



Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS

Discipleship – Godly Mandate

Day – 1 Feb 14

Text to read Matthew 28:18-20

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 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."

Jesus after the resurrection met with the disciples and commanded them to go and make disciples. This is called the Great Commission. The disciples of Jesus were trainees along with Jesus for almost three years and they did not do anything much on their own. They watched closely what Jesus said and did. Now the time has come for them and Jesus wanted them to step out in faith and move on.

Jesus declared to them that He was given all authority in heaven and on earth. What did Jesus mean by it? He gave up His authority with God and did not consider equality with Him. He made a choice to become nothing. He lived a simple life like any of the other people and went through all human difficulties. Eventually He paid the price on the cross and reconciled people to God.

God's power of resurrection restored Jesus back to the Father. He won over death and hell. Now Jesus has the authority and He was willing to pass it on to the disciples. The Great Commission comes with the promise that Jesus will be with them to the end of the age that would naturally mean that the disciples will have authority of Jesus. The power that comes with the authority is the power of resurrection.

Before going and making disciples of all nations these men had to become disciples first and it took at least 3 years for them. Jesus mentored them and now He is releasing them into the world to serve Him.

The question for us is – are we disciples yet? If yes. Are we making disciples? If no. When would we become disciples of Jesus?

But we can be sure when we become disciples we do not have to be afraid of anything because Jesus will be with us all the time.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



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Discipleship – A Process

Day – 2 Feb 15

Text to read Matthew 28:17

17 When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!

What is this Discipleship all about? Discipleship is a process and we need to have gone through it before we make disciples of people. Let me share a working definition before we get started with the process of Discipleship.

A working definition of Discipleship – it is the desire to worship Jesus which is pledging allegiance to become like Him and a compulsion to proclaim Him to others and making others to be like Him. It is fascinating to note that Jesus handpicked 12 men however one got lost to his lust for money while the other 11 remained. Among the 11 some doubted, the number of them who doubted is not known. Nevertheless those who believed worshiped which I think is and should be the attitude of a disciple.

Worship is being madly in love. Sometimes we become mad about our passions and that we cannot let a day go by without thinking about it or doing something about it. Some of the disciples were passionate about Christ while others probably took a while to get there. For a practical understanding of the Discipleship Process let us look at the definition in three parts -

1. Become like Him
2. Proclaim Him
3. Make others become like Him.

With this definition as the foundation let us move on to the process. **Become like Him** would involve **Following** Him closely. So close to the point that we try our best to imitate, do and say everything Jesus said and did. Trying our excellence in practicing whatever He suggested. When we become like Him soaked with His Word and His thoughts reigning in us we do not hesitate to **Proclaim Him**. Such a proclamation results because of our **Believing** Him. We have experienced His goodness and we cannot keep quiet about it but go around sharing it with joy. Eventually this proclamation because of our belief should lead us to mentor the ones we shared Christ's love to become like Him which is **Discipling**.

The question for us is – do I have the passion to worship or am I doubting? If I am doubting when will I begin to worship? Will I become a disciple making disciples?

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Peter the first Disciple of Jesus

Day – 3 Feb 16

Text to Read Luke 5:1-11

Peter was just an ordinary fisherman who had his own issues of life along with a God given personality. Luke 5 verses 1 to 11 gives a vivid picture of his failure. He along with his buddies were cleaning up the nets for the next day's venture since the previous night efforts went in vain. Jesus was a stranger to everyone and He was preaching to the crowds. Then He stopped by Peter and asked him for his boat so he could use it as a stage.

Probably not wanting to go home empty-handed Peter decided to let Him use his boat. They did listen to Him intently, I suppose. After the discourse Jesus told them to cast their nets into the deep. I assume it to be Jesus way of expressing His gratitude for the service provided. Peter responded with his experience of hard toil the previous night. Nevertheless, he was willing to give it a try since Jesus suggested them to do so.

They went to the same sea that had no fish during the night however to their surprise they were unable to haul the net because there was a huge catch. They were utterly amazed. The boats began to sink. Peter had to call for his other friends to help him. Jesus who suggested them to go the sea again for the catch was waiting and He did not go away.

While coming ashore Peter fell at the feet of Jesus and bid Him go away for he was a sinful man. None told him nor did Jesus! Peter knew it. He failed in his earlier attempt. But after Jesus said so he went back where he had nothing to find fish in abundance. Miracles can only be performed by sinless people and he was sure Jesus was that kind of a person. It was the same sea that they explored the previous night. It was incomprehensible.

Jesus took a look at Peter and told him not to be afraid and gave an invitation to follow Him so He could make him fish for men. Peter left everything and followed after Jesus. Oh! It looks so easy. It isn't so. Let's pause!

The question for us is – can we trust God even in our failures? Are we any worth to fish people for Jesus? Do we know that the Lord who suggested us to do something is waiting for us until we come out victorious?

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What made Peter FOLLOW Jesus?

Day – 4 Feb 17

Text to Read Luke 5:1-11

Miracle – drew his attention to Jesus. It is indeed a surprising fact that the Sea of Galilee that did not have fish the previous night had enormous fish then. How was it possible? If Jesus had talked about the issue related to boats at least that could have been taken in seriously since He was a carpenter. What a remote chance of Him suggesting them to go fishing again. Peter being the man of the sea failed. How is it likely that Jesus could outsmart them?

This is nothing but the divine nature of the person who gave them the suggestion to go back to the sea. To be precise - it was MIRACLE that drew them to Jesus. However I feel Peter decided not to settle with the miracle but made a choice to be with the miracle worker. The invitation to be His apprentice was unexpected. If he preferred settling for the miracle it was an occasional affair but if he followed after Jesus, everyday would be a miracle. The latter seemed better than the former. It didn't stop with the miracle for Peter he had an invitation for a greater mission than mundane fishing.

Ministry Invitation – Jesus offered Peter to join Him so he could become fishers of men. What would that mean? What did Peter understand? Jesus found something special in Peter that he was invited to be His disciple. Jesus made a choice of Peter. I wonder if Peter understood the implication of such a call then but he didn't refuse. He took it up and left everything and moved on. Left everything literally.

Who would imagine leaving such a huge catch? It was what he toiled the previous night. It was his living. It was his profession. Nevertheless that call made such a huge impact that he left his fortune for an unknown future.

Was his following worth it?

Was he impulsive?

Was his decision right?

No question could be answered so prematurely since he made a choice to follow after Jesus after he was called by God for a task (fishing for people) which he wasn't sure what it was.

The question for us is – have we followed Jesus like Peter did? Have we enjoyed miracles and got stuck there or continued following the miracle worker?

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FOLLOWING – Sneak Peak to our Life:

Day – 5 Feb 19

Text to Read Luke 5:1-11

I know we too began following Jesus probably after we encountered a miracle. When I say miracle it is not necessarily anything that is supernatural like a big time healing or unbelievable deliverance, to me salvation in itself is supernatural. For some healing and deliverance from habits made way for following Jesus. To others His teachings impacted them. The reasons that led people to follow Jesus can be varied. Whatever it is – it is a miracle of God to lead people to Himself. People who prioritize miracles leave the miracle worker to get back to their old ways of life letting hell loose. Whereas those who are impressed and convinced about the miracle worker focus themselves on growing more and getting to know Him better. This is an invitation to minister. Why do you think the Lord wants you? Is it because you are smart or does He not have anyone better than you? Certainly not. He made a choice for which there is no criteria. It is purely divine and none of us can give a reason for His choice. If He has chosen you, rejoice and celebrate.

I am sure all of us have been following a lot of people, maybe our role models or even celebrities. I had been following different people over the years. I seriously followed Dr. Ravi Zacharias for a long time for his ability to defend the gospel and his gift to break complex philosophical and theological concepts into simple lay terms. Though I followed him I did not believe him or believe in him for everything. I knew he had his special ability which drew me to him but otherwise there was no attachment whatsoever. Well! I followed my dad but I didn't stop with that. I believed him for what he was. I trusted him when he asked me to do something. I was fine when he reprimanded me. I had a closer relationship with him than with those whom I was following. To believe in someone you need to know them well and they need to know you and that they have to relate with you. They must be your well-wisher.

The question for us is – Do you understand that you are called to grow in Jesus and serve Him for the rest of your life? Your invitation is not to have fun with God and receive blessing and stay rich and wealthy but to invite many more like you to follow Jesus for the meaning of their lives.

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BELIEVING

Day – 6 Feb 20

Text to Read Matthew 16:16-20

Matthew 16:16-20 portrays Peter's ability to believe in Jesus and move one step stronger with Him in relationship. The disciples began their journey with Jesus and they encountered many astounding events; some were miracles of healing with different kinds of birth defects. Some were people's deliverance from the demonic oppression. However, none knew who Jesus was except the fact that He was carpenter Joseph's son and his brothers and sisters were known to them as their common friends.

