

## Terms of Discipleship (151)

**Read** = Matthew 16 v 24

**Intro** - Just following Jesus revealing His work, to die in Jerusalem, and Peter saying No to God's plan and Christ's suffering, and the Lord saying that all who say no to His plan of redemption are doing Satan's work.

Just after all this Jesus say's to His disciples,

*'If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me' v24*

He is making it plan and laying down the terms of true discipleship.

There is a cost too and a price to pay to be a real Christian.

And the cost is an unselfish denial and a willingness to suffer for Christ and a following of Him.

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*'He was ready and willing to suffer, here (he) shows them that they must suffer to, and must be ready and willing... Here is the Law of discipleship laid down, and the terms fixed on which we may have the honour and benefit off of it' (p237)*

Note 2 things about this text

## **1. What is a Real Christian?**

## **2. Someone Who Follows Jesus**

### **1. What is a Real Christian?**

Please note -

#### **A. The human will is involved**

*'If any man will come after me'* the Lord here is deliberately emphasising human responsibility

If any man **WILL** come after me

Will: *Would, to will, have a mind too, Resolved, determined, purposed*

*And it's a present, active, indicative, verb in Greek if any man presently right now actively factually wills Himself is determined to and actively putting in human effort to come after me'*

Yes I am saying this as a:

- Reformed preacher

-Believer in a Sovereignty of God

To be a Christian there has to come a point when the person man or woman boy or girl wills to become a Christian, put's in an effort of will to repent of sin and follow Jesus (Yes of course God is in all this) but that does not negate the fact that every Christian must come to the point when they Will, Have a mind to, determines to become a Christian and follow Jesus.

The Human will is involved and there is human responsibility.

Jesus Christ wants a voluntary army, an army of volunteers.

There has to be a time in every Converts life when he is converted to Jesus and willingly gives his life to Jesus and follows Jesus.

It is not enough that a child is baptised as a baby and is confirmed as a teenager, or does not deny Christ as a covenant child, and be assumed into church membership, NO, NO, NO it is not enough not to deny Christ, but there has to be a conversion, a time when the persons will, decides to follow Jesus we must confess Christ.

*'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thy heart that God has raised Him from the dead thou shalt be saved.*

*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' (Romans 10:9-10)*

It is not enough just to be assumed into a church because you are baptised and have not denied Christ. The human will must be involved and there must be an active confession of Jesus Christ.

There has to be a time in life when the person wills and repents of sin and trusts in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and from thereon is repenting and trusting every day!

To negate the human will and human responsibility completely under the guise of God's Sovereignty is Unbiblical and gross error.

Do not ever make God's Sovereignty an excuse for you or your so called covenant children's lack of Biblical conversion!

If the human will has never been involved and the person has never willed to follow Jesus then the person is not converted and not following Jesus.

Also note-

### **B. These are the Terms for being an Ordinary Christian**

Jesus does not hide the cost of being a Christian and make it all so easy, no He lays down the terms upon which a person can claim to be a real Christian, a follower of Jesus.

What I am saying here is this, 'the qualifications/terms in this verse are not the qualifications/terms for a super duper extra spiritual grade 1 A star Christian, who is completely sanctified and has Jesus as both saviour and Lord.

Because that is what some believe who are duped by easy believism that all who profess are but when they continue on in sin without a change to their life they are, "*Saved but not Sanctified*" They have Jesus as their Saviour (They're forgiven) but not their Lord (They do not obey Him).

This is nonsense Jesus plainly says in our text, "*If any man will come after me.*" Anyone who professes to be a Christian must follow him, must have Him as Saviour and Lord, the qualifications are for every ordinary Christian.

Anyone who is a Christian at all must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Jesus.

We see therefore as I said at the beginning of this point that the Lord does not make discipleship

easy by saying, *'It is so easy all you have to do is believe about me and you are saved, then you can go with the rest of your life doing what you please!'* No, right at the beginning the Lord lays down the terms, the immoveable terms, for true discipleship for ANYONE who comes after me.

## **2. Someone Who Follows Jesus**

The true Christian is will to suffer some discomfort for Christ and here then are the terms of true discipleship.

Please note,

- 1. Deny Self**
- 2. Take Up Cross**
- 3. Follow Me**

These three terms, which Jesus speaks about everyone that follows Him, the verb in each is an active imperative in the Greek, which means a direct command/a law/a duty. Oh, these are not popular

words, in the eyes of many modern professed Christians, who like to think that under the NT there is no law nor duties and we are all free floating about in a sea of grace and that the OT is legalistic and full of law, obligations, and duties. (Anti-nomians)

But here as in many places in the NT, but here specifically out of the mouth of Jesus Christ we are given three NT laws/commands under the Gospel of Grace. There are Christian duties, responsibilities that Christians are commanded by Jesus to fulfil.

