

Luke 14:25-33

Discipleship

***Luke 14:25, 26** Great crowds accompanied Jesus and he turned and said to them, “if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”

A great crowd accompanied Jesus. They were with him but there is a difference from doing that to following him as his disciple. Jesus makes it clear what is required to be one of his disciples.

Disciple – Learner, student and follower. We are learning so we can follow. It is not just about amassing knowledge.

In these Scriptures Jesus says three times “cannot be my disciple” in connection with something we have to do or we cannot follow Jesus.

Jesus said you cannot be my disciple. You can be someone else’s disciple but you cannot be Jesus’ disciple.

The Pharisee’s had disciples

The Pharisee’s:

1. Loved the best seats
2. Loved praise of themselves in the streets
3. Left certain things of the Word of God undone

4. Not only did not want to take up their cross and follow Jesus but some of them worked hard to see Jesus carrying his cross to death.

You would know disciples followed a particular teacher because of what they taught and did.

To be a disciple in biblical times meant you walked with your teacher, ate with your teacher, lived with your teacher, studied with your teacher. Your life was connected to and revolved around your teacher.

Hate your closet relations. This is a strong statement. Jesus said many strong and difficult things during his ministry. What does it really mean? Is Jesus commanding us to hate?

Matthew 22:36-40 – Love God with all you are, and love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. All the Law and Prophets depend on these two commandments. They both deal with love and relationships. Life is about relationships; relationships with God and people, and the relationships we have with them should involve love. The two greatest commandments have to do with love.

Mezuzah is a metal or wooden case that is attached to the outside door frame and houses scriptures of which one is Deuteronomy 6:4, 5. They touch their lips, then the Mezuzah and then place their hand over their heart. It is a reminder when they go out and when they come in to love God supremely and obey his commandments.

Leviticus 19:17, 18 – You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

It is clear that Jesus taught us that we should love, so what does he mean that we should hate the relations he listed?

I believe Jesus is saying that in comparison to our love for him, the love that we have for all other relationships seems like hate. We are to have a high love for God. Our highest love should be for God. We are not commanded to love our wives, husbands, children, fathers and mothers with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength. Only God deserves that highest love.

We are to love these humanly relations as much as we love ourselves.

1. If we do not love God above all relationships we cannot be his disciple.

There may be times when we are loving God in this way and then times when we are not. But to follow him as his disciple we must consistently love him in this manner.

***Luke 14:27** Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Jesus spoke this as if all who heard him would understand what he was talking about.

This was before Jesus carried his own cross to Calvary and died. The people he was talking to understood about the cross even though at this time it did not have a connection to the Messiah like it does today.

Psalm 22: For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet, I can count all my bones, they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

The Old Testament did refer to the Messiah dying on a cross but Jews did not catch that or understand it. They thought the Messiah would come and defeat their enemies and rule among them.

What did Jesus mean when he told them bear his own cross and come after him?

In Jesus day the Romans form of capital punishment was crucifixion. It was a slow and painful way to die. It was done in a public place and the crimes of the person being crucified was hung above their head. Sometimes it would take several days for the one being crucified to die. It was done this way as a deterrent for crime.

The person being sentenced to death would usually carry the cross bar of their cross to the place where they would be crucified. In Jesus day when you saw someone carrying a cross you knew they were going to die. Carrying the cross was the end for them because they would be dead in a few days.

“To take up the cross means to renounce selfish ambition; it is a death to a whole way of life.”

The Reformation Study Bible

The person in the time of Jesus who carried his cross could no longer do as they pleased; they were under the authority and control of the Roman government. It was a forced submission to the authority and control of the Roman government.

1 Corinthians 6:19 – Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

We should submit to the authority and control of God and his Spirit.

When the criminal carried his cross it was all about death.

When a disciple of Christ carries their cross it is about death and life. It is death to the old way and living daily in the life of Christ.

How can we bear our cross and come after Jesus and follow him if we have desires or ambitions to do something else or to go in the opposite direction from him.

Luke 9:23- 24 – And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”

To pick up the cross you have to humble yourself and bend down.

It is also not a onetime thing but it is a conscious decision that we should make every day. We must daily deny ourselves, our selfish ambitions and desires and daily put to death that way of life so we can follow Jesus as his disciple.

Matthew 10:38 – “Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”

For a Christian to carry their cross is not the end but the beginning. It is the beginning of being a disciple of Jesus. It is a death to selfish ambitions and a submission to God. Jesus said “bear your own cross and come after me.” This is the beginning of something that continues on and on.

Take up your cross and come after me the rest of your life.

Our cross is not a literal cross that we carry in our hands and on our backs but it is seen in what we do, say, how we treat people and how we live.

2. If we do not bear our cross renouncing our selfish ambition and come after Jesus we cannot be his disciple.

Luke 14:33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

We must sit down and count the cost of following Jesus as his disciple. It is not a quick decision. It is a careful and unhurried process. Much thought is put into it.

Renounce here can mean to detach himself, leave, abandon, give up, give away, bid farewell, say adieu, set apart, forsake, take leave of, send away, departing, dismissing

All that we have belongs to God

All that we have was given to us by God

Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell all that he had and give to the poor and he would have treasure in heaven and come and follow him. To give away every last cent in the Scriptures is not the norm.

We need things to live on. There will be times when Jesus tells us to sell things and give it away or give away something that we have. We cannot let things supersede our relationship with God. We must love God above all. We must pursue God above all.

For me this means that we are manager's or stewards of what we have. It belongs to God but he has entrusted us with it, and put it in our hands.

This verse means that we should live life open handed, allowing God to put in and take out when he desires. We should not live with closed fists concerning what God has given us. We should not be greedy or selfish. If we live with closed fists nothing can be put in and nothing can be taken out.

“In that forsaking lies the key to the whole passage. Christian discipleship is founded in self-renunciation.” Vincent’s Word Studies

If God truly has control of all that we are then he truly has control of all that is in our hands.

3. If we do not renounce all that we have we cannot be his disciple.

Conclusion

To be disciples of Jesus

We need to remind ourselves daily about these three points of Jesus concerning discipleship. We need our own mental Mezuzah concerning these points.

1. We cannot love others above God. We cannot love ourselves above God.

We need to confess daily to God that he is the most important relationship in our lives.

This will help us keep our relationships in the right priority. When other relationships become more important than God, those relationships will suffer along with our fellowship with God.

2. We cannot love our ways above God’s ways

“Your will kingdom come, your will be done.” Matthew 6:10

We need to daily get on our knees and pray to God saying your will be done in my life.

We need to daily submit to God's rule and authority and ask him to guide us in decisions of that day. We need to read the Bible daily for it will fill our minds with the will of God.

We already have the will of man in our minds.

3. We cannot love things above God

We need to daily remind ourselves that what we have belongs to God, and that he has the right to tell us how to use it. We are only managers and stewards of it. We should pray for leadership on how to use what he has given us. We should be alert to urgent needs around us, and have an open and willing heart to allow God to guide us concerning how to use the possessions in our hands.