

"WHO ARE YOU REALLY?"

{Matthew 1:14-20}

Trinity Presbyterian Church

October 12, 2008

Who are you, really? A middle-aged woman has a heart attack and is taken to the hospital. While on the operating table she had a near-death experience. During that experience she sees God and asks if this is it. God says no and explains that she has another 30-40 years to live.

Upon her recovery she decided to just stay in the hospital and have a face-lift, liposuction, breast augmentation, and a tummy tuck. She even had her hairstylist come and change her hair color. She figures that since she's got another 30 or 40 years she might as well make the most of it.






She walked out of the hospital after the last operation and was killed by ambulance speeding up to the hospital. She arrived in front of God again and asked, *"I thought you said I had another 30-40 years?"*

God replied: *"Sorry, I didn't recognize you!"*

Who are you, really? And what are you doing here? Those are the questions of the morning.

THE VACUUM

A deep vacuum remains in the heart of every person until they discover who they really are and why they exist on earth. Because of this colossal identity crises, people frantically explore many routes in order to find meaning to life:

-  Pleasure
-  Sex
-  Thirst for Power
-  Endless Travel
-  Ceaseless Activity

...just a few of the routes people pursue.

Shelves in bookstores and libraries are lined with one book after another on the subject of finding meaning and purpose to life. Unfortunately, few have discovered the answer.

Through a dramatic act of love, God took the initiative and sent His Son to Planet Earth with the sole purpose of bringing meaning and purpose to humankind—to you...to me! God designed you as a person of great worth and value and He longs for you to discover that in/for your life.

THE CALL

Jesus came and lived and walked among us as the epitome of all truth. He was daring and bold and called people to Himself—“**Follow Me!**”—is the central theme of His ministry. That “call” was not a “call” to some dogma, or to a teaching...but, to become a disciple/follower of a Person, Jesus Christ!

There is no calling higher than Christ’s call to discipleship...none! If you can answer the question, “*Who are you, really?*” by saying, “*I am a disciple of Jesus Christ!*” you are on your way to complete fulfillment as a person.

But, let’s consider what the **implications** are for being a “disciple of Jesus Christ.”

Frequently when we hear references to discipleship we immediately think of the twelve who followed Jesus; however, the Bible makes it clear that every Christian is a disciple! **If you claim Christ as Savior, then you are His disciple.**

I was so impressed by Eric Tally’s answer to the question on his Facebook Profile relating to his “*Religious View.*” Eric responded, **“Disciple of Jesus!”** I’m proud of you, Eric! Others have conveyed to me that you are indeed that!

I remind you that even those twelve who followed Jesus were not perfect; therefore, don't think that discipleship is a call to perfection.

When you come to the realization that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, you will know who you are, really and why you exist here on Planet Earth!

Christ called those twelve to "follow" and He calls you and me today to that same disciplined life!

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP?

and

WHY IS IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER TYPES OF DISCIPLESHIP?

1. CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP IS UNIQUE BECAUSE IT BEGINS WITH CHRIST'S CALL TO "FOLLOW"

Christianity begins with God! God takes the initiative. God calls! We respond!

Many of you have responded to that "call" from God—and, He may just be calling some of you this morning.

I want to make it perfectly clear this morning—**God has chosen you!** You did not choose Him—you choose whether or not to accept that "call!"

Every encounter we have with God begins with His initiative! The word for that is "**GRACE**"—we don't deserve His favor...His love...His "call" but it is extended from a heart filled with love.

2. CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP IS UNIQUE BECAUSE IT IS INTENSELY PERSONAL

Every person responds to Christ's invitation individually—alone! There comes a time in a person's life when God calls—and you will know that moment.

The call is personal—to follow Jesus—not to follow a religion or dogma! When we choose to follow Him, personally, He empowers us to be His disciples and live as He would have us to.

3. CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP IS UNIQUE BECAUSE IT REQUIRES A RADICAL OBEDIENCE

It's not a business relationship...a contractual agreement...it's a master-disciple relationship. **Christ is to be Lord and we are His subjects!** It requires relinquishing the controls of your life and turning them over to Him! We don't bargain with Him—we follow where He leads.

Christ leads—we follow—that's radical discipleship!

- ✚ Who's in control of your life?
- ✚ Who are you, really?
- ✚ Whose are you?

4. CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP IS UNIQUE BECAUSE IT IS A WAY OF LIFE

The greatest event in a person's life occurs when they become a disciple of Jesus Christ!

You can be very religious and go to hell!

You can be very involved in the church and not be a disciple!

You can serve on church boards and miss the mark!

You can be on a church staff and not have Christ as Lord!

You can know about Jesus yet not be a true believer!

The greatest event in your life is that moment when you say, “I surrender all...all to Him I freely give...Lord, I give myself to Thee!” **That means surrendering the throne of your life to His Lordship—that's true discipleship!**

What I'm talking about this morning is a personal relationship—to know Him—personally experiencing Him in your life! Once you do that it becomes a daily moment-by-moment, step-by-step relationship with the One who gave His life so that you can enjoy eternal life.

CONCLUSION: WHAT DOES IT COST?

It's free...but it's costly. It cost God the life of His Son. It will demand you lose your life—but, in the end—you gain new life!

Sound great? That's really not an adequate word for it. Mary Poppins would call it **SUPER-FRAGILISTIC-EXPI-ALI-DOCIOUS!** It's the beginning of true freedom and the discovery of who you are, really?

Ultimate fulfillment comes only to the Christian disciple—one who has heard God's "call" to new life and followed Him confidently and willingly.

God's "call" is an invitation to life at the very highest level!