

MU SYDNEY BIBLE STUDIES

2015



DISCIPLESHIP

BEING THE DISCIPLE JESUS WANTS US TO BE

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Suggestions for using these studies

1. Make sure that each person has a copy of the study booklet you are using. People have hearing problems and no-one concentrates all the time, so they need a written copy of the questions to take part in the discussions. Copies of the studies can be bought from the MU Office for each person, or you may wish to buy one copy and use your church facilities to photocopy the number you need.
2. If possible it is good to hand out the studies a week or so before the day, so people have time to prepare in advance. If you do this it is wise to have some extra copies available on the day in case some people forget to bring theirs, or extra people join you.
3. It is essential that the leader has fully prepared the study beforehand. You will find that the summary is relevant to the answers of the questions.
4. You may need to choose a selection of questions to discuss if your group has limited time available for discussion. Choose your selection beforehand, don't simply end when you run out of time.
5. Where you find multiple questions within the one question read the whole of the question first and then deal with each individual question separately. This is so you understand the bigger picture before you deal with the simpler breakdown.
6. You can increase participation by asking several people to read the Bible passages aloud for the group. This also provides a variety of voices and helps to keep people engaged with the study. Make sure you ask your potential readers ahead of time, and also make sure they are comfortable doing this.
7. It is generally better for discussion to sit in a semi-circle than to sit in rows. It is hard to talk to the back of someone's head, and it is generally easier to hear when sitting in semicircles.
8. If you have a large group (twenty or more), consider breaking into smaller groups of about six to ten for the discussion time. The person leading the study could do an introduction, small groups could then discuss the questions with an assigned leader for each group (who has prepared beforehand), and then all could rejoin for a conclusion time directed by the leader.
9. Another alternative for a large group, is choosing several questions that don't just need factual answers but require discussion, and asking the members of the group to discuss that question with the person next to them. Then, if appropriate, ask if anyone would like to share their thoughts with the rest of the group.
10. All Bible readings are taken from New International Version, as found on the Bible Gateway website <https://www.biblegateway.com>

Introduction

Discipleship: Being the Disciple Jesus wants us to be.

Do you ever wonder what it means to truly be a disciple of Jesus? Do you ever wonder if you are getting it right? Do you sometimes think it is all too hard to be the person Jesus wants you to be? Are you like me and see the perfect Jesus and know just how much you must fall short instead of taking it step by step and working on one aspect of the discipleship role at a time until Jesus comes again or you go to meet him in heaven?

What does it mean to be a disciple? When I looked up the dictionary meaning I found that it means many things: following, worshipping, serving, knowing, adhering to, obeying, praising, honouring, standing up for, making known, evangelising; one who embraces and assists in spreading the teachings or doctrines of another or one who is an active adherent of a movement or philosophy. A disciple is often noted to be one of the original 12 followers of Jesus or one of the 70 that Jesus sent out (Luke 10:1) or simply any follower of Jesus.

My first thoughts though were to have a look at what Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 28: 16-20: *Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

First of all we find that the disciples were on the mountain with Jesus and they were *worshipping* him. It doesn't say here what this worship consisted of. Were they on their knees paying homage to him? Were they singing praises to him? Were they praying with him to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit? Were they simply acknowledging him as the Son of God because they finally understood who he was? I imagine that that is what was happening, after all he had just been raised from the dead!

It is interesting isn't it that some still doubted. So does that mean that it's ok that we sometimes struggle with being a disciple, that at times we don't understand what is required of us? I'd like to think so.

Jesus then reminded the disciples where his authority came from and proceeded to give them instructions on what they were to do next. They were to go and make disciples, not Christians, not believers, not converts, but disciples, and, they were to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They were to teach these disciples to obey Jesus' commands. Finally, they were to remember that Jesus would be with them always, to the very end of the age.

