

## The Earthly “Society of Jesus”

The assumption of Jesus’ program for his people on earth was that they would live their lives as his students and co-laborers. They would find him so admirable in every respect wise, beautiful, powerful, and good - that they would constantly seek to be in his presence and be guided, instructed, and helped by him in every aspect of their lives. For he is indeed the living head of the community of prayerful love across all time and space.

On that assumption, his promise to his people was that he would be with them every moment, until this particular “age” is over and the universe enters a new phase (Matt 28:20; Heb. 13:5-6). More generally, the provisions he made for his people during this period in which we now live are provisions made for those who are, precisely, apprentices to him in kingdom living. Anyone who is not a continual student of Jesus, and who nevertheless reads the great promises of the Bible as if they were for him is like someone trying to cash a check on another person’s account. At best, it succeeds only sporadically.

The effect of such continuous study under Jesus would naturally be that we learn how to do everything we do “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17); that is, on his behalf for in his place; that is, once again, as if he himself were doing it. And of course that means we would learn “to conform to everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20). In his presence our inner life will be transformed, and we will become the kind of people for whom his course of action is the natural (and supernatural) course of action.

- Dallas Willard

1. What are your initial impressions of what Dallas Willard says?
2. Is anything particularly insightful or new? Why?
3. How does this change your perspective on how you are to live?