

Discipleship Lesson - Knowing Christ

What is discipleship ultimately about?

- Following Jesus' commands? No.
- Sharing your faith? No.
- Multiplying yourself through discipling others? No.
- These three things are how we typically define discipleship within Cru, and these are not wrong answers. Walking by faith, communicating our faith, and multiplying our faith are all necessary components of discipleship, but none of them are the ultimate goal.
- Through the course of this lesson, we will discover what that ultimate goal is.

Read Matthew 13:44-46

- ⁴⁴The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, ⁴⁶and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.”
- Make some observations. What do you see in this passage?
- Who is the merchant?
 - God? Or Us? (*It can be both*)
- Why would the merchant sell all that he has?
- Would anyone ever actually do this in real life?
 - We'll see the answer to this in a real life example in a bit.

Read Philippians 3:1-11

- Restate the passage in your own words. What is Paul saying here?
- If you had to pick two verses as the most central verses of this passage, what would they be?
 - Philippians 3:7-8 - “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.”
- What similarities are there between this passage from Paul's letter to the Philippians, and Jesus' parables of the treasure and the pearl?
 - To Paul, the treasure is knowing Christ.
- It should be noted that we use the phrase “knowing God” or “knowing Christ” in a very watered-down way today. Normally when someone says, “Do you know Jesus?” they're asking, “Are you a Christian?” But this is not what Paul is talking about. He's not talking about identifying with Christ, he's talking about an actual, real, intimate relationship.
- So Paul puts ultimate emphasis on knowing Christ, but does the rest of Scripture share this same value?

Knowing Christ (God)

- John 17:3 - “This is eternal life (what a treasure!), **that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ** whom You have sent.”
 - Eternal life! What a treasure! And Jesus says that eternal life IS knowing Him.
- 2 Peter 1:2-3 - “Grace and peace (what a treasure!) be multiplied to you **in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord**; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness (what a treasure!), through **the true knowledge of Him** who called us by His own glory and excellence.”
 - Grace and peace! What a treasure! Everything pertaining to life and godliness! What a treasure! And these come to us how? Through knowing Him!
- Jeremiah 9:23-24 - “Thus says the Lord, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; **but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me**, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the Lord.”
 - Even in the Old Testament, we see this emphasis

Forrest Fenn Treasure

- Let’s go back to the idea of treasure. Read this excerpt from “Chasing Infinity” a book on discipleship by Mark Liederbach:
- “In the early part of 2010, an eccentric millionaire by the name of Forrest Fenn published a little autobiographical book entitled *The Thrill of the Chase: A Memoir*. In so doing, he captured the imagination of thousands and ignited a chase for hidden treasure that continues to this day. Fenn, a retired soldier and art dealer in his mid-80’s, revealed that he had hidden away a forty-two-pound chest full of treasure somewhere in the Rocky Mountains north of Santa Fe, New Mexico. The antique bronze chest is reputed to include ‘a jar full of gold dust panned in Alaska, gold coins, large and small gold nuggets, pre-Columbian gold animal figures, two ancient Chinese jade carvings, a 17th-century Spanish gold and emerald ring and a beloved bracelet of turquoise beads, excavated from a Mesa Verde ruin in 1903, that Fenn had won in a game of pool. The total value amounted to about \$3 million.’ The secret to finding the chest involves discovering the clues hidden in a poem he included in the book and then puzzling them together to determine the whereabouts of the treasure. Following the book’s publication, the chase was on! People from all over the world dropped what they were doing and voluntarily sacrificed all they had to pursue Fenn’s treasure. One of the many articles reporting on the treasure hunt records that for those ‘who have been snared by Fenn’s gambit, the treasure’s location is an all-consuming mystery. Some have uprooted their lives to hunt for the chest; at least one has even mortgaged her home to fund her expeditions. Searchers have been arrested for digging up burial sites, for making trouble in national parks, and even for barging onto Fenn’s own property – all of them obsessed

with the idea of the trove just sitting there for the taking, if only they could unravel Fenn's clues.' A valuable treasure is a powerful motivator indeed!"

- According to Wikipedia, five people have died in their efforts to locate the treasure: one in 2016, three in 2017, and one in 2020.
- https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fenn_treasure

- Fenn's Poem:

As I have gone alone in there
And with my treasures bold,
I can keep my secret where,
And hint of riches new and old.
Begin it where warm waters halt
And take it in the canyons down,
Not far, but too far to walk.
Put in below the home of Brown.
From there it's no place for the meek,
The end is ever drawing nigh;
There'll be no paddle up your creek,
Just heavy loads and water high.
If you've been wise and found the blaze,
Look quickly down, your quest to cease,
But tarry scant with marvel gaze,
Just take the chest and go in peace.
So why is it that I must go
And leave my trove for all to seek?
The answer I already know,
I've done it tired, and now I'm weak.
So hear me all and listen good,
Your effort will be worth the cold.
If you are brave and in the wood
I give you title to the gold.

- What are the emotions you feel as you hear this story?
- Your emotions may change when you hear this, but Fenn announced in a June 6, 2020 blog post that the treasure had been found. He wouldn't name the finder and refused to shed light on the clues, leaving many wondering if it actually had been found. Fenn died on September 7, 2020 at the age of 90, but a later lawsuit revealed who had actually found the treasure.
- I don't know about you, but when I first read this story, it almost made me want to go look for the treasure.

- Here's the lesson for us. We have an infinitely more valuable treasure available to us, and yet we fall far short of the passion and determination with which many people have sought Fenn's treasure. Let that convict you!
- 1 Corinthians 2:2 - "For I **determined** to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."
 - Notice the similarities to Philippians 3:8
- Proverbs 2:3-5 - "For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; **if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures**; then you will discern the fear of the Lord and **discover the knowledge of God.**"

Conclusion

- We primarily know Christ through prayer and reading of Scripture, and we will talk more about those in future lessons. But those two disciplines can be practiced religiously without an intimate relationship with Jesus actually being fostered.
- Without knowing Him you can be a regular worshiper, gifted Christian, and skilled ministry worker, and still miss it all. Intimacy with Jesus is a treasure. We must chase after that one thing with everything we've got. We must be willing to "sell all that we have" in order to find that treasure. We must be willing to "die" in order to find that treasure.
- Right now, what is most preventing you from knowing Jesus? What is God asking you to rid from your life ("sell") so that you can obtain the treasure of knowing Him?
- What are you going to do about it? How can I/we hold you accountable to that?