

Being a Disciple

“Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace. So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:25-33).

Have you given thought to the cost of discipleship, or even what it means to be a disciple? A disciple is, “lit., ‘a learner’ (from manthano, ‘to learn,’ from a root math---, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor), in contrast to didaskalos, ‘a teacher;’ hence it denotes ‘one who follows one's teaching” (Vine’s). As we see a contrast between the teacher and the disciple, it behooves us to ask the question, “As a Christian, do I accept the position of a disciple, or do I attempt to be the teacher of my own salvation?”

Throughout the scriptures, we can read of individuals who attempted to do the latter, i.e., they became the source and provider of their religion. On a number of occasions, the Apostle Paul spoke of such individuals, saying, “because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things” (Romans 1:21-23), and again, “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:2-3).

When Jesus was among his people, “And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things” (Mark 6:34), he

would have taught them, as he did when he taught on the mount, “as one having authority, and not as their scribes” (Matthew 7:29).

When the Lord told the apostles, “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” He did so based upon the premise, “All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18-19).

Remember the words of the Lord, saying, “If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples” (John 8:31). Are you “truly” a disciple of Jesus Christ? When you count the cost, you will readily understand you cannot afford NOT to be a disciple, i.e., heaven or hell, your choice. ret