Grace does not negate duty nor obedience to Jesus who is our Lord, indeed obedience to the Lord Jesus' commands is one of the basic terms/conditions of discipleship.

And here is the first term: (I am going to group them all together because they all overlap.)

### **1. Deny Self**

To deny self simply means to deny self. What we want, are self will, the sinful temptation to put me first before everybody else, and to get what I want all

the time. This is the first thing that has to go to be a Christian. Are you willing to deny yourself?

Because to even be converted you must deny yourself, and instead of self being number one, God has to come first in your life, and then your wife/husband, and your children/family, and others, and self has to come last.

*"We are to esteem other better than ourselves."*

*"Let not every man consider his own things but every man also the things of others."*

### **Are you willing to put God first?**

Why then would you pick a career that means you have to miss the public worship of God?

I know mothers who, because they are preparing for their work on Monday, do not bother coming to church on Sunday evening, but stay at home and keep their children at home because they are putting their own work/career and their children education (so called) before God. As if the Bible says, 'It doesn't

matter if you come to public worship or not you can still be a disobedient Christian not denying yourself.'

Whereas the Bible says, '*Neglect not the gathering of yourself together after the manner of some is.*' (Hebrews 10:25)

And the 'some' in Hebrews are the apostates who are not saved.

### **Are you willing to put your husband/wife before yourself?**

Eph tells us that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, and He gave His all for His church -- His life. And wives are to submit to their own husbands.

What does any of this mean but simply deny yourself, put others first!

**Are you willing to put your children and family above yourself?**

Are you? Or are you like many women and men today who put their career before their children and their husbands/wives and God?

For many their career is first because that's what they want to self is their fore first and they pack off their children to day-care when they are only one or two years old so that they can continue their worship of their god which is their career.

And do not give me your rubbish, that you need the money to live . . . When you do not, you need the money for luxuries, extravagance, and to keep up appearances. There are no excuses, you do it because you want to, your self-will is coming first, and everyone else is coming after you. But the Bible says,

*"If anyone comes after Jesus Christ they must deny themselves."*

You do not p-ut God first in your life by disobeying him nor do you deny yourself by putting what you want first. If you do that it simply means you are not a Christian and need to repeat of your sin.

Because Jesus says that if ANY man will come after me I command him/her to deny himself/herself.

**Are you willing to put others before yourself?**

## **2. Take Up Cross**

This simply means being willing to suffer the cross was an instrument of suffering and death, so what Jesus is saying is that all true Christians must be ready and willing to suffer and if necessary die for following Him.

In Early Rain Covenant church in Chengdu, China the authorities came in to their Sunday service twice and arrested the pastor and his wife and 160 members and took them off to prison. If this was to happen here would you be willing to take up your cross and suffer that or would you say something like, "I'm just visiting! I'm not a true believer!" to save your own skin.

In other words are you willing to take up your cross?

### **3. Follow Me**

This last term of true discipleship is the one that proves that we must have Jesus as our Lord, we follow Him, we do obey God's will as Jesus perfectly obeyed the Father's will, we do obey the commands of Jesus Christ because how could we follow Him if we are not following Him? The very word Christian according to Acts 11:26 according to the Greek word, Christian = a follower of Christ. Therefore there is no such thing as a follower who does not follow because if you do not follow Jesus you simply are not a follower, which means you are not a Christian.

## **Conclusion and Summary**

### **1. What is a Real Christian?**

**A. The human will is involved**

**B. These are the Terms for being an Ordinary Christian**

## **2. Someone Who Follows Jesus**

- 1. Deny Self**
- 2. Take Up Cross**
- 3. Follow Me**

### Challenges

1. Beware of any teaching pretending to be Christian that negates the human will involved in our conversion. We must will, make our mind up, to follow Jesus at some point on our lives.

2. Christ's terms for ordinary discipleship are exactly that, this is what every Christian is commanded to do.

3. Beware of any Christianity that denies Christian duties and NT commands. If anyone follows Jesus Christ he/she must fulfil these terms.

4. Do you deny yourself?

It is impossible to be a Christian and a humanist because a humanist thinks and believes or I should say feels and believes that self, man, is God and first in priority, but a Christian is commanded to deny self not deify self.

5. Are you willing to take up your cross?

Would you be willing to die and not deny Jesus?

If you deny him because you might be made fun of at work (which is not very scary anyway) then it is unlikely you would be willing to die for Him by taking up your cross.

6. Do you follow Jesus?

A Christian follows Jesus and it is impossible to be a follower if you do not follow.