

Doing and Saying – a Christian Pilgrimage

Week 82: The Adventure Begins

Day 567: Uh-oh!

What do you mean? You want me to teach, imitate Jesus, and baptize? I have so many questions! I do not know where to begin. It's not as if Jesus is just sitting here able to answer my every question, you know.

Well, actually He is, but let's not argue about that at present.

Let's not argue. So, what am I to do? You've given me an impossible task; one I cannot accomplish.

I understand. I think it's time to talk about discipleship.

Disciples is learning, no? I've been learning for at least the past ... 567 days ...

Good! I am very glad. But "learning" is not all discipleship is. Much of the content of what I'm about to lead you through is from ideas contained in *Being Disciples* by Rowan Williams (a former Archbishop of Canterbury). I highly recommend the book.

Discipleship is, broadly speaking, the effort to emulate someone else in your own life. In our case, Christ.

Copy Christ, yes.

Not exactly copying – it's more like becoming so that you present your own version of Christ – it's as if you and Christ are mixed together into a new creation.

What do you mean?

Well, if Christ is a milkshake and you are chocolate while I am a strawberry, you may become a chocolate milkshake and I a strawberry milkshake. Each represents ourselves in the image of a milkshake. In the same way, you represent Christ, and I represent Christ, but we may be very different "flavours" of Christ. We are ourselves, and we are Christ. The church views that we become the truest representation of ourselves that we can actually be: ourselves wedded with God (it calls this "sanctified"). One being, though, not separate personalities or competing egos. I become the most "myself" that I can possibly be.

This is going to be complicated, isn't it?

Hopefully not! There are a few concepts we'll have to get our heads around though.

Think of all the gifts and attributes God has given you. What flavouring do you add to the "milkshake"? If Christ had your gifts and attributes, what kind of life would He lead? In other words, how would your life emulate Him? Write down some of your thoughts.

Share with those you trust.

Day 568: A disciple

The idea is that every day, Christ comes rising up out of you. Not as something you have to strive for, but rather as a natural transparency of your daily life. That is the outcome of being a disciple.

And how do I get there?

☺ That's where the striving comes in. We strive to create an environment where:

1. Everything you think, say, or do is open to Christ and the Holy Spirit.
2. You are with a learning community whose members are on a likewise journey.

Discipleship isn't something we "put on" over our daily lives. Discipleship is a mode of living. It is a state of being. It IS our daily lives.

Discipleship, as Rowan Williams says, is a relationship that continues. To be a disciple in Jesus' time on earth was to commit yourself to living with the teacher all the time, until you were able to go out and teach on your own. You weren't there to note some ideas which may be helpful, you were there to be changed in a fundamental way. You were there to experience life through the perceptions of the master, and respond as the master would.

First question: do you want to be a disciple? Do you want to be fundamentally changed, so that when people are around you, they are around a form of Christ? Do you want to get as close as possible to the image God had in His mind, when He created you as an Image of Him? I must warn you, this may require change, depending where you are at present on the journey.

Share with those you trust.

Day 569: Living expectantly

Be expectantly aware.

What do you mean?

Be aware of everything going on around you, as best you can – and then, expect Christ to manifest Himself in what is happening. Live in a posture that is both relaxed and attentive, always open to the possibility that Christ is there, that God's Kingdom is breaking in.

Disciples stay alert and attentive, watching and listening. Just as the original disciples watched and listened to Jesus, a disciple of today tries to do the same – watching and listening for Jesus – what is Christ giving, saying, or doing, through this person? Through this group? Through this event?

What are some ways you can be more aware of Christ moving around you?

Share with your fellow explorers.

Day 570: Following – where we'd rather not go ...

A disciple is a follower.

I knew that.

This means we go to where the Master is, to where the Master goes – even if we'd rather not.

As Jesus said, "if you would be my disciple, count the cost!" Things we think are natural and comfortable are not necessarily what we'll be doing. Places we'd like to go are not necessarily where we'll find ourselves. The place and the doing are defined by the Master, not the Follower.

