



*The Podcast Focused on
Revitalizing Conventional Christianity
—One Person at a Time*

Inside Jimbo's Head™

Series 1, Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom
Christianity

Episode 19, Getting Down to the Nitty-Gritty:
Making and Growing Disciples, Part II—The Keys
to Becoming and Making Disciples©

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Introduction

Boy, oh, boy, are we getting into some deep stuff! But before we start, we ought to open up the place where all that deep stuff bubbles up.

Sound Effects: Opening Jimbo's Head

One of these days . . . Oh, well . . .

How did you like those short stories from the frontlines of ministry? I have a good friend who once ran a very large residential program for high-risk youth. After listening to a few of the podcasts and my Stories From the Frontlines of Ministry, he told me of his doubts about whether people want to hear those kinds of stories. Maybe after all those years of administrative and fundraising frustrations, he has become jaded. However, I know him well. He is not jaded toward the kids, just jaded toward most Christian' desire to hear about people in hard situations.

Me, I can find a few people who will support the ministry I do with these kids. Yet, for years, I have been looking for people who will invest their lives in them. Most of the time, I hear something akin to, "better you than me, Jim." How about you? I also hear, "If only I had the time."

Did you believe the Philippians chapter three passage we used to set the tone for this entire Nitty-Gritty section of our study of Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom Christianity? It showed how Jesus' attitude expressed itself in Paul's life from his conversion on. Did you believe verse seventeen that commands us to have the same attitude and to keep our eyes on those who lived like Paul? "What attitude?" You know, the one that says everything in our past religious and cultural lives is a damaged loss and detriment to our partnership with Jesus and His kingdom? Did you believe it when Paul commanded you to have that same attitude taking authority over everything other than your partnership with Jesus and His kingdom and consider that "everything" doggy dew to be scraped off your shoe? Don't be too quick to say yes. We will soon talk about what it means to believe something. If you did "believe" that command from verse seventeen, you would have plenty of time to invest your life in people. But more on that later.

Maybe we are a lot like the guy from the one-minute comedy skit with a punch from FrontLine Productions. We really have it tough, don't we? Or maybe . . . Just maybe, we have no idea what life in Christ is all about. Maybe, just maybe, we have never had a full, complete, intimate, experiential partnership with and participation in communion with Jesus' sufferings so that we become conformed to His death. In other words, we have never learned what it means to love. If these kinds of things are the case in our lives, it is more than likely because we never got started on the right foot? So, let's dive into the deep end of the pool as we discuss the key aspects in becoming a disciple of Jesus or, as some of you may put it, "getting saved."

Inside Jimbo's Head Theme Music

Opening—Where We Have Been and Where Are We Going

To give us a firm foundation in where we are going, let me remind you where we have been.

We started this entire study by looking at the Western church's failure, including and especially American Evangelicalism. If you believe everything is fine in the American church, if you feel everything is fine in the church you attend, more than likely, you have had your head buried in the sand. In fact, if that is where you are, these podcasts will only be an intellectual exercise for you and will bring very little if any authentic change to your life. The facts have been coming in for over twenty-five years. Things are not fine. The adage, "There is much in the showroom window and little in the stock room," pretty much sums up the plight of the conventional culturalized church. And yes, my evangelical friends, your church as well.

After we made an extensive comparison of cultural Christianity, which we find in the modern church, and kingdom Christianity, instituted by Jesus, we started this Nitty-Gritty section by looking at the attitude all people in Christ must possess. And yes, I said **MUST**, possess. And get this! We must possess it without reservation or consideration of the consequences. We need to be like Nike and our brothers and sisters from Iran . . . Just Do It!

Remember, this is a command. If you haven't picked up on it yet, we will soon see that God's grace does not negate His commands found in the New Covenant for those of us who are in Christ. On top of that, God's grace does not give us room for any excuses why we cannot live

as we are commanded to live. Our theology may give us excuses, culturalized Christianity is full of excuses, but not God's word. In fact, being "in Christ" gives us no other choice but to live the life of an obedient kingdom Christian as God's image-bearers. Why? We learned through our study of Philippians 3:7-10 that to be "in Christ" means to be wholly joined in such a way that the one in whom we find ourselves is the place we live and move and the one to whom our powers and influence are subject. To be "in Christ" is to be subject to Him! No excuse covers that one, even if you spend the next ten years trying to come up with one. Of course, if you are "in Christ," you would not even want to think of an excuse not to live in total subjection to Him, and you would rejoice at the concept that you can!

