**Radical Discipleship**

**(Galatians 2:20)**

***Reverend Edmund Chan***

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

The crisis of Christianity is that we have lost our branding. The Christian label that we use is longer descriptive of who we are inside. The question is, what kind of Christian are we? The philosophy of discipleship is all about a certain kind of person radically committed to a certain kind of purpose, who through a certain disciple-making process, produces a certain kind of product.

The crisis that is faced by discipleship of Christianity today is the crisis of product. It has been reduced to a mere programme. It is people who disciple people, not programmes. Programmes are good, but they are tools in the hands of people. If there is not a certain kind of disciple radically committed to Jesus in a radical discipleship, it does not matter what tools are being used, it would not work. That is why the crisis of discipleship exists in the life of the church today.

# Introduction

1. The Church is losing ground

There is a critical need in the life of the church. The church is losing moral ground, whereby it is losing its moral compass. The church is also losing biblical ground, whereby superstition has superseded biblical principles. The church is losing spiritual ground, losing its spiritual hunger and appetite. Therefore, spiritual consumerism has plagued the church today. There is a need for the church to return to radical discipleship, not just discipleship as a programme, but disciples of lovers of Jesus reproducing lovers of Jesus.

1. The Need for Radical Discipleship (Gal 2:20)

Paul highlights two fundamental paradigm shifts for us –

# From being committed Christians to being crucified ones

“I have been crucified with Christ…”

Being crucified with Christ is the idea of a complete union and intimate identification with Christ. It is to be crucified together in union with Christ. “I have been crucified” is a verb. It is a decisive action of the past that has a present result. It is a passive verb. We do not crucify ourselves. Physically and spiritually, it is impossible to crucify yourself. Physically, you cannot nail both your hands to the cross. Spiritually, you cannot crucify yourself. It is an act and a work of God. It is God drawing us, convicting us, giving us a sense of destiny, a sense of identity, a sense of union with Christ so compelling, He does His wonderful work of us dying to ourselves and living for Jesus.

Notice the nature of the word, ‘crucify’. You cannot be a little crucified. To be crucified is the same as to be pregnant, in the sense whereby you are either crucified or you are not, just like how you are either pregnant or you are not. There is a decisive change and a decisive action. This is the problem in Christianity today. We want revival, but in truth, we just want the respectability of revival, instead of the radicalness of revival, which sees us crucified with Jesus Christ.

We have substitute surrender for mere commitment. We think more commitment is demanded of us, but Jesus bids us to come and die. We are called to take up our cross daily and to follow Him. The cross is not an ornament you wear around your neck. It is a Roman instrument of execution. There is a daily commitment in discipleship where we die to ourselves and live unto Jesus. George Muller, a Christian evangelist, is known for his powerful prayer life. When he was asked what the secret of his power was, his reply was that there was a day that George Muller died. He died to his own agenda, his own wants, his own will, and his own preferences. There was a day that George Muller died, and he lived unto Christ.

The King James Version of the verse says, “It is no longer I but Christ who lives in me.” If we read these words and capture the meaning behind it, these words should ring in our souls. This is the key to the Christian life. This is the foundation to radical discipleship. To read discipleship books, to listen to discipleship sermons, to attend discipleship conferences, do not necessarily make us disciples. What makes us radical disciples is the understanding that “it is no longer I but Christ”. We move from being a committed Christian to being a crucified one. The church has lived for far too long without the sense that we are called to be crucified with Jesus and to follow Him. There is a Jewish blessing which goes, “May the dust of the Master cover you.” It means, “May you walk so closely behind the Master that the dust from His feet covers you”. “No longer I but Christ” is the call in following Jesus. It is more than a commitment to Jesus, it is about being crucified with Him.

