 1

M1C1

What is a true disciple?

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What is a true Disciple ?

Matthew 28: 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

What does ‘disciple’ mean? A quick study of the word that is translated into English as “disciple” yields some good information that will provide a base for studying what Jesus meant and how he applied the word.

The word in Greek is transliterated mathetes (literally, the learning one) and is derived from the verb manthano which means “to learn”.

It occurs about 264 times in the Gospels and Acts. It means ‘One who learns instruction from another’ or a disciple is likened to an apprentice who learns from his master tradesman. He can also be likened to an imitator of his teacher.

Gleaning the information from the Greek words one finds that a disciple is a person that not only gains knowledge from the teacher but also acts upon it.

It is sad to say that this basic definition already disqualifies many so-called disciples of Christ.

Many people know much about what Jesus taught but never put it into action.

So in essence, a disciple is one that learns from the Teacher and then acts upon it.

This is very important. It is written in Matthew 23 (Jesus speaking):

8 “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. We need to understand, a disciple follows and a disciple learns from the Teacher.

The disciple never replaces the one true Teacher, or takes the role of the teacher. Jesus remains our Teacher and our Lord. We never must assume the role of Teacher, but remain a follower in the service of our King and His Kingdom.

The theme “to follow” is the key to being a successful disciple. In Matthew 4 we read: *Jesus Calls His First Disciples - 18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 20 At once they left their nets and followed him.* Jesus came and called to the two brothers and they followed.

This is simply how we become a disciple.

We heed the calling of our Lord Jesus.

Matthew 28 is the mandate for all believers – firstly to become a true disciple and then to disciple others. How do we disciple?

Simple - follow the example of Jesus.

The 12 disciples (later to be called Apostles for being special messengers) were constantly in His Presence, learning, watching, training and so grew into maturity and unity because of the example of Jesus.

The names of the first 12 disciples of Jesus were Peter, James (the son of Zebedee), John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (the son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot. (Matthew 10:1-4 and Luke 6:12-16)

What has the Lord’s intent been since the birth of the Church?

Discipleship!

Not only to become a disciple (follower of Jesus) but to lead others to become a disciple of the Lord.

It is very important to understand that in essence we are ALL disciples, regardless of our calling and regardless of our mandate.

If you have been called to shepherd a flock, great, but you remain a disciple.

If you have called to be missionary, wonderful, but you remain a disciple.

Let us understand you never stop being a disciple because Jesus remains your master and Lord.

Our first duty and calling is to be a disciple.

Therefore one who keeps on following the Lord and keeps on learning and acting upon what we learn.

As we will also show in this study, there is no such thing as the clergy and laity.

We are all disciples.

We have all been called to follow and to learn from the Lord. Yes, we may have different callings, but as disciples we are all called collectively to build the Kingdom of God.

Now, from the outset, it is important to remember:

- You do not become a disciple because of your theology training education. You are a disciple because you chose to follow Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.
- You are a disciple because you have accepted Jesus and follow Jesus, and you will never cease fundamentally to be a disciple
- A disciple follows only Jesus and the teachings and commandments of Jesus

Again, it must be emphasized that you are a disciple of the Lord once you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

You do not become a disciple once you have gone to Bible School or have obtained a degree in theology.

If you believe and you follow Jesus, then you are a disciple.

Now, we have mentioned the importance of FOLLOWING.

So then, what is the condition to follow Jesus?

- ***OBEDIENCE REQUIRED:***

“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed,” (John 8:31). Not only is follower of Christ to merely listen to the commands of God but to abide in His Word. The word translated as abide is also translated continue, dwell, remain, stand. This means that a disciple hears the word of the Lord, aligns himself with it, and then continues to stay in agreement with it. A true disciple is one that listens to the commands of Jesus and invests himself fully in the words of the Lord.

This is very important, for as we shall see later in this study, a disciple follows not a religion, or the ways of man, or the doctrines of man, or the traditions of a church or of a denomination, but a disciple follows Jesus only who is the Truth, Way and Life.

In Matthew 6 we are reminded that we must first seek His Kingdom. This is what a disciple does – first seeking the Kingdom of God in obedience above all else.

- ***GOD IS ABOVE ALL AND RULES OUR LIVES ABOVE ALL***

A true disciple not only abides in the word of Christ but has a different perspective on his relationships with family and Jesus himself.

In reference to the family Jesus said, *“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple,” (Luke 14:26).*

On another occasion Jesus said in *Matthew 10:34-38: 34 Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.*

35 For I have come to part asunder a man from his father, and a daughter from her mother, and a [newly married wife from her mother-in-law -36 And a man's foes will be they of his own household. 37 He who loves [and takes more pleasure in] father or mother more than [in] Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves [and takes more pleasure in] son or daughter more than [in] Me is not worthy of Me; 38 And he who does not take up his cross and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conforming wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying also] is not worthy of Me.

Jesus is quite clear from these statements that a disciple of His must not value any other relationship higher than their relationship with Him.

If we value anything higher than Jesus then we walk in idolatry, for God should be worshipped and followed above all else.

If any other human relationship takes pre-eminence than that person is not a true disciple. As Jesus said they are, “not worthy of me.”

Consider also the following words: *Luke 14:33: 33 So then, any of you who does not forsake (renounce, surrender claim to, give up, say goodbye to) all that he has cannot be My disciple.*

In this small statement, Jesus obliterates the idea that there is anything that a person could hold onto while pursuing Christ. As the Apostles did, leaving their nets, their financial security, their families, everything, and so do all that follow Christ.

It says in Matthew 6:24 that a man cannot serve two masters.

A disciple therefore leaves behind everything to follow the Master.

Jesus did command that everyone that is to be a devoted disciple of His to put all relationships and possessions in second place to Him, but that is not all that is to be left behind.