Being with the Master means you will eventually be defined by your relationship with Him. You will be defined by a love beyond comprehension, which will increase your love as well.

You will find yourself in the company of people who Jesus seeks to have company with. This is often the excluded, the disreputable, the self-hating, the diseased, the rejected. They may often be your companions.

Being a disciple means not choosing who you associate with but choosing Jesus – and being willing to relate with those He chooses to associate with, whoever they may be.

If you were defined by a love beyond comprehension, what would you do? Who would you be with? What does "choosing Jesus" mean?

Share your thoughts with your fellow explorers.

Day 571: Close Relationship

We are to be with Jesus. Whoever He is with, whatever He is doing, we are to be there with Him. He will guide one of us to one specific place, a second to another. We are not to only be with Him in His work in the world though; we are to be with Him in closeness. We follow Him not just to serve and do His works; we follow Him by the Holy Spirit to have the same relationship with Him that He has with the Father. A close, intimate, loving relationship bound up in the life of the Trinity.

Just as Jesus said He only did what He saw the Father doing, likewise His disciples only do what they see Jesus doing. This is a sustained, eternal, and unbroken relationship. This is not “go over there and do this, then let’s meet up at the end and debrief,” but rather “let’s go over there together and do this.” Through the Holy Spirit, in the Son, bound to the Father. We see and do because God, Father and Son, sees and does.

As individual humans, we never experience the closeness of relationship with each other which is being suggested here. The relationship with Christ which we pursue is so that Christ knows every thought and word of ours, and we know every thought and word of His, in whatever circumstance we find ourselves. It is totally open, transparent, and loving. It is the fullness of shalom. In your own words, describe what such a relationship with Christ in your life might be like.

Share with your fellow explorers.

Day 572: The Starting Point

The first thing is the desire and acceptance to be in Christ's company all the time.

The desire and acceptance?

Sometimes you will desire it; sometimes you will accept it even if you do not desire it at that moment. The disciple never leaves the Master unless the Master orders them to.

So that means a life of prayer?

Prayer in its many forms yes. Also, seeking the company of other disciples. Also, seeking the revelation of Christ in the bible. Seeking all three with the attentiveness and expectancy that Christ will reveal Himself to you in one or all of them. The point of prayer, other disciples, the bible, is not that they are the endpoint, but that they are methods of transport into the heart of Christ. We seek ever deeper attentiveness and understanding of the bible, of the sacraments and life of the Body of Christ, of each other, of ourselves, of our conversations with God, and of the life situations around us, looking at everything with expectancy that God will reveal Himself in each of those, on a continuing basis.

It means, even when there are times, long or short, when we do not see God, we do not feel God, we do not perceive God, that we are still willing to go where Jesus is and be in the company of people He loves, letting His relationships be made, letting His actions come through, letting ourselves act like a funnel for Christ to pour through just as Christ acted as a funnel for the Father's will. Even though we may feel dry and empty, we accept Christ rising, and allow Him to change ourselves, our contexts, our world. Always attentive, always expectant, not letting our emotions dictate, but rather letting Christ dictate us.

Ultimately, the disciple becomes a place where God can be made manifest in the world, through the Holy Spirit into Christ, and through Christ into the Father. Through the living disciple then, the world encounters the living God.

Where (or how) do you most easily encounter Jesus? What would it be like for those around you to encounter God through your words, your listening, your actions, your stillness, your being in their midst? How would it change them? How would it change you? Write down some thoughts.

Share as you feel appropriate.

Day 573: Rest

Rest, receive nourishment, feed both body and soul. Reflect on the past week and care for your needs (body and spirit). Pray. Dedicate this day to God. Worship! Fill yourself with Light. In the evening get together with a group you trust and share what you would like to from the previous week – good points, hard points, what you've learned, what you've struggled with, etc. Decide again if you wish to continue journeying together or want to stop.

Know that God loves you. Celebrate, Rejoice, Give thanks, talk and walk with God. Be in shalom. Love. Pursue what is healthiest. Order your life as one pursuing facilitating as many people as possible to find the Kingdom of God. Be brave, trust God, Love.