How are we, in today's world, as disciples of Jesus, to adhere to his clear commands? As men and women of God, who believe in the teachings of the Bible and who take the commands of Jesus seriously supposed to be identified as people who follow, worship, serve, adhere to his teachings, obey, praise, honour, stand up for, make him known, or evangelise? All big roles to play and none of them very easy. Yet we have been given many examples of disciples of Jesus who can show us the way and the following Bible Studies will hopefully help us to develop some of the traits of true disciples of Jesus so that he will be made known through what we do and what we say as we endeavour to be the people Jesus wants us to be.

The following Bible studies will look at the various aspects of discipleship that I have previously listed. Some I will look at collectively, some on their own, but over the next four studies we should be able to develop a clear understanding of what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus. One who will be known by those with whom we have contact as a follower of Jesus. The first study will examine what it means to worship or give honour to Jesus. This study will largely concentrate on Mary and Martha. The second study will look at evangelising, standing up for Jesus, making him known through his words and deeds. The third study will look at what it means to obey Jesus' commands. The fourth study will help us understand what Jesus meant when he told his disciples to remember that he would be with them even to the end of the age. This fourth study will help us to understand the resources we have available to us to fulfil Jesus' command to go and make disciples of all nations.

The four studies are:

Study 1 Disciples worship and honour Jesus

Study 2 Disciples stand up for Jesus

Study 3 Disciples obey Jesus' commands

Study 4 Disciples remember that Jesus promised to be with them even to the end of the age

It is my prayer that at the end of these studies you will have a clearer understanding of what it means to be the disciple Jesus wants you to be. I also pray that while taking part in these studies you will enjoy deep fellowship with one another as you work together to be able to present one another as mature member of Jesus' family.

May God richly bless you through his word as presented in these studies,

Karen

Study one.

Disciples worship and honour Jesus.

Think about:

A. What does it really mean to worship and honour someone?

B. When we see the beauty of God's creation, it isn't hard to worship him and give glory to him, but how can I do that in the hustle and bustle of normal life?

Matthew 28: 16-20: Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

What does it really mean to worship and honour someone, (*when they saw him, they worshipped him*) to adore them and bow down to them? It seems to me it is more than merely offering lip service to someone, or even singing praises to their glory. It is more than saying we trust in them to meet our needs, to understand our desires and to fulfil our longings.

While writing these studies I have been on a three month journey throughout the outback of Australia and during this time I have seen many wonders of God's creation. At times I have been left with nothing to say but to simply wonder at the beauty that surrounds me. Right now I am sitting at Geikie Gorge in Western Australia listening to the bird life. The day is sunny and clear, the granite outcrops as we entered the national park were amazing and I'm looking forward to doing a cruise of the gorge when my friends return from their walk. Hopefully we will see some crocodiles. I never cease to wonder at the imagination of our God. He is a God who created crocodiles, koalas, zebras, giraffes, kangaroos and emus. Yet he is the God who also created us to bring him glory and honour. It is easy in the wilderness to acknowledge his creative work but how do I do that in the hustle and bustle of normal life? Mary seemed to have the right idea.

Luke 10:38-42

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked. 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!'

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken from her.”

1. On reading this passage what is the first thing that you think of in regard to Mary’s actions?
2. On reading this passage what is the first thing you think of regarding Martha’s actions?
3. Is it Martha who is honouring Jesus by providing a meal and a place to rest for him?
4. Is it Mary who is honouring Jesus by sitting at his feet and listening to him?
5. Sometimes it’s difficult to make the right choices. Sometimes there is good in all the available choices. How do you decide which choice will bring the most honour to Jesus?

We meet Mary and Martha again at the death of Lazarus in John 11. Jesus returns to Bethany because Lazarus has died and Jesus decides it is now time for the disciples and others to believe in him as the one who saves. *John 11:14-15 “Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe.”*

John 11:17-44

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹ "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

²⁸ After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." ²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴ "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ "Take away the stone," he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

(Before you answer Question 6 and 7 read all of the question and then answer each part separately)

6. Martha rushes out to meet Jesus. In verse 22 she indicates that she has an understanding of Jesus’ place with God the Father.
 - (a) In their conversation in verses 22-27 what do you see that reveals Martha as giving honour and praise to Jesus?

 - (b) Apart from the communal sharing of the Apostles’ Creed and others in church when do you, individually, verbally acknowledge Jesus as Messiah, the Son of God?