The disciple's own life is not to be held higher than Jesus Christ. *“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it,” (Matthew 16:25).*

- **DENY YOURSELF**

Probably the most important teaching that Jesus gave upon what it takes to be a disciple is written in *Luke 14:27: 27 Whoever does not persevere and carry his own cross and come after (follow) Me cannot be My disciple.*

This calls for dying with Christ -- dying to the old attitudes of envy and strife and jealousy and anger and selfishness and pride; and turning to follow Jesus in newness of life.

When we make disciples, we bid people to come and die to their old, destructive ways and to live for Jesus, who loved them and gave himself for them.

A true disciple is therefore one who has died to the self, who love others, who strife to be like the Master, who places God first and who strives to be a humble servant of the Kingdom.

- **TRUST AND FAITH**

A true disciple is one who trusts and has faith in God.

Faith is to believe God can, and trust is to believe God will act on His Word.

A true disciple seeks the Lord's guidance day and night, always willing to lay down the self to gain the glory of God.

- **BE A FOLLOWER**

A believer should be a follower.

A believer should be a disciple.

A disciple should be a follower and a doer of God's Word, commandments, and teachings.

A disciple walks in love, carries his cross, denies the self, lives for others, walks in Spirit and Truth, obeys, is faithful and strives every day to manifest God's glory and holiness by turning away from wickedness and evil.

A disciple follows God's direction and guidance.

A disciple is submitted unto God, seeking a path of manifested sanctification and glorification.

- **BE LED BY THE SPIRIT**

John 3: 5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit[b] gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

In order for us to be an effective disciple of God, we need to be led by the Spirit, for the Lord calls us to be worshippers in Spirit and Truth. We can do nothing without the Holy Spirit, who imparts wisdom, knowledge, counsel, understanding and strength to the disciple to fulfil the Great Commission.

MODULE 1

CHAPTER 2

M1C2

Becoming a true disciple

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We have looked so far in the first chapter what is a true disciple, for a true disciple follows our Lord Jesus and obeys fully and without compromise the teachings, commands and ways of our Lord. A disciple FOLLOWS and LEARNS from the Master.

Remember, a disciple is the one, despite age, upbringing, past, sins or intellect, who accepts Jesus as the one who died on the cross for our salvation and redemption, and then commits to follow God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit with little thought of the self.

A disciple is committed to the dying end to the teachings and the truths that has been taught through Jesus Christ.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT POINT TO REMEMBER – A DISCIPLE FOLLOWS NO MAN OR ORGANISATION BUT ONLY JESUS.

In the Book of Acts, we find the disciple of the Lord moved so powerfully in the Spirit of the Lord because they refused to have no other king except the Lord Jesus.

This is again the crux of being a disciple – following Jesus for He is the Way, Truth and Life.

AT ALL TIMES REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT QUESTION:

What is the goal of the disciple?

Answer:

To be just like his Master. For the disciple of our Lord, it means being like Jesus.

Matthew 10 : 24 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor is a servant or slave above his master. 25 It is sufficient for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant or slave like his master.

The first step on the path of discipleship begins in the exact place where we stand.

We do not have to prequalify to take that first step.

It doesn't matter if we are rich or poor.

There is no requirement to be educated, eloquent, or intellectual.

We do not have to be perfect or well-spoken or even well-mannered.

You and I can walk in the path of discipleship today.

It just takes faith in Jesus.

Nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ spoke the words, "Come, follow me," drawing to himself a group of men that would follow him during the years of his earthly ministry.

Those twelve disciples would quickly multiply to thousands in just a matter of years.

So the question that therefore now remains is how do I become a disciple of the Lord?

You become therefore a disciple of Jesus when you:

- i) Believe He is "The Christ of God", Luke 9:18-20*

And it came about that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?" And they answered and said, "'John the Baptist; but others say, Elijah; and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again.'" And He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."

Following a time of prayer, our Lord asked his disciples this important question of what people think of Him (this incident is also covered in Matthew 16:13-20 and Mark 8:27-30.)

He was seeking to know if the people to whom the disciples had been ministering for the last year in the region of Galilee really understood who He was.

Remember that the Pharisees had already denounced him as a law breaker and a Sabbath breaker who performed all his miracles by the power of Satan.

"John the Baptist," was the first answer Jesus received in response to his question.

In Luke 19:7, we read that Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee, who had beheaded John, became perplexed when he heard of the miracles of Jesus.

He was told that some people thought Jesus was John the Baptist.

But why would the people think that Jesus was the deceased forerunner?

It was because they were looking for a Messiah who would introduce a physical kingdom, but first they would see the forerunner of Malachi who would come with a message of repentance and judgement.

John and Jesus had the same message.

The disciples' second reply was Elijah, the prophet and miracle worker who never died but was taken up into heaven by God some 850 years earlier and was prophesied to return to earth as the forerunner of the Messiah.

Their third answer was, one of the prophets, like the miracle worker Elisha, or even Moses raised from the dead.

Jesus then asked the disciples a second time, "But who do you say that I am?"

This was a very important question.

Jesus was facing the cross, and He needed his disciples to clearly understand His person and purpose on earth, and the part they would play in bringing the Kingdom of God into the hearts of men and women after He returned to his Father.

Now it was Peter's turn to answer, and by the power of spiritual revelation he replied, "The Christ of God" (The Son of the living God, Matt. 16:16).

John would later write of Jesus' incarnation, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

According to Matthew, Jesus said to Peter, *"Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven ."*

How then do you become a disciple of Jesus?

You must believe in your heart that Jesus is the Christ of God, the very Son of the one and only living God, God come in the flesh.

Salvation is found in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

II. Take up your cross daily, Luke 9:21-23

But He warned them, and instructed them not to tell this to anyone, saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Taking up my cross means I admit that it was my sins such as envy, rebellion, pride, lust, murder, adultery, slander and so on that put Jesus on that cross.

But when I placed my faith in Him, I died once and for all to the power of sin, and now because He lives I am able to live a new resurrected life of righteousness by his resurrection power (Romans 6).

The cross of Christ is a daily reminder that our flesh needs to be put to death.

The apostle Paul said years later to the Galatians, *"Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit"* (Gal. 5: 24-25).

Bearing a cross does not mean primarily having hard times.