So, here is a question. When I just talked about the grace of God not negating the commands of the New Covenant and that to be in Christ is to be in total subjection to Him, how many excuses ran through your mind?

When the attitude of Jesus found in Philippians chapter two expresses itself in our lives as it did in Paul's life, not one thing, not our old religious life, not our culture, and definitely not anything attached to this world, gets in our way. Instead, we live as God's image-bearers allowing people to see His character in us as we live in a full, complete, intimate, experiential relationship with Jesus and the power of His resurrection. We also find ourselves living in the full, complete, intimate, experiential communion with His sufferings, being made just like Jesus in His death. In other words, we live in LOVE! Not cotton-candy love, but sacrificially invested LOVE—a love that costs us everything. Do I have to separate that word for you—"Every Thing,"—so you understand, everything means "every thing."

If your head is swimming with these demands of the gospel of the kingdom of God, you may have gotten off on the wrong foot when you "came to Christ." Now hold on, my friend! We will be getting there very soon. However, I must say this last thing about our discussion of the Philippians chapter three passage. If, after listening to episodes fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen, where we discussed these things, they are no more a reality in the way you live your life than they were before you listened, pay specific attention when we talk about the word "believe." Did I mention that before? Must be important, huh? Oh, and yes! If those episodes only have you "thinking about those things," you may have heard my words with your ears, but not with your heart.

As we began to look at how people become Jesus followers and how to grow such disciples last week, I introduced you to a few important principles.

First, I hope I helped you understand that the heart and soul of authentic kingdom ministry, both evangelistic and spiritual growth, is not so much what we "do to or for people," nor even what we "say to people." The heartbeat of kingdom ministry is who we "are with people." That doesn't mean that we do not "do things to or for people," nor does it mean we don't "say things to people." It does mean who we are "with people" must take precedence over what we "do to and for them" or even what we "say to them."

What we "do to or for people" must be done sacrificially. Hence, it becomes the Christlike fertile

soil that nourishes these relationships so people can see that “who we are with them” is actually a reflection of Jesus’ attitude. What they see develops the mindset through which they will interpret what they hear when we “speak to them.”

Next, I gave you a cursory view on building a redemptive or a transformational relationship with people. Through these relationships, we have the platform to invest our lives in them from a self-emptied, self-sacrificial perspective. A lifestyle of prayer, listening, eating a meal together, and serving them allows us to build authentic Christlike ministry. What is authentic Christlike ministry? It is the only authentic ministry for the church and is based on the attitude of Jesus. However, these four principles must form a lifestyle, not a programmed process. As we learn to live/walk in the Spirit, these become a natural way of life that allows people to see the gospel of the kingdom so they can understand our words when we share its message. A Spirit-led B.L.E.S.S. lifestyle is the necessary foundation for every kingdom dweller’s ministry. Oh, and yes! You are called to the ministry! If you are alive in Christ, you are called to be sacrificially invested in people, i.e., you are called to ministry.

However, in the last episode, we left out one “S” from B.L.E.S.S. The one area we did not consider in the B.L.E.S.S. lifestyle was the last “S,” “Share.” And that, my friends, leads us into the next two episodes of “Inside Jimbo’s Head.” Yet, to help you understand the kingdom perspective on the last “S” “Share,” we must look at three areas. These include what it takes to become a disciple of Jesus, the message we are to share, and how we share the message. I hoped we could get through all three in this episode, but . . . Well, you know me . . . I’m sure we will have to break this down into two episodes! So let’s get started looking at what it takes to become a disciple of Jesus or, as some of you may prefer, “get saved.” By the way, the “get saved” mentality may be a strong indication that conventional Christianity and easy believeism run deep in your inner person.

Section 1—What Does It Take To Become or Make a Disciple of Jesus—Kingdom Preeminence

There are four key passages I want us to look at to discover what it takes to become a Jesus follower or, as the Bible puts it, a disciple of Jesus. To find the key considerations in making and becoming a disciple, I would like to share all four at one time.

