

I Will Build My Church

Annie

Scriptures:

Matthew 16:15-19

Matthew 28: 18-20

Acts 8: 9-24

"on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

There is an old saying "Don't put the cart before the horse" and it is so pertinent to us as followers of Christ as we strive to serve and obey Him. In all things, there is an order, a sequence, that is set out by Christ so that we can understand how best to follow His commands.

Our Father God has inspired the scriptures so beautifully to include all sorts of examples of ordinary folk, just like you and me, who do extraordinary deeds for His Kingdom. Simon Peter is one of these, whose impetuosity led him to be both lauded and chastised by Jesus during the period of his learning to be a disciple. The passage in Matthew 16:15-19 is a wonderful lesson for us, as well as our dear friend Peter.

Jesus speaks very clearly in these verses, and there is one thing that always stands out for me, He is the One who builds His church upon the Rock of the revelation that He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. So often, in my impetuosity, I confuse the building of Christ's church with His instruction to us to "go and make disciples".

As He began His ministry here on earth, the first thing Jesus did was to call people to follow Him. Those who heeded that call then spent the next three and a half years learning to be His disciples, but it was, and still is, God who places the tiny spark in the hearts of humankind that is ignited by Holy Spirit to spur them to answer when Jesus calls. Then follows the work that we must all go through, in learning to be His disciple.

How then do we learn? In those same verses, Jesus also said He has given to us the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, but we need to know how to use the Keys. In the book of Acts we can read about Simon the sorcerer who thought he could buy his way into being a disciple and it was Peter who rebuked him and pointed him to repentance for what Peter, led by Holy Spirit, called his wickedness. There is no short cut to learning to be a disciple of Christ, it is a path of daily following, of falling and failing, of being humble and prepared to take instruction.

It is a bit of a conundrum, that our learning to be a disciple will continue until we pass from this world into the next, yet Jesus tells us we also must make disciples. As we stumble through our own path, we also need to help others along theirs. We can read in the Old Testament how God called Joshua to follow Moses, to learn from him, so that he could step up as leader of the nation of Israel when Moses was taken by God. We see how Elisha was instructed by Elijah, how Samuel was brought up by Eli in the temple. All examples of those who were chosen and then disciplined for a specific purpose. We can also see from the lives of Moses, Elijah and Eli that they were not the

finished article, they made mistakes just as we do, yet they continued in their task of preparing their students for what God had planned for them.

Discipleship is a path that we must all tread, it is an essential for all believers whose desire is to follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Saviour. We are both to be guided by Holy Spirit filled believers and also, when prompted by Him, to do what we can to inspire and guide others. Always our hearts and our ears must be open to Holy Spirit so that we can effectively and humbly move how and wherever He leads us.

Prayer: Abba Father, guide and teach us how to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, and how to then guide and teach those we are led to by Holy Spirit, in the mighty Name of Jesus, we pray, Amen