It means going to Golgotha.

It means dying with Christ—dying to the old attitudes of our sinful ways.

Such ways are of course described in *Galatians 5: 19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

It is about turning to follow Jesus in newness of life.

When we make disciples, we bid people to come and die to their old, destructive ways and to live for Jesus, who loved them and gave himself for.

It is all about giving up your old life so that you can live new.

It says in *Matthew 9: 16 "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. 17 Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."*

In this teaching of Jesus, He reminds us that the new wine is the wine of the New Covenant, sealed by the Blood of the Jesus, and we cannot abide in the Lord as His disciple is we hold onto our old ways (which is the old wineskin).

We must become 'new' in the image of the Lord so that as new wineskins we can carry the glory of the Lord as His disciple.

To follow Jesus means we are not to coddle or cuddle our flesh, nor give it any encouragement or even tolerate it.

Instead we are to reject it together with its selfish desires.

We are to nail the flesh to the cross daily.

Paul tells us that if Jesus is Lord, then *"...we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you"* (2 Corinthians 4:11-12).

We cannot compromise with this world. We are either follow Jesus or the world.

Remember these words of Jesus – *Luke 16:13: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."*

It should also be noted we must take up the cross DAILY.

Why?

Because daily we stumble in the ways of the world.

Daily we need to come to the Lord, repent, learn from our mistakes, grow spiritually and seek our strength in His majesty and power.

There is no such thing as being saved and always saved, but more on that later on in the course.

How then do you become a disciple of Jesus?

You must believe that he is the Christ; take up your cross daily, and ...

III. Be willing to lose your life, Luke 9: 24-27

"For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

The disciples were aware that John the Baptist had "lost" his life daily from the time he was a youth up to the time of his physical death at the hands of Herod and Herodias.

Over the following 30 years, 11 of the 12 disciples would be placed into circumstances in which they would day by day have to give up their hopes and dreams in order to remain faithful to their Lord and their calling.

They would be persecuted, arrested, tried, placed in prisons, beaten, suffer cold, hunger, loneliness, fear and abandonment for the sake of Christ.

"Remember the word that I said to you," Jesus said in the upper room, "a slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you..." (John 15: 20).

Paul would tell his spiritual son, Timothy, some 30 years later that, *"...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" (9:26).* Matthew adds, quoting Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12, *"and will then recompense every man according to his deeds."*

Also consider the trials that Paul endured for the glory of the Kingdom: 2 Corinthians 11: *I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move.*

I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? 30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

Indeed, to follow Jesus is not easy.

To follow Jesus means opposing the carnality of the world, opposing the religious ways of man, opposing sin, opposing the ways of the devil and opposing all and everything contrary to the Word and the Kingdom of God.

To be a disciple calls for strength in the character.

It calls for holiness and purity.

How do you become a disciple of Jesus?

Believe he is "the Christ of God" (Luke 9:18-20); take up your cross and follow Him and then ...

iv) Be baptized in water and in Spirit

Why must we be baptized? Because Jesus was baptized.

Matthew 3: 13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan [River], to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him [vigorously protesting], saying, "It is I who need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" 15 But Jesus replied to him, "Permit it just now; for this is the fitting way for us [k]to fulfill all righteousness." Then John permitted [it and baptized] Him.

16 After Jesus was baptized, He came up immediately out of the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he (John) saw the [l]Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him (Jesus), 17 and behold, a [m]voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased and delighted!"

It says on *Matthew 28: Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."*

In verse 19 of this Scripture, our mission is to "make disciples" for Jesus. "Go and make disciples." The meaning of baptism develops out of this meaning of discipleship.

If becoming a disciple of Jesus means dying to your old life and walking in newness of life with Christ as Jesus taught, then it's almost inevitable that the symbolic act of that conversion should come to signify a death and resurrection. And that's just what happened.

Paul says in *Romans 6:3, 4, "All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."*

So Jesus commands baptism as a normative part of disciple-making because baptism signifies in an outward way what it means to become a disciple—death to self-reliance and a new life of faith following Jesus.

We will be discussing in greater detail the baptism later on in the course.

So to sum up, you become a disciple when you firstly believe He is the Son of God, when you are willing to die to the Self, willing to follow Him and when you are willing to be baptized as a sign that you are laying aside the old man for a new life in Jesus

MODULE 1

CHAPTER 3

M1C3

Defining a true disciple

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Much has been written about discipleship, and indeed, many studies are available on this subject, but let it be noted as a matter of concern that it is because the church is not actively practicing true discipleship that we are struggling to see so few believers walking in true authority.

To define a true believer is not so cut and dry, and it extends beyond merely speaking in tongues or moving in the gifts of the Spirit. It is about a believer walking in Spirit and Truth, endeavoring and striving to become more like Jesus, seeking to grow in intimacy with the Lord by dwelling in the spiritual Holy of Holies and ultimately displaying the fruits of the Spirit.

It is about a believer *being* the church, practicing and living the ecclesia life and above all, being a son or daughter of the Lord.

A disciple, by definition, is a convinced adherent of a school or individual.

In the case of Jesus, His disciples were those who followed Him while He was on earth, as well as those who continue to follow Him and His teachings today.

However, so few believers are being properly discipled and trained to become believers and then taught how to disciple others.

We all know the Great Commission according to Matthew 28.

So who is practicing this command?

Was this command only given to the 12 Apostles?

Was it only given to the leaders and pastors?

No, the Lord was talking to His disciples, implying anybody who follows Him and obeys Him as their Lord and Saviour.

Here is a test.

Go look into the mirror and ask yourself the question how many people have you baptized in water and Spirit?

How many people have you trained and disciplined?

How many people have you taught to follow the teachings of Jesus?

It is all our duty as disciples of the Lord to baptize, to train and to teach - all within the scope of our unique personalities, gifts and talents.

Here is the problem then – we still harbour the mind-set that discipleship is the work alone of the leaders of the church.

This is a fallacy.

Do you follow the Lord?

