
Sermon on
*“The Path of the Disciple – Learning to Grow:
Quenching a Thirst”*

::: ZERO :::

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

*“Grace to you and PEACE from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

1 Co 1:3. (NRSV)

::: Amen.

::: ONE :::

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Again, we continue in our worship series “*The Path of the Disciple – Learning to Grow*” – and today all is about “*Quenching a Thirst*”.

We have heard the reading from Matthew 10, Verses 40 to 42.

Now, you have received an additional sheet of paper which also shows you these three verses from the Gospel of Matthew.

But they are written down in a specific order.

::: TWO :::

You know, whoever comes visiting me in my office, will most likely get the impression that I like things being in order—when everything is in its determined place.

Order helps you finding things again when you need them.

I am so crazy that I even take notes of where I store things which I don't use very often—and which I had to search more than two times, like for instance our electrical air pump.

Call me crazy, that's ok.

Back to the sheet:

The reason why I brought this bible text in the order you can see in front of you is because it shows something very special.

And I thought it might be easier to follow my thoughts if you have the ordered text right in front of you.

::: THREE :::

If you have a look at the first row, you find a very, very strong statement by Jesus.

*“Whoever welcomes you
welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes the one who sent me.*

Mt 40:40 (NRSV)

Jesus says people who welcome you welcome me.

Last week I spoke about who the messenger is identified with the sender of the message—and how this may have turned out to be quite unhealthy if the message was not pleasing the receiver.

Here is the same pattern, but in some kind of a *double pattern*:

The Father has sent the Son. The Son, Jesus Christ, is a messenger of the Father—but much more than that. The Father is revealed through the Son, through his acting and his speaking.

In John's Gospel, chapter 14, we read:

⁹ *Jesus said to [Philip],*

*“Have I been with you all this time, Philip,
and you still do not know me?*

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

¹⁰ *Do you not believe that I am in the Father
and the Father is in me?*

The words that I say to you

I do not speak on my own;

but the Father who dwells in me

does his works.

John 14:9–10

Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God the Father, the carer, the loves us as his creation like a surrounding and nurturing mother.

In Jesus Christ *the world* realizes how this God is driven by the wish to bring all his created children back in the community with him.

God cannot stand the gap which the human has opened up. The gap between the source of created life, the creational love and the human as an isolated and self-centered creature.

Jesus Christ is the bringer and sufferer of the message of God's deliverance. He bridges the gap and brings the human back to find the good Father's open arms.

He does that in the utmost sacrifice which can be offered—is own life.

And as the Father is in the Son, we realize, it is God who gives himself to bring the human back to the love from which they were created, and in which their life will be fulfilled.

::: FOUR :::

I hope you can realize: Only a few ordered words in the first row of the text, but such huge implications.

And it goes on. Those who welcome “you”, Christ's disciples, through Christ welcome the loving Father.

Now, you are the bearers of the message of God's deliverance. As you are welcomed, those welcoming you, experience your company, and hear your words—salvation is right there.

That is quite a call for us as messengers.

∴ FIVE ∴

In the last word in every row, we can read about a reward which is granted to those who welcome...

- a prophetⁱ
- a righteousⁱⁱ person
- a little oneⁱⁱⁱ

Actually, all of these groups of persons seem to refer to the disciples themselves.

There is no hierarchy in the follow up of these sentences.

„These are not really different categories of persons, but rather highlight different qualities or roles.

But pride of place is reserved for the “little ones.”^{iv}

These words now, point strongly to the passage we have heard in the All-Age-Story: Matthew 25:

“[The Son of Man says,] Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink [...],^v

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?’^{vi}

And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’^{vii}

∴ SIX ∴

Back to the *reward*.

Reading the passage from Matthew 10 again we realize that the reward is not explained— not explicitly explained.

But, let’s come back to the order of the word on the sheet.

And on the sheet examine the last column.

I call this column the 'column of reward'.

Though the following three sentences do not mention the reward, it is obvious that the reward is exactly what Jesus pointed out in the first one.

The reward of those receiving, welcoming the disciples is that God himself is coming to them.

Those welcoming may not be aware, may not know, but in being in a disciple's company and hearing their words salvation is right there.

::: SEVEN :::

Now: THIS IS ABOUT YOU!

And this time it is not about you hosting someone in need. This time it is about you being the messenger and the example of God's everlasting and ever-caring love for the ones he created.

This time it is about us to anew walk "THE PATH OF THE DISCIPLE". It is about us "LEARNING TO GROW".

It is about us understanding, realizing that when other “QUENCH” our “THIRST” they meet, see, experience Christ through us.

It *might* sound a little uncomfortable.

Usually, we more like to be told what we have to do as good disciples. *Call to action*, or so.

But this time it is rather a *call to being!*

In here, at Peace Church, gathered in this service, we might well hear the words and we might like it: You are my disciple.

But, when after this service, after being gathered around Christ’s table, experiencing again his self-abandoning love, we walk out that door—

let us go as ceaseless disciple of Christ—showing his unending love to anyone we meet,

so that everyone looking in our face will see Christ and through him the unending and ever forgiving love of God, who is the beginning and completion.

Amen.

ⁱ See Mt 13:57.

ⁱⁱ See Mt 5:20.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Mt 18:6.

^{iv} See: Senior, Donald: Matthew (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries).

^v Mt 25:34–35.

^{vi} Mt 25:37.

^{vii} Mt 25:40.