

Salvation and Discipleship

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Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.** And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Luke 23:35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

Luke 23:36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

Luke 23:37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

Luke 23:38 And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, **THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

Luke 23:39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

Luke 23:40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

Luke 23:41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

Luke 23:42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, **Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.**

Luke 14:26 **If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.**

Luke 14:27 **And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.**

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;**

Discipleship to Jesus Christ is a lost concept among many professed Christians today. In fact, it may be a very neglected subject among teachers in this era. The reason I believe this has happened is that bible teachers have a hard time reconciling discipleship with the way a lot of professed Christians are living today. This failure to reconcile the reality of Christian behavior with the principles and demands of discipleship though, is simply because so few Christians today are true disciples.

We find that the bible teaches a truth about salvation and a life of service to Christ that are two distinctly different things. To bear this out, I call to witness the very history of the Israelites from their escape from Egypt to their arrival at the promised land. To see how this shadows or types the lives of some believers, we only need to follow their history. All were snatched out of Egypt; this is symbolic of being saved from the slavery of sin. But not all made it to the promised land; this is symbolic of the failure on the part of the people of God to attain to a level of dedication to Christ where they are in unity with His purposes and can truly enjoy His blessings without them being clouded with disobedience or lack of submission and the displeasure and chastening of God that goes along with such behavior. So it goes with God's people always.

This morning, I want to look the reality of salvation and discipleship in perspective. Let each of us who are saved by God's grace realize the difference. Let each of us who are saved be provoked by the truth to get our lives of service in order regarding discipleship.

I. Salvation Is Not Discipleship

- ❖ (re-read the words of the thief on the cross and Jesus' answer - **Luke 23:39-43**) - Explain that this becomes a type of the experience of salvation of every believer
- ❖ As candidates for salvation we are found to be under judgment and sentenced to die for our sins (thief is receiving the death sentence on the cross) vv. 40-part of 41
- ❖ We are immobilized by our condition (thief couldn't get off his cross)
- ❖ By the gift of the new birth which opens our understanding we are compelled to cry out to the Lord for favor (it is in our state of being under a death sentence that we are given the ability to see our need)- v. 42
- ❖ Without being obligated by us at all, our Lord answers our request (Christ was not obligated to answer the thief)
- ❖ We are freely forgiven of our sin and we are saved from eternal death (Christ acts of His own divine prerogative in saving us from death - today...in paradise-v.43).
- ❖ Note, last, that this thief was never one of Christ's disciples in his life before he was hung on that cross - salvation is not discipleship

II. Being A Disciple

- ❖ Discipleship is a volitional or conscious commitment by believers to be a student and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - To understand the demands Christ puts on being a disciple, we need to be clear on the context of the statement in **Luke 14:26-27**
 - This was addressed to a multitude who followed Christ in such a way that He understood that they were attracted by the novelty of who He was and what He was doing (**Luke 14:25** And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them....)
- ❖ So, it contains a message to two types of would-be disciples; those who may be raw material for true discipleship, and those who are drawn by excitement, novelty, or some other attractant.
 - The two messages about discipleship are the same to both groups. That message is:
 - You must put things that are dearest to you second on your list of priorities - **Luke 14:26** *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*
 - This statement is clearly explained in **Mat. 10:37** *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*
 - This obviously means that things that are second, third, etc. fall even lower on the list
 - We must bear OUR cross: what does this bearing of OUR own cross mean?
 - A number of burdensome things might come out of re-prioritizing our lives
 - Looking at the examples of what things are moved down on the list, we can guess at some repercussions that might happen:
 - You could be rejected by your family and/or friends (the cross of family rejection)

- You could be criticized by your own community (the cross of community rejection)
- You could lose some assistance from people who could help you in hard emotional or financial times (the cross of true emotional or financial need)
- You could be left to yourself, socially which could make you lonely (the cross of loneliness)
- You could lose your job - this would be associated with hating your own life - (the cross of true poverty and lack of resources)
- Bearing YOUR cross also can mean MORE than just the kind of family and social suffering that is likely to come from putting Christ at the top of your priority list. It means also making a commitment of allegiance to Him that equals a "martyr spirit."
 - **Luke 14:26** *If any man come to me...and hate not his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*
- If you will not bear YOUR cross **and follow Him**, you **cannot be His disciple** - what is the sense of this warning?
 - When it comes to a place in your life where we have to make a choice between having one of these things higher on the priority list than following the Lord, and we make the choice to put it up there, we put being His disciple on hold
 - When one of your "life things" is **kept higher on the priority list** than following Jesus, you cannot be His disciple.
- ❖ Now, we need to understand the context of the statement in **John 8:31**: *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*
 - There was a group of Jews present, among which Jesus knew were some true believers. These Jews were fanatically concerned with keeping commandments. Keeping the letter of the law was the most important aspect of what they did in their service to God, because within the commandments they had all the rules about moral behavior and worship.
 - Jesus clarified what they were to be obeying. In clarifying it, He pointed them, not to the written laws and statutes, but to Himself and His words.
- ❖ What does this teach us about really being His disciples?
 - When looking for answers to questions of life, we are to follow the guidance of Christ in opposition to worldly, or any other, advice.
 - Job had it right: (**Job 23:12**) Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*.
 - This following of, or continuing in, His word is to be ongoing
 - This "ongoing" is rarely if ever unbroken (and the Lord understood that); but it is a trend of life we are to have
 - Christ has put an "If" in this statement for a purpose
 - There was no question about their belief in him...the issue was, how were they going to be His disciples
 - The antithesis of how that would be = **If you do not** follow the trend of making the words of Christ the law of the land in your life, you cannot be His disciple.

III. Conclusion

- ❖ Even if you are saved, if you do not put Christ at the top of your priority list, you are not a true disciple
- ❖ Even if you are saved, if you do not continue in the words of Christ, you are not a true disciple.
- ❖ The thief on the cross made it to heaven, but he was not a disciple of the Lord Jesus during

His life. Will this be the case of many born again believers?

- ❖ There will be many in the day of judgment that will have claimed to have been His disciples who will present a lot of things they did in His name. He will tell them to depart because He never knew them (**Mat. 7:22-23**).
- ❖ If you place other life priorities first (ahead of Jesus Christ), you won't have any evidence of discipleship. But the real question is: will you possess any evidence in your soul that you are a true believer? .
- ❖ Mat. 10:25 Jesus: **“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master....”**