Then you are a disciple. And if you are a disciple of the Lord, then you have been called to disciple others, teaching them and baptizing them to become more like Jesus.

We are not called to make clones of ourselves, but to lead others to the feet of the Father so that they can grow spiritually from glory to glory in the image of Jesus.

We, however, struggle with the concept of what it means to disciple someone.

Is it discipleship for someone to attend church on a Sunday morning and receive word and teaching?

No, that is word proclamation.

That is not discipleship.

Is it discipleship to attend weekly cell and prayer group meetings?

In some small part it contributes to discipleship, but it is not true discipleship.

To discover the answer to true discipleship, we have to go back to the source – the One who called disciples - who is Jesus.

To understand discipleship, we must understand what being a disciple entailed in Jesus' day. By exploring discipleship as it was understood by a first century Jew in Israel we will gain further insight into how Jesus' disciples would have understood His command to make disciples.

We need to reach that point of understanding that discipleship is ultimately showing someone the true ancient way of walking and living as a son or daughter of the Most High.

Where did Jesus learn to be the perfect Son, or in our logical thinking, the perfect Christian?

Was He trained or taught?

Did He attend any services?

Jesus learned sonship before the foundation of the earth was laid.

He learned about sonship in heaven as taught by the Father.

Before mankind, there was perfect fellowship in heaven between Father and the Son and the Spirit. Jesus was the Perfect Son in heaven before Adam was born and when He came to earth He kept on being the perfect Son.

He just lived the way He did in heaven!

What did Jesus do on earth?

He walked in fellowship and relationship with the Father.

He showed others the way to the Father through Him.

He showed Himself so that we can see the Father.

He was the perfect Son so that we could find the perfect Father.

He died so that we can be sons and daughters of the Father.

Jesus did all those miraculous signs and wonders because of His perfect sonship.

He never betrayed the King of the Kingdom.

He was full of power, as God while human, because He knew what it meant to be a son.

Jesus showed his perfect sonship in His relationship with His earthly mother.

He showed His perfect sonship to the world so that we could all become sons and daughters spiritually because He wants us to serve the Father together in the same intimate and loving way.

What is then sonship?

It is a living, breathing faith relationship.

Sonship, or for the matter daughtership, is not something external, fed by rituals. It is that daily fusion of your spirit and His Spirit.

It is His blood running in our veins, mind connecting with mind, heart with heart, soul with soul, fiber with fiber, bone with bone and morality and immorality.

Sonship is alive; it is something pulsating, something eternal, and something real.

Sonship does not end or begin for it is forever moving and flowing.

It cannot be defined, caged or captured.

It begins not on a Sunday or with prayer and neither does it end so.

It is continuous, it is birth, it is our blood flowing, and it is our hope and dreams.

It is love and endless hope.

Sonship and fatherhood mingled and intertwined, every second and every moment.

ULTIMATELY, YOU ARE A DISCIPLE BECAUSE OF YOUR SONSHIP OR DAUGHTERSHIP IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD.

Our discipleship is defined by our relationship with the Lord.

It is not external or temporary.

It is not institutional or rationalistic or abstract.

It is alive.

It is divine.

The Word says the Lord has known us in the secret place and has formed us in the secret place before we were born (Psalm 139).

Sonship is born in the secret place.

Before we had the means to breathe, the Lord made us in the secret place to be His son or daughter.

In the days of Israel, sonship and daughtership was forged in the Tent of Meeting, in the Holy Place and in His presence.

When Moses went up the mountain, he sat 40 days in the presence of the Father - Moses was taught sonship.

Such sonship was sealed and rebirthed in his heart. Moses wrote in Psalm 91 how he found refuge under the wing of the Lord - that is the secret place, the meeting place - the place of His presence.

The day we are reborn in spirit, we enter His presence, His secret place where sonship and daughtership is again rebirthed in us and given full bloom.

This spiritual condition flourishes and grows and strengthens and gains power like a mighty flood and like a mighty thunder. In the secret spiritual place where divinity and man meet, we find the Father and where we are covered by the Blood of His Son Jesus.

Sonship gains momentum and grows like a tree when we return as a son and a daughter to that secret place – thereby when we return and walk in the presence of the Lord.

For this is how it has always been - the Father teaching His son or daughter, one on one, in His presence, in His way, us covered by His wings and us covered by the Blood.

That is discipleship.

From the beginning of time, since Adam and Eve, the Lord showed us how to live as a son and daughter and also how to attain it.

This is vital for our understanding.

The covenant was a way of attainment, but the Lord's will for how we should live as sons or daughters has never changed.

His idea of being a Christian has never changed but only the means of attainment.

The covenant in the days of Abraham and Moses shone bright with the ways of sonship and daughtership, ultimately preparing all mankind, including Israel, to embrace the perfect covenant of grace.

The Blood of Jesus sealed the perfect covenant of Father with the purpose of birthing spiritual sons and daughters.

The Blood allows us to dwell beyond the veil in the Holy of Holies as we can spiritually again walk with the Lord.

The Blood of the Lamb seals the Covenant by which we become disciples of the Living Lord.

Throughout the history God has made His intention clear: how to live as a perfect son or daughter.

That is what He wants.

No rituals.

He wants sons and daughters, therefore DISCIPLES, who make Him and His Kingdom proud.

He therefore wants followers who are above all spiritual sons or daughters.

He wants disciples who spiritually walk in Spirit and Truth as sons and daughters, who therefore walk under the full authority of God.

Sonship and daughtership is a question of being.

And this is where the Bride still sadly fails in her understanding.

We are called to simply be a son or a daughter.

Ultimately, we are called to be sons and daughters of the divine and eternal Kingdom. In that state of knowing and being, lies our strength and security.

We ARE disciples when we allow God to BE Lord in our lives.

In the end, we are sons and daughters.

We are royalty.

By the covenant and by the Blood, His Kingdom is ours. Seeking the Kingdom is seeking to please the King.

It is about loyalty, obedience and serving.

But we doubt for we walk not as sons and daughters.

We are not *being* a son or daughter, for it should be a normal spiritual state as breathing and sleeping is to our physical bodies.