We have already looked at the first passage in past episodes. The three thousand foot view of Jesus’ ministry is found in Mark chapter one, verse fifteen.

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe** in the gospel.

The familiar “great commission” is the second passage found in Matthew, chapter twenty-eight, verse eighteen through twenty.

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.

The third passage is Mark's account of Jesus' final commission to His disciples just before His ascension. You will find this in Mark chapter sixteen, verses fifteen and sixteen.

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and **proclaim the gospel** to the whole creation. Whoever **believes and is baptized will be saved**, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

Finally, we come to Luke's account of Jesus' last interactions with His disciples just before His ascension found in Luke's gospel, chapter twenty-four, verses forty-five through forty-seven.

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and **that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name** to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

When looking at what it means to be a disciple or to make disciples, we must realize how the kingdom is preeminent every time we think of coming to Christ and our life in Christ. We also must realize the kingdom's preeminence every time we think about seeing any person come to Christ or grow in Christ. There is no coming to Christ, there is no life in Christ, separated from the kingdom. The preeminent place of the kingdom is the one thing I have discussed on this podcast more than anything else. Guess what? It is the preeminent principle we must understand in making disciples. Why? Because it is the preeminent principle in how and why a person becomes a disciple of Jesus or, as some would say, "become saved."

The gospel is about the kingdom established by Jesus during His earthly ministry. The entire Biblical record's total focus on this foundational issue is why we dedicated so much to this subject in the first fourteen episodes of this series. It is so missing from the modern church that we also spent much time comparing and contrasting culturalized Christianity with kingdom Christianity.

By now, you must realize that "being saved" or becoming a disciple is not about going to heaven when you die. Yes, you do get to be with the Lord in His heavenly realm when you die if you are in Christ. However, "being saved" or the more biblical perspective, becoming a disciple of Jesus, is all about the kingdom—the kingdom that is here and exists in the now!

Of course, we see this in Mark's three thousand-foot view of Jesus' message, which we discussed previously. But we also see it in Matthew's great commission. I can't tell you how many times I have read these verses. I, like most, recognized that the basis of Jesus' great commission was and is His authority. Thus He had the authority to give the commission. But it was not until I began to see the golden thread of the kingdom running through everything in the Bible and the precedence of the kingdom in the New Covenant that I realized the basis and purpose of the Great Commission was Jesus' rule—the kingdom of God. In other words, Jesus was saying, "Because the kingdom is established and I am now king, go . . ." The exclusive purpose of making disciples, each disciple's exclusive purpose, must be the rule of Jesus—the kingdom of God. The purpose of salvation, the purpose of being "in Christ," must be the rule of Jesus—the

kingdom of God.

In Mark chapter sixteen, Jesus tells His disciples to “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.” Then He speaks of “salvation” as the outcome of that proclamation. What gospel, what good news, are they to proclaim? Previously in Matthew twenty-four, Jesus clarifies to these same disciples what He means by proclaiming the gospel.

And the gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The entire Jewish community’s mindset down through history was the need for salvation from their sins so God could once again establish His kingdom among them. The one clear purpose of the coming Messiah was to deliver them from their sins so the Messiah could deliver them from their enemies by establishing God’s kingdom. Thus when Jesus speaks of salvation within the context of His Christness, His Messiahship, He is speaking of salvation that prepares people for entrance and participation in the kingdom He established on the cross.

This reality is why it is so detrimental to those with whom we share the gospel when we make salvation all about going to heaven when one dies and not about living in and participating in the kingdom that has already been established. This misplaced emphasis gets people started on the wrong foot and is a key reason why, “Houston, We Have A Problem.”

The purpose to which one is “saved,” the purpose behind becoming a disciple of Jesus, is the kingdom established by Messiah Jesus, Jesus Christ, during His earthly ministry. If we make it anything else, we get people off on the wrong foot. Once again, this is a key reason why, “Houston, We Have A Problem.”

