

## Let me Become your Disciple from the bottom of my Heart

August 17th, 2014, Gospel Meeting, Miyota  
Gotthold Beck

心の底から弟子となしたまえ  
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### Matthew

16:15 He asked them, "But who do you say I am?"

16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!"

16:17 Then Jesus told him, "How blessed you are, Simon son of Jonah, since flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, though my Father in heaven has.

### Matthew

26:33 But Peter told him, "Even if everyone else turns against you, I certainly won't!"

26:34 Jesus told him, "I tell you with certainty, before a rooster crows this very night, you will deny me three times."

26:35 Peter told him, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!" And all the disciples said the same thing.

### Luke

22:31 "Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has asked permission to sift all of you like wheat,

22:32 but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail. When you have come back, you must strengthen your brothers."

22:33 Peter told him, "Lord, I am ready even to go to prison and to die with you!"

22:34 But Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you deny three times that you know me."

### John

13:37 Lord, why can't I follow you now?" Peter asked him. "I would lay down my life for you!"

We used to sing this hymn, which went, "Let me become your disciple, my Lord, my Lord. Let me be your disciple. From the bottom of my heart, let me be your disciple." I hope this to be, not just a song, but our sincere desire and our heartfelt prayer. Then, we will be truly blessed. Let me read some more verses from the Gospel according to Mark.

### Mark

1:16 While Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew.

They were throwing a net into the sea because they were fishermen.

1:17 Jesus told them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people!"

18 So immediately they left their nets and followed him.

1:19 Going on a little farther he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat repairing their nets.

1:20 He immediately called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

### Mark

2:13 Jesus went out again beside the sea. The whole crowd kept coming to him, and he kept teaching them.

2:14 As he was walking along, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax collector's desk. Jesus told him, "Follow me!" So Levi got up and followed him.

2:15 Later, he was having dinner at Levi's house. Many tax collectors and sinners were also eating with Jesus and his disciples, because there were many who were following him.

2:16 When the scribes and the Pharisees saw him eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

2:17 When Jesus heard that, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a physician, but sick ones do. I did not come to call righteous people, but sinners."

### Mark

3:13 Then Jesus went up on a hillside and called to himself those whom he had decided on, and they approached him.

3:14 He appointed the Twelve, whom he called apostles, to accompany him, to be sent out to preach.

As we can see from the Gospels, there were always two kinds of things that Jesus called people to do. Firstly, he called them to become children of God. After all, it was to accept the salvation. Secondly, Jesus urged people to become his disciples. The whole book of the gospel according to Mark is intended to characterize Jesus as the great servant.

On the other hand, in Matthew, Jesus is characterized as the King, while, in Luke, he is characterized as man and as the son of God in the Gospel according to John. However, as I mentioned above, the Gospel according to Mark depicts Jesus as the servant of God, seeking and looking for his fellow workers, his disciples.

Co-workers of Jesus, or disciples refer to those who are ready to serve Jesus. And this Gospel according to Mark clearly describes what Jesus urged and commanded to his disciples to do. The central figure of the entire story is, needless to say, our Lord Jesus himself.

So in here, I would like to raise some questions and seek the answers together. To begin with, who is it that is urging us? It is nobody but Jesus himself. As we can see from a series of verbs used in these verses, Jesus is the one who always acts first by himself, then leads others to participate in that action.

#### Mark

3:13 Jesus called to himself those whom he had decided on, and they approached him.

In the verse 16, 19 and 24 of the chapter 1 we just read, it is repeatedly written, Jesus saw this and Jesus saw that. We also see in the verses 17, 20 and 24 of this chapter, the same word appears a number of times; Jesus called someone, Jesus called someone.

Jesus called the name of Zacchaeus and Saul. Likewise, he called each one of his disciples by their own names. I guess that this has a significant meaning because it indicates that Jesus cares about each individual and he desires to lead each person one by one.

Furthermore, it is not that men chose Jesus, but Jesus chose them, joined them and had fellowship with them. Up until this day, men can never be saved by their own strength or by their own decision. Only Jesus can open the eyes of our hearts so that we can see the reality of ourselves and the salvation completed by the Lord himself. The calling of Jesus can be found in this verse, which you all know by heart;

#### Matthew

11:28 Come to me, all of you who are weary and loaded down with burdens, and I will give you rest.

He is not telling you to “come to church”, or “belong to some Christian organization,” but “come to me.” I will give you rest. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. So are his promises. His words are still true today. Jesus is there for all sinners, for those who seek help, for those who have lost all hope. Through repentance and faith, the salvation of Jesus becomes a reality. However, repentance and faith do not come from humans, but are given from above.