 - (c) We know he is but do we say it to him in our individual prayer and praise?

7. John 11:28-32. Mary hears that Jesus is asking for her and goes to meet him.
 - (a) What action and word shows that Mary honours Jesus?

 - (b) There is something humbling about Mary’s action here that makes me think of our own actions before Jesus. Do we humble ourselves before him?

 - (c) Do we lay at his feet if only metaphorically?

 - (d) How do our actions glorify Jesus?

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.² Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.³ Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected,⁵ "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages."⁶ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

⁷ "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial."⁸ You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

Again we find Jesus in the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary.

8. What does Mary do that gives honour to Jesus?

9. How often do we give our best to Jesus, whether it be in material things such as the perfume Mary administered to his feet or in using the gifts he has given us to the best of our ability, or in helping another in need?

10. How often do we willingly and graciously give what we have to Jesus?

Luke 1: 46-55

Mary's Song

And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ *and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,*

⁴⁸ *for he has been mindful*

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ *for the Mighty One has done great things for me—*

holy is his name.

⁵⁰ *His mercy extends to those who fear him,*

from generation to generation.

⁵¹ *He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;*

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² *He has brought down rulers from their thrones*

but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ *He has filled the hungry with good things*

but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ *He has helped his servant Israel,*

remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵ *to Abraham and his descendants forever,*

just as he promised our ancestors."

Question 10: please choose one of the options below to answer this question.

10. (a) In your own words (either by yourself or in a small group (2-3) or in your Bible Study large group) rewrite Mary's song of praise to the Lord and choose one of your songs and say together as a prayer.

or

(b) Read Mary's Song together

Concluding Thoughts

I hope that as we have looked at the way in which Mary and Martha worshipped Jesus, and how Mary, Jesus' earthly mother, worshipped him we have a better understanding of how we can give Jesus honour and praise in all things.

One of the best ways I know to give praise and honour to our God is to read and say aloud the Psalms and Psalm 8 is one of the most wonderful. Before you meet again for Bible Study spend some time alone saying this Psalm, maybe rewriting it to express your heart of praise to God.

Psalm 8

¹ *LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory
in the heavens.*

² *Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.*

³ *When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,*

⁴ *what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?*

⁵ *You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honour.*

⁶ *You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:*

⁷ *all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,*

⁸ *the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.*

⁹ *LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Bible Study 2

Disciples stand up for Jesus.

Matthew 28: 16-20: *Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

The study will look at evangelising, standing up for Jesus, *making disciples of all nations*, and making him known through his words and deeds.

Some people are born to be evangelists, some to be teachers, some pastors, some counsellors, some peacemakers, some poets, some doctors, and many other vocations. However, all of us who know, love and believe in Jesus, who call ourselves his disciples, are called to make Jesus known.

This is not an easy task but it may be easier than you think.

Let's begin by looking at the **Acts 2:1-26**

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵*Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?"⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"*

¹³*Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."*

¹⁴*Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I*

say. ¹⁵ *These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!* ¹⁶ *No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*

¹⁷ *"In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.*

¹⁸ *Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.*

¹⁹ *I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.*

²⁰ *The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.*

²¹ *And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.'*

²² *"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him:*

*"I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.*

²⁶ *Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest in hope.*

Peter responds from verse 11, to the amazement of those who are witnesses, to the healing of the lame man at the gate called Beautiful.

1. What do you find amazing about Peter's speech? (Verses 11-26)

2. Peter's speech was a clear Gospel message from beginning to end. Note down each significant Gospel point that Peter emphasises.

3. Using these points either individually, in a small group of 2-3 or in your large Bible Study group write your own Gospel message and share it with the group. If you are artistic or have a creative member in your group you might like to tell your message in picture form.

Peter's approach to evangelism was dramatic and the results were amazing and immediately obvious to the concern of many Jews of the time. However there are other ways to make Jesus known as we are not all called to be evangelists. That is for the Billy Grahams and John Chapmans of this world not for most of us. It is important however that we know what to say when we need to say it. You never know when someone in the street might walk up to you and ask "what must I do to be saved?" While it was not quite like that I have been asked that question and thankfully for my Beach Mission training I was able, with confidence, to share the truth of the Gospel when asked.

