

Being Like Jesus

The verse that we will be basing this teaching on occurred at the final moments of the life of **Jesus**, while He was on this earth. This reference incorporates the final instructions of the **Teacher** to His disciples. Since these are the final instructions, they carry a measure of importance that is exceeding great. Therefore it is incumbent on us to give great attention to these instructions and to carry them out as successfully as we can. These instructions are as follows, Matthew 28:19, 20 NLT, emphasis added is mine:

*Therefore, go and **make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you**. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

Before digging into the meat of the reference, it is important to understand what **Jesus** is not saying. **Jesus** is not saying to go out and build ecclesiastic structures and organizations; rather, what **Jesus** is saying is that we need to make disciples of individual people from all the nations, teaching them how to be like Him and how to walk in obedience to His commands. **Jesus** is not promoting a theology of how to get into Heaven and thus escape Hell; rather, what **Jesus** is promoting is a manner of living in Heaven on this earth now and in the age to come.

We shall explore in this teaching what it means to be like **Jesus** and we will explore what it means to 'obey everything that He commanded.' The primary attribute of **Jesus** was His obedience to the will of the **Father**. The following references will document this attribute of **Jesus**:

- 🕯 **John 4:34 NLT:** *Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent Me, and from finishing His work.*
- 🕯 **John 5:30 NLT:** *I can do nothing on My own. I judge as God tells Me. Therefore, My judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the One who sent Me, not My own will.*
- 🕯 **John 8:28 NLT:** *So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I AM He. I do nothing on My own but say only what the Father taught Me.*

Jesus is demonstrating that the primary attribute of the disciple is to be obedient to the will of the **Father**. It was the lack of obedience by Adam and Eve that caused such problems to begin with. **GOD** has been working to restore His children back to this point of obedience, as it was to be expressed at the very beginning of time. The restored nature of obedience is the central point of the plan of salvation as devised by the **LORD**.

We need to come to a complete understanding of the importance of obedience as an attribute of a disciple of **Jesus**. First of all, our obedience is the hallmark of our being in the family of **GOD**, Matthew 12:50 NLT:

Anyone who does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother!

Secondly, disobedience may exempt one from being in the Kingdom of **GOD**, Matthew 7:21 NLT:

Not everyone who calls out to Me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of My Father in heaven will enter.

Thirdly, disobedience will provoke wrath from the **Father**, John 3:36 NLT:

And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

The importance of obedience was also demonstrated in the personal life of **Jesus**. The writer of Hebrews tells us that **Jesus** learned obedience by the things that He suffered, Hebrews 5:8. Much of that suffering came as a result of living in a sin cursed world. It was for the express purpose of relieving the world from the curse of sin that **Jesus** came to the earth to model the actions of the Torah instructions for all the people to see. The pressures from this mission were so great that **Jesus** prayed to the **Father** in the following manner, Luke 22:42-44 NLT:

"Father, if You are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from Me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine." Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened Him. He prayed more fervently, and He was in such agony of spirit that His sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.

We can see the elements of the mission of **Jesus** in a couple of key references. The first reference is found in Luke 4:16-19 NLT, emphasis added is mine:

*When He came to the village of Nazareth, His boyhood home, He went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to Him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written: "**The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, for He has anointed Me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD's favor has come.**"*

So to be like **Jesus**, one would need to be actively involved in proclaiming the Good News regarding **GOD's** plan of restoration; to proclaim freedom in the **Spirit** of **GOD** for those held in bondage to their sin; to open the eyes of those that are spiritually blind to the things of the **LORD**; and to bring relief through the gifts of the **Holy Spirit** to those that have been crushed by the world's system. These are very mighty goals and we will discuss them separately below:

- ✠ **Proclaiming the Good News:** Unfortunately many believers believe that the Good News is a message of how to stay out of Hell. Thus they focus a lot of energy on teaching people how to live a 'Holy Life' by their standards and doctrines. The truth is that **GOD** plans to restore mankind to the level of relationship that we had before the fall and then take us even further. This goal would involve making us new creatures that have the inner power over sin; we would have direct communion with our **Father**, so we would not have to have human intermediaries; we would be fulfilling the plan that our **Father** has for each life on this planet; we would see the fulfilling of all the promises given to Abraham for his people; and we would see the emergence of the Kingdom of **GOD** brought to the Earth through the lives and actions of His children.
- ✠ **Proclaiming our liberation from sin:** Unfortunately some believers hold to the belief that as 'born again' believers, we are still sinners. The truth that needs to be proclaimed is that we were sinners and that we were delivered by grace and that we are learning to walk in our new identity as holy, set apart saints of the **Most High**. Our deliverance from the power and control of sin was finished on the execution stake with **Jesus**, but we have not come into the realization of this freedom as of yet. When we acknowledge this truth by the guidance of the **Holy Spirit**; we are then able to realize that we have been set free to walk in the same manner as **Jesus**. To be like **Jesus** is to walk free from fleshly sin and to be able to help others to understand this truth that will set them free as they appropriate this truth for their lives.

