

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

“But join with me in suffering for the Gospel, by the power of God who has saved us...” —2 TIMOTHY 1:8

Timothy was a young disciple of Christ, much beloved and mentored by Paul. His story is one almost every Christian can identify with. We are all eager and willing at first, but somewhere along the line, confusion, doubt and worry steps in.

Timothy grew up with tension caused by the stigma attached to his mixed parentage, and with only one parent being a believer, but God had plans for him. While still a young man, someone new entered his life, not someone with a new message, but someone bold and fresh. Accompanied by Barnabas, the Apostle Paul was on his first missionary journey into Turkey when he first met Timothy in his hometown of Lystra. A friendship was formed, and under Paul’s ministry, Timothy, within the context of a very dramatic event, was converted to Christianity.

Lystra and surrounding areas were predominately pagan. When Paul and Barnabas came upon a man, crippled from birth, Paul healed him through the power of Christ. In a euphoric response, the people hailed both Paul and Barnabas as gods, and were deaf to their adamant protests until a man from Antioch convinced them otherwise. The pendulum suddenly swung from wanting to worship Paul and Barnabas to wanting to kill them. Paul was viciously stoned and left for dead. When he came around, he got up and went back into the city, presumably taking refuge in Timothy’s home. Battered, bruised and swollen, Paul desires to know, “Timothy, would you still like to be a disciple?”

What would our answer have been at a time like that? To help us know, we need to ask what is involved in becoming a true disciple of Christ. The Christian church has one job description and that is to make disciples. These are men, women and children who will say ‘yes’ to unconditional surrender of their lives to Christ. There is notably a “turning from ourselves” to a “turning to God” with no middle ground, no bargains.

We need to realize true discipleship is not a sentimental journey of faith, but a denying of oneself for the purposes of Jesus Christ. There is no doubt the gospel is costly, but it is also deeply enriching and rewarding, because we have someone much bigger in control who knows every turn our lives will take. It is a lifestyle dynamically alive and meaningful, as opposed to having beliefs we try to follow and don’t pass on.

PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, I don’t ever want to cower away from anything You have called me to do. I ask that You fill me with the courage and boldness of Paul, so I may serve You better. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I hesitant in my service to God because of the cost? If so, how can I best overcome that?