Being a follower of the Lord is being a son and daughter, every waking second.

It is being that son or daughter in the secret place.

It is being there where the Spirit resides in us and us in the Throne Room.

So it comes down to our character, behavior, attitude, norms, values, priorities, outlooks, perceptions and mind-sets.

Our discipleship should be a reflection of the divine values of the Kingdom.

Only in His presence, in our sonship and daughtership, we know who we are and act so, thereby our fears and insecurities perish at the hand of the One who made us.

In that perfect walk of being, we know the Father as being true and just and loyal, and we can rest from our labour.

Finally, by being and knowing, we trust and walk in faith.

We are His children.

THIS IS THEREFORE TRUE DISCIPLESHIP – DEFINED AS RELATIONSHIP.

SUCH RELATIONSHIP IS NOT DEFINED BY RELIGION BUT IT IS DEFINED BY ABIDING AND RESTING IN THE DIVINE EMBRACE OF GRACE THAT COMES FROM A PERSONAL AND LOVING GOD.

Look at the life of Jesus.

He was perfectly cared for and loved and strengthened to complete what was started.

But He walked with the Father, and His Kingdom is what He cherishes.

If we are true sons and daughters – therefore true disciples - then our Father and His Kingdom are our delight and sole desire.

Sonship and daughtership - this is what the Lord desires.

Our greatest purpose then in life is to become disciples as sons and daughters.

The main purpose of discipleship is to be like Jesus.

Yet, what Jesus came to teach us is that to be like Jesus is to be a perfect son or daughter!

Yes, Jesus taught us through discipleship that ultimately, we must become like Him, therefore the perfect son or daughter, so that we may also sit at the feet of the Father, infilled by the Holy Spirit!

So often we disciple believers for ministry, yet we forget that the greatest purpose of Jesus' ministry was to teach us about sonship and daughtership!

So the young believer above all must spiritually grow from glory to glory as a spiritual son or daughter – then he or she is will be a true follower and therefore disciple.

Jesus after all grew up and lived the life of the perfect Son.

He came to show us how to live as the perfect son or daughter.

He lived in pure relationship with the Father just as Adam had done.

A mayor purpose of Christian discipleship is to learn about the Father.

In Christ's three-year public ministry on earth, He often stated that His goal was to teach His disciples about His Father.

Christ wanted us to know that God is alive, real, sovereign, loving, and is preparing a place for His believers in heaven.

So another purpose of discipleship is to grow in our knowledge of God.

In Philippians 1:9, Paul said, *"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight."*

As we grow to know God, we yearn to know His power and to experience it at work in our lives.

We long to feel His presence more closely and fully than we have experienced previously. We yearn to understand and grow in God's grace.

Bearing fruit for the kingdom of God is another purpose of Christian discipleship.

Our character defines who we are as disciples.

It says in *John 15:8*, *"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."*

It is essential to increase the fruit (or those character virtues we exhibit in our lives) to be productive as well-informed disciples of Christ in order to carry out the responsibilities given to believers such as serving others and spreading the gospel.

Christian discipleship might best be described as training or mentoring program designed to develop individuals to become more like their Saviour.

When Christ became man and lived on earth, He endured all of the same trials, pains, and persecutions that man suffers in order to prove himself as a perfect example for us.

Therefore, one of the primary purposes of Christian discipleship is to emulate the character of Christ.

1 Peter 2:21 says *"to this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps."*

So what did Jesus teach us about discipleship?

It is simple.

He took 12 men and they walked with Him, therefore following Him, for more than three years!

Every day they watched Him – they studied what He did, how He did it.

They watched as He prayed, they watched Him grow and they watched Him intensely.

And what they saw Him do they did!

That is discipleship.

True discipleship is when a believer, who is walking in the maturity of the faith, takes a young believer under his or her wing.

In today's world no one can be in the company of another 24 hours a day!

But, as the true believer, we must allow enough time for this young believer to "follow" us to the cross and the feet of the Father – implying that the young believer should be allowed to watch, and study and learn and practically and theoretically learn for a time from the mentor. However, the young believer should be learning not to become a clone of the mentor, but must grow in the image of Christ.

The mentor, like Paul, serves as spiritual father or mother, showing the way to the true Teacher.

The mentor, through practical and theoretical impartation, in maturity and in Spirit, takes responsibility for that young believer until he or she grows in spiritual maturity.

Can we comprehend this?

We are not talking about teachings a young believer now or then or simple word proclamation.

Discipleship is mentoring.

As the mature believer you are in essence the spiritual father or mother to the young in spirit.

But can we comprehend the implications?

Just as the 12 followers did exactly what Jesus did, those who disciple must with great responsibility and accountability lay the correct foundation so that the young believer, by studying and learning from his mentor, can grow strong in His faith and the character of Jesus.

To what purpose?

So that the young believer can then disciple other followers of the Lord!

True discipleship implies that we must allow the young believer the full opportunity to learn predominantly from the mentor.

But this demands maturity and wisdom from the mentor's part, who should know that all the flock belongs to Jesus.

We are only called to train and equip until that young believer grows stronger as a disciple so that ultimately he or she may disciple someone else.

Jesus taught us that the correct way is for a young believer to come under the wing of a more mature disciple.

This disciple/mentor must through a strong bond of friendship show the young believer the ropes and teach him practically and theoretically.

If this mature disciple is a true follower of the Lord, he or she will be walking in the fruits of the Spirit and will be wise enough to lead him ultimately to the feet of the Lord and encourage him to learn from others.

But this mentor should remain the spiritual father until the time is ripe for the young believer, now spiritually grown, to go out, minister and make disciples.

This is therefore the true purpose of discipleship and how to define what it means to be a disciple - to lead people to become like Jesus.

Jesus could handle 12 disciples on a very intense and personal level.

In our lifetime we will probably be training about six to seven disciples.

Yes, that is all.

Remember, discipleship entails an intense journey that you walk with someone, and in our case this journey could take many years before that person is ready to disciple another and become a mentor.

