

O Jesus I have promised [Disciple]

'Sing and Study' Bible Study Series | compiled by Rev. Irene Bom

LENT 2B | Study 2 of 6

SING

O JESUS I HAVE PROMISED / CH4 644

by John Ernest Bode (1816-1874)

1 O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
Be now and always near me, my Master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle if you are by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.

2 O let me feel you near me! The world is ever near:
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear.
My foes are ever near me, around me and within;
But, Jesus, draw still nearer, and shield my soul from sin.

3 O let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will.
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen, true guardian of my soul.

4 O Jesus, you hast promised to all who follow you
That where you are in glory your servant shall be too.
And, Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
Now give me grace to follow, my Master and my friend.

ICE BREAKER (allow 20 minutes)

Prep: Sing the song (or listen to a recording) and have someone read out the DID YOU KNOW? column.

Song: What connections, memories or feelings does the song evoke for you? Is there a verse, phrase or image that is particularly meaningful?

Theme: Have someone read out the quotation below. Note what the song says about being Jesus' disciple.

DISCIPLE

by Jonathan Parnell, from <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-a-disciple>

The standard definition of "disciple" (noun) is someone who adheres to the teachings of another. It is a follower or a learner. It refers to someone who takes up the ways of someone else. Applied to Jesus, a disciple is someone who learns from him to live like him — someone who, because of God's awakening grace, conforms his or her words and ways to the words and ways of Jesus. Or, you might say, as others have put it in the past, disciples of Jesus are themselves "little Christs" (Acts 26:28; 2 Cor 1:21).

DID YOU KNOW?

The hymn writer, John Ernest Bode, was an Anglican clergyman serving a small parish near Cambridge, England when his three children, a daughter and two sons, were preparing for confirmation. Bode not only led the confirmation service, but also wrote this hymn especially for the occasion — telling the children that the hymn included "all the important truths I want you to remember."

The hymn reminds us of the promises we have made to Jesus, as well as promises Jesus made to us.

Reportedly the hymn was so popular in its day that the Church of England's bishops (who went from one confirmation service to the next) got sick of it and begged the clergy to stop using it.

The four Gospels give us the definitive portrait of Jesus in his life on earth, and if we really want to know what it means to be his disciple, the Gospels are likely where we start.

To follow Jesus means to worship him exclusively ... to serve like him. ... to point people to him.

In summary the context is:

1. Jesus, accompanied by his disciples and followed by the crowds, is active and popular in Galilee.
2. Jesus expects deadly opposition when he ventures south to Judea and Jerusalem.
3. Peter has just made the startling claim that Jesus is the Messiah (Mark 8:27-30).

Read Mark 8:31-38

DISCUSSION

Listening & Learning Questions

1. What verse jumps out at you? Why?
2. Jesus foretells his death and resurrection three times in Mark's gospel (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). What aspects does he highlight in Mk 8:31?
3. How is Peter an example to the other disciples?
4. Jesus often taught in parables. In v.34-38 he uses a different approach. Discuss.
5. Why do you think Jesus uses words like 'whoever', 'someone', 'anyone'? Why not be more direct?
6. Read Deut 30:19. Both Moses and Jesus present us with a choice. Discuss.

Heart & Healing Questions

1. How does the death of Jesus 'brood' over this passage?
2. How do you react when, like Peter, you hear something that 'blows your mind'?
3. What makes you 'want to be' a disciple of Jesus (v. 34)?
4. How does your relationship with Jesus impact your life/soul? What are the costs and the benefits?
5. What word or phrase from the passage (or the song) will you carry with you this week?

CLOSING (allow 5-10 minutes)

Sing the first verse of *O Jesus I have promised* (or listen to a recording) and end with the closing prayer.

COMMENTARY

v.31 Jesus repeatedly refers to himself as the *Son of Man*, a term with apocryphal overtones (Dan 7:13-14). **v.31** *The elders* (influential lay leaders), *the chief priests* (Sadducees, including former high priests) and *the teachers of the Law* (scribes, mostly Pharisees) together constituted the Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court which met in Jerusalem. **v.33** *Satan* means 'adversary, opponent'. **v.34** *disciple* means 'pupil, learner'. In its most intense sense discipleship suggests a total commitment to stay close to and to obey the person chosen as one's teacher.

v.34 The *cross* was a horrific instrument used by the Romans and other authorities for execution. **v.35** *gospel* or 'good news' is from the Greek word, *euangelion*, which generally means an oral report of good tidings about the work of the gods or the good outcome of a battle.

v.35,36 The words translated as *life* (v.35) and *soul* (v.36) are in fact the same word in the original Greek word (*psyche*).

MARK 8:31-38

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³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.'

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.'

CLOSING PRAYER

by Bishop Telmor Sartison, from *The Prayers of Our Church*

God of compassion, the way of the cross is as much a mystery to us as it was to the immediate followers of Jesus. But we have heard how your grace is exercised in the journey of suffering and rejection experienced by Jesus. Help us to hear with ears inspired, to see with eyes opened to your ways, and to respond with lives committed to your service.

God of our Lenten journey, **we watch and walk with Jesus.**

We repent, O God. We cannot name our own cross even though we try. You must show us the cross you give us. Help us see. Give us the faith to respond and follow Jesus. We have heard that it is in losing our life for the sake of Gospel of Jesus that we find our life.

God of our Lenten journey, **we watch and walk with Jesus.**