Salvation brings one into the kingdom and makes them a minister of the kingdom. Thus there can be no discipleship, there can be no salvation without submission to the Lordship of Jesus. This understanding is why the final line of Peter’s sermon on Pentecost, the first “evangelistic message” of the church age, ends with,

Let all the house of Israel, therefore, know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

God made Him the Christ, the one who established the kingdom upon the cross and prepared us for that kingdom by winning our victory over the guilt and power of sin on that same cross. Thus, God also made Him Lord of that kingdom. The cross, our redemption—the atonement, the kingdom, and the Lordship of Jesus is a one package deal. They cannot be separated. To do so is to cut the golden thread that runs through the whole of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. To talk about salvation as something separate from discipleship breaks the kingdom thread between Jesus’ great commission in Matthew chapter twenty-eight and His command in Mark chapter sixteen.

Section II—What Does It Take To Become or Make a Disciple of Jesus—Salvation and Discipleship Indisputable

The whole concept of the kingdom speaks to the issue of the Lordship of Jesus. Remember, the first principle of making disciples is that the kingdom is inseparable from the gospel, thus inseparable from salvation. The second principle is tied into the first and is something to which I just alluded. We must never distinguish between salvation and discipleship.

A "disciple," generically, is a person who attaches themselves to and lives in subordination to a Master emulating his master in all things. Jesus said in John chapter thirteen, verses thirteen through fifteen,

You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, the go-to work on the history of the New Covenant words, clarifies that there is a difference between being a student and a disciple. Simply put, a student comes to learn from a teacher. A disciple comes to learn and emulate the life of his Master.

Again, if to be "saved" is to be found "in Christ," we then see this same connection between salvation and discipleship, the atonement of Christ and the Lordship of Christ. When we studied Philippians chapter three verses seven through ten, we learned that to be in Christ means to be wholly joined in such a way that the one in whom we find ourselves is the place we live and move and the one to whom our powers and influence are subject. Thus we are not just students of Jesus. We are subject to Him as our Lord, whom we are called to emulate in all that He was and is.

As mentioned above, there is a strong connection between the last words of Jesus spoken to His disciples in Matthew's gospel, Mark's gospel, and Luke's. In Matthew's, they are commanded to make disciples of all nations. In Mark's, they are commanded to proclaim the gospel to the whole creation and that those who believe and are baptized will be saved. We will soon see the strong Biblical connection between baptism and discipleship. In Luke's gospel, we are told that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in Jesus' name. Thus discipleship, salvation, and the forgiveness of sins are all tied together in one neat package.

Because of all we need to cover, this is all the time I have to focus on how discipleship and salvation should never be separated. However, these few points form a mountain of evidence for any seeker of truth.

Section III—What Does It Take to Become or Make a Disciple of Jesus—How should a Person Respond to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God

Now, let us turn our attention to the third principle of how one becomes a disciple of Jesus, or once again, how one becomes "saved," for those of you who want to use that verbiage. This

third principle speaks to how one must react to the gospel of the kingdom of God if they are to become a disciple of Jesus, i.e., they are to be saved. Here we see three keywords used—Repent, Believe, and Baptize. We are going to look at each of these and then see how they fit together.

However, before we get there, I need to make one issue clear.

If you have come to Christ any time in the last two hundred years, you will find an emphasis on only one of these three words. Generally, evangelicals, and protestants in general, find their focus on the word “believe.” Often the terms repentance and baptism have been left out for fear of making salvation a work. Or maybe it is easier to get a person to “just pray this prayer” if one only uses the term believe. Why?

One often hears that if we believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and if we are sorry for our sins and really mean it, all we have to do is pray a particular prayer and be saved. Here, while trusting in God’s work in a person’s life, the emphasis toward the person with whom the gospel is shared is “if you agree with our argument that Jesus died on the cross for your sins.” The term “believe” is relegated to an agreement, and the emphasis is on atonement separated from the kingdom. The way one responds is to pray a prayer. We will soon see this kind of salvation process's fallacy and emphasis if you have not already caught on to this truth. In all actuality, the results within evangelicalism, which we have discussed at length, are all the proof you need. Oh, and by the way, if you are not evangelical and are feeling pretty good about yourself? The results of those who do not fit into the spectrum of evangelicalism are even worst.

Why do I bring this up here? If you have been “led to the Lord” in the way I described, you may feel uncomfortable with what I am about to share. Just hang in there with me. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

Now let’s look at those three keywords that describe how a person is to react to the gospel of the kingdom of God. Of course, these have a direct bearing on how we make a disciple of Jesus. The first is the word “repent.”