Even then, for the rest of your life you will remain a spiritual father or mother to that disciple.

This entails a lot of work and commitment and effort.

It also entails a lot of responsibility and being accountable.

But can you see the picture emerging?

If we properly disciple, then we will have a Bride full of mature believers, equipped and trained properly, ready to equip others.

This is what Jesus did with the 12 – who then became 11 – yet at the outpouring of the Spirit they were so empowered that the entire Christian movement was set alight!

Why?

Because Jesus properly discipled and mentored 12.

Jesus also did a lot of word proclamation and He was constantly teaching the crowds, but He only had 12 disciples who walked with Him and learned from Him constantly!

To Paul, discipleship is about imitating Christ.

This is not a New Testament phenomenon.

Discipleship was the common method by which rabbi's trained and taught disciples to imitate them.

Those disciples then went on to become rabbis training their own disciples and so on.

What distinguishes Jesus' model is that we, as His disciples, are commanded to raise other disciples, not for ourselves, but for Him.

On his second missionary journey, Paul takes the young man Timothy under his wing (Acts 16), and from that time Timothy goes everywhere with him, being taught the doctrines of the faith, being trained in the work of the ministry, being shaped by the daily disciplines of the Christian life.

Paul pours his life into Timothy, reproducing himself spiritually into the young man of God.

By doing so, Paul rises up another collaborator in the Gospel; Timothy will ultimately serve as bishop of the Church in Ephesus Paul raised Timothy to be a disciple after the heart of the Lord.

The problem is that we hardly have disciples anymore.

We have a lot of Christians going to church and attending weekly meetings, but they are not walking with a mentor to ultimately like the 12 and in faith go out and making other disciples!

It is the simple procedure of multiplication.

We have many students and learners, but far too few sons and daughters walking in the Spirit and Truth under the authority of Jesus.

Is this principal of discipleship only exclusive to the New Testament?

No, because God is always the same and has always been the same.

Let us look at a couple of examples of where mentoring takes place.

Look at the prophet Elijah, who technically disciplined Elisha.

Look at Moses, who technically disciplined Joshua.

In both these cases, we find a process of “following”.

Elisha walked side by side with Elijah, while Joshua was in the desert with Moses for 40 years.

Both these men studied and learned before they took upon themselves the mantle.

In conclusion, what is the definition of a disciple – A disciple is one who follows Jesus and then ultimately disciplines’ others to become a disciple by following Jesus.

We will look more in detail regarding the process of how to disciple someone later on in the course.

After all, we will all do it in our own unique way.

In conclusion, discipleship is defined by relationship.

Discipleship implies we live, walk and breath as sons and daughters of the Lord.

We are disciples because of our relationship with the Lord.

Without relationship, there is no real discipleship, only someone who has been shaped into becoming a Christian through religion and tradition.

Want to be a true disciple?

Then walk with God in a close, living and real relationship.

MODULE 1

CHAPTER 4

M1C4

Heart of a disciple

Layout by E Cloete

LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

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In order to understand what it means to be a disciple in nature, we need to study Matthew 10 which reads like a manual.

This is like a guidebook of sorts for any disciple who truly follows Jesus.

When we read Matthew 10, we get a very good understanding of what it means to be a disciple of God. Jesus thus sums up the 'heart' or the essence of what it means to be a disciple when He speaks to his disciples as captured in this Scripture.

In the very first sentence we read: *Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.*

Jesus therefore deals swiftly with the authority of the disciple when He says that He has given the power and authority to the disciple to counter the works of the unclean spirit, and to drive and to cast them out.

He has given the disciple the authority to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease, all in the Name of Jesus. Jesus granted this authority not only to the 12, but also the 70 and also to us who follow in His footsteps.

A disciple therefore walks in authority.

A disciple has the authority to loosen and to bind, to tear down strongholds (2 Corinthians 10) and to bring the Light where darkness exists.

Take note: We will discuss the matter of authority later on in the course.

We then find a list of names of the disciples ...

2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Why is this important?

You see, a disciple is known by God.

A true disciple is even known by Satan.

A true disciple is known by name.

We can fool man by our clever words and being very pious in our behaviour, but only the Lord knows if we are truly His children or not.

Only the Lord knows if we truly know Him and serve Him and love Him. A true disciple is therefore KNOWN in the spiritual realm and will thus walk by such authority.

2 Timothy 2: 19 But the firm foundation of (laid by) God stands, sure and unshaken, bearing this seal (inscription): The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names [himself by] the name of the Lord give up all iniquity and stand aloof from it.

So many “believers” try to fool the spiritual realm and pretend to be walking in the anointing and authority, but the spiritual realm KNOWS whose heart is sold out for the Kingdom.

This is the truth of the matter.

God knows it, the devil knows it, and every angel and demon is aware of it.

A true disciple walks in authority because he has a legal standing in the spiritual dimension, while someone who is not walking with God is an imposter and such an imposter is always quickly exposed when it comes to the matters of the spiritual.

The Lord is looking for true disciples, but such a disciple will be known for they walk in Truth and they walk in God’s Glory and they walk by the Spirit.

For a disciple, there is no pretense and no need to be hypocritical – they simple exist in Christ and therefore their entire life is about Christ.

So, when we find a list of names of disciples, it is a declaration that these disciples are known, they are real and they serve the true Master.

Unto such disciples the Lord grants all authority by His Name so that the disciple can serve the purpose and plan of the Kingdom.

It is these days easy to be known by people.

Question is, are we known in the heavenlies and regarded as a friend and a disciple by the Lord?

If so, we walk in authority, for the power comes from high, not from below.

The quickest way to also test of someone is a true disciple is if you put him or her in a confrontation with a demonic presence.

The presence will know the true sons and daughters of the Lord.

But these days the Church is running away from such confrontation because it exposes us to be disciples only by name and not by our heavenly recognition.

A true disciple is not formed by all kinds of titles gained through education, or through money or status – a true disciple is formed by his relationship to God, how much he submits and yields and is willing to lay down the crown of the self.

