

His security is "in Christ" where no real harm can come
(1 Peter 3:13; 1 Cor. 1:30; Romans 8:37-39).

- C. To avoid the ultimate shame, defeat and loss: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of the Father with the holy angels"(Mark 8:38).
- D. For the ultimate reason, hope, gain of eternal reward: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds" (Matt. 16:27).
1. Hope anchored in God is our "Strong(est) encouragement"(Heb.6:18).
 2. Hope of resurrection to eternal life (John 11:25,26).
 3. Being of Christ & "Not of this world" (John 15:10), his name is written in heaven (Luke 10:20), in "the book of life" (Rev. 20:12-15); and he regards himself a pilgrim on earth and a citizen of heaven (Phil. 3:20).
- V. DISCIPLES OF CHRIST ARE MADE BY "SPEAKING THE WORD.... AND PREACHING THE LORD JESUS" (Acts 11:19-26; 6:1,7).
- A. We must learn of Christ and believe (Heb. 8:10; 11:6); and though we are complex dual beings, this is relatively simple.
1. We must hear, learn and be drawn of God (John 6:44,45; 12:32).
 2. "Learn of" the One who is altogether lovely/mighty: Matt. 11:29.
 3. This comes from "speaking the word, preaching the Lord Jesus," "teaching the word of God" (Matt. 11:29; Acts 11:19,20; 18:11).
- B. We must "turn to the Lord" by faith, repentance, confession and baptism. Discipleship means more than faith in facts: Acts 11:21; 2:36-42.
- C. Then Cleave (cling) to the Lord (Acts 11:23; John 10:27,28).
What does this mean?
1. Continue in, & "stand fast in the faith" (1 Cor. 16:13; 15:58).
 2. No "looking back" (Luke 9:62; 17:32: "Remember Lot's wife."
 3. Not go beyond his teaching: 2 John 9-11; Matt. 15:2; Mark 7:5.
- D. The distinctive persons who did the above were those first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26; Isaiah 62:2).
1. Can you truly be called a Christian now? Are you living in and for Christ? Or are you still in "the bondage of sin"?
 2. Do your credentials and spiritual ID card match those disciples?

CONCLUSION -

- I. "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24), and His Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13), who testifies through the Bible how we become disciples and how we remain his disciples (Romans 8:14-17).
- II. Does your spirit testify with God's Spirit today? Does your spiritual ID card bear witness with God's Spirit that you are his child?

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

The Meaning, Cost and Obligations of Discipleship
Mark 8:31-38; Luke 9:23-26,57-62; 14:25-35; Matt.16:21-28;28:18-20
INTRODUCTION -

- I. The disciples of Jesus were called Christians first at Antioch, but his followers were called disciples long before that.
- II. One may be called a Christian without being a disciple of the Lord: Jesus said, "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray" (Matt.24:25).
- III. According to Jesus, it is extremely important that we know the meaning and cost of being his disciple. The Jewish concept of discipleship was incorrect (Matt. 20:20,21).

DISCUSSION -

- I. THE TERM DISCIPLE IS A NAME GIVEN THE FOLLOWERS OF ANY TEACHER.
- A. It is a distinctive term used 271 times in the New Testament, much more often than Christian (Matthew 28:18; Acts 6:1).
1. It means "one who receives instruction from another;" and always implies personal adherence to the views of his teacher.
 2. A disciple is a pupil, student or scholar, in any field such as religion, politics, military science, etc; "especially one who believes in the doctrine of his teacher/follows him"^{Cru-}_{dens.}
- B. Being a disciple of some does not mean a great deal, and is not a vital matter.
1. Being a disciple of Washington, Jackson, Lincoln or Jefferson is not a life or death matter. One may be relatively indifferent toward such men.
 2. Modern disciples of Wesley, Luther and Calvin admit we can go to heaven without following their peculiar teaching.
- C. But being disciples of others means much more to character, life and destiny.
1. We cannot be indifferent to disciples of Karl Marx, Hitler, Castro, Stalin, Freud, Fletcher, Hefner, Saddam Hussein, and you know why.
 2. We cannot be indifferent to Jesus, the greatest teacher who ever lived on the earth.
- II. THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP IS GREAT BUT NOT TOO GREAT.
- A. It cost God the "unspeakable gift" of His Son (2 Cor. 9:15; John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 8:31,32).
- B. It cost Jesus heaven's glory, his life and blood (2 Cor. 8:9; Heb. 2:9; Luke 9:57-62; 1 Tim. 2:4-6).
- C. For sinners to be saved, it is necessary to give up the love of the world and the pleasures of sin, to enter the way of life with Christ and be added to the most costly institution, the

church of Christ (Acts 2;38,47; 20:28; Eph. 5:25; Isa. 55:7; Titus 2:11,12), as Moses did (Heb. 11:25).