So, it is true to say that believers refer to those who have gratefully received this gift. Has each one of you who came here this morning received it already? Or,

have you not received it yet? What is necessary in our life? The most important thing is to become the children of God. That is to say, to be saved. Then, what is required for that?

First of all, we have to realize our desperate need for the salvation. Secondly, it is to understand that human effort is utterly meaningless. In other words, you can never be saved by yourself or by other people. All kinds of human efforts are worthless and hopeless. The salvation mentioned in the Bible is indeed the solution to the problem of your sins.

Although all men are under the wrath of the Lord God because of their sins, the Bible tells us that they will still have peace with the Lord with their debts all paid off, their sins will be forgiven and they will be granted eternal life. However, this can be accomplished neither by men nor religion, but by Jesus alone. When Jesus was punished by Sacred God for the mistakes and arrogance of humans, he paid our debts with his precious blood to forgive our sins.

When believers accept this truth as fact in their hearts, they will have peace with God, forgiveness of their sins and eternal life. Humans cannot solve the problem of their sins through their own strength. They have to be brought to confession that they absolutely need Jesus.

“Lord, I come to you now as the most miserable and helpless man. For solving the problem of my arrogance, mistakes and sins in order to redeem me, my heart is filled with gratitude to you.” Those who can express such feeling towards Jesus will be blessed.

Let us summarize again. To become children of the Creator God, two things are necessary. Firstly, we need to accept all things that the Lord God tells us. This is vitally important. Secondly, we need to accept Jesus.

Then, what is the Lord God telling us? The Lord tells us that this disease of our sins is utterly incurable and there is no hope for improvement. However, Jesus has sacrificed himself for us. What Jesus has accomplished for us is more than enough. Secondly, of course, we need to accept what is provided to us.

It is written in the latter part of verse 17 of the Revelation, chapter 22, near the very end of the entire Bible, “Let anyone who wants the water of life take it as a gift!” The “water of life” in this verse refers to nothing but the gift of salvation given from Jesus. It is stated in here, “Anyone who wants it, take it.” In here, what matters is whether you want it or not. If you want it, you will never fail to receive it. If you don't, you are hopeless. Your future is in darkness.

As Jesus gives eternal life to us, he never forces us to accept it. As it is promised, those who want it will receive it. Those who receive it will keep it. They will have peace with God, forgiveness for their sins, joy of being made children of God and will be given eternal life. What is Jesus urging us to do? He is calling us to be children of God, that is to say, to accept the salvation. But, that is not all.

Actually, Jesus is calling us to become his disciples. "Follow me and I will make you fishers of people!" So, Jesus called his disciples in. What does this call of Jesus imply? It was not just for our own salvation that we were saved but we were saved to be used by him, to serve him.

When you are truly saved, you will also be given the desire to save the unsaved people. If you lack a sincere passion for the salvation of the unsaved people, your faith may be questioned.

After Jesus told people that he would release them from their burden for them so that they would accept the salvation, he also asked them to serve him. What does it mean to serve Jesus? It is not to be given a list of tasks to do, but it means simply to obey Jesus. Then, what is it to obey Jesus? To obey Jesus is to deny yourself and abandon yourself. Let us read a few more verses.

#### Matthew

16:24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow me continually.

16:25 Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

He said, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it." In the original Bible, written in the Greek language, the word 'life' is not used. Instead, it is written 'soul'. Then, what does it mean to "want to save your soul?" It is to turn to your own way and live in a self-centered manner.

What is the function of the so-called soul? Firstly, it is to think. Secondly, it is to feel. And thirdly, it desires something. Therefore, to deny yourself is simply to refuse to allow your thoughts, your emotions and your desires to control you. Contrarily, to abandon your soul, you need to drive your own intention away from your heart and replace it with Jesus, to make him sit on the first seat of your heart.

Without this, no one can truly obey and follow Jesus. To follow Jesus, not only do we have to deny and abandon ourselves, but we need to hate ourselves.

We find these very harsh words in Luke, chapter 14, verse 26;

#### Luke

26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, as well as his own life, he can't be my disciple.

27 Whoever doesn't carry his cross and follow me can't be my disciple.

To hate ourselves, we absolutely need to have distrust of ourselves. Not until your confidence is totally broken down will you be able to obey Jesus. You have to give up your confidence until you feel that you can never take another step without Jesus. Let us look at what Jesus himself confessed and testified.

