

“Discipleship 101” - Mark 8:34-38, 9:1 (also in Matthew 16: 24-28 and Luke 9:23-27)

TODAY we mark the words of Jesus in Mark 8:34 where he says: **“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”**

- 34 And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross [*Luke: “daily”*], and follow Me.
- 35 "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospels shall save it.
- 36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?
- 37 "For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? [*i.e. to “buy back,” once lost*]
- 38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." [*Matthew adds: “and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.”*]

This is “Discipleship 101” – the clear basic principles of being a follower and student of Jesus Christ. As it says in v. 32: “He was stating the matter plainly.” Now that Jesus had the disciples believing that He was the Divine Anointed One come to save the world, He must begin “course correction”. This began with plainly stating that He was going to die and leave (resurrect). (v. 31). It continues over the course of His final year of life. Next, in our text today, He plainly states what it will take to be a fully devoted follower. There is no clearer description of discipleship anywhere in the Scriptures. All 3 synoptic gospels record these words of Jesus in their account.

“If anyone wishes...” This is a matter of desire and will – a CHOICE, not a demand. Jesus offers – just like the other gracious offers of God in Scripture:

Isaiah 55:1 Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”

Matthew 11: 28-30 Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My load is light.

Revelation 3:20 Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

Clearly it is God's will and desire for you and I to be a devoted disciple of Jesus – but He does not command or insist. He offers and instructs.

"...To come after Me" "After" speaks of the tradition of disciples to literally follow behind their rabbi as He walked. This implies "to be like me" in character and behavior. Not just... to KNOW ABOUT or BELIEVE, but complete SURRENDER

THE 3 STEPS TO DISCIPLESHIP ("101")

1. Deny myself
2. Take up my (own) cross (daily)
3. Follow Jesus

General Observations

1. This is blatant honesty – not "sugarcoating" the cost of discipleship
2. This is challenge by example - This is the first mention of "cross" in the Gospel account and points to Jesus' ultimate fate. It also points to the reality many of the disciples would face in their personal martyrdom.
3. This is against the tide of worldly wisdom, which says "it's all about doing what's right for me, and avoiding confrontation and what might be uncomfortable

Specific Observations

1. DENYING MYSELF = saying "no" to self-indulgence

Luke 14:33... whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple

1. Not my pleasure, but Christ's pleasure
2. Not my control, but Christ's control
3. Not giving in to evil temptations but embracing victory over them

2. TAKING UP MY CROSS

1 Peter 2:21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

a. Shouldering my burdens willingly

Galatians 6:5 For each one shall bear his own load.

b. Shouldering my burdens cheerfully

Philippians 4:11... I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any

and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Shouldering my burdens purposefully

James 1:3 Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

3. PRINCIPLES OF JESUS TO FOLLOW (here are 12 from Matthew's gospel)

John 15:8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

1. **SEEK WHAT IS RIGHT** *Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Matthew 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.*
2. **BE VISIBLE FOR GOD** *Matthew 5:16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*
3. **LOVE YOUR ENEMIES** *Matthew 5:44 ... I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.*
4. **MAKE HEAVENLY THINGS YOUR TREASURE** *Matthew 6:19-21 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal, for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.*
5. **TRUST - DON'T BE ANXIOUS** *Matthew 6:34 Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*
6. **"DO UNTO OTHERS" – THE GOLDEN RULE** *Matthew 7:12... Whatever you want others to do for you, do so for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*
7. **BE ACTIVE IN THE HARVEST** *Matthew 9:37-38 The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.*
8. **CONFRONT SIN** *Matthew 18:15-17... If your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take on or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.*
9. **FORGIVE UNCONDITIONALLY** *Matthew 18:21-22... Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven..."*
10. **HONOR MARRIAGE VOWS** *Matthew 19:6... [A man and his wife] are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.*

11. **BE A SERVANT** Matthew 20:27-28 . . . Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.
12. **LOVE GOD PASSIONATELY** Matthew 22:37-39 . . . You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment.

Song: "Get to be Redeemed"

V. 35-38 MY SOUL – My most precious personal possession

1. **It can be SAVED** (v. 35)
 - a. by giving it up for Jesus
 - b. by giving it up for the Gospel
2. **It can be LOST** (v. 36)
 - a. by keeping it for self
 - b. by gaining the world
3. **It cannot be BOUGHT BACK** (v. 37)

Once lost – it is gone forever; it's worth is the blood of Jesus
4. **It will be JUDGED** (v. 38)
 - a. by my relationship to Jesus (Mark 8:38)
 - b. by my deeds in life (Matt. 16:27)

Invitation