🕯️ **Restoring sight to the spiritually blind:** While much of the ministry of **Jesus** involved restoring sight to the physically blind, **Jesus** was much more concerned with their spiritual sight. Before we become regenerated in our spirits (born again), we struggled to understand the things of **GOD**, for we were blinded to the things of the **Spirit**, 1 Corinthians 2:14. This situation is particularly problematic for unspiritual religious leaders that are 'blinded' to the truths of the **LORD** by their spiritual arrogance. **Jesus** referred to these hypocritical religious leaders as the 'blind leading the blind,' Matthew 15:14. Our mission is to do works that will cause the 'blind' to see the light of **GOD's** love in our lives, so that His light will cause their blindness to cease, Matthew 5:16.

🕯️ **Relieving the oppressed:** Just as the children of Israel were oppressed by the Egyptians in ancient Egypt, the people of the world are oppressed by the sinful conduct of people. **GOD** was concerned with the rich people of the world oppressing the poor, so He instructed the people to follow the Torah guidelines regarding their conduct with the poor. The work of restoration is to bring the dignity of mankind back to their valued status as children of the **Most High**. Our mission is to relieve the suffering and other results of the oppression so that people may gain a sense of their spiritual dignity.

One of the ways that we can be like **Jesus** is to model His concern for the people. The compassion that **Jesus** felt for the people was a prime motivation for His ceaseless efforts to minister to the people. Some references to this compassion are listed below:

🕯️ **Matthew 9:36 NLT:** *When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

🕯️ **Matthew 14:14 NLT:** *Jesus saw the huge crowd as He stepped from the boat, and He had compassion on them and healed their sick.*

🕯️ **Matthew 20:34 NLT:** *Jesus felt sorry for them and touched their eyes. Instantly they could see! Then they followed Him.*

🕯️ **Mark 1:41 NLT:** *Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," He said. "Be healed!"*

🕯️ **John 11:35 NLT:** *Then Jesus wept.*

Compassion for suffering people was a hallmark of the ministry of **Jesus** and it is intended to be the hallmark of His disciples. Unfortunately many believers believe that merely teaching others the 'doctrines' of their faith is all that is required to be a person that disciples others, but the pattern of discipleship set forth by **Jesus** requires one to be a doer not just a hearer of the word, James) 1:22-24.

Jesus emphasized this point with the Parable of the Sheep and Goats. The goats were representative of people that would not perform acts of kindness and mercy. They were relegated to a place of great punishment. The sheep were people that did act compassionately for those that were suffering so they receive the blessing of **Jesus**. These acts were delineated as follows, Matthew 25:34-40 NLT:

*"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed Me. I was thirsty, and you gave Me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited Me into your home. I was naked, and you gave Me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for Me. I was in prison, and you visited Me.'
"Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see You hungry and feed You? Or thirsty and give You something to drink? Or a stranger and show You hospitality? Or naked and give You clothing? When did we ever see You sick or in prison and visit You?' "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these My brothers and sisters, you were doing it to Me!"*

One thing that we need to keep in mind regarding this reference is that it was not the acts themselves that really mattered but it was the heart that motivated the actions that was important. In other words it is not by works alone that we evidence salvation, for if this was the case, then we would need to quantify the number of works required, as do some religions. Rather it is important to realize that the works were evidence of an inner change of heart that motivated the people to act. We can sometimes do the right thing but if it not done in the right motive then it can be useless. Paul refers to this problem in the thirteenth chapter of the Book of 1 Corinthians. The inner motivating force that would cause someone to act in a selfless manner is called love. Love is perhaps the greatest attribute of **Jesus** that a disciple can manifest in their lives. It is an attribute that cannot be faked but when it is applied, it can change the world. The following are references that reflect the power of love:

- 👉 **John 3:16 NLT:** *For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.*
- 👉 **John 15:12-14 NLT:** *This is My commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are My friends if you do what I command.*
- 👉 **1 John 4:7 NLT:** *Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.*

✠ **Matthew 5:44-48 NLT:** *But I say, love your enemies! [Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you.] Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For He gives His sunlight to both the evil and the good, and He sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect (complete in love), even as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Emphasis added is mine)*

We see in these references the natural progressive effect of love in the life of the believer. The first effect is from the love that **GOD** gives to the people of the world. It was love that motivated Him to create us on the first place, even though He knew that we would reject Him. It was this great love that caused Him to send **Jesus** to the world to restore it back to Him. It was the love of **Jesus** that caused Him to give of His life in order to disciple a handful of men in the beloved ways of the **Father**. It was then the active sharing of that love that caused these men to change the lives of others to form the initial body of believers, who eventually changed the course of history. It was this love that kept the body of believers in their sacrificial lifestyle towards the very people that would bring persecution upon them.

The brief life of **Jesus** brought such a powerful change to the affairs of the world, as people would forsake the desires of their life and lay them on the altar of service to the **LORD**. This brief flicker of holy light has grown into a world-wide flame of glory for the **Father**. This progressive work of the disciples of **GOD** all started with a simple band of believers that placed the love of the **LORD** and obedience to His Word (based on the Torah instructions) before all else, as stated in Acts: 2:44-47 NLT:

And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.