Priscilla and Aquila I find a great encouragement for those of us who are not called to be 'Evangelists' in the upfront dramatic way of some. The following passages will help us explore some of the other ways we can make Jesus known.

Priscilla and Aquila

Acts 18

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.² There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,³ and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.⁴ Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.⁶ But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

⁷Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. ¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." ¹¹ So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

¹² While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul and brought him to the place of judgment. ¹³ "This man," they charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law."

¹⁴ Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to them, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanour or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. ¹⁵ But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." ¹⁶ So he drove them off. ¹⁷ Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul; and Gallio showed no concern whatever.

¹⁸ Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. ¹⁹ They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. ²¹ But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus. ²² When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

²³ After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and travelled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

²⁴ Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

²⁷ When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. ²⁸ For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

4. In verses 1-4 what were Priscilla and Aquila doing to assist in the spread of the Gospel?

5. In verses 24-26 what did Priscilla and Aquila do to enhance the spread of the truth of the Gospel?

6. In verses 27-28 what did Priscilla and Aquila do to ensure the spread of the Gospel?

7. In Romans 3: 6 we find Priscilla and Aquila again as Paul's co-workers. What can you do as a co-worker for the Gospel? Your role does not have to be an upfront one but how can you, using the gifts God has given you, assist in the spread of the Gospel?

Read all of Question 8 and then answer the part of the question that is appropriate for you.

8. In 1 Corinthians 16:19 we find Priscilla and Aquila opening their house for church. Not everyone is able to do this.
 - (a) Are there ways in which you can make your home available for Bible Study, fellowship around God's word, exploring the Gospel message, breaking bread together and praying for missionaries and friends as they share the Gospel wherever they might be?

 - (b) If you are unable to do this at your house, can you support someone who is able to? Who are they? How can you do this?

Concluding Thoughts

Having completed this study I want you to give yourself a break. Stop feeling guilty about 'evangelism' and think about the ways in which you can stand up for Jesus in the day to day relationships you have with your local baker, barista, pharmacist, hairdresser, dietician, physiotherapist, podiatrist, doctor, dentist. While thinking about these studies I have given up counting the number of times there have been opportunities for me to make one line statements about my faith in Jesus at these and many other daily meetings. Like you probably, I don't always take them up as I often don't think well on my feet, or I'm too scared to speak up but when I have I have found people to be accommodating and some even interested. None to date have been rude or nasty to me. You never know how the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts but you can go away praying for them. For as Paul says in Timothy, (*1 Timothy 2:1-4: I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—²for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.³ This is good, and pleases God our Saviour,⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*) God wants everyone to know about him.

The goal of Christians everywhere is that everyone will be presented to God fully mature in Christ (Colossians 1:28) because it is Jesus we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom. As we stand up for Jesus maybe you can use the words of 1 Peter 2 as a reminder of how our daily lives in action reflect our love for Jesus. It is our lives in action that also reflect our gratitude and awe at what he has done for us which makes us want to stand up for him. This is reflected in verses 23-25 of 1 Peter 2.

1 Peter 2: 23-25

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.²⁴ "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."²⁵ For "you were like sheep going astray," but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Study 3

Disciples obey Jesus' commands

Matthew 28: 16-20: *Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

In the words above we see that Jesus commands his disciples, including us, to make disciples. We are to follow that up by teaching those very same disciples to obey Jesus' commands. A daunting task when you consider the number of Jesus' commands recorded in the Gospels. In chapter 14 of John's Gospel we also find Jesus saying, *"If you love me, obey my commands."* (vs. 15) and *"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."* (vs. 21). So it seems that not only are we to obey Jesus' commands but in doing so we will be rewarded by the love of Jesus and his Father. Do we need a better incentive?

However obeying Jesus' commands is easier said than done considering the list of commands varies from 38 to 147, some of them, of course, have the same meaning, such as, "believe in me" and "believe in him who God sent."

