

## Apprentice of Jesus our Teacher

Dallas Willard @ Wheaton College - October 2001 [26:55]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=womyJzd7gXA&t=36s>

**Scribe's Comments** - *The session was typed from the YouTube (audio only) with good-faith effort but it is not verbatim. **Bold** and underlining added by the scribe.*



*"The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge in the 20th Century."*

I don't mean that it doesn't exist. I mean it is not accessible.

The issue as it especially affects the church: The disappearance of Jesus the teacher and the emergence of Christianity without discipleship. This is a major part of the overall story.

### Colossians 3

Paul presenting a stunning picture of what it means to be alive in Christ.

*"If you've been risen with Christ, seek those things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God."* (v. 1)

"Above" - we mean right here where God is right now.

*"You are dead and your life is hid with Christ"* (v. 3)

We don't even see our own life for what it really is. We have a principle at work within us that will change us. We have a part in that depending on where we direct our minds. But as to what we are, we don't even know that.

You may feel that as a young person trying to find your way and make decisions. Paul is quite realistic about this. He often did not always know what was going on. We don't have to know what's going on. Your life is hid with Christ in God.

You're dead. The old life is cut off but you're alive in Christ. That's the fundamental teaching about Christianity and conversion - we have a new life within us.

*"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall also appear with Him glorious."* (v.4)

Think about "glory" and its relationship to who you are. Sometimes we don't appear glorious or feel glorious.

The foundation that lays is for the transformation of Christian character - what we are to know as Christians and where Jesus intends to bring us.

*"Since this is true, [therefore] Put to death [mortify] the members of your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry."* (v. 5)

Put to death things you can do without God's help.

## **Build a Teaching**

What it says about putting off the old person and putting on the new. The putting on the new is the teaching that Jesus brings us in as His disciples.

*"Put on the new self being renewed in the knowledge."* (v. 10)

Basic problems of life - divisions of classifications between human beings.

This is talking about loving your neighbor as yourself.

*"In the knowledge of God...*

*no Greek, Jew, Circumcised, Uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian..."*

We are renewed with a knowledge that is like God so we see the whole world differently.

*"Put on Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience. **13** Bear with one another and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Above all these things, put on love which is the bond of unity."* (v. 12-14)

Romans 8, I Peter 1 - a progression that all end up with agape - love.

Don't think of them as things to be done. Think of them as the person who has been changed so that these kind of things naturally come out of him. The Christian is not the person who goes around with a list of things to be done. They are person who through discipleship to Christ they have become so transformed, these things become naturally who we are. We're talking about the change of our identity.

**"Is this real?"** [9:30]

We have lost this as a realistic goal as our Christian life. There are very few people looking at passages like this and say, *"This is what I am intending to become, this kind of person I want to be."*

Or I Corinthians 13, Matthew 5 are not a realistic goal of Christians in our lifetime. I'm challenging you whether or not it will be your goal.

\* Charlie Daniels,

*"Oh Jesus how could you love me?*

*"For when I have a choice between right and wrong,*

*I choose wrong two out of three."*

Most people have that as the constant pattern of the Christian life. When you have a choice between right and wrong, what's your average?

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I'm am not so concerned about your average but what you're intending.

\* "Drop kick me Jesus through the goal posts of life."

We get passive. We lose our drive toward the clear teachings we are called to in Christ. Sometimes that's mixed in with bad theology like - we are saved by grace so we should *not* be wildly enthusiastic about transformation.

This explains our problems with so much of Christian life and leadership where we simply don't have a plan for doing what Paul says to put off the old person and put on the new.

### What is Your Plan?

[12:30]

How do you put off the old person and put on the new?

Our response is often, "I'm trying."

Trying is not the secret. You need a strategy for life and that strategy has to be one on discipleship.

What does discipleship mean to you?

Disciple means student or I like the term "apprentice".

To be an apprentice to them - learning from them to do what they do.

To be with them learning to be like them.

If you're going to be a disciple...You have to have a teacher.

That's the deepest part of our problem in this whole area of character transformation in Christlikeness. You have to have a teacher but in our circles of Christianity, Jesus as teacher has disappeared from our horizon.

