

Three Ships For Our Journey

Introduction. The gospel of Jesus Christ was Paul's greatest hope (Romans 1:16). It also caused him the most earthly grief in the sense of resistance from the gospel's enemies (2 Corinthians 11:22-28).

In the process of these challenges Paul had an advantage, besides his continuous faith, that saved his life. He was a Roman citizen and that protected him from some punishments (Acts 22:22-29). At one point, Paul used this "citizenship" to appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:1-12).

Much of Paul's life had been spent walking from place to place, but on this journey he was taken to his appeal by three ships (Acts 27:2, 6; 28:11). These ships were not intended to be metaphors for our spiritual understanding. It is only a coincidence — an opportunity — because we also have a journey to a far greater judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10), and there are three "ships" that will convey us there.

I. Lordship

- A. Our greatest hope, and reason for being, is the lordship of Jesus Christ. Once we come to terms with Christ's lordship, we will be set for success.
- B. First, we must know what "lordship" means. Lordship is a position of authority, control, and power. How does the lordship of Jesus Christ influence our journey?
 1. On our journey we respect His authority. We accept His highest height of power, the Son of God (Matthew 17:1-5; Mark 16:19). He is the "beginning and the end" (Revelation 22:13).
 - a) A blatant disregard for authority is the problem in most modern religious practices. Far too many believe that they just do what they want and somehow it pleases Jesus.
 - b) This is not just a modern problem; it was happening in the first century too — people associating the name of Jesus with unauthorized practices (Matthew 7:21-23).
 2. On our journey we are directed by His word (John 8:31), keep His commandments (John 14:15), and continue to live in His authority for all we do (Colossians 3:17).
 3. On our journey we are subject to His control. Jesus does not "control" us by taking over; we subject ourselves to His control by choice — we seek His direction willingly and willfully. We give ourselves entirely to God's will (1 Timothy 4:15), through seeking to do His will (1 John 2:6), offering ourselves as a living sacrifice to Him (Hebrews 13:15-16). When we come to terms with Christ's lordship we will acknowledge that we are His servants, and are in need of His help (Romans 5:6).

II. Discipleship

- A. There are many who claim to be "disciples," but this relationship to Jesus must be more than words, more than a slogan. We have to live up to that word.
- B. In John 1:35-42, two men wanted to be disciples and we get to read what they did to satisfy that desire. They would focus their lives on being like their Master. They would learn everything there was to know to become like their Master.

- C. By definition, a disciple of Jesus Christ incorporates four ideas:
 - 1. A believer — one who believes “in” Jesus and “of” Jesus; accepting the evidence that He is the Son of God (John 20:30-31) and devotedly following His teaching (2 John 9).
 - 2. A follower — one who seeks to emulate the example of Jesus in all that He said and did (1 John 2:6).
 - 3. A learner — one who seeks to increase their understanding of Jesus with a great thirst for that knowledge (Matthew 5:6).
 - 4. An adherent — believing in Jesus, no matter what is said against Him; who is around us; or when we are challenged to confess Him (Matthew 10:32).
- D. A disciple of Christ seeks for betterment by following, learning from, and adhering to the best. We cannot claim to be Christ’s if we do not accept the necessities of discipleship. When we get this right we will have one great goal all our days — to become comparable to Jesus (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 4:13).

III. Citizenship

- A. Citizenship is a critically important relationship. Being a citizen of a given country grants you the rights, privileges, and protections of that country. He was mentioned in the introduction, Paul was a citizen of Rome and that citizenship afforded him the right to a fair trial and the protection of the Roman soldiers.
- B. In this country, our citizens have the same ideals provided for their well-being: they have rights, privileges, and protections. But also, they have a sense of belonging, a knowledge of the homeland, and a right to seek their place here.
- C. How can our citizenship influence our journey? The citizenship that will keep us on our journey is one we gain by acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and submitting to Him as obedient disciples (Ephesians 2:13-21; Philippians 3:20).
- D. The desire to see our home where we are welcomed, and where we will have an eternal sense of belonging, should drive us through every step of our earthly journey. We desire to see that place, prepared by our Lord, for us (Hebrews 11:10, 16). We desire to hear our welcome home (Matthew 25:21). We desire to walk in the glory of God that illuminates the never-ending day (Revelation 21:23).

Conclusion. In our journey, we look to Jesus and His Lordship over us (Hebrews 12:1-2). We seek to be like Him through obedient discipleship (John 8:31). We desire our eternal home, the place of our true citizenship (Philippians 3:20).

How is your journey? The Lord is waiting if you are willing. Take hold of the Lord’s direction and start heading for a new and better destination today.