

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

Week 6 – Discipleship in Jesus' Day; "Walking in the Dust of the Rabbi"

February 25, 2020

Have you ever wondered why the men that Jesus called to follow Him dropped everything and ran after Him? These weren't young boys at play. These were men who had occupations. In Jesus' day most boys sought out the rabbis they wished to follow. If a student wanted to study with a rabbi he would ask if he might "follow" the rabbi. The rabbi would consider the student's potential to become like him. It is likely most students were turned away.

Education in Jesus' day:

Beit Sefer from ages 6 to 10. Beit Sefer – house of the book. A local synagogue Torah teacher who would begin teaching the children the Torah. "May the words of God be sweet to your taste, sweeter than honey to your mouth" (Psalm 119:103). From ages 6-10, Jewish boys would memorize the Torah.

Beit Talmud from ages 10-14. Beit Talmud – house of learning. The best of the best students would continue on, memorizing the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. By 14 years of age, the best of the best students had the entire Hebrew text memorized. Students would also at this age begin learning the Jewish art of questions and answers. Luke 2:46 – Jesus was in the Temple listening to the teachers and asking them questions. Students learned "remez" which means "hint" in Hebrew. The Rabbis would call out a passage of Scripture and the student would have to give the Scripture before and after that passage. They lived in the text!

Beit Midrash - at the end of study at Beit Talmud, when a Jewish boy was 14 years old, if he was the best of the best, then he would present himself to a well-known respected, powerful rabbi. He would say, "Rabbi, I want to become your disciple, your talmidim, your student. Please let me in your Beit Midrash, your house of study." The rabbi examined and asked lots of questions to find out if indeed this child was the best of the best. Because each rabbi wanted to teach his thinking, his philosophy, his interpretation of Scripture. YOKE - the rabbi's teaching, philosophy, and interpretation of Scripture. And if the rabbi believed that the student was the best of the best, that he was able to become a rabbi, he would say, "Lech Acharai – Come, follow me." The boy would leave his family, his family compound, his village. He would leave the local synagogue. He would leave everything and follow that rabbi. He would become a talmidim, a disciple, a student. He would devote his life to becoming exactly like that rabbi. He would follow him everywhere. It would be said to such a student - "May you be covered in the dust of

your rabbi.” The disciples would follow their rabbi so closely that they would become covered with the dust of their rabbi. “May you follow him so closely that the dust of his sandals covers you.” Are we walking so closely behind Jesus, with Jesus, that we’re covered in His dust? OR – are we covered by someone else’s dust?

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But for some Jewish boys when the rabbis quizzed them they did NOT say, “Lech Acharai – Come, follow me.” But instead they said “My son, you do know Torah. But you are not able to be my talmidim, my disciple, my student.” And so, the rabbi would say, “Go, home to your village. Make babies. Pray that they become rabbis. Go home and learn the family business. You won’t be studying to be a rabbi.”

Jesus was a rabbi. 13 times in the New Testament Jesus is called a rabbi (Matthew 26:25,49; Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45; John 1:38,49; 3:2,26; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8). 41 times He is called a teacher. Only one time is he called a carpenter (Mark 6:3). In Matthew 11:28 Jesus said, “Come unto Me all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Jesus called disciples who may have already failed the rabbi test, and He said, “Lech Acharai – Come, follow Me ... Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me.”

Matt. 4:18 – Jesus saw 2 brothers – Peter and Andrew. They immediately dropped their nets. Here was a Rabbi Who believed they could be just like Him!

Peter denied Jesus! BUT GOD restores!!! After Jesus’ resurrection, He appeared to the disciples who had returned to their fishing. Catching nothing, He told them to drop your net on this side of the boat. . . . He told Peter to “Feed my lambs, take care of my sheep.”

After Jesus’ resurrection and ascension...after the disciples received power from God (Acts. 1:8), what was said of them? Peter addressed the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling body in Jerusalem – they met in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Acts 4:10-13 - ...let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. ¹¹ This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ ¹² Nor is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” ¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

QUESTIONS:

What does this mean to us as believers in Jesus?

What does discipleship look like today?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

In what ways is God speaking to you?

In what ways do your eyes need to be opened?

In what ways does your perspective need to be changed?

What are your next steps?