

Sunday, September 15, 2013
THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP
Matthew 16:21-25

Jesus came to build a body...a church...a spiritual community. Far from being a comfortable club existing entirely for the benefits of its members, the church is to be God's agent for the healing of the whole of creation.

Luke 9:57-58 – *As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.”* ⁵⁸ *Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”*

Jesus calls people to put their whole trust in God and not in the uncertain riches of this world. *This is where faith appears – and resides.*

Faith is the essence of all true discipleship. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). *This is the beginning of discipleship.*

Unless a Christian learns to trust and obey, discipleship is impossible.

I. Discipleship Begins in Obedience

Acts 4:19-20 - *But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! 20 As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”*

Acts 5:29 - *Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings!*

The call of Jesus to His disciples was a call of LOVE – a love tested by OBEDIENCE: Obedience to His WORD.

II. The Path of Discipleship

The Path of Discipleship involves the necessity of FAITH

Ephesians 2:8-9 - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Although God's gifts are given by grace, they are received through faith. Faith is the open hand by which we take what God offers us.

Faith which is able to receive God's grace will be proven by obedience to God's Word. Without obedience there is no faith.

Hebrews 11:8 - *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

John says in his gospel that the opposite of believing Jesus is disobeying Him.

John 3:36 - *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Faith is always accompanied by obedience.

John Calvin:

“While it is faith alone that justifies, the faith that justifies is never alone.”

III. The Demand of Discipleship

When we become true disciples of Jesus Christ, our old self has died. We have said with Christ, “Not my will but Thine be done.” (Luke 22:42)

II Corinthians 5:14-21 - *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: ¹⁵ And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. ¹⁶ Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. ¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. ¹⁸ And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. ²¹ For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

At the heart of any self-denial is not just a determination to do away with the old self but also a determination to do the will of God.

Everything must be put under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, to the glory of God!

Jesus had one supreme concern during His earthly ministry – glorify the Father. Those are His terms for discipleship today.