

- I) V34-38 INTRO: AND: When He had called *the people* to Him *with* His disciples also He said to *them*
 - a) As we begin, Jesus is calling people out of the world, that they might become His disciples
 - 1) This is not a call to only the apostles, but notice it is for all people

- II) SOMETHING INTERESTING: The word disciple is the common word for Christian
 - a) IN THE NT: Disciple is used 29 times, disciples is used 243 times for a total of 272 times
 - 1) FACT: *Christian* is only used 2 times, *Christians* once, *believer* once, *believers* three times

- III) THE POINT IS: Jesus is calling people to become His *disciples*, not religious people
 - a) DEFINITION: A disciple is one who learns and follows, for a lifetime
 - 1) KEY: There is no such thing as a *part time* follower of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - 2) POINT: God is calling us to permanently follow Him without looking back!
 - 3) Lu 9:62 (Jesus said) No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

- IV) IN THIS PASSAGE: Jesus is calling people to follow Him as His disciples
 - a) A crowd is forming, and to the crowd He gives an invitation for them to follow Him
 - 1) I find it interesting how He reacts to a crowd: notice, He does not soften His requirements
 - 2) NOTICE: Instead of simply welcoming them in, He actually challenges them

- V) *QUESTION*: Why would He do such a thing, knowing that the majority would refuse to follow Him
 - a) This is because He is not interested in men in *quantity* He is interested in men of *quality*
 - 1) THE FACT IS: An appeal to self-interest always attracts the wrong kind of follower
 - 2) By nature, we are already consumers in our mentality, and must learn to be servants of God

- VI) JESUS IMPOSED THESE KINDS OF TERMS: Because He desires *disciples*, not groupies
 - a) Discipleship carries a cost that is paid by the one following after the Lord
 - 1) JUST READING THE BIBLE REVEALS: The road of following the Lord is paved with difficulties
 - 2) STILL: The cost for *refusing* to follow Him is much higher

- VII) JESUS: Is issuing a challenge for people everywhere to become His followers, His disciples
 - a) He makes it very clear that there is definitely a cost involved in following Him
 - 1) DISCIPLES: Decide to follow a teacher, memorize his words, learn his way of ministry, imitate his life and character, and raise up your own disciples

- VIII) V34 WHOEVER: Desires to come after Me let him *deny* himself and *take up* his cross and *follow* Me
 - a) *FIRST*: His invitation is to *anyone* and to *everyone* willing to hear His voice
 - 1) Is 45:22 Look to Me, and be saved, *all you ends of the earth!*
 - 2) 1 Ti 2:4 (God) desires *all men* to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - 3) 2 Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness...

- IX) *SECOND*: He says If anyone *desires to come after Me*
 - a) *DESIRES*: To delight in; resolve, purpose; to be fond of or have pleasure in
 - 1) If anyone resolves to follow Me, let him follow after Me
 - 2) POINT: Jesus makes it clear that following Him is a *voluntary act of the will*
 - 3) REMEMBER: A disciple is somebody who decides to follow a teacher

- I) KEY: He is not forcing people to follow Him, but *inviting* them to follow Him

- a) We have already seen this in His early ministry
 - 1) Mk 1:16-18 And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men". They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

- II) THOUGH GOD DESIRES *ALL* TO COME TO HIM: Not everybody sees the need to do so
 - a) Some just do not see it as being necessary: life is too good for them to contemplate eternity
 - 1) Job 21:7-15 Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power? They see their children established around them, their offspring before their eyes. Their homes are safe and free from fear; the rod of God is not upon them. Their bulls never fail to breed; their cows calve and do not miscarry. They send forth their children as a flock; their little ones dance about. They sing to the music of tambourine and harp; they make merry to the sound of the flute. They spend their years in prosperity and go down to the grave in peace. Yet they say to God, "Leave us alone! We have no desire to know your ways. Who is the Almighty that we should serve him? What would we gain by praying to him?"
 - 2) Jn 1:11-12 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

