

## Discipleship in Community

God's plan for the world is realized through his community of disciples. What could life in our local church look like if "making disciples of all people and training them how to do everything Jesus commanded" was taken as its primary objective?

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## "Christ Liveth In Me"

Once far from God and dead in sin,  
No light my heart could see;  
But in God's Word the light I found,  
Now Christ liveth in me.

As lives the flow'r within the seed,  
As in the cone the tree,  
So, praise the Christ of truth and grace,  
His Spirit dwelleth in me.

As rays of light from yonder sun,  
The flow'rs of earth set free,  
So life and light and love come forth  
From Christ living in me.

With longing all my heart is filled,  
That like Him I may be,  
As on the wondrous thought I dwell  
That Christ liveth in me.

Christ liveth in me,  
Christ liveth in me;  
Oh! what a salvation this,  
That Christ liveth in me.

## THE LIFE JESUS OFFERED

### The Doorway Into Reality

*"Those who come through me will be safe. They will go in and out and find all they need... I have come into their world that they may have life, and life to the limit." John 10:9-10, John Eldredge paraphrase*

### Jesus' Announcement to the Public: God's Kingdom Open to All

- "Jesus then came into Galilee announcing the good news from God. 'All the preliminaries have been taken care of,' he said, 'and the rule of God is now accessible to everyone. Review your plans for living and base your life on this remarkable new opportunity' *Mark 1:15, Dallas Willard paraphrase*
- Repent for the Kingdom of the heavens is at hand. (*Matt. 3:2, 4:17, 10:7*)

## THE GAP

- Some of us feel a distance between the abundant life Jesus promised and the lives we are actually living.
- Many professing Christians are locked in defeat very similar to the rest of the world.

The invitation of Jesus is to become an apprentice - not merely profess orthodox Christian belief.

"The greatest issue facing the world today, with all its heart-breaking needs, is whether those who are identified as "Christians" will become disciples – students, apprentices, practitioners – of Jesus Christ, steadily learning from him how to live the life of the Kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence."

Dallas Willard

## GOD'S PLAN FOR THE WORLD

From the beginning, God has wanted to be with people and cooperate with them in extending his authority into their environments.

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## Jesus's Final Commandment

"...God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20, MSG

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## God's plan for the world realized through his community of disciples.

- The church as outposts.
- The church as training centers.

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## WHAT LIFE COULD BE LIKE

1. Freedom to do the good we intend to do.
2. Lives of amazing simplicity.
3. Reliably exercise power that is beyond us.

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### ① Freedom to do the Good we Intend to Do

Without discipleship seriously engaged in our local discipleship communities, we will be stuck in a pattern of wanting to do good but being prepared to do evil.

Alternatively, practicing Jesus's word as his apprentices in community enables us to understand our lives and to see how God's "divine power has granted to us all that we need for godly living" (2 Peter 1:3). This in turn gives us an increasing freedom from evil inclinations, as we learn how to simply do what we know to be right.

By practicing abiding in his words we come to know the truth and the truth does make us free. (John 8:36)

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### ② Lives of Amazing Simplicity

Only fervent discipleship to Christ through the Spirit brings the inward transformation of thought and character that "cleans the inside of the cup" (Matt. 23:25) and "makes the tree good" (Matt. 12:33).

As we learn from Jesus in community, we are increasingly transformed so that who we are on the inside matches that which is on the outside. An amazing simplicity will take over our lives--a simplicity that is really just transparency.

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### 3 Reliably Exercise Power that is Beyond Us

The community that makes sure to walk as close to Jesus as possible learns to draw upon the available resources of God's Kingdom to deal with the problems and evils we encounter in our daily lives. Without the exercise of God's resources beyond our own abilities we are largely helpless, and we thereby fail to act "in his name."

To act "in the name of Jesus" is to act on his behalf, using his resources, and he always involves himself in the process.

*"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (Acts 10:38)*

We are called to do his work by his power.

Discipleship Colossians CS 2020

However we may understand the details we should recognize that the biblical picture of human life is one where we were meant to be inhabited by God and live by a power beyond ourselves.

Human problems cannot be solved by human means. Human life can never flourish unless it pulses with "*the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.*" (Eph. 1:19)



*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Colossians 3:1-17 (NIV)

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