

The Reclamation of All Things: A Greater Identity

In the 2014 movie, *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, the world has separated into two camps: genetically altered apes & humans. The apes have escaped from the science labs that created them and have found refuge in the mountains. Meanwhile, a deadly virus has wiped out most of humanity and the survivors are holed up in dilapidated cities without electricity or other conveniences the human-race once enjoyed. Their world has fallen apart. Through a twisted series of misunderstandings, the apes believe the humans are out to destroy them and vice versa. The consequence: an all-out war.

As the humans develop their defensive plan, we hear their motivation as they fight for survival. One man says, *you all know what we're up against! And I want you to know - it's not just about power! It's about giving us the hope to rebuild, to reclaim the world we lost!* In this quote, we find the heartbeat of most movies, literature and sporting events - *dominion*. Who will come out on top? Who is the strongest? Who will rule? Who will reclaim what was lost?

From Rabbi Jesus, we learn the answer - *He* will reclaim what was lost (Matthew 18:11). And he will do it in the most unlikely way: by living the life humans couldn't live, dying the death humans should have died and donating his merits to humanity. Now he lives in his people through the same Spirit that brought him back to life, empowering them to live a new kind of life and partner with Him in the reclamation of all things (Luke 24:49, Romans 8:11). *What are the implications of all this?*

Journey Together

- 1). Describe your vision of a perfect world?
- 2). What can we do as Christ's followers to help shape that world?

Roadmap: Read Matthew 27 & 28

- 3). What do you think is significant about the way Matthew ends his gospel (Mt. 28:16-20)?
- 4). Read Genesis 1:27-28. What was God's first command to humans? How does it compare with Jesus last command in Matthew? How would this command benefit the world?

5). Read Genesis 12:1-3. How is God's call to Abraham similar to his command to Adam & Eve? Now return to Matthew 28:16-20. What is God still concerned with?

6). Being baptized into the name of the Father, Son & Spirit is being immersed into a new identity. What changes about my identity when I'm brought into a new identity with the Father, the Son and the Spirit?

7). Jesus commissions his disciples to spread out and fill the earth with this new and greater identity, which is an expression of who God is and what he has done. How would your life and world change if you, personally, lived from this greater identity? How might these things reflect Jesus plan to reclaim and renew all things?

8). Read Ephesians 1:22-23. We read that Christ's church is his people who "fill all in all." In light of all the texts we've looked at up to this point, what images come to mind when you think of Christ's people "filling all in all?"

Discipleship Challenge: Being a disciple of Jesus means living as a family of missionary servants. This is our new trinitarian identity and it's not an individual endeavor. The church isn't an event we attend, but a family we belong to. Gather with a few friends this week over a meal and talk about how you might live differently with each other in the next 3-6 months if you really believed you were family. What if you believed you were servants to the least of these? What if you believed you'd been given the Spirit for mission. Practice this seventh competence of *A Greater Identity* by agreeing with a few friends to live differently in light of your new identity.

My Journey

1. How has God been using *Journey* in your life this week to do *Great Things* for Him?
2. How has this last study helped pull together the overall picture of what discipleship under Rabbi Jesus is all about?
3. How can this group be praying for you right now and this week?

Backstory:

We've come full circle. We've been learning about discipleship from Matthew under Rabbi Jesus, His most unlikely follower. According to Matthew, discipleship begins by acknowledging and honoring Jesus - the true Messianic king. It culminates with our new identity and the extension of His kingdom.

Jesus is the new head of a renewed humanity reclaiming all that was lost in the downward spiral of sin and death. In Jesus, the dominion forfeited by our first parents by giving into the Serpent has finally been restored. Jesus is propelling the world on a new trajectory of reclaimed dominion bearing the fruit of righteousness and multiplying the grace of God in the very place where sin once reigned supreme.

Jesus victory over sin and death established by His resurrection from the dead would be enough to start the world over on a new divine course. But God's design was much more than a realignment of the world. God's plan was total restoration – reclaiming all that was lost in the Fall. This is why discipleship is so important. Discipleship is so much more than our personal spiritual renewal. Discipleship leads to the honor, glory, and dignity of advancing this renewal as a volunteer in Jesus mission. In discipleship, we are being trained and enlisted for the restoration of all things. And privilege above all privilege – we are graciously permitted the joy of inviting others to join the revolution through the discipleship process.

All authority – *all authority in heaven and on earth* has been given to Jesus. He won the right to rule! But now, unlike any other earthly sovereign the world has ever known, He shares His right to rule with us by helping advance His mission. Those who once led in the rebellion are now conscripted for the revolution. “Go”, Jesus says. “Go make disciples!” This is the message of Matthew. In the gospel according to Matthew we learn the discipleship competencies of Rabbi Jesus all for this – that we might join the cause and make more disciples as Matthew instructs us to do.

We have *a great new king* and have been given *a great new life* including *a great new mission* with *a great new message* making *great new leaders* for a *great new world* that results in *great new people* under the lordship of Jesus Christ!

We will never be the same. We belong to Jesus. We have His life. We have been called to His mission. He have His deepest secrets for a new world order. Through His Spirit we are to live the message we are sharing. We will never view the world in the same idolatrous way again now that we have His life-giving perspective.

Finally, we know why we are here. Genesis 1 reminds us of God's original purpose for the human family. The first three days of creation are placeholders where God creates light, air and land. In the next three days God fills the light with sun, moon and stars, the air with birds, and the land with living things including us. And just as God filled the things He made, we are commanded to fill the world and to have dominion. Filling and having dominion was our original purpose, but became frustrated by sin. Now through Jesus, dominion for the human family has been restored.

This is the final discipleship competency under Rabbi Jesus. We are to claim our *greater new identity*, going in His authority to do what we have always been ordained to do – claim dominion through the redeeming process of discipleship.

This is how we are to accomplish greater things in Jesus name! This is Jesus plan for transforming the world! This is how His kingdom has come, is advancing and will ultimately overcome the world! The Prince of this world has been cast down. His kingdom of selfishness, pain, misery, death and destruction is being replaced by God's kingdom of love, joy, faithfulness, beauty, truth and grace. Through the victory of Jesus, we have been delivered from sin and enlisted in the service of our king. This is our new identity. We are His disciples! Now, under His authority let's reclaim our dominion and go make disciples in Jesus name!