

## Disciples

### Scripture Reading: Luke 14.15-35

Key Verse: Lu 6:40 "*A disciple is not above his teacher*"

Do you want to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? Are you sure about that? Well let's see what the Bible has to teach us about discipleship then ask yourself again at the end of this session.

#### The Meaning of Discipleship.

The name 'disciple' is found only in the four Gospels, and in the earlier part of Acts. It was then replaced by the words 'apostle' and 'Christian' for other believers. Nevertheless, Jesus' use of the image of a disciple is valuable to us in learning the truths he taught. Disciple was a word well used and understood in the day in which Jesus lived. A disciple is a learner, a pupil, one who is under the instruction and discipline of a master. Is the word 'disciple' a title of office, or is it a metaphor describing relationship? It is both, as we shall see.

#### The Objective of Discipleship

Luke 6:40 *A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher.* RSV  
Here is a recurring theme in the teaching of Jesus. It was probably a proverb in currency in His day which he used to teach several important points. (This is in itself a lesson to us to use familiar objects as illustrations and objects of teaching.) The first is that our aim must be to be like Jesus in our ministry to this needy world. We may never achieve this aim fully, but if we are disciples we ought to be constantly moving in this direction. We should seek to adopt His attitudes, His aims and His principles of ministry if we are to be like Him in this aspect. He is our role model.

#### The Fellowship of Discipleship

Matthew 10:24&25 *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.* Jesus, his motives and his methods were misunderstood. People explained them in terms they knew. We must be prepared to be misunderstood too.

John 13.15&16 *For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say to you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.* Jesus gave this instruction as he washed the feet of the disciples. It was a demonstration of humility and submission which Jesus expected them to also adopt as a principle in leadership and ministry.

John 15.20. *Remember the word that I said to you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.* This is part of the 'as-so' principle of John in 6.57, 15.9, 20.21; and like verses. Our union with God in Christ will only be true as we prayerfully open our hearts and lives to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and so are conformed to Jesus' image.

#### The Conditions of Discipleship

Lu 14:26 *If any one come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*  
'Come' here means to 'come to' and 'follow'. 'To' is *Pros* 'unto'; or 'with'. 'Hate' in this context means 'to love less' or to 'esteem less.' and must be seen in the context of the parable Jesus told of a banquet of invited guests who found more important pursuits and they were replaced by the beggars of society. A student who is not so motivated to learn that he does not attend his teacher's instruction is no student. They will be dropped from the class. Compare Matthew 10.34-38.

Lu 14:27 *And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.* This 'cross' does not mean the share of troubles and problems that come to us all in life, but rather to take up the cross of Jesus means to voluntarily share His reproach and suffering and if need be death, and to do it for his sake. Read also Luke 6.22. People of this world are driven by different values.

Lu 14:33 *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsake not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple.* There is a cost to discipleship. Does this text mean that I must abandon my claim to all that I have? Yes that is exactly what it does mean. There are two legal words for dealing with our things, 'possession' and 'property'. We have possession of our goods, but the Lord has the property. We are the users, but he is the owner. As His servants He

can direct us to use His property in any way that He wishes.

Again, economists talk of 'opportunity cost' which means that we can only invest in one thing at the expense of another. In the terms of discipleship, we can not spend our lives just pleasing ourselves and following Jesus too. There is room for only one or the other.

Look up Luke 9.57-62. Of these three men the first on hearing the terms of discipleship melted away. We never hear of him again. The others found some more pressing task at home. It was simply an excuse to put off the call they had received, not the meeting of a genuine family need. The interpretation of the incidents derive from their context.

#### The Rewards of Discipleship

Mt 10:41&42 . . . *whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.* Jesus is teaching here that there will one day be reward and recognition of the nature, level, degree and cost to the disciple for his service to the Lord. (See v41)

**Applying Discipleship Today.** Read Matthew 10.1 to 11.1. This is a passage which contains the instructions which Jesus gave to the twelve disciples as he sent them out, two by two, to minister as He did. As you read:

1. Make a list of the instructions which applied specifically to them.
2. Make a list of the principles of discipleship which apply to us all.  
This list will be a good starting point to your discipleship.

## Welcome

### Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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