You might, in preparation for this study find a red letter version of the Gospels and gather your own list of Jesus' commands. Maybe you could group them under appropriate headings such as the following or those of your own design.

1. Repentance, Belief, New Birth and Receiving the Holy Spirit
2. Following Jesus
3. Prayer
4. Faith
5. Wisdom
6. Standing up for Jesus
7. Jesus' Second Coming
8. Loving God
9. Loving our Neighbours and Fellow Christians
10. Godly Living

As it would be impossible to look at all the commands of Jesus in one study I have chosen just a few for us to examine here. Hopefully they will assist us in our daily lives as we strive to be the disciples Jesus wants us to be.

You don't need to do all of these references, although you can if you want to, but choose 3 or 4 from each group.

1. Pray always

Using the following passages as a guide how does Jesus ask us to pray and what does Jesus ask us to pray for?

- a) Luke 21: 36
- b) Luke 22: 40 and 46
- c) Luke 10: 2
- d) Luke 6:28
- e) Matthew 6:6
- f) Matthew 6:7-8
- g) John 16: 24 and 26
- h) Matthew 6:9-13

2. Loving God and our Neighbours

Using the following passages as a guide how does Jesus ask us to express our love for God and our neighbours?

- a) Mark 12:30-31
- b) Matthew 4:10
- c) John 4: 23-24
- d) John 5:22-23
- e) Luke 6:31
- f) Matthew 19:18-19
- g) Luke 14:12-13

3. Jesus' Second Coming

Be encouraged by the truth of Jesus' commands regarding his return. What are the important messages we can take from the following commands of Jesus?

- a) Revelation 2:25
- b) Revelation 3:2-3
- c) Luke 12:35-36
- d) Luke 12:40
- e) Luke 21:8-19
- f) Luke 21:34-36
- g) Mark 13:34-37

4. Finally, choosing just one or two of these passages from each point make some suggestions as to how these commands can be applied to your daily life either individually or collectively.

Concluding Thoughts

Your list of Jesus' commands will provide you with a guidebook for Godly living and help you in your goal to be presented to our heavenly Father as one who is mature in Jesus, on his return. My Bible Study group has often heard me say that one of my strongest longings is that someone will say as part of the eulogy at my funeral service that Jesus will look at me and say "well done good and faithful servant." It is such a strong and hopeful wish that it nearly always brings me close to tears as I know that it is only because of Jesus' love for me/us, and because of what he has done for me/us, that that will be at all possible. My prayer is that as you think about the commands of Jesus and how you might apply them to your life you will remember that it was part of Jesus' commission to his disciples to obey his commands and that the reward will be his love and the love of his Father. An amazing gift!!!

On reflection it is through keeping the two most stand out of Jesus' commands that we will please God. These two commands are the guiding force underneath all the other commands.

A good way to conclude this Bible Study would be to say together those commands from Matthew 22: 37-40: *"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the law and the prophets hang on these two commands."*

Study 4

Disciples remember that Jesus promised to be with them even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28: 16-20: *Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Jesus' promise that he would be with his disciples even to the end of the age is overwhelming to those of us who are his children for we know the cost of this for him. We know he chose to do the work his Father set for him to do. We know he died for us that we might be right with our God. We also know that Jesus sits at the right hand of God the Father and that he chose to do that in order that we might receive the power of the Holy Spirit. John 16:7 says, *"But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you."*

Can you put yourself in the disciples' shoes as Jesus said to them *"and surely, I will be with you always, to the very end of the age"*? Can you put yourself in the shoes of the disciples before Jesus' ascension? Can you put yourself in their shoes at his ascension? All this was before the Holy Spirit descended upon them and entered into them. What did Jesus really mean by saying he would be with them, and by extension us, even to the end of the age?

How is Jesus in us and thereby with us?

1. By his Word

Jesus has given us himself in his Word and he uses his Word to teach us many things.

- a) Using John 1: 1 and 14 describe how Jesus has made himself known to us.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

b) How does John 6: 35-40 encourage you?

John 6: 35-40 *Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."*

c) Jesus Word gives us the way of salvation. How does John 14:6 express this reality?

