

6-7-20 Trinity Sunday

Sermon- The Up, the In, and the Out of Discipling

Scripture- Matthew 28:16-20, CTW Psalm 58

Hymns 3, 701

Theme- With the same authority which Jesus gave to the disciples back then, he commands us to help grow and feed His kingdom here on earth...how are we doing? Have we lost the vision and desire, and if so, how do we get it back? Let's talk!

I. First, Let's Look at the Shape We are In Now

I have been reading an interesting book lately titled "A Jesus Shaped Life", by Bob Rognlien, a pastor who has studied and written much about what it really means to be a disciple of Christ, as Jesus called us to be in the Matthew passage which I just read, and in practically every other passage in the Bible.

It is just that important that we take this opportunity on Trinity Sunday, to understand the call of our lives as Christians. Many Christians think that He is calling us to be members of a church and let that be that. The closer we get to the Word, however, we realize that He calls us to be disciples and make disciples.

A. The Author says that first we need to check what kind of shape we are in. Now, in case you are thinking that he is inviting us to some sort of Christian exercise class where we all tone up and get in shape, think again!

This is about our spiritual shape and the author invites us to ask these questions: Who am I?, Why am I here?, Who am I following? , Who is my family? And, am I in shape to follow God in a way that truly resembles His actual call on my life?

The Bible tells us that in the very beginning, God created us in His image and the author states that means "our lives are designed from the beginning to be shaped above all by a relationship with the creator.

This is the "UP" part of the equation, which we will talk about later...but for a refreshment, I know you can recall me talking about our VERTICAL relationship with God. Above all else, church goer or not, God wants us to be in CLOSE AND MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP with Him.

Our Shape, therefore depends on whether we have been conformed and transformed in to the image of God.

B. The Author calls this the "Shape of a New Kind of Life"...that even though we think we are "normal" people, we, as the people of God have NEVER been called to be normal...we are called to be extraordinary...because He made us for a specific purpose.

Jesus told his closest friends: For I have given you an example, that you also should do just have I have done to you." John 13:15. He went on to say, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." John 14:9...Jesus was claiming to be THE TEMPLATE, for the life we were meant to be.

Remember "be thou holy, as I am Holy"? Remember 1 Peter 1:16? We covered that a few weeks ago in our study of Peter.. now, how many of us have become convinced in that time that we can ever be as holy as Jesus?

For us people trying to figure out how to "DO CHURCH" in this new age, we must first deal with Christ. As you know, for months now we have cried out the mantra of GOING DEEPER IN CHRIST! Well, time to take stock are you still treading water or have you dived deeper?

And, if so, have you checked your shape lately in that regard?

II. Today is called Trinity Sunday...how does that effect our self-concept?

A. In the Matthew passage, Jesus is calling us deeper...to be able to tell others the Good News and make them

disciples for the kingdom, as well. The natural by-product of that endeavor, is that our UP relationship...the relationship we have with God, will naturally grow stronger.

We are to be moving in His direction, at His direction, receiving disciple-making power as we go. Verse 18 and 19: Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority on heaven and earth, Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.

WHO AMONG YOU COULD DO THAT WITHOUT A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE Father?

This is the very nature of the new covenant which Jesus has been referring to...because of his atoning work on the cross, through His blood, we can be closer to God than ever! If we rise to the new life!

B. Jesus Achieves this by Affirming the Power of the Trinity, Hence the celebration of Trinity Sunday! For the hearers of this passage, the concept of the Trinity comes right from the Words of Christ. He says that we are to BAPTIZE all disciples in the name of the FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

Some people think that this is a man-made concept that we are "reading into" the passage, but right there it is...He did not say to baptize them in the names...but in the NAME of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...the blessed three in one. AMEN?

Further understanding reveals that this is all about our UP relationship with the Godhead three in one...disciples are to baptize people because baptism unites believers with Jesus Christ in their death to sin and their resurrection to a new life.

In summary, our baptism symbolizes submission to Christ, a willingness to live God's way, and identification with God's people.

That is how we are to envision ourselves functioning in this New Covenant that Christ calls us to! The Holy Spirit represents the Godhead on earth, leading us into belief of all this as central truth for our lives:

John 16:13-15 ¹³"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

This is the strived for level at which all Christians should endeavor to function in their lives!

III. To Do This, The Author Tells Us to Envision a Triangle. At the Top is the Word "UP" at the Bottom Right Corner is the Word "IN" and on the bottom left corner is the Word "Out"

A. We are to intentionally to grow into this. Ephesians 4:15 "we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the Head, into Christ." Jesus is meant to be the form that shapes our lives, If He did it, then we are to emulate that. The author says that "We are meant to grow up and be pruned back until we begin to look and act more like Him. When Jesus said follow me, he was inviting us to become intentional about growing in the shape of Christ.

The author says that life in Christ calls us to go deeper and agree to be REMADE into the image of Christ...not only to save us but to make His church closer into His image!

B. In addition, if this triangle is to be our individual shape, then it follows that since God's church is the people of God, not the building itself, then the Church of God should follow that pattern as well...Up, In, and Out!

The author asks us to look at four assumptions that we might each hold about the church. Please stop and think about each one and see if there is truth in there for you:

1. Some people assume the church is meant to be an “efficient vendor of religious services.” They come once a week to fill up and don’t really want anyone to talk to them or interact with them beyond what a surface level of pleasant conversation requires. These folks tend to see the Pastor of the church as the religious provider who will explain the Bible to them and mediate regular access to God’s forgiveness and guidance.

2. Others come assuming a full menu of spiritual options will be offered for their benefit. These folks expect the church staff and dedicated volunteers to SERVE them meeting the needs and yes, even whims of each family member. They understand the need to contribute financially in order to support the things that they like to see, in order to meet their own particular needs.

3. Some people come to church with anxiety and trepidation. Based on bad experiences from the past or negative portrayals they have received, these people assume they will find judgement, legalism, and prejudice when they come to church. They actually expect not to like church or its members when they show up, and sometimes they are right. Sometimes these are self-fulfilling prophecies.

4. Many of us bring other assumptions to the table, such as the type of music to be played, what will be included in worship services, how the pastor will be dressed, how the building will look, what type of terminology will be used, how much time it will take, and more. Truthfully, not many people will expect that the church will look like it did in Jesus’ time. However, if being a Christian means we are to be “little Christs,” then why should we not expect church to look like that?

It is time for us to take a closer look at the church of Jesus Christ and in the coming weeks, we will do so.

IV. In the Meantime, Go to your Study Bibles and in the Dictionary/Concordance, look up the word "CHURCH" and read the references that it leads you to.

A. Here are some that I found for you...take a minute and write them down. As you look them up, test this author in his assumption that it is all about three things:

UP- the relationship we have with the Godhead three in one, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

IN- the relationship that we disciples have and should have with one another, in a way that Honors the kingdom, and next,

OUT- the relationship we have with the rest of the world, and how our day to day activities must mirror the relationships we have with those in the UP and the IN.

Come back next week, and we will go deeper. Amen? Let us pray that God leads us always to greater understanding and participation...