

The Good, the Bad, and the Ornerly: Discipleship in the New Testament

1. **Description**
2. **Lexical sense:**
 - a. “disciple” (*mathetás* in Greek) – 269 times in 253 gospel verses
 - b. “discipleship” – 0 times
3. **In Greek culture**
 - a. “Disciple in Greek culture:
 - i. common in philosophical, religious and very practical spheres.
 - b. Implies dependence on a superior teacher or witness, or apprenticeship
 - i. following a particular school of thought
 - c. Requires a master / disciple relationship not required of a teacher / student
 - i. imitation of the master
4. **Jewish circles**
 - a. closest word for “disciple” in Hebrew is *talmid* – Talmud = “teaching”; *talmid* = “one who learns”
 - i. 1 Chron 25:8, translated into the LXX as *manthanontes* – “one who learns”
 - b. The key relationship, in Judaism, is *not* with a master, but with God,
 - c. The prophets, Elijah, Elisha and Jeremiah, had schools, but not disciples
5. **Who Has Disciples In the NT**
 - a. Pharisees: Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33
 - b. Moses: John 9:28
 - c. John: Matt 11:2; Mark 2:18, Luke 5:33; Luke 7:18; John 3:25
 - d. Paul: 1 Cor 4:16; 1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17
6. **Male and female**
 - a. Tabitha / Dorca / “Gazelle” of Acts 9:36 (*matháttria*).
 - b. Mary (Martha and Mary)
 - i. Sitting at Jesus’ feet
 - c. Mary Magdalene – “a disciple of the Lord” in the Gospel of Peter,
7. **First mentions of “disciples”:**
 - a. 1st mentions: Matt 5:1; 8:17-27; 10:1-4
8. **Disciples and Masters – likeness, but not in glory:**
 - a. No disciple superior to the teacher: Luke 6:40; Matt 10:24-25
 - b. It is *enough* to suffer like the Master: John 15:18-21
 - c. Service rather than suffering: John 13:12-17
9. **Suffering as an end of discipleship?**
 - a. Not because suffering brings God’s pleasure.
 - i. a means to accomplish a good...*not* the end in itself.
 - b. Jesus cherishes every kindness done for disciples: Matt 10:40-42
10. **Framing Discipleship**
 - a. Not precisely what we say, or even do: Matt 7:21-23
 - b. Disciples flavor and lighten the world: Matt 5:13-16
 - i. but the glory is the Father’s

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- c. Requires
 - i. personal sacrifice: Luke 14:26-27 – hyperbolic
 - ii. an internal discipline: Galatians 5:24
- d. Two marks of the disciple:
 - i. John 15:8 – “bear much fruit”
 - ii. John 13:34-35 – “...how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

11. Disciples are family to Jesus

- a. The relationship between Jesus and the disciples – a strong family character: Matt 12:46-50

12. Jesus’ Disciples’ Success?

- a. Evidence, in the Gospels is mixed
 - i. e.g., Mark 9:14-29 – failing to pray
 - ii. In parallel, Matthew 17:14-20 – disciples are of *little* faith

13. Mark’s Rude Disciples

- a. Mark 4:38-41 – “...do you not care?”
- b. Mark 5:30 – “...yet you ask, ‘Who touched me?’”
- c. Mark 6:34-44 – “Are we to buy two hundred days’ wages worth of food?”

14. Mark’s Obtuse Disciples

- a. On a boat, with only one loaf of bread
- b. Frustrated: 8:17-21
- c. The Petrine confession: Mark 8:27-30
- d. Jesus great acts: Mark 5:35-43; 6:45; 6:34-44 and 8:1-9
- e. Marks of *God*.
 - i. Walk on water: Job 9:8; Hab 3:15; Psa 77:20; Isa 43:16; 51:9-10; Wis 14:3
 - ii. Feeds the thousands: Exodus
- f. Right answer? – “God!”
- g. Political and military? – wrong answer.
- h. Matthews additions: 16:16

15. Mark’s Three Passion Predictions

- a. contrasting selfless Jesus and the disciples
 - i. 8:31-33; 9:30-32; and 10:32-34

16. The First Passion Prediction

- a. Mark 8:31-33 – response? Peter rebukes him.
 - i. No exaltation, military victories, independence
- b. Jesus rebukes Peter
 - i. as Jesus rebuked unclean spirits: Mark 1:25, 3:12 and 9:25
- c. Disciples deny themselves, take up crosses, and follow.

17. Second Prediction

- a. Mark 9:30-37 – response? Discussing who was the greatest.
- b. Receiving one child (*paidion*) in Jesus’ name
 - i. Not innocence, but powerlessness.

18. Third Prediction

- a. Mark 10:32-45 – preferential seating

- b. Jesus' closest friends: Peter, James and John
 - i. Mark 1:29; 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33
 - ii. Sometimes Andrew also: Mark 1:29 and 13:3
- c. Bumping Peter.
- d. Greatness through servanthood, imitating the Son of Man

19. What Next?

- a. Following the predictions: Mark 10:46-52 – Bartimaeus
 - i. many rebuked him
- b. The disciples getting in the way of others
- c. Jericho, where something had to fall down: Joshua, ch 6
- d. Recognizing personal blindness, and calling out to Jesus
 - i. and following him on “the way.”

20. A Summary of Gospel portrayals

- a. Mark – negative in *most* everything,
- b. Matthew softened the negative
- c. Luke and John puts disciples in positive light,
- d. In all the Gospels, one, some or all of the disciples
 - i. deny him publicly (Mt 26:69-75; Mk 14:66-72; Lk 22:56-62; Jn 18:25-27),
 - ii. ultimately betray him to his enemies (Mt 26:47-56; Mk 14:43-45; Lk 22:47-53; Jn 18:2-3),
 - iii. hide while he is brutalized and murdered (Mt 27:55-56; Mk 15:40; Lk 23:49; Jn 19:25-27).

21. Positives:

- a. Privileged, insider relationship: Matt 13:16-17
- b. Desired by Jesus at the Passover: Matt 26:17-19
- c. Called upon to make yet more disciples: Matt 28:16-20