

DISCIPLE 1.0 Destination Transformation

Jerry Cisar — May 26, 2019

DISCIPLE 1.0 Destination Transformation!

Text: Matthew 7:13-29

Introduction

Like any true performance and the practice that makes it possible, doing what Jesus says “takes us out of ourselves only to return us to ourselves fuller, richer, and more deeply changed” (Hauerwas).

Jesus has laid out the vision for life in the Kingdom of Heaven (5:1-16), He has described the behaviors necessary for this kingdom to be a reality (5:17—7:12), and now He is calling for the dedication necessary for the culture-changing the Kingdom of Heaven to be experienced.

I. Not for the Faint of Heart (13-14)

Tony Moore: “Leading a culture change is not for the faint of heart. It is a process, as opposed to a check-the-box event. Progress is slow, and resistance is strong, as old habits are hard to break once they have been ingrained. Nevertheless, to the brave go the spoils!”

- A. The narrow gate is a metaphor for a restricted, or difficult gate.
- B. The easy path leads to destruction; *this* difficult path to life.

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Do you think it is accurate to say that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is “leading a culture change”? Explain.
- Why is “doing” or “putting into practice” the teachings of Jesus transformative for the disciple? Why is this transformation necessary for a believer?
- How does the context of the Sermon on the Mount make clear that “doing” the will of God is not about meriting a ticket to heaven, but about transformation of a people into an outpost of the Kingdom of heaven?
- Though the early church may not have known what a brand was, how might the quote by Ann Rhoades, “Your people are your brand,” be seen in the church in Syrian Antioch? (See Acts 11:26.)
- What might we learn from the first chapter of the Didache about what it meant to be a disciple in the apostolic church?
- The first time Jesus authority is mentioned in Matthew’s gospel is in 7:28-29 at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. The last time is in Matthew 28:18-20. Taken together, what might these texts reveal about how the authority of Jesus is exercised in our lives?

C. “Your people are your brand.” (Ann Rhoades)

Matthew is writing to believers who are most likely in Syrian Antioch. This is the same place where the disciples were first called Christians. The people were the brand. They were like Christ.

The Didache: *The Two Ways and the First Commandment*

“There are two ways, one of life and one of death, but a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is this: First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself, and do not do to another what you would not want done to you. And of these sayings the teaching is this: Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you. For what reward is there for loving those who love you? Do not the Gentiles do the same? But love those who hate you, and you shall not have an enemy. Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts. If someone strikes your right cheek, turn to him the other also, and you shall be perfect. If someone impresses you for one mile, go with him two. If someone takes your cloak, give him also your coat. If someone takes from you what is yours, ask it not back, for indeed you are not able. Give to every one who asks you, and ask it not back; for the Father wills that to all.”

II. No Greedy Leaders (15-23)

A. *What is this necessary fruit?*

- i. If a person has not incorporated the values of the Kingdom by embodying the behaviors it calls for, they are not a true spokesperson for God!
- ii. In the immediate context that means that false leaders are greedy leaders rather than generous; that false leaders are angry leaders; that false leaders take and do not give; that false leaders lust after what is not theirs.
- iii. False leaders are those who do not have a righteousness that exceeds that of the Pharisees or teachers of the Law.

iv. If leaders are not exhibiting the behaviors Jesus calls for, the followers will be led astray.

B. This is the same kind of fruit described by Paul in his prayer for the Colossians (Col. 1:9-12).

Angela Duckworth: “At its core, a culture is defined by the shared norms and values of a group of people. In other words, a distinct culture exists anytime a group of people are in consensus about how we do things around here and why.”

C. We don’t change the culture by perfection, but by *consistency of effort over a long period of time*.

III. No Playing the Short Game (24-29)

A. We don’t believe in the storm until it is arriving.

B. This text calls us to take ownership for our behaviors.

Conclusion

“Organizations with clearly stated values, whose behavior is aligned with those values, outperform those who do not.” (Tony Moore)