

Walk in peace, part 1

Matthew 28:18-20

MPS: Christ-followers are made new by Jesus to walk in God's peace.

OBJ: Every person should walk in God's peace for two reasons.

INTRO

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Cor 5:17

What does it mean to be "made new" by the gospel of Jesus Christ? Last week we looked at the first realm of knowing God, "living in love" in the realm of the heart, and the first two aspects of the Christian identity, Worshiper and Servant. We recognized that these are not separate entities, but two expressions of the same, single "force", God's love alive in Christ-followers. God gives a new heart to know Him, and places His Spirit within us to live in His love. Christ-followers engage the heart to focus on relationship with God as Worshipers to grow and all-consuming love for Him, and engage the hands to focus on expression of life as Servants and meet needs in His name. **Christ-followers live in God's love when they live as Worshipers and Servants.**

Today we consider "walking in peace" in the realm of the mind, and the final two aspects of every Christ-follower's identity, Disciple and Missioner.

TRANS And here is the final part of the "new" that has come.

MPS: Christ-followers are made new by Jesus to walk in God's peace.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matt 28:18-20

This passage is known as the Great Commission. These are Jesus' final words to His disciples before He ascends into Heaven. These words are so important that they are recorded five times in the Gospel accounts. [Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-48; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8) Every human author of a gospel account prioritizes these words of Jesus. **The Great Commission distinguishes the second realm in which Christ-followers relate to God, the realm of a renewed mind to walk in and proclaim His peace.**

The Great Commission teaches two vital truths about our identity as a Christ-follower. First, one must "be" a disciple to make disciples. Second, every true disciple actively engages in making disciples through the gospel. This provides the last two aspects of our identity as Disciple and Missioner. **When a Christ-follower lives as a Disciple and Missioner, they walk in God's peace and labor to proclaim God's peace to all people through the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

Made New Series Note: Last week we saw that "living in God's love", through a new heart, as Worshiper and Servant meant we transfer the value of God's love to all people. Today we will see that "walking in peace", in the realm of the renewed mind, means we transfer the authority of God's truth to live under King Jesus' rule.

ILLUS The Identity / Ethos Principle (Centripetal force / Centrifugal force)

The Principle of Identity / Ethos also applies in the realm of the renewed mind: The One that centers your life will determine how you live your life. The peace we have with God through the gospel daily returns us to Jesus to apply it to every area of life, and share the good news of peace that He gives to all who believe. **Walking in God's peace means a Christ-follower remembers Jesus is our peace (Disciple), and goes forth to share Him with others (Missioner).**

TRANS Q? What does it mean for a Christ-follower to walk in peace as Disciple and Missioner?

Disciple

Disciple is the third aspect of the Christ-follower's identity because God's purpose in salvation reverses sin's curse imposed upon our mind. When sin entered the world through rebellion, Satan attacked our mind and thinking by questioning God's Word and darkening our mind to His truth. Jesus' death and resurrection crushed sin and the grave, and renews our darkened thinking. Relationship with Jesus brings renewal of the mind as part of our transformation. **Disciple forms the third aspect of a Christ-follower's identity to learn and follow God's will because we have the mind of Christ.** (1 Cor 2:16)

A Disciple 'engages the mind' to focus on AUTHENTICITY of new life in Jesus by renewal of the mind.

Understanding what it means to know God includes every faculty of life. But special priority is given to the mind as "command central". Paul records in Romans,

*Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewal of your mind,***

*that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. **Rom 12:2***

God's transformation of our identity as Disciple in salvation is revealed by a renewing mind in sanctification.

Our identity as Disciple combines two meanings to create a new reality. The Greek word for disciple (*mathetes*) means "learner and follower". This isn't multiple choice of "learner" or "follower" to choose. One without the other means something different altogether. Learning without following only makes an "encyclopedia". Following without learning makes one a "fan". For a Christ-follower, there is no stagnant learning, and no ignorant following. The expectation of following prioritizes learning. And the dependency upon learning enables following. **A Disciple is only made when the combined qualities of "learner and follower" practice the rhythm of "trust and obey".**

But Scripture doesn't hide the fact that the reality of our transformation is not an easy process. This new rhythm demands that a Disciple grow in humility as the gospel gets applied for obedience. **God's power works to bring authenticity of new life by gospel transformation.** A Disciple recognizes gospel transformation in authenticity means "my whole life is changing". **Self-denial and suffering become a regular practice in the midst of gospel transformation.** Jesus' words remind us,

*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. **Luke 9:23***

*Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. **Luke 14:27***

Gospel transformation in authenticity is "reality-altering". When we set our mind on Jesus Christ, by the Spirit's power we walk in peace with God.

*"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the thing of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, **but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.**" **Rom 8:5-6***

Walking in God's peace first means that Disciples grow in Authenticity of new life through gospel transformation that renews the mind to discern God's will and walk in His peace.

TRANS A Disciple learns and follows Jesus to walk in God's peace by applying the gospel to every area of life. **How does one apply the gospel to every area of life?**

Paul gives extensive consideration to our identity as "Disciple" in his letter to the Colossians. Using the theme of Lordship and Jesus as the "Head", he gives extensive focus to our thinking. He explores **four dimensions of the mind / thinking** that are important for Christ-followers as Disciple to apply the gospel.