Here was an occasion when Jesus stopped by and asked the disciples who people of the town thought He was. His followers declared to Him that some thought He was possibly John the Baptist, or Elijah or Jeremiah or some other prophet. Their ideas about Jesus were varied. Nonetheless everyone had an idea that He was no ordinary person but nobody knew His real identity. For a moment if we pause - was Jesus struggling with an identity crisis. No way! Then why such a question. That is because He wanted the disciples to have a clear understanding of who they have associated themselves with, since they have left all their little possession and their dear family to follow after Him.

To become Believers in the Lord Jesus you need to have a **revelation** of who the Lord is to you and what would possibly be the outcome and expectation from such a relationship. Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples. He wanted them to be aware that they were called for a divine purpose, and that they were going to be part of the Heavenly Father's plan. Peter went past the superfluous understanding people had about Jesus and confidently declared that His mentor was the Messiah, the Son of The Living GOD. Jesus immediately responded to Him that it was revealed to him by His Father in heaven. None knew about Jesus except Peter. It was a God-given privilege for him. Jesus affirmed His identity and declared that it would be Peter on whom the church will be built. Was Peter any better than the other disciples? Not necessarily. However, it was the Lord's revelation of Himself and Peter's confession of the Lord Jesus to be the Messiah that made the difference from the rest of the disciples.

The question for us is – what is our personal revelation about Jesus that can make us believe Him? Have we in faith confessed in public that He is the Savior of our lives? If so, then we are in the process of Believing.

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BELIEVING INVOKES RESPONSIBILITY

Day – 7 Feb 21

Text to Read Matthew 16:16-20

It was the Lord's choice for Peter to let him know that upon the declaration of his faith the Lord Jesus would build the church. Such a huge task needed greater commitment and courage to step forward. Peter was unaware of the task ahead of him. He was honored to have known who Jesus was and that was about it. The revelation Peter had invoked a responsibility that was unbelievably great.

Responsibility – what was it all about? Jesus said He was going to build the church upon Peter and Jesus was the cornerstone and the gates of hell would never prevail against it. That was quite a thing. What does that mean? Peter would become the first pastor to run a church – a prototype of the Kingdom of GOD. The idea of church was not there then. There were synagogues and laws pertaining to it. It was more a legalistic form of worship with no freedom. It was meant only for the Jews and others were not allowed to be a part.

Jesus came for the sake of all mankind and for them to be united with the Father. So He revealed Himself to Peter who was a radical Jew. By virtue he was an impulsive man and his temperament made him take quick but firm decisions. The very first decision points to it, leaving a huge catch of fish behind to follow Jesus. He was going to be the representation of His master because he was one of whom Jesus mentored though he would deny Him later. The trust in Jesus for Peter was getting stronger, though Jesus knew him inside out.

Peter was a man with his own weakness. But his trust towards Jesus was making him better every day. He was part of the core group. He was the leader of the twelve not defined but his actions and initiatives made it possible. He did not give much thought to what Jesus said about building His church. He was unaware of the global implication it was to bring then. Nevertheless Jesus gave him an idea of what is likely to happen in the future of their following.

The question for us is – how strong is our belief in Jesus? Can we be aware that we are the church and we are called to be responsible for God's Kingdom?

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BELIEVERS

Day – 8 Feb 22

Text to Read Matthew 16:16-20

Sneak Peak to Our Life: Once we begin to follow Jesus we get to trust Him based on the small miracles that we encounter in life. We begin our journey by reading His word and getting a bit closer. As we start relying on His word and following it literally we get to find comfort and strength from Jesus. From a – *Know About Jesus Syndrome* we move to *Knowing Jesus Well Remedy*. Our consistent fellowship with the body of Christ followers (Church worship services) draws us closer to Jesus. The worship and the preaching enhances our trust in Jesus. Now we can comfortably call ourselves as **Believers** and we enjoy this title so much that we remain in it for the rest of our life and never escalate to be a disciple.

Jesus wanted us to follow Him and then become disciples but He never wanted us to be an intermediary by getting stuck to be a believer. The disciples of Jesus were believers until Jesus ascended to the Father. They were totally dependent on Him for everything. They were not able to do anything boldly and confidently. They messed up. Jesus was always there to rescue and restore them. He saved their faces all the time during their shameful encounters. Jesus sternly told them that there would be a time when He would not be there. They were just believers but did not proclaim Jesus yet. But He promised to send the Holy Spirit who would guide them all through. The disciples knew nothing about the Spirit of God. However when Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit to descend on them they waited patiently and then the Lord moved them in a different realm that was unbelievable. This is also true for us if we move from a follower to believing in Jesus for everything. We kind of know Him now. But not fully yet, to trust Him to become a disciple. The ultimatum for us is to become a disciple of Jesus and make disciples.

The question for us is – we know we are believers. How long have we stayed that way? The apostles of Jesus were believers as long as Jesus was with them but when He ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit came upon them; they grew up from believing to discipling. They began proclaiming Jesus passionately to the others. Let's think about it.

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DIGRESSION WORTH 1

Day – 9 Feb 23

Text to Read Matthew 4:3, James 2:9

Discipleship as a process, begins with following and then to believing and eventually should end in discipling. Now staying as a Believer is a huge danger. Who is a Believer? In a general sense anyone who believes in the existence of anything that is specified is effective, proper or desirable. In that case the devil is also a believer. It might shock you. The reasons are outright truth.

The Devil Believes in the Lordship of Jesus: The book of James is explicit in describing the belief of the devil. James 2:9 quotes, “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.” Isn’t that interesting! Whatever the Believer believes about Jesus the devil believes too. In Matthew chapter 4 we see Jesus was led by the Spirit to the wilderness and He was fasting for 40 days. After the days got over as He was hungry the devil came to Him and challenged Him to change the stones to bread. The devil knew Jesus had the power to do anything supernatural. But Jesus never gave in. This is true for the believers in Jesus they also know that He is all powerful and mighty and He can do the unbelievable. They look to Jesus as lucky charm and does not want to go beyond. They have believed because of a miracle and they prefer many more. They do not want to grow and serve Christ.

None of us have a problem believing in Jesus. It is the same with the people of the world; those who *know about Jesus believe Him* they have no trouble in believing. The Christian world calls such people as ‘Believers.’ We need to be better than the devil, if we have the same belief as the devil does we are no good. John 8:44 calls the devil as the father of lies nevertheless it still believes in Jesus. We sure need to exercise caution to grow up in Christ. We cannot remain as believers enjoying the trivial benefits but must train ourselves to become stronger in Jesus striving to serve Him despite benefits. We need Jesus not for blessings but for living in Him and for Him, which is the very purpose of our being.

The question for us is – are stuck as believers? Are we following Jesus for fringe benefits? Do we prefer to become disciples?

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DIGRESSION WORTH 2

Day – 10 Feb 24

Text to Read Luke 22:31

Devil's Demand to the LORD: Luke 22:31 reads that satan asked the Lord to sift all the disciples like wheat. Jesus permitted the devil to do so nevertheless the Lord told the disciples that He had prayed for them. The ESV reads it as - demanded instead of asked. Look at the audacity of the devil demanding Jesus to distort His people.

Believers are no less, they demand like the devil does. They are the ones who can cause a lot of confusion within the body of Christ. They cannot stand another person for reasons unknown or sometimes because of jealous, unforgiving attitude or even vengeance. They demand power and authority and want to lord over the others. They get into a destructive mode if their position is under threat. They cannot stand change in the body of Christ in whatever perspectives it is related to. They cannot but be self-centered about everything. The heart of God is not in them. As believers they prefer to do those that please them and the Kingdom mindset is absent for them.

The disciples of Jesus when they were Believers had a similar problem: they wanted to know who was greatest among them. Jesus had to reprimand them for such a thought. However when they graduated to be a disciple after Jesus ascended to heaven none of them ever had the idea of who was great. They knew it was Jesus who was great and that they should be servants of all. The believers in church have the same power struggle they want to prove themselves the greatest. If there are disciples of Jesus in the congregation they do not do that. Therefore if someone remains just as a believer for a long time – you can only expect them to be destructive. Nevertheless, the Lord's desire for us is to become disciples.

The question for us is – are we demanding? Are we trying to prove ourselves as greatest? Do we have the Kingdom mindset? Are we thinking about ourselves and our comfort all the time? Let us allow the Lord to search us and examine our ways.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



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DIGRESSION WORTH 3

Day – 11 Feb 26

Text to Read Mark 5:1-20

Devil Knows that Jesus Listens and Responds: We find this interesting event in the synoptic gospels. Jesus came to Gerasenes and as He stepped out of the boat a demon possessed man encountered. He fell at Jesus' feet and pleaded with Him not to destroy. Jesus had never done that before He asked for the demon's name. It said it was 'legion' which meant they were many in number. We read in Mark chapter 5 and verse 12 the demons begged Jesus to send them to the pigs that were there. Jesus answered them. He gave them permission to get into the herd of pigs. The devil knew that Jesus listened and would respond. The devil did not want to get to the bottomless pit that is why it wanted to be cast into the pigs. They cared less about anything. They were so self-centered.