- III) SOMETIMES: Something may speak to us so powerfully that we respond to it *emotionally*
 - a) It can happen after an especially powerful time of worship, or after a great message
 - 1) FACT: This is often the goal of many sermons: To move people emotionally
 - 2) YET: Jesus refused to accept such shallow responses
 - 3) WHY: Because He knew the enthusiasm would die when tested

- IV) HIS MESSAGE: If anyone desires to follow Him, is an invitation to respond in a certain way
 - a) Jesus says: Let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Him
 - 1) THE FACT IS: Great leaders often challenge people to greatness
 - 2) Jesus did not come to make life easy but to make men great, in Him

- V) HOW DO YOU BECOME A DISCIPLE: Jesus says you must *deny yourself*
 - a) It includes forsaking your own attempts to save yourself
 - 1) To deny yourself is to put Jesus first and to seek to do His will in everything
 - 2) Ps 27:8 When You said, Seek My face, My heart said to You, Your face, LORD, I will seek.

- VI) ALSO: To *deny yourself* speaks of no longer serving your own interests; to *forget yourself*
 - a) If a person will be a follower of Jesus, they say no to their own desires and yes to Him
 - 1) It is learning to care about other people, serving them without a desire for reward
 - 2) Phil 2:3-4 *Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

- VII) SECOND: Jesus says to those who are listening to Him *Take up your cross*
 - a) The crowd immediately pictured a man carrying a cross on a death march
 - 1) POINT: To follow Jesus is costly, and all who follow Him will experience hardships
 - 2) Carrying a cross was done openly, and was a shameful march that led to death
 - 3) Amy Carmichael: *As the Master shall the servant be*, and pierced are the feet that follow Me

- I) THIS: Was true in the life of the Apostle Paul
 - a) Paul made it clear that suffering was part of the cost of being a disciple of Jesus

- 1) Ac 14:22 We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.
 - 2) IT HAS BEEN SAID: A faith that costs nothing is worth nothing
- II) MANY OF US: Saw the Movie Passion of the Christ
- a) In the movie, we saw a dramatization of the scourging of Jesus
 - 1) In his ministry life, Paul was beaten like that five times
 - 2) 2 Co 11:24 From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one.
- III) THIRD: And follow *Me*
- a) Jesus is the One we look to as our Chief Shepherd, pursuing Him as we live
 - 1) Jn 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.
 - 2) Jn 12:26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.
- IV) TO BE A FOLLOWER: Also means to yield up the direction of your life to Jesus
- a) Instead of plotting your own course, you begin following His lead in your life
 - 1) This would speak of a life of submission to Jesus
 - 2) Mt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven
- V) V35 FOR: Whoever desires to save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for My sake
- a) FACT: If you desire to live in eternity, you have to die to your own desires now
 - 1) Die to your selfish desire to rule: Learn to serve God and let go of trying to be in control
- VI) V36-37 WHAT WILL A MAN GIVE *IN EXCHANGE* FOR HIS SOUL
- a) KEY: Notice how Jesus draws the comparison from what we would call commercial life
 - 1) He uses words like profit, gains, loses, exchanges, which are all commercial terms
- VII) WHAT IS THE COMPARISON: He compares temporary gain versus eternal life
- a) POINT: To seek after that which cannot fulfill nor last is an absolutely foolish investment
 - 1) Ps 49:5-10 Why should I fear when evil days come, when wicked deceivers surround me-- those who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches? No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him-- the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough-- that he should live on forever and not see decay. For all can see that wise men die; the foolish and the senseless alike perish and leave their wealth to others.
 - 2) Mt 6:19-20 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.
 - 3) Mt 6:31-33 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well
- VIII) V38 FOR: Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation
- a) Closet Christianity is not encouraged: open acknowledgment of Jesus demonstrates salvation
 - 1) In the final judgment, Jesus will deny him entrance into His kingdom, turning away from him