Repent

Here is a story to start us off.

I sat in a small Bible study led by the pastor of the church I was attending. I had heard him give what some would call a gospel message. His call to action was always the same, “If you believe with all your heart that you are a sinner and deserve God’s wrath, and if you believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins so that you can be right with God and go to heaven when you die, I want you to pray this prayer with me.” He would then pray a prayer stopping in small increments so others could follow along with him.

In the Bible study, he talked about how one comes into a saving relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Of course, his focus was solely on the word “believe.” I began to point out to him how the word “repent” or “repentance” was used in conjunction with the word “believe.” I also pointed out that in many cases, it was used alone concerning “salvation.” Because of his

theological persuasion and the fact that it would confuse others in the study, I stayed away from the word "baptized."

His response was, "Well, Jim, I believe the only thing that is necessary for salvation is to believe in Jesus as the sacrifice for your sins." We will soon learn that his use of the word believe was correct when he said "I believe," for he truly acted upon that understanding. The focus of that belief . . . Well, that is only half the story.

So, what Biblical evidence did this pastor ignore to hold to his religious viewpoint?

First, there is the way Jesus told people to respond to the good news that the kingdom of God had come found in Mark 1:15. Jesus said, "Repent and believe" in the gospel or the good news.

There was also the way Luke described Jesus' commission to His disciple before His ascension when He told them that, "repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations . . ."

I also pointed out that Peter's Pentecost sermon, the first evangelistic sermon ever preached, included the appeal to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." I also pointed out that Peter's sermon on Solomon's Portico found in Acts chapter three included the appeal to "repent, therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out . . ."

Paul also approached the gospel message with such an appeal in Acts chapter seventeen, verse thirty and thirty-one, when he said that God "now commands all people everywhere to repent . . ." Then there is the time when Paul stood before King Agrippa in Acts twenty-six, and said, "they (Gentiles) should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance."

Finally, I pointed out to this pastor that when the leaders in Jerusalem, made up of those men who walked with Jesus, heard from Peter what had happened when Gentiles came to faith in Jesus, their reply was nothing like the response normally heard from modern-day Evangelicals. They did not say, "Wow, Gentiles believed the gospel!" or "Wow, Gentiles expressed faith in Jesus by believing in Him." They also did not jump up and down, proclaiming, "Wow, Gentiles have been saved because they believed Peter's message and prayed the prayer of salvation." Their reply was simply, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Oh, I could have pointed out just as a final kicker that Paul, when talking to the Ephesian elders and reviewing his ministry among them, said that he taught in public and from house to house, "testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." Still, I did not want to pile on! Ok, you know me by now. I did add that one, but not the other passages I could have added.

By now, I hope, if you come from the same religious background as that pastor, that you are not so steeped in your religious traditions that you can't see the importance of repentance. I

hope you can see just how important repentance is to becoming a disciple of Jesus or, as you may still like to say, "being saved." I also hope you can see how important demonstrating a repentant lifestyle and speaking of repentance is when making disciples of Jesus. Like Paul in Philippians chapter three, I hope you are willing to see your old religious background as a damaged loss and detriment to your partnership with Jesus and His kingdom. Why? When we look at what the word repent means, we see that to believe in Jesus must first be preceded by the gift of repentance. In fact, they are so intricately connected that they become one act identified by either word yet totally different from the way the average person "believes." Again, if Paul's radical attitude and actions were part or at least the result of his conversion, we have an excellent example from what we are to repent.

So what does it mean to repent?

First, I hope you always remember that we are talking about the gospel of the kingdom of God, not the gospel of getting saved so we can go to heaven when we die. Have I said that enough times yet? We are leaving our old kingdom and its cultural ways, including sin, and entering a new kingdom with its cultural ways, including righteous living. As we learned from Philippians 3:7-10, the word righteous means to possess a condition that yields feeling, thinking, and actions in conformity to God's character and acceptable to God. In other words, we are leaving our old kingdom and its culture and becoming God's image-bearers dwelling in and expanding the authority and culture of His kingdom.