If Jesus could listen to the devil and grant its desire the believers have no doubt that Jesus listens and He answers prayers. Therefore, they remain believers until they die. The commitment for the believer isn't much. Their prayers will be answered. God will bless them. They will not have much trouble. Believers see God as a crisis intervener. They easily get upset when God doesn't do what they wanted Him to do. They do not have the maturity in Christ to know His plan and purpose for their life.

They tend to trivialize the sacrifice on the cross. They do not consider the great commission of making disciples. They are self-focused and busy with themselves. They don't realize it is not about themselves but it is all about Jesus. Even the little they have done for Christ they brag big about it, be it in their giving or serving. They stay the same immatured and unchanged. They are not happy to risk becoming disciples or making disciples. They do not want to trouble themselves. They prefer living trouble-free and that is why they need Jesus for themselves. From such a perspective believers are no better than the devil if they do not become a disciple.

The question for us is – are we seeking the good of ourselves all the time? Have we realized that it is not about us and it is all about Jesus our Lord? A careful introspection can lead us towards becoming disciples.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
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DISCIPLESHIP WORTH

Day – 12 Feb 27

Text to Read John 8:31-32 / John 15:16-17

Does it mean that being a Believer is bad?

Truly, yes!

Jesus called those who believed Him to be His disciples. John 8 declared that if those believers remained faithful to His teachings they would know the truth and the truth would set them free. Freedom from their sinful lives and reconciled relationship with God through Jesus. The 12 men of Jesus had no questions like the other Jews but followed Him initially and began to believe. However when they remained as believers they were witnessing Jesus' life and ministry while learning from it. They were trainees. If you are a believer you are being trained but you have to become a disciple someday. You cannot remain the same. The apostles began to serve God's Kingdom after Jesus ascended to heaven. The Holy Spirit came upon them and they were empowered by God. They used all their learning from Jesus. They were no more believers, they were full-fledged disciples who were making disciples for Jesus.

John 15:16 declares that God made a choice of His people and appointed them to go and bear fruit. Literally Jesus chose the 12 men and made them partners with Him in reaching out people to connect with God. Through Jesus the disciples got connected to God. The life of these disciple weren't an easy one. It was hard to live as disciples but with God's grace they made it. They put up with everything since they were compelled by Christ's love to serve people. As disciples their old self was dead and they became new in Christ. The newness flowed through them in all aspects of life. It was because Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to be their guidance. The Spirit led them as they depended on His presence.

We have no choice if we believe in Jesus but for sure to become disciples. The disciples have had a huge change in their mindset, they stopped surviving and began living. They brought life through Jesus in everyone whom they encountered. The life in Jesus was abundant. The Disciples of Jesus found purpose for life and they began living and not surviving.

The question for us is – have we given a serious thought about discipleship? It calls for a lifestyle that is similar to the life of Jesus – a one that is rooted in His love and established in obedience to Him and lived out in sacrifice for His glory and honor.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



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DIGNITY TO MENTORS

Day – 13 Feb 28

Text to Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12

Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance.

How to become Disciples?

Are there any specific processes to becoming disciples?

Can everyone become a Disciple?

To answer these questions let us draw some lessons from Paul's first letter to the church at Thessalonica. He gives a guideline in chapter 5 and we will take a look at few verses in context. I intend to use the word DISCIPLE as an acronym to make it easy to understand. Let's begin with D in Disciple.

Dignity to Mentors

The very beginning to become a disciple is to find a mentor and be under the person to learn and grow. The 12 disciples of Jesus were trained under Jesus for an approximate three years before they could launch into the disciple making process. They first had to become disciples. It wasn't easy for them nor for Jesus to mentor them. Some of them were hard nuts to crack. However, Jesus continued to serve them with love and was patient with them to see them grow.

Iron sharpens iron and so does one person mentor another. The disciples rallied with Jesus wherever He went, be it a wedding or a funeral home. They closely watched what Jesus did. They intently listened to what He said. They enjoyed the benefits and the honor because of their mentor. They also went through trouble because of Jesus' radical teachings. In all of these some of their questions and concerns were answered. Many who made a choice to follow Jesus left because of His hard teaching. The 12 men never left since they left everything to follow Jesus. Many of His actions surprised them. His power over nature frightened them and His undiminished passion and obedience for God persuaded them to hold to Him. Jesus lived out what He continued preaching and teaching. However they were not ready yet. All of these events enabled them to hold so dearly to Him and convinced them more to stay with Him.

The question for us is – have we had mentors? Are we disciples or still believers? If we have become disciples have we tried mentoring anyone yet?

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MENTOR'S MINDFULNESS

Day – 14 Feb 29

Text to Read 1 Thessalonians 5:13/Matthew 16:21-28

Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other.

Mentoring relationship is an intentional decision made out of choice to train disciples. Jesus made the choice of Peter. His confession made Jesus declare that He would build the church upon him. However when Jesus shared about His suffering He would have to undergo leading to death, Peter did not agree on it but he began to rebuke Jesus that such a thing would never happen. Jesus turned to Peter and called him satan and said he had no Godly concerns but thought like mere humans. Jesus told him that he was a stumbling block. How could that be possible – a man who had Godly revelation about Jesus is presently acting demonic?

Couldn't Jesus understand His trainee's concern for Him as his mentor? Whatever Jesus said should have saddened Peter but nothing is noted in the scripture. It is an indication that in training to become disciples there is all possibility for the mentor to be upset and angry for the ungodly things a trainee could come up with. It should not turn out to be a spoiler but should turn into a pointer to be God-like. This perspective is disciplining to think like Jesus did. Jesus lived to honor His Father and do His will, as Disciples of Christ we need to do the same. Anything other than that will be our personal goal. A disciple is meant to imitate and imbibe the qualities of his leader.

If discipleship is considered seriously for the worth of the leader, then conflicts in the relationship paves way for stronger relationship. The need to become God-centered takes dominance than emotional upheavals. Therefore, in a discipling relationship Godly love takes precedence and lets them accomplish discipling peacefully. With all his flaws Peter turned out to be the best disciple Christ wanted him to be. He did have trouble even after being disciplined. It only points to the truth that discipleship is a life-long process as we intentionally take steps to disciple people.

The question for us is – do we have a mentor? Are we willing to be on board if someone invites us to be disciplined? Let's check ourselves – it is pivotal to do so.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
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INSPIRE DISCIPLESHIP

Day – 15 March 1

Text to Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14 / John 1:35-50

Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone.

True leader inspires their followers. The passage in John brings to us the invitation of Jesus' first few disciples. The two disciples of John the Baptist when they heard John talk so high about Jesus they both left him. They went after Jesus. Jesus asked them what they wanted and they didn't have an idea of what they wanted but they asked a simple question of where He was staying. Jesus called them to go with Him. His invite to them was a call to discipleship. Andrew and the other disciple were eagerly waiting for the Messiah and when they found Him they were overjoyed.

Then Jesus went to Galilee and found Philip and invited him to follow. Philip decided to get hold of his friend Nathanael and brought him to Jesus. Nathanael was little bashful since he had his preconceived idea that nothing good could possibly come from Nazareth. His perspective completely changed when he heard Jesus tell him that He knew while he sat under the fig tree. It was a Jewish custom to sit under the shade of fig tree and think of God. Jesus declared to him that he would witness many more than what he encountered then.

The men Jesus invited to disciple were of different kind. However, Jesus was loving and patient with these men when they failed. He was gentle when they had attitude. He took care of them so well since He knew they were weak. They were broken and they needed someone to be alongside to love them and lead them to God. Jesus did that despite these men's shortcomings. Discipleship is a painstaking process both to the disciple and the leader. Jesus inspired them unswervingly. He made sure that He was there until they were disciplined to disciple others.

The question for us is – have we with our life inspired others to follow Jesus? Is our passion for Jesus contagious? Are we willing to take up the task of discipling? If we are disciples and if we do not disciple we will end up being a believer having survived until our last breath.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



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STRIVE TO DO GOOD

Day – 16 March 2

Text to Read 1 Thessalonians 5:15 / Luke 6:6-11, 27-30

See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.

Consciously being a disciple of Jesus isn't so easy. It is the most difficult. If we ever made a decision to follow Jesus and become His disciples we are probably the most courageous people on earth. The teachings of Jesus were hard that was why some who rallied after Him left. Jesus raised the standard of the Law given by Moses. The idea of eye for eye and tooth for tooth did not exist with Jesus. He proposed doing good despite evil done. Jesus taught His disciples to do so.