A true disciple only serves God and none other.

But these are the days that the true and the fake disciples will be exposed, for the one walks in God's true power, truth and authority [accompanied by real signs, wonders and miracles] and the other by deception, spiritual frailty and flesh.

The fake disciples operate by the metaphysical, by the pseudo spiritual and by religion, not relationship.

To illustrate this point, read *Acts 19: 11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. 13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*

The evil spirits knew Paul as a disciple and so Paul walked in authority.

The Jewish exorcists were not known by the demons, for they were not true disciples and so were exposed.

From verse six in Matthew 10, we get a clear indication of what it means to be a disciple. It reads: *6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.* A true disciple therefore has a heart for the lost. For the needy.

For the sick.

For the downtrodden.

For the oppressed.

Why?

Because Jesus has such a heart – He came to save the sinners, lift up the weak, set the captives free from spiritual and emotional bondage and He came to give hope to those who have lost all hope.

The disciple after all is like the Master, just so the disciple now needs to follow Jesus who has such a heart for the lost and the troubled.

John the Baptist was the voice in the wilderness that cried repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.

Still today, there should be a similar cry of the disciple and it should be the cry of the follower of Jesus to the lost world.

We need to go to those who do not know Jesus and to cry that it is time to repent of our ways for indeed, the Kingdom of God is at hand.

The Kingdom of God is already at hand because Jesus came 2000 years ago and He has already established His kingdom in heaven.

The kingdom only has to manifest in its fullness at the end of all time with the coming of the New Jerusalem.

In the Great Commission, Jesus told His disciples that they must go into the entire world to preach the Good News and to teach all the things that Jesus taught them.

One of the key mandates of the disciple is to preach and to go and teach the Good News.

It is the mandate, the purpose and the calling of all disciples to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is at hand and that we need to repent and turn to Him.

John 20:21 New International Version (NIV): Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

In verse eight, Jesus continues with the mandate of the disciple when He says they are called to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons.

Again, we are talking about authority, but then this is authority which flows from God unto His true followers.

Jesus also speaks about freely receiving and freely giving, for this should remain the heart of the disciple.

The disciple is not somebody who lives for his own glory and he does not love the self or live for his own pleasure or for his own fame. In Matthew 5, Jesus emphasises in the Beatitudes that blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the kind and the kind.

The disciple lives for God, and only for the Glory of God and so the disciple will go into the world for the simple reason to glorify God.

The disciple lives for the Beatitudes.

Let us then read the following out of the chapter: *9 “Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— 10 no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. 11 Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. 12 As you enter the home, give it your greeting. 13 If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. 15 Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for that town. Jesus then speaks how the disciples should not to take anything on their journey, like gold or silver and that they must not take any provisions or any clothes.*

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 6 that a disciple must first seek the Kingdom of God and its righteousness and then the rest will be added.

That is the heart of a disciple – God’s Kingdom and the Glory of such a Kingdom above self-glory and self-enrichment or glorification.

This is what Jesus was emphasizing - a disciple of God must first and always put his trust and faith completely into the hands of God, and that a disciple must not worry about the things of the world like food or clothing because the Father will provide for the disciple.

So therefore, in Matthew verses nine and 10, we are reminded that a disciple must always and in all things trust and rely upon God.

Jesus tells them not to take sandals, food or clothing, not even gold or silver, because He was teaching them that they must have trust and they must have faith – like a mustard seed - in the living God.

Jesus was teaching His disciples that they must first seek the Kingdom of God and wherever they go the Lord will take care of them. A disciple must rely and trust and lean upon God.

A disciple's will is subjected and submitted to the will and way of the living God.

The heart of the disciple is thus God's Kingdom, and the Kingdom is his source, his strength, his joy, his hope and his love.

A disciple lives for God and God alone.

We then read the following: *12 And when you go into a household, greet it. 13 If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city!*

Jesus provides us with a truth to ponder.

For Jesus is sayings to his disciples that wherever they are going, they must leave their peace whenever welcomed, but if a house or town doesn't welcome them then they must let the peace return to them.

So often we are afraid of the opinion of the world, afraid to offend, and so often as disciples we want to please the world and we want to please man, but we forget that the mandate of the disciple is to stand for God's Truth and to uphold such Truth.

We are not here to please man, but God. After all, it is all about God and His honour, and such honour the disciple must uphold and fight for.

Luke 12: 8 "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God."

Jesus makes it clear to his disciples what is important is His word and His very presence that abides and dwells in His disciples.

For in John 15 Jesus says that if you abide in Him then He will abide in us.

Therefore, for the disciple, the truth of God and the presence of God should and must be their desire and they must revere and fear God and not man.

A disciple would rather be a fool in the eyes of man than a fool in the eyes of God.

In Luke 10, Jesus sends out the 70 disciples. *17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."*

The lesson we learn from Luke 10 is that a disciple always carries the concerns of God on his heart.

He must never glory in his own flesh, own achievements, abilities or the favour he finds.

It should remain of utmost importance for the disciple that he always rejoices because his name is written in heaven.

Let us now read verses 16 to 20: *16 "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. 17 Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. 18 On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say, 20 for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*

Here, the Lord reminds the disciples that He is sending them out like sheep in the midst of the wolves.

He tells them to be weary and to be wise as serpents and to be innocent as doves.

The Lord reminds the disciples and us that we need to be humble and kind and contrite at heart, but we also need to remain vigilant, we need to be alert as warriors and watchmen.

We must always be willing to act according to the inner strength and inner guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Still today the Lord sends us out as disciples like sheep in the midst of wolves and still today we need to be very careful.

We must remember that Satan roams like a devouring lion.

In verse 17, Jesus tells His disciples to be on guard against men whose ways or nature is to act in opposition to God for they will seek to destroy the work of the disciple.

The Lord also tells the disciples to beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

Jesus warns the disciples that they will be brought before governors and kings for the sake of Jesus so that they can bear witness and to act like a testimony for God. Jesus, however, encourages them not worry about what they will say for it will be given to them in the very hour and the moment when needed.