The word used in the Greek translated "repent" literally means to "perceive afterward" and signifies "to change one's mind or purpose." The reference made earlier where Paul refers to his ministry before King Agrippa tells us clearly how Paul saw repentance ". . . that they (the Gentiles) should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance." Here we see that repentance is a turning away from a past way of life to God and His way of life and thus living a different lifestyle, or as the passage puts it, "performing deeds in keeping with their repentance."

Once again, we have a perfect example of this in Paul's example of the radical attitude and actions that became his at, or at least through, his conversion. His mind was changed once and for all in the past in a way that affected his present behaviors. His purpose was changed once and for all in the past in a way that affected his present behaviors. He was focused solely on his partnership with the Messiah and His kingdom as well as the supreme, superior, surpassing worth of a full, complete, intimate, experiential knowledge of Messiah Jesus as Lord and His kingdom. These two things were the impetus behind Paul's radical attitude and actions, causing him to take authority over his past religious background, past cultural realities, and the whole of every kind and variety of things in their totality. It was repentance that caused him to see them as damaged losses and a detriment to that partnership and relationship with Messiah Jesus and His kingdom. And that, my friends, is how you paint a picture of authentic repentance leading to behaviors in keeping with repentance. It is the life of an authentic disciple of Jesus the Messiah.

Believe

Now let's turn to that one word we hear used so often, "believe." This word indicates the second way a person must react to become a disciple of Jesus. Thus it is the second principle we must make sure people understand when making disciples.

Here is where our previous study of Western culture and specifically the American culture, and how it has seeped into the reality of conventional Christianity becomes imperative. Remember, one of the pillars of American culture laid by our founding fathers is the concept of rationalism. Rationalistic intellectualism reigns supreme in the church. If you simply look at how much time the church spends in preaching and teaching compared to worship (if it is authentic) and prayer, you will see what I mean. Forget living life together so we can keep our eyes on those who walk as Paul walked.

Whether or not it has been taught that way, how the concept of "believing" has been practiced in the American culturalized church becomes a matter of agreeing with a philosophy of life. You can call it theology or a doctrinal statement. In reality, the way the average American Christian deals with believing is an agreement with a set of rational concepts drawn out of the Bible.

I remember moving to a new area and seeking to join a local church. Two of the church elders came over to interview us to see if we met the church's membership requirements. What did we talk about? What was the entire emphasis of their inquiry? Was it about the quality of our walk in Christ? Was it about even the "implementation" of scripture in our lives? No. All inquiries were about how our "beliefs" lined up with their doctrinal statement. Oh, yes . . . And our salvation experience. Not the results of our salvation experience, other than our doctrinal views, but simply "how we got saved." There was no emphasis on living as Jesus commanded us to live. There was no emphasis on living the attitude of Christ in our relationship with other disciples of Jesus as Paul commands us to live in Philippians chapter two. Nor was there any emphasis on whether we were even interested in living according to Paul's example in Philippians chapter three.

In the Western church, doctrine rules! Of course, since the seeker-friendly movement, even that has been watered down trying to make "salvation" as simple as possible. Why? "We got to get as many people into heaven as possible; we have to get as many to pray that prayer before Jesus returns." I've said it before, and I will say it again, often "bringing a person to Christ" has become like the dishonest "bait and switch" concepts of deceitful salesmanship. Anything to get them in the door, anything to get them to sign on the dotted line, and then we will talk about the contract. What contract? You know, the contract concerning the Lordship of Jesus and the demands of the gospel, the constitution of the kingdom of God, the New Covenant.

Do we even talk about these things once a person "comes to Christ?" Ok, maybe we will talk about it at some point, or maybe we will mention it in passing in an occasional side reference in a sermon on how to have a happy marriage. In the conventional culturalized church, even if we talk about these things, we never present them as commands and rarely insist on them affecting our lives. And those who do . . . they focus on a legalistic way of implementing the demands of

the gospel, not the Biblical approach of living/walking in the Spirit which becomes our reality through training, not classroom methodologies.

