

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 17)

What is a radical disciple? Other names are commonly used for radicals: insurgents, revolutionists, insurrectionists, leftists, Bolsheviks, anarchists. None of these fit Jesus or His disciples. In fact, these are poor definitions of the word "radical." Jesus' disciples were extreme, but they weren't overthrowing anything. They were the beginning of something fundamentally new. The dictionary defines radical as "proceeding from or pertaining to the root." It means foundation, essential, fundamental. Radical comes from the root word "radish." The apostles were "rooted...in love" (Ephesians 3:17). Jesus' disciples were fundamentally different from the religious sects of their day. Their faith was built on the foundation of the prophets (the Word of God) and became the foundation of Jesus' church (Ephesians 3:20). When Jesus said, "...upon this rock I will build my church" he was referring to Peter's confession of faith (Matthew 16:18). They were rooted in the truth about the Messiah. They were grounded in His teaching. Furthermore, Peter and the rest of the apostles would become the foundation of His church which is the "pillar and ground of truth" (I Timothy 3:15). Jesus' disciples were radical. Their beliefs and their values were fundamentally different from the world and other religious ideologies. They were exclusive. They were rooted in love for Christ and His mission. They weren't born that way. How did they get that way? To answer that question is to answer how disciples of Jesus can be radical today. Jesus used fixed and lasting principles for training ordinary men into radical disciples. Those principles work today just as they did when Jesus was alive. The principles Jesus used in making radical disciples are the same principles that make radical disciples today if we are willing to believe them and follow them.