On one of the Sabbath when Jesus was in the synagogue teaching He saw a man with a deformed right hand. He wanted to heal the man of His infirmity but He knew the hearts of the Pharisees. They were waiting to trap Jesus for working on the Holy day. Jesus called the man to come to Him before everyone and questioned them – if the law permitted them to do good or evil on the Sabbath day, to save or destroy life? He looked around and none responded. Then Jesus healed the man.

To do good to anyone when it's under your power to do so you don't have to look for an auspicious day or time or for the approval of people around. When you can you should. Disciples are called to do good like their master. The disciples of Jesus witnessed this incident. They had the chance to see how the Pharisees reacted but nothing stopped Jesus from doing good though it seemed against the legal systems of the synagogue.

Again when Jesus addressed the crowd from the mountain He touched upon a similar perspective. He said to those who were willing to listen to Him He gave them this suggestion to love their enemies. To bless those who would curse them, pray for those who would hurt them and show the other cheek if they have slapped them on one. What would it mean? Is it possible at all? Jesus expected His disciples to be vulnerable and show forth love in all situations.

The question for us is – can we be good and do good all the time? Even when it is not likely if we try our best at it, we are getting there as a disciple; because of so much of Jesus in us.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

CELEBRATE GOD

Day – 17 March 4

Text to Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16 / Luke 10:1-20

Always be joyful.

This was a proposition for disciples to follow through. But is it possible to be joyful always? It is doubtful from a human perspective not so from a Godly one. If joy is Christ and His presence it is possible to be joyful always. He promised to be with us to the end of the age. The book of Psalm says there is fullness of joy in the presence of the Lord.

In Luke chapter 10 we read that Jesus sent 72 of His disciples two by two and gave them the authority to heal the sick, cast out demons and preach good news to the people. The disciples did what Jesus told them to do and came back excited and surprised that the devils obeyed them at their command in Jesus name (v.17). They were thrilled about their accomplishment. It was a simple joy of a target achieved which is the most common reason for happiness in our lives. The contrast is true too. If we fail in our assignment we feel bad and guilty for our inability to achieve. Jesus taught His disciples the truth of what is being joyful.

Joy is not in accomplishments, it is in the fact that the names of these people who obeyed Jesus were written in the book of life. Your happiness should be based if your name is on the roll as you rock for Christ. The truth is often our joy depends on the circumstances. If things go wrong and not the way we expected it to be we feel miserable and shattered. The joy is lost in no time. Our situations decide our delight. To some the dependency on certain pleasurable addiction brings in enjoyment. Those joys are momentary because when the impact of it is gone joy is gone with it. Nevertheless if your joy is because of who Jesus is to you, it is a never ending joy. Therefore we need to ensure that we celebrate Jesus all our life. Jesus must and should be our joy. He is the joy-giver.

The question for us is – what brings us joy? Is it accomplishments in life or the powerful presence of the God of creation with us? Let us look for true delight in being with Jesus and serving Him as disciples.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

INVOKE GOD's PRESENCE

Day – 18 March 5

Text to Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17 / Luke 10:21 / John 17:1-26, 11:41-42

Never stop praying.

Prayer literally means a solemn request for help or expression of thanks to God. In a general sense prayer is pleading for favor. Jesus as the master of the 12 disciples was big on praying as need arose. He prayed for help and He also prayed for giving thanks. He did pray publicly as seemed fit but often in private. Nevertheless Jesus never quit praying and when His disciples asked about prayer, He taught them.

As disciples it is pivotal to invoke the presence of God in our lives and in all our circumstances. It is His presence that we can make all the difference and that is why Jesus promised His presence when two or three would be gathered in His name. When the 72 disciples came back rejoicing because of the ministry they did, Jesus prayed to the Father for revealing the truths about the Kingdom of God to them.

Jesus publicly prayed at the tomb of Lazarus calling him to come out. Jesus prayed at the Garden of Gethsemane in private pleading God to take the cup of sorrow from Him. In all His prayers Jesus ensured that the will of God was done and God received honor and glory.

When the 12 men of Jesus became disciples they made sure they gave the priority to prayer like their master. They knew the power of prayer. Acts 3 and 6 records their dependency on prayer. Acts 3 depicts their power of prayer when a lame man from birth was healed. Acts 6 portrays the trouble the church had because of a widow's meal program. The Apostles decided to entrust the responsibility to Spirit filled men to run the program and they gave themselves to the ministry of prayer and preaching. They never took prayer lightly since they learnt it from Jesus and the power such earnest prayers can bring about.

The question for us – if we are disciples have we seriously spent time praying? Do we have a set aside time for prayer every day? If we do not have, then we can be sure we are not disciples yet but stuck as believers looking to God only during crisis.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

PLEASED IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Day – 19 March 6

Text to Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18 / John 11:41-42

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

If we are disciples in Christ we need to be thankful always. Our gratitude does not depend on the circumstances. Despite what we go through we need to remain with an attitude of thanksgiving. Is it ideal? Or is it abstract? It is possible to remain thankful if we have trusted the Lord Jesus for everything. He only does what is best for us and nothing other than that.

Jesus role modeled every aspect of His teaching to the disciples. He displayed in public a prayer of thanksgiving in an unreceptive atmosphere. It was in Bethany the town where Lazarus and his sisters lived. There was not a good welcome because some wanted to stone them to death for the kind of teaching that Jesus taught. When Lazarus died of sickness Jesus had left the town already and was ministering at a different town. When He heard the news He decided to stay there two more days before He returned to Bethany.

Jesus was 4 days late when He arrived in Bethany. There were different kinds of reaction from people. Some said if He had healed the blind people would He not have known that Lazarus would die. Could He not have prevented him from dying? People were trying to make logical sense out of the event. When they saw Him crying they murmured among themselves about His love for His friend.

Nothing mattered to Jesus. He empathized with the sisters for the loss of their brother and His friend. However the sisters led Him to the tomb on Jesus' request. Martha tried her best to stop Jesus. Nevertheless Jesus in full view of the people lifted His face towards heaven and thanked God and declared that God always heard Him and He was thanking Him for He would hear Him then and bring back Lazarus to life so people who witness could trust God. Lazarus was back to life. Some Jews trusted and some doubted but the disciples witnessed Jesus power of thanksgiving in a hostile environment.

The question for us is – can we give thanks to God in all circumstances? It might look impossible. But with God it is possible. If we are disciples I think we need to be more thankful in dreadful situations.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

PLEASED WITH THE SPIRIT

Day – 20 March 7

Text to Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20 / Acts 4

Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at prophecies.

When Jesus gave the Great Commission to the disciples He wanted them to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to be poured upon them. So they could be empowered to do what Jesus taught them to do. The disciples who were so afraid even while Jesus was with them did not have any fear when they were filled with the Spirit of God. They challenged the leaders, priests and chief officials of the Sanhedrin.

Acts chapter 4 records Peter and John being questioned about the healing of the lame man. The way they defended their case surprised the leaders since these men who rallied with Jesus were unschooled men. They were ordinary fisherman who lived in fear of the Romans. The people in the Sanhedrin was unaware of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught them about the power of the Holy Spirit. The disciples experienced it and were bolder than they were before.

Jesus when He led the disciples He was prophetic with them. He consciously kept revealing to them that He would have to undergo suffering and then be killed. Nevertheless God would raise Him back to life. The disciples knew nothing about it. But they did not despise or question anything about whatever He said. Jesus was prophetic about His coming back. He warned of the signs of the last days. The prophecies of Jesus were of warning and letting people turn back to God. The disciples therefore did not belittle or take it lightly. They even passed on in their teaching as they made disciples of nations.

The question for us is – do we have the Spirit of God in us? What is our understanding? Do we depend on the Spirit of God for guidance? Does our Spirit-filled life produce fruit or are we worked up about our gifts? Often people are side-tracked with the gifts and show no fruit which is the evidence of the Spirit of God in our lives. What about prophecy? Does it come to us as a warning for the turnaround of our lives or as an excitement for our itching ears? Disciples of Jesus are discerning and bear fruit in every aspect of life.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS

LAST TO GOOD

Day – 21 March 8

Text to Read 1 Thessalonians 5:21 / Luke 23:11, 27-43

but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good.

Another perspective in discipleship is holding on to what is good. Despite so many frustration and trouble that Jesus went through He held to the good in everything and didn't see anything bad. To stay with the good we need to test everything. Often we try to buy into ideas because someone who is a big deal had said so. Do we budge to the influence of the famous or do we look for truth in whatever is said and done.

Jesus' goodness lasted until His death. It never diminished. Luke recorded that Pilate and Herod were enemies. However during the time of Jesus' interrogation for crucifixion they both became friends. I would attribute that to Jesus' goodness. It didn't stop there though some soldiers mocked and ridiculed there were others who acknowledged Him as the divine one.

Even during the agonizing moment Jesus pleaded to the Father for the forgiveness of all ignorant people who were torturing Him. Jesus was mocked by one of the criminals. Jesus could have cursed him but He remained good to him too. The other criminal requested Jesus to remember him in heaven. He even reprimanded the other criminal for being reckless and bashful. Nothing moved Jesus. He held to His teaching of goodness and made sure that everyone had a taste of it despite His gruesome agony.