Now, we will get more into how to live the gospel's reality in a few episodes, but for now, we need to hone in on what it means to "believe." I went through years of schooling and listened to thousands and thousands of sermons over the past fifty years. I have read even more books and read through not a few commentary sets. Then there were all the systematic theology sets from various groupings of Christian belief systems. Oops! There's that word belief again. However, while the concept was a reality to me, I never knew that the actual Greek word for "believe" actually is the verb form of the Greek word for faith. In other words, if there were such an English word, it would be better to translate the Greek as "faithing" rather than believe.

Whenever the Bible speaks of "believing" or tells us to believe, it tells us to have active faith in that to which it speaks. It is generally in the present tense and a command insisting that we continuously, habitually, as a lifestyle, have active faith.

You have heard in previous episodes my definition of faith. "Faith is that firm foundational conviction that everything God has said and done, says and does and promises to do is true and truthful, driving one to obedience." Here it is plain and simple. Paul spoke of how the Gentiles should "repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance." I have mentioned how repentance and believing are intertwined. Thus we can easily say that to believe is to have "faith performing deeds in keeping with our faith."

Thus to repent is to turn from our old religious systems, our old cultural way of life, and the whole of every kind and variety of things in their totality. To believe is to have a firm foundational conviction that all God said and did, says and does, and promises to do is true and truthful, driving us into obedience without reservation or concern for the consequences. Why? Active faith says we can trust God to be true to His commands, actions, and promises.

This understanding is why every time someone came and asked to become a disciple of Jesus, He met them with either a radical counting the cost statement or counting the cost questions. If they turned away, He did not run after them trying to explain the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. Why? He knew that their repentant attitude and active faith would be seen by their direct obedience to His words. It was not a matter of convincing them. It was a matter of their repentance, and active faith expressed without reservation or concern for the consequences.

Baptize

And that, my friends, brings us to the last way a person must react to become a disciple of Jesus. The third key principle in making disciples is found in the word "baptize." And no, I am not going to get into a long, drawn-out theological argument about time, mode, and significance of baptism. I will save that for those who like to count how many angels dance on the head of a pin.

I will, however, remind you of the four passages of scripture we looked at as we began this

section of our study. Accumulatively the words repent, believe, and baptize each appeared twice. The word repent was associated with God's kingdom, and the forgiveness of sins and the word believe was associated with the kingdom of God and salvation. The word baptize is associated with the kingdom of God, salvation, and discipleship. Once again, if we do not separate the cross from the kingdom, atonement (or salvation) from the kingdom of God, we can see how clearly these are interlocked together, especially in Jesus' final commissions to His first disciples.

Let's make this simple. Whatever the significance of baptism, Jesus links baptism directly to the concept of discipleship. His first disciples were to go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But there is one other passage that cements this linkage between baptism and discipleship. In John chapter four, verse one, we are told that the Pharisees learned that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John the Baptist. The whole concept of making disciples, whether you were John the Baptist, any other spiritual or philosophical leader, or Jesus Christ Himself, was to baptize them as disciples.

The person's name in whom you were baptized is the person who becomes your master. Remember, as a disciple, you do not just simply learn what your master taught, that is rationalistic intellectualism, but emulate your master in all his lifestyle and ways. Thus, the immediate follow-through after baptizing a disciple is to train them in all Jesus commanded. In other words, train them in how to live the cultural way Jesus established for His kingdom. Don't worry. I know it says "teach." We will get into that can of worms in two episodes when we talk about growing disciples.

If it is not already clear, let me also clarify that the kingdom, discipleship, and salvation are intertwined in these passages in the same manner as repentance, believing, and baptism. We will focus in the next episode, once again, on how salvation, as it concerns overcoming the guilt and power of sin, prepares one to live in the kingdom established by Jesus on the cross. One becomes a disciple of Jesus by receiving the free gift of salvation that overcomes the guilt and power of sin in order to live in and expand the kingdom established by Jesus. We become a disciple through water baptism as the outward sign of that discipleship under the authority of Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. Thus one must repent of their past way of life as seen in Paul from Philippians chapter three, have active faith in Jesus as the Messiah who brought the salvation that prepares one for the kingdom, and be baptized as one wholly joined to Christ as a disciple in a way that He is the one in whom they live and move and the one to whom all their power and influence are subject. See how this all comes together.