It is not about how serious the condition or problem the church has, it is about how long the church has lived with a discipleship deficit that led to the creation of these problems. There is a discipleship deficit in the church that is killing the church, and it manifests in all kinds of problems, and the root and the foundation of it is a lack of alignment to Jesus. The foundation has not been set right, and we have lived with the condition for far too long. There is a simple way to reverse the condition. It is simple, but it is not easy. However, by God’s grace, it can be done. The way to reverse the condition is to determine in our hearts today, that it is no longer I but Christ, to shift from being committed to being crucified with Jesus.

1. From what we do for God to what God has done for us

“…who loved us and gave Himself for us.”

God cannot love us more each day because His love for us is perfect and complete, and perfection cannot be improved. God did not send a dozen of angels to die on the cross for us, because they do not qualify. Nothing on earth and in heaven qualifies except for the perfect gift of the perfect Son of God who came to die on the cross in His perfect love for us. Reverend Edmund shared that he became a pastor not because he thinks it is a great vocation to serve God and that he is the sacrificial kind. The only reason why he is a pastor is because he was gripped by the perfect love of God. He has no desire for a large church or a large ministry. All he knows is that Jesus loves him and gave Himself up for him, and he will do whatever God wants him to do, to the best of his abilities, with God’s help. If your motivation to serve God is your love for people alone, it can be very discouraging because loving people can be difficult. Let your motivation to serve God be based on the conviction of His compelling love for you, your love for Him in return, and His love for the people. Reverend Edmund wanted to serve God on his own terms, but God spoke to him, saying that His Son loved the church and gave Himself up for the church. Many seek after their own, but none after the things of Christ. Reverend Edmund then surrendered his life to follow the call of God upon his life. We need to understand the principles by which God works so we can step out in faith and follow Him.

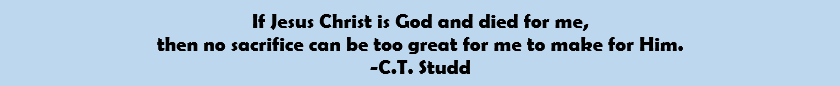
Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:1-3)

Jesus said that there are many rooms in His Father’s house, and He was going there to prepare a place for us. In context, Jesus was saying that He went to the cross to prepare a place for us. He went to the cross, He laid down His life for us, to prepare a place for us in heaven. He will come back and take us with Him so that we will be where He is. Jesus is saying that He wants intimacy with us. Jesus’ perfect and complete love for us is enough. Do not struggle with Christ. If you do not trust Him who died for you, who then can you trust? Give Him your all.

# CONCLUSION

F.B. Meyer, a Bible teacher, was preaching in a convention in the UK, and in that same convention, C.T. Studd came back as a missionary to recruit missionaries for the mission field. He was given fifteen minutes to give an update on what is happening on the field and his passion for missions. C.T. Studd shared passionately about God’s heart for the lost, and there was not a dry eye in the audience. The audience were moved and the presence of God was tangible in the place. All C.T. Studd did was to share fifteen minutes of his testimony. He did not even preach. F.B. Meyer asked C.T. Studd what his secret to such a powerful sharing and ministry was, and C.T. Studd asked F.B. Meyer if he has given all his keys. He went on to explain that in our hearts are many rooms with many doors, some doors are open to God, some doors are shut to Him. Then there are other doors, secret doors, where the doors are shut, locked and the keys are kept. We refuse to give the keys to God. C.T. Studd gave this counsel, “Open up the doors of your heart to God in full surrender and give Him all your keys. Have you given all your keys to Jesus?” That question moved F.B. Meyer. He went to a quiet, solitary place, knelt and prayed. “Lord, my whole heart is completely surrender to You. All the doors that I have shut I open to You. I break open the locks to all the secret doors and open them to You. All my keys I hand them to You.” From that day onwards, F.B. Meyer became not only a good Bible teacher, but a great Bible teacher.

It is no longer I but Christ. This is radical discipleship. Open all the doors of your heart today and give all your keys to God. Make a decisive decision today to return to radical discipleship, that it is no longer I but Christ.



Sermon summary by Anthea Tan