He admitted that he could not accomplish anything by himself. We too have to seek nothing but the will of Jesus. Otherwise, we will run into a wall. However, Jesus still says that it is not enough to have a distrust of ourselves, but we have to hate ourselves to obey him. Why is such a harsh word like 'hate' used in the Bible? Paul clearly answered this question.

#### Romans

7:18 For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh.

Isaiah used different words to explain the same fact in these famous verses.

#### Isaiah

55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts (thoughts of you believers), nor are your ways (ways of you believers) my ways," declares the Lord.

55:9 For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

His thoughts are not just a little, but totally different from ours. Now, I would like to think about Peter quickly from verses 21 to 23 of Matthew, chapter 16. Jesus used very harsh words to Peter. He said, "Get behind me, Satan."

#### Matthew

16:21 From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he would have to go to Jerusalem and suffer a great deal because of the elders, the high priests, and the scribes. Then he would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised.

16:22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God be merciful to you, Lord! This must never happen to you!"

Jesus turned but he never said, "I appreciate your concern, Peter." Instead,

**Matthew**

16:23 But Jesus turned and told Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an offense to me, because you are not thinking God's thoughts but human thoughts!"

Although Peter believed in Jesus, when he tried to keep Jesus away from the cross, Jesus threw these words at him, "Get behind me, Satan." How could this happen? Peter had already been following Jesus for three years this time. Nevertheless, Peter was not his disciple in a true sense. The purpose and motive of Peter when he said these words were not wrong.

However, because Peter judged things from the human perspective and acted based on the human view, Jesus had to throw such a harsh word to him, 'Satan'. In all aspects, we have to act bearing this in mind; "Not my own will, but the will of the Lord to be followed." It is absolutely necessary for us to abandon our own thoughts and respect nothing but the will of the Lord. Verses 39 and 42 of Matthew, chapter 26, practically consisted of the same words. They expressed the heartfelt cry of Jesus, who knew that he was going to be slaughtered, "Yet not what I want but what you want." "Let your will be followed."

To obey Jesus is to surrender all your will and desire to the Lord every day. We should pay special attention to his words telling us that not only do we have to hate ourselves, but we also have to hate our family. It begins at verse 34 of Matthew, chapter 10;

**Matthew**

10:34 Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword!

10:35 I came to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

10:36 A person's enemies will include members of his own family.'

10:37 The one who loves his father or mother more than me isn't worthy of me, and the one who loves a son or daughter more than me isn't worthy of me.

10:38 The one who doesn't take up his cross and follow me isn't worthy of me.

Here, Jesus clearly said to us to hate our own family. Does it mean literally to neglect our family members and not to care about them at all? When we try to find a solution to some particular problem, we tend to pick up some favourable verses from the Bible and use them for excuses, which is, needless to say, fundamentally wrong.

Under any circumstances, we ought to look at what the entire Bible is telling us. It goes without saying that the Lord desires the salvation of the whole family wholeheartedly, rather than the salvation of each single person. Then, why is he telling us to hate our family? I guess that the answer can be found in chapter 5, verse 8 of the First Epistle to Timothy;

**1 Timothy**

5:8 If anyone does not take care of his own relatives, especially his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Paul wrote these words to his beloved disciple, Timothy. What does it mean to hate your own family after all? It is never to despise your family members and neglect them. It is a matter of course but when we try to find an answer to some specific problem in our life, it is extremely dangerous to, as I just mentioned, pick up some convenient verses and use them to convince yourself and justify your solution to the problem.

Whatever the problem you are facing, you should try to understand what the entire Bible is telling you. Needless to say, the Lord sincerely desires, not just the salvation of each person, but rather the salvation of the entire family. Then, what does it mean to hate your family?

These words in 5:8 of the First Epistle to Timothy are truly important and we should always keep them in our minds. This verse and verses cited earlier from Matthew 10 may seem to totally conflict with each other at a first glance. The Bible clearly states that we have to place importance on our family and respect them.

However, at the same time, the Bible tells us that we have to obey the Lord more sincerely than any person. Those who place the Lord and his words at the top will absolutely care about their family. Contrarily, those who put the highest importance on their family will come to deny the Lord.

The Bible tells us that those who seek the salvation of their family have to abandon them first. The point is that the salvation can never be accomplished with lukewarm attitude and compromise. If you sincerely wish the salvation of your family, salvation of your relatives and the salvation of everybody you know, you need to stand on the side of the Lord 100 per cent. That is to say, obedience to Jesus has to begin by denying yourself as well as your family, hating them and placing Jesus at the top of your life. When we take this uncompromising attitude, the Lord will give us an

abundant blessing so that our family will absolutely be led and saved as he has promised.

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