First, thinking as "knowledge". In this level of thinking includes basic, factual information. Paul sets forth the core facts of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. The Law and Commands of God are presented, predominantly, in this manner. Thinking as knowledge is the most straightforward presentation of information.

Second, thinking as the "perspective of knowledge". In this level of thinking we gain comprehension and meaning, and begin to recognize different levels of knowledge.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! **Psalm 139:17**

God holds the highest level of knowledge, far beyond our own. (Isa 55:8-9) The Psalmist is overwhelmed by the vastness of God's knowledge. Every detail of every thing is perfectly known by God.

Luke records Jesus opening the disciples "thinking" to greater comprehension.

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures **Luke 24:45**

When the resurrected Christ appeared to some of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, they did not recognize Him. He joined their conversation. His instruction performed a miracle of knowledge in them, recorded here by Dr. Luke. Jesus gave the disciples a new perspective in their thinking to comprehend all the Scriptures with Him as the center.

ILLUS When Jesus teaches **the parable of the prodigal son**, (Luke 15:11f) he interprets the Law (Deut 21:18-23) with a new perspective (though, yet complete from Gal 3:13) to demonstrate the love of Father God.

In this second level of thinking knowledge takes on new perspectives.

Third, thinking as a "pattern of processing knowledge". In this level of thinking, what we've comprehended in meaning now moves to a deeper understanding. This is rightly be thought of as philosophy, where the relationship of our comprehension begins to lead to discernment. This dimension deals specifically with how you process information to make decisions or draw conclusions for action.

We all think in "patterns", which determine how we think about things. Patterns may be based on learning (knowledge, worldly wisdom), training (practice), or past experiences (emotional, traumatic events). Paul exhorts us to maturity in our thinking,

Brothers, do not be children in your thinking...be mature. **1 Cor 14:20**

Paul instructs Christians to think in the same manner as Jesus.

Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus" **Phil 2.5** (describes Jesus thinking)

Scripture also demonstrates a strong WARNING against how sin darkens our thinking patterns.

"For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking..." **Rom 1.21**

ILLUS When Police drive behind you on the highway, what you know about them does not change, but "how you think about them" at that moment does!

The Psalmist invites God to search him, the whole of his life, and perfectly "know" him.

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! **Psalm 139:23**

This invitation is not simply to determine whether all factual information is correct. But all the more, is my comprehension and understanding correct. The question we must consider is, **what determines our pattern of thinking, Biblical teaching or personal rationale and experience? Who is at the center of my thoughts? Do my conclusions align with God's Word to bring Him glory?**

Often in our 'pattern of thinking', we limit the intake of information (mind polarizes on speedometer with police behind) to reach a conclusion, (by training, urgency, convenience, or comfort). Reconciliation with God changes the way we think, what we think and our pattern of processing information. (2 Cor 5.16) **Christ-followers as Disciple learn to seek God in his Word, and let Holy Spirit counsel and guide our mind in "how" we think.**

Peter instructs that Christian thinking should be different because Christ had suffered in the flesh.

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking" **1 Peter 4:1**

Peter gave this charge because what we know about Jesus' suffering, both in the facts and meaning, brings new understanding to the way we live.

In this third level of thinking, we gain understanding from the larger picture, or narrative, and apply it toward how we think about things.

Fourth, thinking as wisdom is where all other aspects combine for right application unto obedience. A disciple continually walks in “gospel truth” in order to grow in every area of the mind.

Paul exhorts Christians to walk in God’s wisdom.

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, Ephesians 5:15

Proverbs reminds us that walking in wisdom is not an individual project, but the fruit of making disciple .

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise. Prov 13:20

I take time to talk about these dimensions of knowledge because as we walk with God and address the issues of life, we seek new information, to think about it in helpful ways, use it to understand and draw from our relationship with God to obey. **And, Christ holds all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.** (Col 2:3)

Why is it important to talk about our mind / thinking? Because everyone is telling you how to think. How did we ever conceive a thought without social media. Studies now show that Social Media is not only the dumbing down our mind so that we don’t think, but also makes us ignorant from not thinking and changing the way we think. In a world where information is doubling every two days, or faster, we need to think about how we think today more than ever before.

ILLUS: Receiving bad news, like cancer news. When you hear this, you will, by the way you've been trained, run to whatever your thinking leads you to. And the one it will lead you to is the one who holds you, who centers you. Our pattern of thinking is important because when it matters, you're not gonna care about it, only about where it leads you. If you've not been thinking about the gospel before then, you will not have time to entertain it then.

Engaging the mind is not simply knowing an answer, but by faith embracing Jesus as God’s living truth (learner) and worthy of obedience (follower). Embracing truth by faith causes a change of the mind, the essence of repentance . A Disciple reads, meditates on and studies Scripture to know what it says, comprehend what it means, understand why it matters and apply how we live. A Disciple ‘engages the mind’ because the gospel encompasses the totality of our thinking; “what we think”, “what we think about what we think”, “how we think about what we think”, and “how we apply to action what we think about”. **Jesus transforms our whole being by renewing our mind, including every level of thinking !**

MPS: Christ-followers are made new by Jesus to walk in God’s peace.