We're left to struggle with passages like this and just try, perhaps sporadically. That's where the Charlie Daniels song comes it... "*I choose wrong two out of three.*"

A lot of Christians feel that way because they have tried.

Read I Corinthians 13 and say, "I'm going to be like this" and they get angrier and angrier.

We are deeply wedded to things like "anger". Many Christians will plead for the validity of anger.

Paul says lay it aside. What do you do without it?

How do you live if you're going to do the things Jesus said?

That's where the teacher comes in. Discipleship when Jesus was here was learning from Him to do what He did.

Everything that Jesus said is for us to do and we can learn how to do it. But, we can not do it by trying only. Trying will make us bitter and angry and convinced of failure. We will fall back in the habit patterns the govern us because we have not been transformed inwardly.

Discipleship is about being transformed inwardly and that's why we need Jesus as teacher.

## **Two Problems that Brought us to this Position:**

### **1.) The Misunderstanding of Salvation**

How would you explain salvation? The governing assumption about salvation in our culture has to do with what happens after you die. Being "Saved" means being assured when they die they are going to heaven.

Salvation in our day is largely shrunk down to justification and the only issue is the forgiveness of sin. When you believe the right things, you have salvation in that sense, you'll go to Heaven when you die.

Salvation is much more than that. That is simply one of the effects of salvation. Salvation is being caught up in the life of Jesus Christ.

"Trust Jesus" is actually the answer to what must I do to be saved but trust Jesus means being caught up by Him in the life that He is now living.

Colossians 3 - Foundation of all change - *"Since you are raised with Christ, seek the things above..."*

That's the foundation of all change.

In that life with Christ you live as His apprentice. You learning to do what He did, what He said by becoming like Him.

### **2.) Struggle between Fundamentalism and Modernism**

Jesus as teacher was set aside. Those are the conservative side understood those on the liberal side when they spoke of Jesus as "teacher" meant he was merely a man. What is lacking in Jesus as teacher in the historical struggle was when people tried to cut Jesus down as a mere teacher and the conservatives recognized that as code language which denied his divinity, the role of his sacrificial death on our behalf, everything we might find fundamental to Christianity.

There are reasons why this has happened but we must not allow it to happen to us individually. Please, in your own mind, reach an understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and become His disciple.

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### What is a Disciple?

[21:12]

As a disciple of Jesus I am learning from Him how to lead my life as He life if He were I.

I am learning the inward patterns of transformation of having the thought and feeling that He has. I am learning that from personal guidance from Jesus Himself. I know all of you would say Jesus is here to guide you. We have to enter that as a living practice.

1.) Discipleship means not just learning how to do things He explicitly said by becoming the person who would do that.

2.) It also means learning how to do things He never talked about. His teachings are for a framework but they don't give us the details.

\* War, running a business, being a student

We have to think of Him in such a way that He is one to whom we can submit ourselves for constant teaching leading to inner transformation that makes it possible for us to naturally do things He said and taught.

How to bless those who curse us, pray for those who persecute us.

But also "*How to fire someone.*"

Yes, not just the things he talked about how to the things I am doing.

I am learning from him how to lead my life as He life if he were I. That includes all the details.

"How would Jesus teach *Introduction to Economics*"?

He came into our life and lived as a full human being and knows how to do all things and He knows how we should do that.. He can teach us how to do that. He is our teacher.

If we want to understand the richness of life in the kingdom of God, the path of doing that is to accept Jesus as our constant teacher and do the things that will enable us with Him to learn how to do them.

"*Bless those who curse you. Loving your enemies.*"

You can do that but you have to learn. We do that by entering the school of Jesus in our whole life and inviting Him to be our master and we are his apprentices.

### How do I Stand as an Apprentice of Jesus?

Have I chosen to be an apprentice in everything that concerns me?

—> That is the way you put off the old person and put on the new.

It is the path of discipleship. If we have faith, we have no way from faith to this [discipleship]. If we have discipleship, we increasingly come to the place where the things that Jesus said and did are the sweetest, strongest, most natural and easiest things for us to do.

**Closing Prayer [26:20] ~ ~ ~ End of Session @ 26:55 ~ ~ ~**