Acts chapter 7 records a similar incident like of that of Jesus. Stephen was stoned to death and he prayed like Jesus did – for God to forgive those who were against him and their sin should not be counted against them. This landmark incident reveals the way the disciples of Jesus made disciples of those who were under them. In spite of all accusations and false allegations they held to God and showed forth the goodness of God through their actions.

The question for us is – can we remain good despite all allegations? Do we have a forgiving heart like Jesus and Stephen? If we are disciples we have no choice than to exhibit God's goodness in all situations.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

ELIMINATE EVIL

Day – 22 March 9

Text to Read 1 Thessalonians 5:22 / John 17:15

Stay away from every kind of evil.

The absence of heat is cold and the absence of light is darkness so is the absence of God – it is evil. The world does not need God since the standards He has kept for people to follow are way too much. Therefore the world tries its best to get people away from God by giving them half-truths. People are baited into it so easily and they cannot even discern the difference between truth and falsehood. The knowledge and fear of God is not existent anymore.

Jesus taught His disciples to stay away from evil and He even prayed to the Father that He would protect them from it. The prayer of Jesus in John 17:15 says, “I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.” Jesus was practical in His appeal – God cannot make a separate world without evil for His people to dwell. We still have to live here and Jesus asked God to protect us as we live every day. This is also the reason why Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to be alongside with us.

The disciples of Jesus were conscious of God all the time that they did not have any room to falter. Even with some of their preconceived ideas which were culturally ingrained Jesus helped them to get out of it. They were ready to change and was willing to obey and please Jesus. The prayer that Jesus taught His disciples had a component where they would declare that they should not be led to temptation but to be delivered from the evil one. Evil is a serious issue to work out from being trapped to it.

As Paul wrote to the church in Corinth – Bad Company corrupts good character so are some people who get corrupted because of the wrong relationship. They would not even know they have lost themselves to evil since they get desensitized to evil. The good in them eventually fades away to their dismay. Therefore it is wise to examine our ways to eliminate evil.

The question for us is – whose company are we in? Do we associate with people who are passionate for Christ? Or are accompanied by people who behave like hypocrites? Disciples of Jesus are straightforward and practical.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – LOVE

Day – 23 March 11

Text to Read John 13:34-35

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

Discipleship begins with love. Jesus expressed His love for the disciples by stooping low and washing the feet of the 12 men. It is a typical Jewish custom where the host of the house would wash the feet of the guests. It was a mark of honor. Jesus went one step ahead when He did it. He removed His outer garment and tied a towel around His waist which is an indication that the person is a servant and not the master. Jesus served His disciples and He modeled that they would have to do the same. Without love such an act of humility can never be done.

The very idea of wanting to be a disciple of someone originates with the love for the person concerned. The 12 men of Jesus fell in love with Jesus for reasons that could be varied. Maybe for miracles or maybe for considering them as special people worthy of choice. Whatever be it they were able to put up with each other and with Jesus despite differences in their thoughts and opinions. The binding factor for them was love.

Jesus declared to them that He was giving them a new commandment – to love one another. Is it so hard to love? Of course, yes. It is easy to love those whom we like for some strange reasons. But it isn't easy to love everyone. Jesus wanted the disciples to love everyone and that character alone will become the proof for others to understand that they are Disciples of Jesus. Our love for Jesus will be the key reason for us to love others. If we truly love Jesus we cannot have hatred for others however if we have bitterness and animosity we need to examine our love for Jesus.

True love does not compromise. It points to the truth and gets people out of falsehood. Jesus in love had to clarify a lot of misconceptions for His men. When they wanted to know who was the greatest He took hold of a small child and told them to be like them in order to inherit the kingdom of God. If there is a need to be greatest then they must become the servant of all. Such perspectives turn out to be real only with love.

The question for us is – do we really love Jesus to obey everything that He has commanded? Will it be possible for us to love those whom we do not like? We need to ask the Lord's help to get us to love everyone even if they have hurt us.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – DENY SELF

Day – 24 March 12

Text to Read Luke 9:23

Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Discipleship is about denying self. What is this deny yourself? Is it same as self-denial or are there differences? Self-denial has a different meaning. It is to do with an act of letting go of the self as with altruistic abstinence. Sometimes the willingness to consciously give up something to achieve a particular goal. Some young people decide not to have ice-cream and pastries because they are conscious not to add on weight. On the other hand denying self is a mindful choice to give up on the personal lordship of one’s own life and live to the Lordship of Jesus. It is about shedding the old-self and becoming new and Christ-like every day.

This was one of the hardest teaching of Jesus. You can give up few things of your liking because you wanted to accomplish something. Whereas when you follow Jesus you have to give up on yourself and take on Jesus and His desires for your life is quite a thing. When we train to be a disciple it is nothing about us – it is all about Jesus. This is probably the key reason why many decide to stay as believers and do not prefer to be disciples.

It wasn’t by any means easy for the 12 men. The mother of James and John came to Jesus with a big request that her sons one would sit at the right hand and the other at the left hand of Jesus. It drove the other disciples mad at them. We are not too sure if this desire was also found in the brothers and the mother voiced it. At the end of the day Jesus told them it was not for Him to decide these places of honor. The brothers were willing to undergo the cup of sorrow to achieve their position. How true it is – if it is about honor we do not mind going through hardships. On the contrary we may not want to undergo shame for the glory of God.

Jesus denied Himself the privilege of equality with God the Father and became nothing and took on the position of a servant and willingly died on the cross for the sins of the world. Death on the cross is the most shameful punishment in the then Greco-Roman world. Christ’s death made cross the symbol of love and sacrifice. To be precise while Jesus lived on the earth He thought about His Father all the time and the ways to honor Him. When we become disciples of Jesus our ultimate in life should be to please and honor Jesus.

The question for us is – are we on a self-denial mode or denying our personal self? Let us carefully examine our motives. Paul declared our only aim should be whether living or dying we belong to Jesus.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS

DISCIPLESHIP – CARRYING YOUR CROSS

Day – 25 March 13

Text to Read Luke 14:27

And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

Discipleship has a huge cost. As human beings we enjoy everything that is free. Anything that costs us we see the dire need for it if not we try and avoid it. This is probably the key reason why many of us remain as believers. It costs nothing. It does not pressurize us to live like Jesus. We live the way we want and believe in Jesus and Jesus would still meet our needs. It is easier to live as believers that is what the devils do they believe in Jesus but do not desire to be like Jesus.

Jesus told the crowd that was following Him to carry their own cross. He told them if they desired to be His disciples they must be able to love Him more than their mother, father, brother, sister, wife and children. If they cannot do that they cannot become His disciples. What does it mean? Is Jesus trying to propagate a teaching of hatred when He is called the God of love? Are these significant people not needed anymore? No way. He was teaching His disciples about a priority shift. If they truly loved Jesus they would give Jesus the first in everything. It is keeping Christ above all things of life.

If we examine our lives, often we live to please others. We have learnt the art of well-behaving when we are around people other than our family. Our disposition and talks are terrible when we are among our family. Why so? We do not want anyone to think ill about us. We want them to know that we are cultured and not uncivilized. If this consciousness about the way others would think of us make us behave well, why not we become conscious of God? We must intentionally be pleasing GOD.

Pleasing Jesus doesn't make life easy we still have to carry our cross. What is it? It could be an unresolved hardship. It could be an unsaved family member. It could be our ailment that bothers us so much. It could be a habit or an addiction. It could be anything that hinders our smooth walk with God. Nevertheless with all of these shortcomings if we strive to follow Christ the best possible way we will become Disciples of Christ honored by Him.

The question for us is – what is the cost we have paid to be a disciple of Jesus? Are we still a believer unwilling to pay the price? What is our cross? Has it become a hindrance or a catalyst to move forward? Let us not hesitate to pay the cost because it is worth.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – DISCIPLINE

Day – 26 March 14

Text to Read Luke 6:40

Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.

Discipleship has to do with discipline. If you are a student you are subjected to discipline. The disciples of Jesus had to be straightened out for many things. Jesus talked about His death and He was preparing the 12 men to be ready to serve in His absence. He wanted to visit Jerusalem before He could be taken up to heaven. He also sent messengers to a Samaritan village for people to be ready for His arrival. However that particular Samaritan village refused to welcome Jesus because He was going to Jerusalem. Luke 9:51-56 depicts this whole event and the way the brothers John and James got angry that they asked permission from Jesus to call fire on the village to destroy it. Jesus turned to them and rebuked them. The brothers kind of wanted to prove their zeal to Jesus, sadly Jesus did not approve of such a behavior.