John 14:6 *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

d) 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Thessalonians 2:16 are powerful expressions of the value of understanding Jesus' Word. What can Jesus' Word do for us?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2 Thessalonians 2:15-16 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.¹⁶ Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.*

How is Jesus in us and thereby with us?

2. Jesus is with us as we pray and as he prays for us

- (a) Even in the Old Testament the Lord was with his people.

He was with Moses as he prepared him to face Pharaoh and bring the people out of Egypt (Exodus 33: 15 *Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here."*),

He promised to be with Jacob while he did what the Lord required of him: (Genesis 28: 15-17 *I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.*"¹⁶ *When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it."*¹⁷ *He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."*).

What is God promising Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:14-16?

2 Chronicles 7:14-16 *if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*¹⁵ *Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.*¹⁶ *I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.*

- (b) Matthew 18:19-20 is a significant promise of Jesus. How does this passage encourage you?

Matthew 18:19-20 *"Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.*²⁰ *For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*

- (c) Read John 17: 6-26. *"I have revealed you^t to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.*⁷ *Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you.*⁸ *For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.*⁹ *pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.*¹⁰ *All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.*¹¹ *I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the*

power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

How is Jesus' prayer for his disciples and for all believers indicative of the fact that he is with us? How does this passage encourage you?

How is Jesus in us and thereby with us?

3. Jesus is with us through the power of the Holy Spirit

John 16:7 says, “But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate, (comforter, mediator, helper) will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you.”

The power of the Holy Spirit is not limited. The Holy Spirit has all the power of the Godhead. He is at one with God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit brings power to the church and to individual believers to do God's work as Jesus has commanded us.

Romans 8:9-11

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

- a) As you read Romans 8: 9-11 what leaps out at you as being a significant aspect of the power of the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 1:17-23

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

- b) As you read Ephesians 1:17-23 what leaps out at you as being a significant aspect of the power of the Holy Spirit?

- c) In both Romans 8:9-11 and Ephesians 1:17-23 there is an amazing revelation that we can draw much strength and encouragement from. What is it? (Take a better look at Romans 8: 11 and Ephesians 1:19-20)

Concluding Thoughts

Let us take great encouragement from the words of Paul in Romans 8: 35-39 *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:*

‘For your sake we face death all day long;

We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor death, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This is true because Jesus is in us!

Our confidence is that Jesus rules from heaven as the ascended Lord. He sits at God’s right hand as our mediator and friend. His Word guides us and in the power of the Holy Spirit he is with us. Jesus will never, ever leave us. In the words of Hebrews 13: 5 *“God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”* The strength of the ‘never’ in this verse is such that it ought to read; *“I will never, never, never, never, never leave you.*

What then does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? I hope these studies have brought alive for you Jesus' commission of Matthew 28: 16-20: *Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Disciples are those who worship Jesus.

Disciples are those who stand up for Jesus, making him known and making more disciples.

Disciples are those who obey Jesus' commands.

Disciples are those who know that Jesus is in them and will always be in them. Because we know he is in us, we know we have all the resources we need to undertake Jesus' commission and therefore assist in presenting everyone mature in Christ before God our Father when Jesus comes again.

As we conclude this series what has come to my mind are the words of the hymn by Daniel W. White: *“I Know Whom I Have Believed.”* If you have someone in your group who can

hold a tune it would be nice to sing this hymn together otherwise conclude by reading it together or one person can read the verses and the whole group can join in, in the refrain.

“I Know Whom I Have Believed.”

1. I know not why God’s wondrous grace
To me He hath made known,
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love
Redeemed me for His own.

Refrain:

But “I know Whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I’ve committed
Unto Him against that day.”

2. I know not how this saving faith
To me He did impart,
Nor how believing in His Word
Wrought peace within my heart.
3. I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convincing men of sin,
Revealing Jesus through the Word,
Creating faith in Him.
4. I know not what of good or ill
May be reserved for me,
Of weary ways or golden days,
Before His face I see.
5. I know not when my Lord may come,
At night or noontide fair,
Nor if I walk the vale with Him,
Or meet Him in the air.