After all, it is not they who speak, but the Spirit of their Father who speaks through them.

This again reminds us that it is by the might and power of the Holy Spirit that a disciple should be operating.

A disciple cannot operate according to his own flesh, strength, wisdom or insight.

A disciple is reborn in Spirit, worships in spirit and truth, and seeks and is led by the Holy Spirit.

Only then will a disciple succeed in the Great Commission.

We will discuss the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciple later on.

Still today we have to realize as disciples that we are called to preach and teach a word and a message that confronts the ways of the world.

Jesus says He did not come to bring peace on the earth.

Many men and women in history have come against the Gospel of God for it is a Truth that they don't want to hear or listen to and they will fight it and they will resist and even revolt against the Truth.

After all, the Truth is a double-edged sword that exposes the darkness.

As disciples of God we will always be persecuted and there will always be opposition.

Did not Jesus say in Matthew 5 in His Beatitudes that blessed are those who are persecuted?

We think sometimes it is all about God's blessing to be a disciple and yes, the Lord will bless those who follow Him and who abide in Jesus. But the Lord makes it clear it is not always going to be easy.

Disciples of God are involved in a spiritual war (Ephesians 6), for they are part of God's army.

We are involved in spiritual battles every day, as we fight for the lost, the spiritual dying and the spiritual needy.

Satan is waging a war since the beginning of time, but we have been called to be warriors, watchmen and we are called to be servants.

Just like in the days of Nehemiah when the walls were built by men who carried the sword in one hand a construction tool in another, so we are called to both warriors and builders of God's Kingdom.

Such is the way of the disciple.

We are called to go to a broken world, and we are called to go to a people who are resisting and even rebelling against God.

The Lord thus reminded His disciples and He is reminding us today that we must not fear and we must trust and have faith in Him.

When Jesus said to His disciples that they do not have to worry about what they are going to say, He was reminding them to have faith and to put their trust in His divine wisdom.

Then we read in our chapter of study: *21 “Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22 And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

How the Lord reminds us of the challenges and obstacles that we will face as disciples, for this is not an easy ride, since this world belongs to the devil for a while.

The disciples are reminded they will be hated by all for His Name’s sake but they need to persevere and endure.

Jesus reminds us in verse 23 (second part of the sentence) *For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.* It has been a problem that for the last 2000 years there has been far too few disciples of the Lord.

This is why Jesus said that the harvest is great but the laborer’s are few.

There have been many Christians following a religion but not disciples following God as a living faith.

Indeed, the harvest is expanding {there are about 7 billion people on the planet} but the workers aren’t really multiplying in the same strength to keep up with the demand and to fulfil the Great Commission.

Now look at the following verses: *24 “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!*

How the Lord reminds us that he is God and that we are man, and that He is Jesus and we are His disciples.

In church today we want to be the demigods and we want to be greater than the master, because so often we think our way and our programmes and our methods is greater than the purpose and plans of God. Indeed, many are the plans of man, but the plan of God prevails!

Verse 24 speaks of pride, for pride was the fall of Satan. In order to be a true disciple we need to remain humble, to know our place in the spiritual realm, to remain pure of heart, and we need to manifest His holiness and righteousness to the Glory of God.

How verse 25 should strengthen our resolve, for if the world called Jesus a demon [Beelzebub], how much more will they then mock the disciples of God!

This is the way of the disciple.

A disciple is an enemy to the ways of the world, and we will often be ridiculed, mocked, persecuted and even rejected.

To be a disciple means to follow God and not the world.

It means to follow the truth and not the lies and the deceptions of the world.

Jesus therefore encouraged His disciples to stand strong in the Truth and to remain standing upon the rock of Jesus. Glory to God!

In verse 26, we read: *Therefore, do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed and hidden that will not be known. 7 "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.*

We do not have to fear mankind or the world or the devil because God is with us.

God has given us His Spirit by which we operate in the gifts of wisdom, knowledge and discernment.

God gives us wisdom and insight and the anointing to walk in authority to be victorious and to overcome!

A disciple walks in authority and operates on a supernatural level, living a life of the supernatural for our God is a supernatural God for whom nothing is impossible!

Indeed, a disciple lives and operates in the supernatural, and the Lord reveals to His disciple's deeper truths and He speaks about the deeper meanings and secrets.

To His disciples He shares His heart so that the disciples can act and move and pray according to what Jesus teaches us and what Jesus reveals.

We therefore do not have to fear because God is with us and He will show us all things to his Glory so that we can expose all things that are hidden in the Name of Jesus.

The Lord will reveal all things that are in the darkness and in the shadows because God is Light.

Jesus teaches us that we must as disciples be the light unto the world (Matthew 5) because when our light shines it shines upon the darkness and upon the shadows and it shines upon the ways of the enemy and it shines upon the things that are forbidden, evil and corrupt.

That is why we need to let our light shine so that God will be glorified, so that evil can be exposed, so that strongholds can be exposed, which will lead to deliverance and freedom for many who are held as spiritual slaves.

Indeed, God has called the disciples to walk in victory and power and in authority so that the ways and the schemes of the devil can be revealed once and for all.

The disciple can never be ashamed of God!

A disciple needs to constantly fight the good fight of faith, and a disciple will stand with God no matter what, and a disciple will pursue the will of God no matter the terrors or the threat.

This is the mark of the disciple, for a disciple will openly declare the word of God to a broken world no matter the persecution and the trouble that waits upon one's path.

A disciple believes in Psalm 91, for we are under the shadow of the wing of the Almighty! Why shall we fear when God is with us?

Yes, a disciple loves God, loves His Kingdom, loves His people, loves the broken world, and because of that love, will not shy away, be ashamed or be reluctant, but press on and seek God's Glory.

Lastly, let us take to heart the concluding words of this chapter as spoken by Jesus: *40 "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41 Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward."*

Discipleship is all about God, about His Love, His Truth, His Glory and serving Him.

For then we shall walk in His Presence and in Spirit and Truth.

For then we shall walk as true disciples.