

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

“Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.”—LUKE 14:27 & 33

Interestingly, the word ‘Christian’ or ‘Christians’ appears only three times in the Bible, but the word ‘disciple’ or ‘disciples’ almost 300 times. Jesus never told us what it means to be a Christian, but He has told us what it means to be a disciple.

Yesterday we discussed a condition of true discipleship, which appears to be a paradox with the use of the word ‘hate’, but actually means the love of Jesus being uppermost in our lives. Jesus then states two other conditions, which also seem a paradox. When He says, “Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple,” He is talking about bondage to Him in which we forfeit our individual rights and agendas in order to serve Him, regardless of consequences to ourselves. We usually like to play it safe, but to be a true disciple we need to be willing to risk and to suffer. The paradox here is the bondage we have to Jesus is what actually leads to liberty. The battle has already been won, and we stand on the side of the Victor. Not only do we find life, but discover everything of this world is utterly incomparable to the everlasting riches of Christ.

Jesus introduces a third condition by telling two short stories; one about a man and another about a king, and their insufficiencies. The man wants to build a tower, but first needs to take stock of his resources to make sure he has enough to complete it. Otherwise, he will only have the foundation laid, and become the butt of ridicule. It’s the same with the

king who goes into battle with only half the men his opposition has. He realizes he is outnumbered, and asks for terms of peace. The only terms of peace he will have is in complete surrender. “In the same way,” Jesus says, “Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.”

There comes a point when we realize everything we have is not enough. We acknowledge that we can't complete the tower or win the battle, but Jesus can. The paradox here is that in surrendering everything we have to Jesus, we are gaining the divine resources of heaven. Our insufficiency is replaced with Christ's sufficiency, and He becomes the empowerment for all He has called us to do. True discipleship isn't about applying methods or a lifestyle, but about the life of Jesus Christ lived in us and through us. We can sit under the umbrella of Christianity, content with our own agendas, or as disciples, we can totally submit to Christ, content with nothing less than His agenda.

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, help me to become a true disciple and relinquish all I have to your Lordship for your purpose. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I deterred at the cost of being a disciple, or willing to submit everything to Jesus?