

## **Sermon – Port Macquarie – 28<sup>th</sup> / 29<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

### **Matthew 10: 40-42:**

#### Keep on Keeping on:

Discipleship, we have heard much about Discipleship over the last few week's chapters 8 to 10 of Matthew have much to say on the matter and this is because Jesus wants all disciples and prospective disciples what is required of them and to have no doubts in this regard. We have heard how as Disciples of Jesus we are to follow his teachings with total commitment for we cannot say we are disciples on Mondays & Thursdays with the rest of the time as our own. Discipleship is a fulltime commitment.

As Disciples we should realize that the calling will make demands of us, as to how we prioritize our lives in relation to Christ and our families. Also being a Disciple, demands of each of us a zeal for the mission of Jesus and the preaching of the "True Gospel" message in both word and action. In fact Jesus points out that to reject our call to Discipleship is a rejection of him and thus of God. A rejection of God leads to our rejection in the Kingdom to come.

Some think that they are doing our Almighty God a great favour by coming to him, or that we can come to him on our own terms. Also we ask him to put right the mess we have made in our lives then refuse to allow him to use us as he wants and we wriggle and squirm when he calls us to reach out to others in his love or to preach a tough message. We want the benefits of Discipleship without the dedication and commitment required.

Fortunately for us God is a gracious God and he puts up with our lack of trust and weak kneed responses to this call to be Disciples and through his love and grace continues to give us opportunities to say yes to him. For from the beginning of our relationship with God through Christ we realize God is in charge of our lives and that he has created us for a purpose, and that purpose is to serve him as Disciples in Mission. In other words once you say yes to Jesus and mean it, you do not have much choice for you are then a Disciple.

Also as our reading from Romans 6 shows us, as believers in Jesus Christ then we are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness and as a slave is one who obeys and honour their master so we who claim Jesus as our master and come under the law of grace, must obey and honour him.

Thus the mission of Jesus Christ in the world today for Disciples is the same as it was 200 years ago and depends on the willingness of Christians/Disciples to give their resources of time, energy and money to Christ. Jesus told his Disciples earlier in chapter 10 that it would be tough but that he would be with us always and if we are to follow him we are to give him our all for there is no part time service in the service of our Lord. It is either in or out, there are no half measures for this leads to weakness and opens us up to being lead astray from the path of Jesus.

Thus if the Church as the body of Christ is weak today, and having little impact on society, it is because Christians are not prepared to follow Jesus with the same commitment as the early believers? As I pondered on this I asked how much impact we at St Thomas as a church community are having on society in Port Macquarie. I ventured to answer – not much.

As Christians today are we Jesus envoys to the world as much as the first 12 were when he sent them to preach the Good news to all the world? Or do we say wait a minute, I have a family and works responsibilities and cannot follow or go. We know that all Disciples are not called to leadership or to be Prophets, especially not me so how can I step out in mission for Jesus. I am not equipped for this task for I am only a Clerk, cook, homemaker, or I am retired, or I am poor, or many other concerns.

However whatever part of the mission God calls us to he will equip us for and provide all that we need just as he provided all that Abraham needed for him to fulfill the task he was given (Genesis 22). Jesus tells us that he will be with us always even to the ends of the earth. So not only does he equip us he accompanies us on the journey.

I am sure that Jesus understood these concerns for in the closing verses of chapter 10 which form our gospel reading today for Jesus is telling us in these verses that we can all find it as rewarding and be part of the mission by being on the supporting side as by being in the front line.

Jesus is pointing out in these verses that helping, supporting and assisting the Prophets and Righteous Ones will generate the same rewards.

Verse 41 **whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous;**

Then in Verse 42 Jesus says **"and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."**

In using the term little ones Jesus is referring to his Disciples and to caring for each other within the community. For the giving even the smallest gifts in Jesus name is also Ministry. In the Middle East, at the time of the writing of the Gospel, a gift as small as a drink of water could be a life saver. So the helping in ministry of all Christians can be life giving and just as important as the Prophet. That drink of water for a Disciple may be as simple as sitting with a sick neighbour, making a meal for someone in need, sharing God's love with all so that see Jesus in and with you and that you truly believe what you preach.

Thus this final verse speaks of those of us who are not to be in leadership roles, they speak of a message of mutual ownership of the ministry and mission of the Church, whether you are a Prophet, a Righteous Person or a Little one and when one receives a Disciple and welcomes their message one will not loose their reward.

True Disciples must dedicate themselves wholly to Jesus and anyone who supports or is kind and helpful to a Disciple will be rewarded by God. This helping of Disciples is a service to God, for it is in fact helping each other, for we are all Disciples, and we are to do it everyday actively and so that it can be seen as a measure of how much we love God and treat others.

So as we are all called to be followers of Jesus and thus Disciples, or at least those who say yes to his message of Salvation, we are to go out into all the world in his name and are also to support those who are over us in the Lord.

To not do so, to say no to God or not accept his message is a rejection of Jesus, and as this is rebellion it is sin and as such has its own reward.

Two unbelievers once sat in a railroad train discussing Christ's wonderful life. Even non-Christians cannot escape thinking of Christ. One said, "I think an interesting romance could be written about Him." The other replied, "You are just the man to write it. Set forth the correct view of His life and character. Tear down the prevailing sentiment as to His divinity and paint Him as He was—a man among men." The suggestion was acted upon and the romance was written. The man who made the suggestion was Colonel Ingersoll; the author was General Lew Wallace, and the book was Ben Hur. In the process of constructing it, General Wallace found himself facing the unaccountable Man. The more he studied His life and character, the more profoundly he was convinced that He was more than a man among men; until at length, like the centurion under the cross; he was constrained to cry, "Verily, this was the Son of God." That's exactly the testimony of John the Baptist. He says, "The one coming after me has been before me, because he was first compared with me." He was and is God. When that is accepted, then there is no difficulty in understanding either His character or His miraculous works.

Jesus said to his Disciples "Go into all the world and preach the Good News" this is still his instructions for his Disciples today. God has a task for each one of us as Disciples. So let each one seek God's face, find out what it is he wants us to do and then do it for him with all our heart mind soul and strength and make Disciples for him by introducing the Ingersoll's of this world to the love God has for them.

If you have not said yes to Jesus message, or have turned a deaf ear to it, or have failed to obey the call to Discipleship then now is the time to repent and turn to Jesus and accept him as your Lord & Saviour. If you need help for that final step then Our Prayer Team, Clergy Team and members of the Family of St T are here, willing and able to help you.

If you have said yes to Jesus then great, keep it up for now its time to get involved and go preach the good news of Christ to all and to let the people of Port Macquarie and those in you family see Jesus in and through you.

For those who follow the ways of Jesus find that the rewards are out of this world, so do not miss out on yours.

In the name of Father, Son & Holy Spirit. AMEN  
Micheal Perrott.