

True Disciple #20 – You Are a Minister

Welcome to True Disciple #20. This is Rod Nichols and I am proud of you for hanging in there and listening to all the previous messages. If you haven't done that, click on the Weekly Messages button under the current message on the front page at www.TrueDisciple.Info. This will bring you completely up to date. These messages are all short, so it shouldn't take you too long.

This week my topic is "You are a minister". I can hear a bunch of you thinking or saying, "no, I'm not" and my reply is "yes, you are and let me prove it to you in this short message."

In the church we see today, the "minister" stands in front of the congregation and preaches every Saturday or Sunday, and sometimes on Wednesday. The congregation just listens. Although this is very common today, it wasn't the way the early church was.

First, Jesus's disciples were ordinary men, not religious leaders. They had not attended the local rabbinical school to become a rabbi, rather they were fishermen, tax collectors, and likely worked at other jobs in their community. Jesus didn't choose the high priest or other rabbis as His followers. He chose people like you and me.

Second, after Jesus had invested three years training the disciples, they began to train others, who trained others, who trained others. All this ministry was done in homes, the workplace, marketplace, and in the temple courtyard (which was open to everyone). There were no church buildings back then. It wasn't until around 313 AD, when Roman Emperor Constantine recognized Christianity as a legal religion, that church buildings were built and the first were owned by the Roman church – this was the beginning of the Roman Catholic Church.

There are some, yet unconfirmed reports of a building used by Christians near the Euphrates River in eastern Roman Syria, which appears to be from around 240 AD. This however, also could have been a large house, as the early Christian church utilized the larger houses to meet, eat, talk about Jesus, learn from other disciples, and pray.

I'm sure that those of you who know the Bible are probably thinking about Ephesians 4:11-12 that talks about different ministry positions and so let's look at that next:

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ..." (NKJV)

This is the Apostle Paul speaking and what he's saying is that God has gifted some people to be equippers of the saints (all believers) for the work of ministry. Someone who does ministry would be called a minister. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then you are a minister. Now, you may or may not be gifted by God to equip other ministers, but you are a minister and Jesus expects you to go out and do what He said in Mark 16:15, where He said to go into the world and preach the gospel (good news about salvation) and Matthew 28:19 where Jesus said to go and make disciples of all the nations.

Jesus wasn't speaking to the religious people who had their degrees from seminaries and Bible colleges, he was talking to the fishermen, tax collectors and other average people AND He was speaking to all of us.

If we leave all the work to the professional ministers, we are shirking our God-given duties to spread the gospel and make disciples. As a true disciple, you must embrace the fact that you are a minister. You may not have a fancy degree or pulpit, but you are a minister and can share the gospel with your family, neighbors, co-workers, and friends.

Most of us are afraid that if we talk about Jesus with people we know, they will reject us. This is a scheme of Satan to keep the church from expanding across the earth, as God intended in the Garden of Eden. It's a lie, from the father of lies. In fact, in a recent study of non-believers, they found that 79% were open to hearing about the gospel from someone who was sincere about walking out their faith. Most people replied that they would be interested in learning more and would even go to a church service, if someone would ask.

So, what does this look like for you? Well, first, share your testimony of receiving Jesus into your life and how your life has improved. Second, be ready to answer

questions, but don't feel like you have to know it all. It's better if you don't. If they ask a question you can't answer, tell them that it's a good question and you will do some research and find out. If you have a smart phone, you can probably find the answer through a quick Google search. Third, ask them if they would like to receive Jesus as their Savior. Fourth, invite them to your church services to begin their journey with Christ. Finally, continue to interact with them, as they are now your disciple.

Imagine if each of us did this with just one person each month, what an amazing impact it would have on our family, friends, workplace, community, country, and world and it all starts with you.

That's it for message #20. You now have the knowledge and a choice. You can file it away as a nice message or you can put it to work and change the world. It's your choice. The good news is that you have the Holy Spirit living in you, so you will never be alone.

Have a wonderfully blessed week!