Christ's School of Discipleship

Holy Scripture describes the Church of Christ as a family, with babes, children and fathers, where we live closely bound to one another and grow until we become like the Lord. (I write unto you, *fathers,* because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, *young men,* because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, *little children,* because ye have known the Father. 1 John 2:13)

Christ is the head of this family, the Church, and He cherishes it. (For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: Ephesians 5:29)

He does not abandon His newborns, and He will not leave them to grow up without help. Whoever is born of God is placed in Christ's family and in Christ's school, to grow as a disciple until he comes to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of His fulness. (And he gave some… pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints… till we all come… unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13)

The Church, the Body of Christ, is the most effective workshop that could ever exist. Its one and only purpose is to bring a person to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

When the principalities and powers in heavenly places look upon the life of the Church, they see how great the wisdom of God is. (To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Ephesians 3:10-11)

In the Church we learn self-denial, humility and godliness; we learn to offer ourselves as servants of Christ; we learn to live in righteousness, as He lived.

The Family

In His family we are taught and helped to live as He lived, because only in this way will His character be stamped upon us: His longsuffering, His kindness, His meekness, His love… and this can happen only in His school, which is the Church. (He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6)

If we look a little more closely, we can easily see that everything to do with our salvation, from the new birth until we come to a perfect man, is remarkably like what we experience in this short life on earth.

When a child comes into the world, we witness a birth, and it is very much like being born again into the Kingdom of God. (For though ye have ten thousand instructers in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. 1 Corinthians 4:15-16)

A natural baby cannot choose the family he grows up in; those he was born to will be his family. To grow, a natural baby is fed on his mother's milk. Everything is completely new to a newborn child. He takes in everything he sees and hears from his parents.

The Newborn's Path

It is the same with the one who is born again. He is in a family with spiritual parents (the Body of Christ, which is the Church), who feed him spiritual milk as they would a baby. (I... could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but... even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat. 1 Corinthians 3:1-2)

He takes in everything he sees and hears from his spiritual parents. (As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children. 1 Thessalonians 2:11)

A little later, the natural child is enrolled in school, and after some years he graduates... In this world we could never imagine someone becoming a doctor without going to medical school and without teachers.

The same must happen with the spiritual child. You cannot reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ without being a disciple in His school. (He departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. Acts 19:9)

God gives us new birth, gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us, and places us in His school, where we have spiritual parents and teachers, so that we may be raised according to the standard of His Kingdom.

He has given us everything we need to reach the stature for which we were created. (From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body. Ephesians 4:16)

The Purpose of the Church

This school of discipleship has only one purpose: that the disciple should become like the Master. **All of us must go through** this school, whose final aim is to form the image of His Son in us. (The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. Luke 6:40)

The Son of God was sent to earth by the heavenly Father to establish the Church, which is the Body of Christ. He is the founder of this school of disciples, the Church that He so lovingly cherishes. (Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18; For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. Ephesians 5:29)

The Lord Jesus made disciples, then sent them into all the world, so that they in turn would make other disciples and enrol in Christ's school whoever wished to enter it. (Go ye therefore, and teach all nations… teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20)

We can take the Lord's disciples as our example, and above all the apostle Paul. He gave his whole life to the service of the Church of Christ.

He made disciples and taught them, so that he could present them before God as disciples made perfect in Christ. (Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. Colossians 1:28-29)

The Process of Being Made Perfect

Only in His school can the relationships between disciples be adjusted until we reach maturity and complete unity in all things, a unity that will continue in His eternal Kingdom. (That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. John 17:21)

A person must go through all kinds of trials, so that over the course of this school he takes on the character of the Lord Jesus and is found worthy to dwell with God and with all who have graduated from this school of discipleship and have His likeness stamped upon their character.

Let us take longsuffering as an example. How can it come to be stamped upon our character?

To begin with, we learn and take in the Lord's teaching about not resisting; then, when trials come upon us, we put it into practice, following in the footsteps of our spiritual parents, who in turn follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. (And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Matthew 5:40-41)

Every one of us must pass through this school of patience, which does its perfect work, because this is the only way our character is made perfect. (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, **that ye may be perfect** and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:2-4)

This article is taken from the booklet The Church, the Body of Christ – Online Booklet – Unmodified Word, available free online as a PDF.

Go to the next article: The Role of the Members in the Body of Christ – Unmodified Word – Spiritual Revival Articles

Source: *Christ's School of Discipleship* — Unmodified Word
unmodifiedword.com/articles/christs-school-of-discipleship