

Hidden Treasures 202

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7

BECOMING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

In Matthew 28:18 we read:

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Here we can see clearly what Jesus' desire was before He went home to His Father. Everyone was to become a disciple and observe everything that He commanded. You could ask: "What was it that He commanded?" Jesus did not leave us in uncertainty, but rather He explains it freely and openly in Matthew 5:38+39 : "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. But I say unto you that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite you on thy right cheek,

turn to him the other also." Or in verse 43:

" You have heard that it hath been said, 'thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.' But I say unto you, love your enemies and bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: That ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans do the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

These, and even many more, are words of eternal life. And to put them into practice is the way to go from a human life to a godly one. It is truly a high goal and a great task that we have been given here as disciples, apprentices of Jesus. There are many people who call themselves Christians, so one ought to think that they would have attained this obedience and this perfection. According to Jesus' own words, this is not the case, as he said in Matthew 7:14: "For the gate is strait and the way is narrow that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

When they hear about being perfect and doing what Jesus commanded, many believers have

no faith that something so great is at all possible. And why not? Well, that is just the very question. The answer can only be: they have never been Jesus' disciple, pupil, nor apprentice.

A good apprentice is prepared and willing to learn from his Master, and to give up his own ideas. He rejoices when he finds something that is not good in himself so that he can be made like his Master as quickly as possible.

Only disciples who have this attitude of heart will be able to come into spiritual development. If something is difficult to learn, then an enormous effort is necessary. If someone wants to become perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect, then the greatest possible human effort and zeal is called for. Everything is possible for God, but in lazy and unbelieving people God does not want to do such a great work.

In Luke 14:25 it is written: "And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." And in verse 33: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Here we see the narrow gate that Jesus presented to His disciples. It is a voluntary

matter to go through it. When we are successful in getting through it, then we have passed the entrance examination into His school. Then we have truly become disciples, and we can learn from the Master everything that He has commanded us to do. In Matthew 10:25 it is written: "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord."

For an apprentice, it is a foregone conclusion and something quite natural for him to want to become like his master. He has faith therein, because he is in His school. A person who has not become a disciple will never be able to believe in something so great and glorious.

Our schooling is, then, in conformity with our calling, thorough and exact. In the beginning we do not learn the most difficult things, but rather the easier lessons. In Matthew 11:29 Jesus said: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

It is very important to be humble and meek during our entire period of training. Without these, we will never be able to grow. But then lessons come that the Master wants to lead us into. In the tribulations of daily life we are tempted to become impatient, to become restless, to be worried, and to much more. We have many habits that should have no place in our new life. These, and much else as well, are part of our self-life. But now the time has

come when we can get rid of these forever. "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." Matthew 10:39.

It is interesting to be in Jesus' school. There is a lot we still do not know. But the teacher is patient, and we often have to repeat a chapter over and over again. We are to love our enemies. "Yes of course," you might say - "but here's this difficult person who can't stand me and who always despises me!" Here's our chance to love our enemies. By living faith in His Word, we begin to pray for them and to bless them until we have it good in our hearts when we think of them. Then we are able to love them. That is how the Master did it, and that is also how we are to do it.

To deny oneself is a great mystery. What does it mean "to deny oneself"? It means not to do that to which my fleshly desires have lured and enticed me. "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin." 1 Peter 4:1.

Well, who can believe such a thing: "to cease from sin"! Only someone who has become a disciple of Jesus can believe this! For him, the way is open. He has received permission from the Master. Yes, we really have a glorious prospect through the gospel. It is, in truth, "good tidings". May God be highly praised for it.

Ephesians 4:15+16: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Then true brotherhood and fellowship will come forth. This results in happy marriages, in harmony between young and old, in a happy life, and in the fear of God already here on earth. That is really a masterpiece. That is what Jesus wants to do in us. Amen.

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