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DISCIPLES OF CHRIST - II
Mark 8:34-38

Who are Christians? Who are disciples? New Testament says:

As World War II drew to a close, the allies were driving toward Berlin. Hitler ordered the key prisoners in camps to be terminated. From the stench of death was led a young German pastor who refused to bow to Hitler - Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Listen to someone who paid a price!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German churchman of the Nazi era who eventually suffered martyrdom for his opposition to Hitler's policies, called this erroneous theology "cheap grace." He said, "Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ living and incarnate."

The contrast is "costly grace."

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price, to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him. Costly grace is the gospel which must be *sought* again and again, the gift which must be *asked* for, the door at which a man must *knock*. Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*.

Just before He laid down His life on the cross, Jesus Christ gave three parables in rapid succession in Mt. 25.

1. Bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom. The unprepared were shut out = they weren't saved.
2. The man given one talent who buried it was "cast into darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth" = lost.
3. People who fail to feed the hungry, drinks to the thirsty, receive strangers, clothe the naked, care for the sick and visit the imprisoned, though they call on the Lord... = unconverted and perish.

What does all this mean? Listen to some Godly teachers who have wrestled with this truth and summarize it for us:

A. W. Tozer: Another writer, an American, bemoaned the same situation. Chicago pastor and devotional author A. W. Tozer, Pursuit of God, declared,

The doctrine of justification by faith--a Biblical truth and a blessed relief from sterile legalism and unavailing self-effort--has in our time fallen into evil company and been interpreted by many in such manner as actually to bar men from the knowledge of God. The whole transaction of religious conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless. Faith may now be exercised without a jar to the moral life and without embarrassment to the Adamic ego. Christ may be "received" without creating any special love for him in the soul of the receiver. The man is "saved," but he is not hungry or thirsty after God. In fact he is specifically taught to be satisfied and encouraged to be content with little.

James Brice, successor to the late great Donald Grey Barnhouse, writes:

Christ's Call to Discipleship

...But sermons should suggest that members of a church may not actually be saved, although they are members. Teachers should stress that a personal, self-denying, costly, and persistent following of Christ is necessary if a person is to be acknowledged by Jesus at the final day.

In the absence of this teaching millions drift on, assuming that because they have made verbal acknowledgment of Christ ten, twenty, or even thirty years ago and have done nothing terribly bad since, they are Christians, when actually they may be far from Christ, devoid of grace, and in danger of perishing forever.

3. The great Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon say "take my yoke" as meaning, "If you will be saved by me, I must be your Master and you must be my servant; you cannot have me for a Savior if you do not accept me for a Lawgiver and Commander. If you will not do as I bid you, neither shall you find rest to your souls."

Brice again:

Work. The yoke placed upon the shoulders of a farm animal enables it to work. The yoke of Christ, placed upon the shoulders of His followers, undoubtedly has a similar purpose in their lives. It means that we are hitched to His team of enlisted in His service. We are soldiers in His army, builders of His temple, evangelists for His gospel, ambassadors of His kingdom.

1. Now let's go to our text and start tracing the gospel that Jesus Christ proclaimed: Mark 8:34-38 (read). These verses hold four key truths about being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Let me list them:
2. Renouncing self as the authority and focus of my life = self-denial.
3. Living a life of sacrifice and separation to the cross of Christ = separation.
4. Unquestioning allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ's word and way = servanthood.
5. Recognizing the true owner of my time, money, possessions and abilities = stewardship.

If this is what Christ called us to, how did people respond -- to Him -- when He called? Let's look at a positive and negative example. (Lk. 18) Negative first:

Matt. 19: 16-30:

- 16 And behold, one came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"
- 17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is *only* One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." (*Show impossibility*)
- 18 He said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS;
- 19 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER [Exod. 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20]; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF" [Lev. 19:18].
- 20 The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept; (not admit lost) what am I still lacking?"

21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."
22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieved; for he was one who owned much property.
23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.
24 "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
25 And when the disciples heard *this*, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"
26 And looking upon them Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?"
28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life.
30 "But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.

Mark 10:17-31:

17 And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and *began asking* Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

19 "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER'" [Exod. 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20].

20 And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."

21 And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: (not admit lost) go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

22 But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property.

23 And Jesus, looking around said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

24 And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 And they were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?"

27 Looking upon them, Jesus said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

28 Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You." (*"Regeneration" describes the world's restored condition when Messiah returns...*)

29 Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake,

30 but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

31 "But many who are first, will be last; and the last, first."

Luke 18:18-30:

18 And a certain ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

20 "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER'" [Exod. 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20].

21 And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."

22 And when Jesus heard *this*, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

23 But when he had heard these things, he became very sad; for he was extremely rich.

24 And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!

25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 And they who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?"

27 But He said, "The things impossible with men are possible with God."

28 And Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own homes, and followed You."

29 And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,

30 who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

Let's analyze: What did the rich young ruler have?

1. Enthusiasm = ran
2. Theology = knelt at Christ's feet, called Him God
3. Religion = externally kept all the 10 Commandments

What had the rich young ruler neglected?

1. True conviction = sinner + lost
2. True submission = submission to Lord

Christ's lesson?

Salvation impossible. Only the miracle of God.

How about it? Are you trying to get to heaven? Or, are you confessing lost + unable and willing to submit to Christ?

Back to Mark 8:

<u>Jesus said to rich young ruler:</u>	<u>he said:</u>
1. Self-denial - renounce self	No
2. Separation - sacrifice life to Christ's cross	No
3. Servanthood - no allegiance to Christ's commands	No
4. Stewardship - receive true ownership	No

Now, the positive:

Apostle Paul		
True conviction?	Rom. 3:10+23	sinner
True submission?	Rom. 10	Lord

Look at Phil. 3.

1. Self-denial -- Paul renounced self? V. 3-7
2. Servanthood? Paul's unquestionable allegiance to Christ?
V. 8-9
3. Separation - Paul turned to Christ and the cross? V. 10-11
4. Stewardship? Paul became a true owner? V. 12-14

Jesus Christ said to get to heaven, be My disciple and defined discipleship as forsaking all to follow Christ.