Luke 9 also portrayed John coming to Jesus and complaining about someone casting demons away from people in Jesus name. John stopped him since he was not part of the Jesus' team. Jesus had to set them right Jesus was not only for those selected 12 men but for everyone who sought after Him. It didn't stop there they had issues among themselves as to who was the greatest. Jesus took a little child aside and pointed to them if they would welcome even a child because of Him they have welcomed Him and His father. The child has no ego if those who really preferred to be great must be humble among everyone. True greatness results from being a servant of all.

Jesus did not spare the disciples from disciplining. Often people have mistaken disciplinary action as absence of love. Those who want to see their trainees do well do not become lenient but strict with discipline. It is a healthy love. The present world system hates love and propagates discipline as measure of meanness. As a result people are let loose and get themselves messed up beyond repair. Jesus in love warned and disciplined the disciples.

The question for us is – are we willing to be disciplined or do we get upset with it? As parents do you think you should be strict with your children or do you think they need freedom? Freedom without accountability and responsibility is a chaos and we end up producing deviants. Let's us be conscious to discipline and be disciplined.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – SOUND TEACHING

Day – 27 March 15

Text to Read John 8:31-32

Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

True discipleship depends on the disciple’s ability to hold firmly to the teachings of the master. The Disciples of Jesus had trouble with Jesus’ teaching since it was hard to practice. When superfluously looked at – His teachings were radical and it seemed as if it was against the established Laws of Moses and the prophets. It was certainly not so. The Law of Moses suggested that those caught in adultery must be killed by hurling stones at them, Jesus on the contrast declared adultery even if someone looked at a woman lustfully. He raised the standard of moral law. It was indeed tough to match the standards that Jesus laid out for people to follow. Nevertheless, holding on dearly to such a teaching made the disciples remarkable.

Jesus declared anyone to be His disciple if they held on to His teaching. His said His teachings were the truth and knowing the truth would set them free from the bondage of any kind of sin. Jesus also exhorted that He was the way, the truth and the life and none can get to the Father except through Him. If you have known Jesus you have known the truth and you can never be led astray into fallacy.

If we look at the perspectives of life – facts and reality keep changing whereas the truth does not. What seems to be a reality now could become stale after a while. So is the concept of fact as research enhances some facts about a particular thing that was held for ages become old and a new fact would be established. Then it becomes a pointer for comparison. Truth remains unaltered at any cost. Teachings of Jesus were real and factual for the 12 men then, nevertheless they were truth even when disciples ministered to nations after Jesus ascended. It is the absolute truth even for us in this generation. The Word of God has never become outdated. It is progressive and it still makes sense in a world of nonsense. Because the disciples of Jesus proclaimed His teachings people are set free from all kinds of bondages.

The question for us is – do we really love the teachings of Jesus? If so, do we have a plan for reading the Bible systematically? If we are strong in the Word of God we will all be like the Berean Church that examined everything that was spoken to them. Let us be watchful not buying into deception.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – CHRIST MY ALL

Day – 28 March 16

Text to Read Luke 14:26

If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.

Those who do not know Jesus would never understand this text. Does Jesus promote hatred among the family? What is Jesus up to? Is He so narcissistic? Certainly not! Jesus wanted His followers to love Him more than anyone else. He even wanted us to love Him more than our life. Is Jesus so selfish? Probably Yes! The reason is simple John one of His disciples wrote that He first loved us. He chose us. He emptied Himself. He died for our sins. He took our place. It is absolutely amazing to know that He came in for us. We were in His mind. He became selfish in being selfless. Therefore, if we dare to go after Him He has every right to ask us to follow Him unwaveringly.

The 12 chosen men of Jesus left everything to follow Him. Did they lose out on life? Nothing at all. It was a priority shift. Their minds were filled with the teachings of Jesus. When they lived with Jesus they were timid did not have the courage to do anything boldly, however after Jesus' ascension and their waiting for and infilling of the Holy Spirit turned them out to be dynamites that were exploding with the love and teachings of their master. There going was steady. They courageously faced every challenge. They were willing to risk their lives for the sake of Jesus. They considered it an honor to suffer hardship for Christ. They only did what Jesus did. Jesus during His earthly ministry when His brothers and mother came to visit, declared to the disciples that those who served for the Kingdom of God were His mother and brothers and sisters.

To the disciples – Christ became their all. They did have families and together for the whole family it was Christ who became the ultimate. None were divided, there was oneness. With Christ life turned out to be a walk of faith and nothing of fear. The disciples had the fear of God and were led in faith for everything. Christ Jesus was their all in all be in their weakness or strength, in their sickness or in good health, in their poverty or in abundance.

The question for us is – is Christ all in all for us? How about our family? Do they all follow Jesus? If not, have we made a conscious attempt to lead them to Christ? Even if we gain the whole world and lose our life without Christ our life has no meaning and purpose.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – LOST IN CHRIST

Day – 29 March 18

Text to Read Matthew 16:24-25

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.

When the disciples understood who Jesus was, He declared to them His suffering and the way He would be killed. Peter took offense at Jesus and didn’t want anything of that sort to happen to His master. Peter’s intention is unknown but can only be assumed. Jesus had to reprimand Peter for his ungodly thinking and continued to declare to the disciples that if they had to follow Him they had to give up their own ways and look for God’s ways. This was not meant for the disciples of Jesus alone it was meant for us too.

In a simple sense it would be – lost in Christ. You have given up on your identity and have taken on the identity with Jesus. It is surely not letting go of your uniqueness. It is identifying and establishing your true identity in Christ. Until the 12 men met Jesus and were invited they were doing life their way. A mundane way of living like any average person on earth would live. Their encounter with Jesus revealed their purpose and true meaning of life. It was not about them it was about Jesus in their lives. The moon shines in the night and it is so beautiful but without the Sun moon has no light in it. So is the life of disciples without the Son Jesus they have nothing in them.

Jesus plainly told them if they hold on to life dearly without God they would lose it whereas if they were willing to lose their life for the sake of Christ, they will have it saved. What does that mean? It is about a paradigm shift in life process. The disciples of Jesus cared more for the things of God, this did not mean they were reckless about their family. God helped them strike a balance. They knew what gave them satisfaction – the things of God. God became their hub and the rest of their life revolved around it. It was a smooth ride despite the bumps. Jesus at the center of life makes life worthy and well lived. It reflects the nature of Christ in us and through us.

The question for us is – what are we lost to? Is Christ the center of our life? Does our life revolve around Jesus and His agenda? A deeper look into it would bless our heart.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – FOLLOWING HIS FOOTSTEPS

Day – 30 March 19

Text to 1 Peter 2:21-25

For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.

The fully trained disciples of Jesus began to serve people all across the globe. They followed the footsteps of Jesus. Though they were with Jesus and personally witnessed His radical living, they had trouble changing themselves. John 21 portrays Jesus' challenge to Peter about feeding His lamb and the kind of death he would die. Peter did not understand the implication then but was impulsive to know what would happen to John his buddy. Jesus quietened him not to be bothered about the others. But to concentrate on what was entrusted to him to accomplish.

Peter had to encounter several issues related to serving Jesus and he became so Christ-like that he courageously wrote that Christ has called everyone to suffering. He seemed to teach like Jesus did. Who would appreciate a call to suffer? Nevertheless, Peter taught boldly to suffer like Jesus did and that He set an example to follow. Christ did not sin or ever tell a lie. Although He was abused, He never tried to get even. And when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He had faith in God, who judges fairly. Christ carried the burden of our sins. He was nailed to the cross, so we would stop sinning and start living right.

Jesus had the power and authority to put the trouble makers in place. If He could silence the raging sea and call the dead back to life, there was nothing impossible for Jesus to do. However, He took to remain quiet and suffer since it was to honor His Father. It was permitted by God. Peter was so well groomed as a disciple and he was training those under him in a similar manner. It takes courage to suffer for doing good. Jesus did it and it honored God, so our suffering will certainly honor Jesus.

The idea of suffering for Christ might look exciting from the preaching and teaching perspective but to personally go through it is never a pleasant experience. Peter knew it and all who follow Jesus know it.

The question for us is – do we have suffering and ended up asking where is God in my trouble? If yes, we are getting there becoming a seasoned disciple. If not then we are still believers and sometimes quit following Jesus or stop being part of the church gathering. Let us examine!

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – TOTAL TRANSFORMATION

Day – 31 March 20

Text to Read Romans 12:2

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Changes in life is a challenge. We are ingrained with certain patterns of behavior and it is affirmed by the culture and norms of the society that we are part of. If change is hard then transformation is bit too much. Paul was transformed by his encounter with Jesus on the Road to Damascus. He was a hard core Jewish scholar who literally held to the teachings of the Law of Moses. He thought of Jesus to be a heretic and was convinced in his mind to persecute His followers. He was unchanging with his convictions. However, when Jesus met him he was totally transformed.

