

"THE GREAT COMMISSION ACCORDING TO MATTHEW"

INTRODUCTION

1. In Matthew's account of "The Great Commission," notice the main thought of Jesus' command...
 - a. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" - **Mt 28:18-20**
 - b. Jesus wanted His apostles to **make disciples**
2. Are you a disciple of Jesus?
 - a. More than likely you believe in Jesus
 - b. You might even be one to attend church services regularly

[But is that what it means to be His disciple? Let's take a close look at...]

I. THE MEANING OF A DISCIPLE

A. THE DEFINITION OF A DISCIPLE...

1. The word "disciple" literally means a learner
 - a. It denotes "one who follows another's teaching" - **Vine**
 - b. A disciple was not only a learner, he was also an adherent
 - c. For this reason disciples were spoken of as imitators of their teachers
 2. The goal in being a disciple
 - a. As stated by Jesus: to be like the teacher - **Lk 6:40**
 - b. To be His disciple, then, is to strive to be like Him!
 3. According to Paul, this coincides with God's goal in the redemption of mankind, that they be conformed to the image of His Son - **Ro 8:29**
- **Do you have a strong desire to follow Jesus and become like Him? Unless you do, it cannot be said that you are truly His disciple!**

B. THE MARKS OF A DISCIPLE...

1. One who abides in the words of Jesus - **Jn 8:31**
 - a. This would imply being a diligent student of the teachings of Christ
 - b. It also requires one to be a doer of the Word - **Mt 7:21-27; Ja 1:21-25**
 2. One who loves the brethren - **Jn 13:34-35**
 - a. With a love patterned after the love of Jesus ("as I have loved you")
 - b. With a love that is visible to the world ("by this all will know")
 - c. Made possible when we have been born again - **1 Pe 1:22-23**
 3. One who bears much fruit - **Jn 15:8**
 - a. Notice the word "much" (also found in verse 5)
 - b. Jesus is not talking about an occasional good deed
 - c. But a lifestyle which prompts people to glorify God! - **Mt 5:16**
- **To be a disciple of Jesus means more than just a casual church member; it requires commitment to the teachings of Christ, the love of brethren, and bearing fruit**

[Now that we understand the nature of discipleship how does one begin?
For the answer we return to our beginning text (**Mt 28:19-20**)...]

II. THE MAKING OF A DISCIPLE

A. IT INVOLVES BAPTISM...

1. **Why baptism?**
 - a. Remember the goal of discipleship: to be like Jesus
 - b. He was holy and sinless, yet we are to be like Him
 - c. Fortunately, baptism is described as an act of faith which puts us in contact with the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ so we can be forgiven - **Ac 2:38; 22:16; Ro 6:3-4**
 - d. It is also the means by which one "puts on Christ" - **Ga 3:27**
 - e. So baptism is the logical starting place for true discipleship!
 2. **What is baptism?**
 - a. It is an act of submission which must be preceded by faith in Jesus and repentance for our sins - **Ac 2:36-38; 8:36-37**
 - b. It is also an act of submission which involves a burial in water, in which one then rises to walk in newness of life through the power of God - **Ac 8:38; Ro 6:3-4; Co 2:12**
 3. When done according to the Word of God, baptism then becomes an act of faith on our part which results in a wonderful working of God in our lives!
 - a. Our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus - **Ac 22:16; Ep 5:25-27**
 - b. We are regenerated and renewed by the Spirit of God- **Ti 3:5-6**
- **When done in faith and repentance, baptism is truly a rebirth involving both water and the Spirit! - Jn 3:5**

B. IT INCLUDES TEACHING AND OBEDIENCE...

1. This brings us back to the very definition of discipleship
 2. For Jesus clearly states:
 - a. We are to be **taught** (that is, to be **learners**)
 - b. We are to **observe** (that is, to be adherents or **doers**)
 3. In this way we embark on a life devoted to learning and doing all that Jesus commanded
 - a. We are to continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine - **Ac 2:42**
 - b. We are to imitate them, even as they imitated Christ - **1 Co 11:1**
- **Thus baptism is the beginning of a life of learning and obeying the words of Jesus Christ - Lk 6:46**

CONCLUSION

1. Only those scripturally baptized, observing all Jesus commanded, can truly be called His disciples!
2. Only they can take consolation in the promise of Jesus: "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" - **Mt 28:20**

Do you desire this wonderful promise? You must be willing to accept the authority and lordship of Jesus Christ in your life (cf. **Mt 28:18**). Are you willing to be a disciple of Jesus Christ...?