At this point, to understand baptism, we must understand how Jesus changed Old Covenant processes into New Covenant realities. Jesus took the Passover meal and used it to demonstrate how he fulfilled the Passover through His life, death, and resurrection. He was not continuing the Passover meal. Jesus was showing how, through becoming the Passover Lamb of God that was slain for the sins of God's people, He now was not only the protection from judgment but the means of entering into the community and communion that He, the Father and the Holy

Spirit shared. While there is a symbolic aspect to this fulfilled Passover meal we now call communion, there was also a reality concerning a *koinonia* or a communion with the body and blood of Christ.

In the same way, Jesus, as John the Baptist was commanded by God to do, took the ceremonial washings of the Old Covenant and the first-century practices of them and reinstated them as the way of accepting Him as one's master or becoming a disciple of Jesus. But again, this went even further because not only were His disciples and those disciples they would make entering into a relationship with Him as master but also with the Father and the Spirit. This discipleship was to be expressed in a new kingdom, with a new culture and a new purpose in expanding that kingdom. Thus baptism is also intricately intertwined with repentance and believing, having active faith. In fact, baptism is the first way repentance and active faith express themselves in obedience to the commands of Jesus.

Concluding Thoughts

Let me conclude by reminding you that we began by looking at the three thousand foot view of Jesus' ministry and the three instances where His final commission was given to His disciples. Here we emphasized, once again, the importance of never losing the link between salvation and the kingdom of God or, as some have put it, the cross and the kingdom.

Thus, I also pointed out how detrimental it is when we separate the concept of salvation and discipleship.

We must realize that salvation from the guilt of sin and the power of sin is what enables us to participate in the kingdom established by Jesus, the Messiah, on the cross.

However, we do not only participate in the kingdom. We must live according to its culture, becoming living examples of His kingdom as we unite and live in community with other disciples. The kingdom of God does reign on this earth in this age. It reigns in righteousness and justice through its physical manifestation, the community of disciples living in communion with the persons of the Trinity and each other.

We must also not simply live in and exemplify His kingdom. We must expand His kingdom by making disciples.

This making disciples is where our understanding of how one is to respond to the gospel of the kingdom by becoming a disciple becomes so important.

We learned the importance of repentance, which changes our mind and purpose, driving us in a new direction and new actions. As a gift from God, repentance is that new mindset and purpose which changes our direction leading to a new lifestyle, a new culture, and a new political allegiance. It also leads us to a new way of accomplishing God's purpose in expanding His kingdom, which is our new political allegiance.

It is this new way of living that is activated by not only repenting but also by believing. Thus these two words, repent and believe, are inextricably intertwined with one another. We learned

that the word "believe" means to have active faith. When coupled with repentance, this faith changes our attitude and actions to Paul's radical attitude and actions, which we studied in Philippians 3:7-10.

Finally, we learned the third way we must respond to the gospel of God's kingdom is through water baptism. This baptism is the act, not a prayer of salvation, that cements and demonstrates our repentance and active faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Sign Off

Well, the clock has ticked way past our endpoint, and I know that is a lot of ground to cover. I also know it may sound strange if you have grown up in the conventional culturalized church with its emphasis on easy believism and its ugly step-sister, the I'll fly away mentality.

So, let me finish by reminding you that this Sunday at 8 PM CST, 9 PM EST, my good friend and co-host, Joel Heim, and I will have another live broadcast of the Digging Deeper Café. Here we will be joined by either Dr. James Randolph of Advancing Christ's Kingdom Global Ministries or Kevin Birky of Mulberry Tree Ministers in Kouts, Indiana. They will be asking me questions about this Inside Jimbo's Head segment and bringing their unique commentaries. And yes, we look forward to your questions and comments, as well. In fact, it is your questions and comments that are the reason for the live broadcast. So come to the Hello, Jimbo Speaking Facebook page or the Hello, Jimbo Speaking Youtube Channel this Sunday at 8 PM CST, 9 PM EST and join us.

If you are listening to this podcast after it first drops, you can find the video of this Diggin' Deeper Cafe on the Hello, Jimbo Speaking website at www.jimbospeaking.org. You can find a lot more on this site as well.

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So, until next week, go out there and, by God's grace, make it a great life that honors and glorifies Father through the faith that produces obedience. Do not settle for anything less. Why? Father settles for nothing less!

See you next week.