What is this transformation and how does that happen? Transformation is letting God to change the way we think and act. It is to unlearn what was learned in the society and shed the cultural influence. It is to embrace the principles of Jesus and living by it. It is not easy as it seems. The very first disciple Peter had to shed a lot of his cultural influence and the behavior pattern that was affirmed in his life. Acts 10 gives a vivid picture of Peter's transformation.

Peter was at Simon the tanner's house hungry waiting for food to be served. Meanwhile he fell into a trance and saw a mat with unclean animals on it and God suggesting him to kill and eat. This vision repeated three times. He was a Jew and he could not defile himself with eating unclean animals. The Lord declared to him not to call anything unclean that was created by God. Before he was fully convinced God brought people from Cornelius' house at the door waiting to invite him to their master's place. What Peter encountered at Cornelius the Gentile centurion's house shook his foundational belief system that Jesus was meant for the Jews. Peter witnessed the out pouring of the Spirit on the Gentiles. He was almost transformed not completely yet. Since he behaved differently when leaders from Jerusalem arrived. Paul had to challenge his hypocrisy. The Lord's encounter with the vision and Godly man's warning straightened Peter. He was totally transformed. No more distinctions everyone was made by God for God to know God.

The question for us is – are we fully transformed yet? Or do we have a string of cultural influence that makes us stumble in our walk with Christ. Let us be careful to let God change the way we think.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

Day – 32 March 21

Text to Read Hebrews 10:24-25

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

The world we live in is so discouraging and demotivating. If we have to manage such pessimism we need a lot of encouragement which is unavailable in the world. The only way to be encouraged is our fellowship with people of God. The writer of Hebrews was well aware and so exhorted the disciples of Jesus to encourage one another.

Our discipleship expresses itself in our encouragement to others. What is this encouragement all about? It is the act of giving someone support, hope and confidence. Did Jesus encourage His disciples? Of course, He did. Matthew 14:22-33 depicts the picture of Jesus encouraging Peter to step out in faith. Jesus fed the 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish and the disciples were stunned by the miracle. Jesus left them to pray alone while they took the boat to go to the other side of the lake. In midnight Jesus came walking on the water and the disciples were terrified thinking it was a ghost. Peter was bold to tell the Lord if it was Him he would like to get to Him. Jesus asked him to step out and Peter did, however when he saw the wind he lost hope and began to sink. Jesus helped him up.

When we lose focus on Jesus we will certainly be lost. We need to consistently look to Jesus who is our encouragement. The world around and the circumstances we are in will always be intimidating. Jesus should be our focus come what may.

Jesus reinforced the idea of fellowship with His disciples when He sent the 72 in pairs. He also declared in Matthew 18:19 that if two of them would agree and ask for anything it would be done to them. They could bind or let loose anything in agreement if they ask the Lord Jesus. It is hard for two people to agree on a similar perspective about something nevertheless the possibility of agreeing will make an impact. Jesus motivated them to be in fellowship which will enable them to be accountable and responsible. Such a fellowship would be a source of support and motivation.

The question for us is – are we encouraging or our comments discouraging and disturbing? Do we love fellowship despite drastic differences in people coming together? We got to check ourselves.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – PLEASING OTHERS

Day – 33 March 22

Text to Read Romans 15:1-3

If our faith is strong, we should be patient with the Lord's followers whose faith is weak. We should try to please them instead of ourselves. We should think of their good and try to help them by doing what pleases them. Even Christ did not try to please himself.

As human beings we have excelled in pleasing others if such an act would entitle us with benefits beyond imagination. Paul is not writing about such a pleasing. He is writing about the way in which followers of Christ can be built strong in faith. If we have a strong faith it is not meant for bragging, it is rather for the benefit of the others. Our faith has to build the others around us. Therefore it is pivotal to remain patient with those whose faith is growing. Paul used the example of Jesus' life in describing the attitude of pleasing others.

Jesus did not do anything to please Himself. Whatever He said and did, He consciously made sure to honor His Father. He pleased those people who encountered Him. This is truly not compromise. He did it to ensure that He was with them in whatever they were experiencing. Jesus went out of His way to serve people. He pleased people even when it became an issue of dispute. He did it since He wanted to build those lives.

John 4 illustrates His meeting with the Samaritan woman. Jews had nothing to do with them. Jesus uncritically listened to the Samaritan woman's idea of herself and all her concepts about the Messiah. Jesus patiently spend time with her knowing all about her lifestyle. He led her to a divine realization. Jesus' approach pleased her so much that when she realized she found the Savior she did not remain quiet, she ran back to the village that cast her out to bring them to see Him. Her transformation paved way for the whole Samaritan village to know Jesus the Messiah. Jesus' action displeased the disciples but they had no courage to question Him. What an irony sometimes our behavior to please others to lead them to the Lord can become displeasing to some. It doesn't matter – what matters most is bringing people to Christ.

The question for us is – who do we please? The Lord or the people who we expect favor from. Can we consciously be nice and kind to people so by some divine means we can bring them to the saving grace of Jesus? We must be intentional in pleasing people for the sake of Jesus not for compromise.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – INTENTIONALITY

Day – 34 March 23

Text to Read John 4:4

He had to go through Samaria on the way.

Except for a few many of us are casual about everything. If we are disciples of Jesus we have to become intentional about everything that pertains to our life. John 4 describes Jesus' intentionality to meet a woman who was an outcast.

The Pharisees were getting angry at Jesus since more than John Jesus was baptizing and making more disciples. Though it was not Jesus but His disciples. Jesus left Judea and was on His way to Galilee. There was an easy route to follow but Jesus rerouted His way to go through Samaria. He stopped at a Samaritan village called Sychar. It was where Jesus was going to meet with a woman who was avoided by the people of the village.

Jesus was tired because of the journey and was thirsty. He sat near the well of Jacob where this woman came to draw water. Jesus looked at her asked for a drink and she politely denied since He was a Jew and she was a Samaritan. Jesus took her from her point and said if she knew who was asking for water she could have received living water. Jesus intentionally turned a casual conversation to a divine one. The exhausted woman because of the everyday ordeal to fetch water from the distant well decided to get the living water. Jesus wanted her to bring her husband for which she answered she had none. Jesus knew it all and He declared she had 5 husbands and the one with whom she was living was not hers too. Bingo! We all know the rest of the event. Because of an outcast woman the village turned out to be outstanding in knowing the Savior.

Acts 16:13 portrays a similar incident in the life of Paul. The apostle intentionally on a Sabbath Day went to a riverbank outside the city where people gather for prayer meeting. Paul shared Jesus to the gathering. And the Lord opened the heart of Lydia a merchant of purple cloth, she and her household were baptized and she opened her house for the church.

As Disciples of Christ if we are intentional we can see the Lord work wonders for us by opening the hearts of people to receive Him.

The question for us is – are we intentional about sharing Jesus? Have we tried to do it? If we decide to move about intentionally God can use us and we will be surprised about the many who can know Jesus for life.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – EXEMPLARY LIVING

Day – 35 March 25

Text to Read 1 Corinthians 11:1

And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.

Paul as an apostle was a latecomer to Christ. Jesus handpicked the 12 men when He dwelt on the earth whereas Paul had to be chosen at his worst time. Jesus made a choice of him from heaven. He was enroute to persecute Christians in Damascus with the letter from the Chief priests and the rulers of the Synagogue. The encounter was so dramatic that Paul asked the two most pivotal questions of life. The first one – who are you Lord? And the second being – what do you want me to do Lord?

The Lord Jesus did not say anything but His powerful presence completely transformed his life. He was changed within the twinkle of an eye. It was Ananias who prayed for him and the Lord revealed the plans of Paul to him so he was convinced to minister to the persecutor. Paul began to serve Christ immediately. He tried to join the disciples of Jesus but was in vain. However, Barnabas vouched for him and got him into the fellowship.

Paul's life had a complete turnaround experience. The former persecutor became a prolific preacher who was persuasive. He matured in Christ to the point where he had the audacity to declare to people to follow him as he followed the example of Christ. Did he reflect Christ in all of his life? Yes! He did without any doubt. His convictions were compelling and his obedience to God made him an honorable vessel for God's glory. He lived a life that was worth imitating.

The implication of imitation cannot be taken lightly. Learning happens faster with imitation than any other learning methods. When people have an admiration for someone even without their knowledge they begin to imitate. They follow after every aspect of the person admired. Paul adored Jesus and he made sure he reflected Christ consciously all through his life's journey. It is definitely not fan following. It is to live with integrity of word and deed following the principles Jesus taught.

The question for us is – who do we imitate? A serious introspection will reveal the truth for us. However we need to ensure that we imitate Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith. He alone is worthy of imitating.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – RIGHT REASONING

Day – 36 March 26

Text to Read Luke 9:57-58

As they were walking along, someone said to Jesus, “I will follow you wherever you go.” But Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head.”

