

Monday Morning Rewind – October 11, 2010

Good morning! Why aren't "maturing" Christians maturing as Christians? This is the question we wrestled with on Sabbath as we began a new series on discipleship. The question was sparked by a social phenomenon taking place among 20-somethings known as "failure to launch." It seems that a growing number of young adults are prolonging their adolescence, staying in school for lack of better options, traveling, avoiding commitments, and forestalling the beginning of adult life.

The "failure to launch" into adulthood may be a legitimate societal concern, but what of Christian's "failure to launch" into discipleship? Is there evidence in contemporary Christianity of prolonging the "babe-in-Christ" stage of spiritual development? Of refusing to be weaned from the "milk" of the Word? Of ever learning but never coming to a full knowledge of the truth (2 Tim 3:7)? Of traveling from church to church avoiding commitments, and forestalling the call to discipleship?

I think it is obvious that **in the church today we have too many members but not enough disciples of Jesus Christ.** There are far too many Christians with their names on the church books, and their posteriors on the church pews, who have failed to launch into the maturity of discipleship.

But just what is a disciple? The Greek word is "Mathetes" – a student who attaches him or herself to a teacher for the purpose of acquiring practical/theoretical knowledge. But it is even deeper than that. **A disciple doesn't just want to know what the rabbi knows. A disciple wants to be like the rabbi and wants to learn to do what the rabbi does.**

A Christian disciple is one who follows Christ, one who submits to His authority, one who hungers to learn His truths and follows through obedience.

By that definition, who fills the majority of the pews in churches across America? Members, attenders, or disciples? True disciples are in short supply these days.

Rewind to Matthew 28:16-20, and there you will find God's mandate to disciples. It is the annunciation of the second covenant and gives both our mission and reason for existence. Note there are five "alls" in this passage. All authority, all nations, all of God, all His commands, all the days. The CEO of heaven has gathered His people on a mountaintop (again) to give new marching orders. There is no more authoritative voice than this. And please note that nowhere did Jesus say to go make church members. He said to go make *disciples*.

One of the first basic requirements of a disciple is to be with Christ. To Live in relationship with the One who is discipling you. Rewind to Mark 3:13, 14 and note that the first order of business for the newly-called disciples was to "be with Him." **Many church members fail to launch into discipleship because they are seldom with Jesus.** We're all "too busy." We substitute church attendance for abiding in Christ and in so doing, we remain unchanged—spiritual infants who have failed to grow up.

Look at John 12:1-2. Note what the newly-resurrected Lazarus is doing. He's reclining at the table with Jesus! What do men who were dead do when they've been raised to life? *They have fellowship with Jesus!* People who were dead and are now alive in Christ love to hang out with Christ. What does it say about us when we're too busy to be with Jesus? Either we're still dead, or maybe we don't appreciate our resurrection.

The call to discipleship is a call to be *with* Christ. This is a basic first step for maturing Christians, and yet, the failure to take this step is the major reason most are failing to mature.

In Jesus' day, everyone knew what discipleship looked like. A rabbi would come to town. And he'd have his little pack of disciples with him, and they'd be doing everything they could to keep up with him, because they devoted their lives to doing what their rabbi does. So if you're a disciple, by the end of the day traveling on these hot, dusty, dirty roads, you've got whatever your rabbi stepped in just caked all over the front of you. So, a saying developed among the sages and wise men of that time--"May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi."

Everyone had seen this. They knew exactly what it meant to be covered in the dust of your rabbi. That's how closely they were following, and being with their rabbi. Whose dust are you covered in today? Is it Jesus or the dust of a busy schedule? Is it Jesus or the dust of social engagements, educational pursuits, financial concerns, media saturation, politics or recreational pursuits?

Where is there a failure to launch in your spiritual life? I encourage you to pray for God's help in maturing as a Christian. Pray for a greater commitment to be with Jesus starting today.—Pastor Randy

P.S. The Discipleship series is designed to be interactive so that we engage with the information as participants and not spectators. Each week there will be questions to discuss and pray through. This

week's questions are below. I encourage you to answer and follow the discussion on facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/group.php?gid=61311396799>.

- Do you think it's true that there is a failure on the part of maturing Christians to mature as Christians? Explain why.
- How do we prolong our spiritual "adolescence?"
- Why aren't church members and disciples synonymous? What's a disciple? Which is the church better at making—disciples or members?
- Besides prayer and Bible study, what does it mean to be "with" Jesus?

Randy Maxwell
Pastor, Kuna Seventh-day Adventist Church
www.kunasdachurch.org
2 Chron. 7:14

"The need is great. The key is prayer. The time is now."