

Matthew 16:24
TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

- I. The concept.
 - A. Discipleship is “come after me.”
 - 1. First, a disciple is a pupil who learns from a teacher by listening and watching.
 - 2. Second, a disciple is an adherent.
 - B. A disciple “of Jesus.”
 - 1. To come after Jesus (Savior) is to declare that I need Him to save me because of my sins and sinfulness.
 - 2. To follow Jesus is to admit that we are nothing of ourselves.
- II. The characteristics.
 - A. “Let him deny himself,” i.e., be willing to make oneself nothing.
 - 1. It is putting to death self-importance, self-absorption, self-satisfaction, self-centeredness (Lk. 14:26,33; Gal. 5:24).
 - 2. But it is never to end in itself - it must always lead an equal measure of living unto Him who died for me (II Cor. 5:15).
 - 3. Self-denial is universal, and perpetual.
 - B. “Take up his cross” (six times in gospel narratives).
 - 1. Our “cross” means suffering, pain and even dying (hurt, but not in the sense of atoning).
 - 2. Most important is to see that this is an intentional act which distinguishes Christ’s followers from the world.
 - C. “Follow Me.”
 - 1. This refers to coming behind Jesus in the sense of accompanying Him.
 - 2. Peter was going to lead (22), but Jesus told him to get behind Him, Satan.
- III. There is great blessedness in this, in spite of what it appears to be.
 - A. To follow Jesus does mean self-denial and a cross and blind following, but it more than that!!
 - B. Gain the perspective that our suffering is a part of His wonderful, loving care of us.
 - 1. Knowing that we have a place in glory encourages us as we suffer now.
 - 2. As Christ’s humiliation led to His exaltation unto everlasting life (Phil. 2:8-11), so will ours (Luke 18:29,30).