Many people who were onlookers witnessed Jesus perform miracles. It probably excited them to follow Him. As Jesus and His disciples were walking along someone told Him he would like to follow Jesus wherever He went. He didn't immediately welcome that person to join Him. On the contrary He declared to him that even the wild animals and birds have their own place of rest whereas Jesus did not have any. What was He trying to tell these people? Was He turning them down and their desire to be His followers? No not all! Jesus wanted His followers to have the right reasons to follow Him. They should not follow Him because their life would be easy full of miracles and they would be welcomed everywhere and treated well. It didn't much happen. They had to face serious opposition, trials, backbiting, outrageous words and sometimes to run away from being stoned to death.

Sadly today the reasons people quote to invite people to follow Jesus are materialistic and not for the true purpose. Jesus did not want to mislead people who decided to follow after Him. He was point blank if they followed after Him they may not have anything for themselves. They will be sojourners. They will have to live by faith. It will certainly not be a life of luxury. It will be one of sacrifice – giving up on the personal self. It will be all about Jesus and nothing about themselves. Luke did not write the response of this self-invited person. But Jesus was truthful about the implication their decisions to follow Him can bring up.

Blessings, riches and wealth are not the reasons to be Jesus' followers. The true reason to follow Christ is to reconcile with God through Jesus' death on the cross. His atoning sacrifice invokes eternal life with God and we become heirs of God. The intention for some to remain believers is because they do not want to love and sacrifice like Jesus did. They want to see Jesus as their lucky-charm or Santa with bag of gifts. They do not want to get into mode of growing in faith and serving others. Jesus gave His life as a ransom for many. He expects the same if we become His disciples.

The question for us is – what is our reason to follow Jesus? Is it our conviction or conveniences? If we become disciples of Jesus – He becomes our everything!

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS

DISCIPLESHIP – NO RESERVATIONS

Day – 37 March 27

Text to Read Luke 9:59-60

He said to another person, “Come, follow me.” The man agreed, but he said, “Lord, first let me return home and bury my father.” But Jesus told him, “Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead! Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God.”

When someone volunteered to follow Him Jesus subtly downplayed it giving reasons that the Son of Man had no place to stay. However, it is interesting to note that Jesus gave an invitation to someone to follow Him. That someone was deceptive. It looked as if the person agreed but he came up with the excuse why he could not follow Jesus. He had his reservations.

The person told Jesus that he had to go home and bury his father and then he would come to follow Him. The response Jesus gave seemed rude but it is not so. In Jewish culture death is more serious than anything else. Even if the poor is left uncared it is acceptable nevertheless it is unfair to leave the dead unattended. If that was the case what was this man doing where Jesus was around. He was probably dodging his responsibility. He would not be fit to serve God. If death was such a serious affair he had no business to watch what Jesus did.

Jesus’ response was outright. The dead have nothing to do, they do not need God after their life is gone. The living need God and it is the bound duty of the followers of Jesus to proclaim to the living the necessity to connect to God. The man Jesus approached had trouble, he was not going to do anything worthy. This attitude is true for many of us too. We are busy doing unworthy things – in Jesus’ term striving to deal the dead. Dead do nothing. There is only rotteness. The more we get away from proclaiming Jesus we kind of naturally lean towards the dead things of life that can be destructive.

The question for us is – are we alive in Christ firstly? Are we conscious about leading people to Christ before they would be dead and gone? Do we make any efforts to reach people for Christ? If we are Christ followers we will be busy to make Jesus known to the unknown.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – NO LOOKING BACK

Day – 38 March 28

Text to Read Luke 9:61-62

Another said, “Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-bye to my family.” But Jesus told him, “Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.”

One of the greatest aspect about following Jesus is – He never forces anything upon anyone. He has given freewill to all mankind. God has placed before us life and death and He suggests that we chose life. Although some prefer to follow after the things of the world that lead to death and destruction. If they make a choice of following Jesus they have eternal life. We don't deserve it nor do we have to earn it. It is freely given to us as we confess Christ Jesus to be our Savior rescuing us from the sinful life.

Another person said to Jesus he would follow Him but he wanted to go home and bid farewell to his family. Well! Jesus was not appreciative of his response. He responded that anyone who decides to go after Him should not look back and keep their eyes focused on Jesus and move on forward. No looking back. Looking behind will only entice and drag us to destruction. Following Jesus should not be impulsive or emotionally driven. It should be a conviction from the Holy Spirit and a personal deep desire to relate with God. Those who follow Jesus for fringe benefits and blessings soon get trapped to their unmet desires and wants and quit on Jesus.

There must be no turning back if we follow Jesus. The going should be steady. It is a narrow path as Jesus Himself declared it. He showed us the example for us to follow. Because He wanted to do the Father's will and honor Him, Jesus ended up on the gruesome cross. He knew He had no choice than to suffer but it was meant for the glory of God. So as we follow Jesus our path is a path of suffering and pain. It is not a bed of roses but rather a life of thorns. Jesus became the trial-blazer so we have no worries and He can lead us out of it victorious.

The question for us is – have we anytime decided to quit following Jesus because our desires were not met? Is the trouble and hardship of life weary us that we cannot handle it no more? If we trust in His goodness and His faithfulness we can see every tragedy turn out to God's strategy.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – AMBASSDORS OF CHRIST

Day – 39 March 29

Text to Read 1 Corinthians 5:20

So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"

A fully trained disciple is an Ambassador of Christ. The person cannot but reflect Christ in their word and deed. It is more about being like Jesus. God was in Christ and He reconciled the world to Himself and He no longer counted people's sin because Jesus in His obedience nailed it to the cross. And those of us who reconcile our lives with Jesus we become a source of reconciliation for the rest of them to get to God.

If we are disciples then the appeal of Christ is to us, that we speak for Him and plead people to get back to God. If we look at the perspective of an Ambassador from the worldly aspect it is not easy to get to that status. An Ambassador represents their own nation in an alien land. They are the point of reference for the country represented. The person has enormous power as they would speak for their country in every pivotal policy making. They are considered diplomats and they can evade any security check in any high secured zone. They receive enormous respect and honor. It is their status as Ambassadors that make it possible. The representative is taken seriously for their actions. If we understand the implication of it we will truly be aware that we represent the world of Christ. We are Ambassadors of Christ.

Jesus came from the Father and went back to the Father. He was the only one who descended from heaven and ascended back to it. We who have no clue of what heaven is like has been given the authority and responsibility of representing it. This is a privilege from God as we become His disciples. He has given us the grace to be His heirs and have the honor of calling Him – Abba Father! Such an escalation for mortal beings like us shows forth the trust of God in us as we receive His forgiveness when we confess Jesus to be our Lord and Savior.

The question for us is – have we realized the implication of becoming His disciples? We are no longer citizens of our geographical locations we are citizens of heaven. If we consider this honor we will not be quite but loud mouthed to proclaim Jesus to everyone.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!



**Grange Church of GOD
LENT DEVOTIONS**

DISCIPLESHIP – PROCLAIM JESUS

Day – 40 March 30

Text to Read Romans 10:10-17

So faith comes from hearing that is, hearing the Good News about Christ. (v.17)

One of the greatest thing that the disciples should do is to proclaim Jesus. Resurrected Jesus before ascending to heaven declared to the disciples that they must Make Disciples of All Nations. A Great Commission Jesus gave to those who would become His disciples. This proclamation is possible only after we become disciples. Believers do not proclaim Jesus but they always remain in a procuring mode. They look for benefits and doesn't prefer becoming beneficial to Christ the Lord. Jesus taught and trained His disciples to propagate the good news.

We got to know Jesus because someone decided to share Him with us. When we believed in our heart about Jesus we were made right with God and when we confessed with our mouth we were saved. Now it is our turn to talk about Jesus to the others and bring them to Him. Paul wrote that – 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How can they be saved unless they believe, how can they believe unless they hear about Jesus. Therefore, it is pivotal to proclaim Him. Such proclamation is likely when we are captivated by God's love.

Are people willing to listen? Yes. It is mandatory that we need to know Jesus well if we have to share the good news. How well do we know Jesus? Do we know Him like the people of the world or do we know Him more intimately. Our well-knowing makes the impact. Paul wrote to the churches with authority since he knew Jesus well. He took time with the Disciples of Jesus in Jerusalem and also was mentored by Barnabas. Since then his journey in Christ was remarkable.

He took at least three cross-cultural mission journey. He established churches among the Jews and the Gentiles. He defended the gospel in public arenas. He mentored many young people for Christ. Among them were Timothy, Titus and Silas to name a few. He rejoiced when he went through horrendous times. He did not give up on Jesus. He continued despite hardship and persecutions both from his own people an also from the Gentiles. He was unashamed of the gospel. He was tirelessly proclaiming Jesus so by all means people will get to know Him and be reconciled to God. He was compelled by God's love. His life became contagious.

The question for us is – have we taken any efforts to share Jesus? Have we been in trouble because we proclaimed Jesus? Do we have the passion to proclaim? Let us examine.

Be a Disciple and Make Disciples!