D. A person must prefer Christ above everyone, everything, and abide in the teaching of Christ regardless of the cost if he desires to be the Lord's disciple.

III. THE CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP (Mark 8:31-38; Luke 14:25-33).

A. The test of sacrifice: "Let him deny himself" (Mark 8:34); "Seek first...." (Matt. 6:33).

1. Jesus made self-denial essential to Christian discipleship.

It costs sinners the love of this world and the pleasure of sin, to enter the way of life by the narrow gate with Christ, and suffer with the people of God for righteousness' sake, for the same reason a good mother denies her child poison (Titus 2:11,12; Acts 3:19).

2. It is not so much the denial of any big or little thing to self; but the denial of self; i.e., a self-centered life, to submit to God's will and a Christ-centered life. It is to turn from self to submit to Jesus: From one lord, center, to another (Matt. 6:33; 10:37; Luke 14:26; John 21:15-19).

3. This requires that our affections and thoughts be centered on and guided by God rather than self (Prov. 23:7; Mark 8:33).

B. The test of service: Daily cross-bearing: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27; Mark 8:34).

1. Cross-bearing is usually thought to be the bearing of burdens or enduring of trials in the service of Christ. It is impossible to renounce all that we have (Luke 14:23) and give ourselves to Christ without suffering some loss or trouble. In the beginning of Christianity, it often involved martyrdom. In our time it always involves some sacrifice (Matt. 10:34-39).

2. But the cross Jesus had in mind when he spoke these words was not some inevitable trouble, such as poverty or burden which comes to saint or sinner alike, but something additional. This cross is something that we take up voluntarily and which is within our power to refuse to accept (John 10:17,18). We bear it not because we cannot escape it, but because it is part of following Christ; and one reason for bearing it is that we cannot truly follow Him without it. "We bear our cross when we voluntarily suffer for the good of others"—Thomas.

3. He loves other disciples after our Lord's example (John 13:34).

The badge of discipleship is basin/towel, not worldly scepter, crown, wealth, power, prestige/position, for which his disciples had looked & sought (Matt. 20:20-28).

Being God's child makes every other child a brother. He has active good will toward the saints: His light will shine, if a disciple, because he walks in the light (Matt. 5:14-17; 1 Jn.1:7).

4. Therefore he is a true disciple of Christ who will bear any cross, endure any hardship that is involved in following Jesus.

Each one must "bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:2). We sometimes think it would be best for us if we could change our cross for another, and we magnify some of our crosses at times until we are unable to see that of the Lord or of another. Each one must have courage/faith to fight the good fight on his own feet, meet temptation, keep the faith and finish the course.

C. The test of submission/obedience: He must follow Christ daily: If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (daily)" (Mark 8:34; cf. Luke 9:23). "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26; cf. 6:46).

1. Jesus pictures himself here, not as the Redeemer of men, but as our Pattern, Leader, Shepherd and Lord, "by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7).

2. He appeals to our human will: His cross must be taken up by faith consciously, deliberately and lovingly. His principle of self-denial was conscious, deliberate, voluntary, victorious and delightful (Heb. 10:7; Psalm 40:8).

3. His disciples continue in his word, in doing all things he commands (John 8:31,32; Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:42). In our obedience of faith to his/our Father, in overcoming temptation, in prayer, in worship, and in righteous service in his kingdom.

IV. REASONS FOR THE CONDITIONS: BLESSING/REWARD OF DISCIPLESHIP (Mark 8:35).

A. To find & have the most wonderful life: "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it" (Mark 8:35; Matt. 16:24,25).

1. A good and worthy life is the product of righteousness: A sober righteous, godly life produces well-being: Best health/friends.

2. Peace/joy in the Holy Spirit follows righteousness: Assurance of pardon, forgiveness/rest (Heb. 8:12; 10:17; Mt. 11:28; Rom. 14:17).

3. Creativity thrives in a righteous peaceful mind & joyful heart.

B. For the supreme gain/profit of life: "For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, & forfeit his life (soul)" (Mark 8:36)? "For what should a man give in exchange for his life" (Matt. 16:26)?

1. A Christian follows the safest course/enjoys the best security on earth: The security of the soul in Christ is the only absolute security on the earth.

2. No real harm can come from being a real Christian: One who follows the ideal Teacher; teaching and wisdom, and is truly united with the supreme Person, power/purpose in the universe: