

# *MATTHEW 8:18 – 23*

## *THE COST OF BEING A TRUE DISCIPLE*

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When Jesus saw the multitudes around the house, He gave the order to depart to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

*Mt. 8:18*

*18 And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side.*

Why would He leave such a crowd? Isn't this what all of us should want, more people to follow Jesus? It almost seems counter-intuitive that anyone sharing the Gospel would leave a crowd when that crowd seems to want more. But Jesus knows the mind of fallen man. He knows that the Word that has been sown in the hearts of the crowd will sift through them and separate the serious from the curious.

We will see the word disciple used a great deal from now on, and we need to define it carefully. At this point, the word "disciple" has a rather loose definition. As with any start-up, there is a period where people are trying to "feel out" and watch to see how things are going to work. There is a sort of mental assent to following Jesus. And there is nothing wrong with that. There is nothing different here in the eighth chapter of Matthew.

Because we are dealing with people, people from various Judaic and even Gentile backgrounds, those in the crowd are at various stages of belief/ non-belief when it comes to what Jesus said. After all, in many ways He has just turned the religious world on its head. The Sermon on the Mount gave the people a great deal on which to chew. Many of the people are thinking through things... and that is a good thing. Jesus has much to say when it comes to counting the cost of our actions and planning what lies ahead. It is because of this that He decided to get into the boat and leave the crowd behind. He determined to let the Word do its work. His ministry was based out of

Capernaum. He would be back soon enough and those who sincerely chose to follow Him would still be there when He returned.

But some of the very mind-sets from which He is attempting to leave behind catch Him before He is able to get into the boat and cast off from the shore.

*19 Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."*

*20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*

- "Can we get into the boat also?"
- "Teacher, I will follow you!"
- Was Jesus homeless? No.
- **2 Sam. 15: 19 – 22**

**19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. 20 In fact, you came only yesterday. Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where? Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you."**

**21 But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be."**

**22 So David said to Ittai, "Go, and cross over." Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men and all the little ones who were with him crossed over.**

In contrast:

**LK 22: 33,34**

**33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."**

**34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."**

- Impulse buying
- Over-eager, not counting the cost. Jesus' type of ministry was not the one in which the scribe was accustomed.

*21 Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."*

*22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."*

- Disciple – a loose definition.
- As opposed to the scribe, this man has a reserved, hesitant commitment.
- "Let the dead bury the dead?" Who were the dead?
- There were professionals that took care of such things, especially the second burial which would have been about a year after the initial burial. (explain)

**Luke 14: 25 -33**

**25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.**

- Let's look at the word, "hate" for a second.
- God loved Jacob but "hated Esau. (Mal. 1:3) But in Gen. 33 we see that God greatly blessed Esau.
- Jacob is said to have hated his wife, Leah, but it becomes clear, in the greater context that Jacob simply loved Rachel more. (Gen. 29:30,31)
- **The word "hate" in these instances carries the connotation of second best.**
- **So, for the disciple, one's love for their parents and other family members should not eclipse the love they are to have for Jesus. All other relationships are to be "second best" compared to the one we have with our Savior.**

**Luke 9: 57-62**

57 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."

58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me."

But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house."

62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

- How can you plow a straight furrow if you are looking behind you?
- Preaching the kingdom requires full and urgent commitment.
- To some extent, they are dropping like flies.

23 *Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.*

- Some followed, other didn't. Some waited on His return, others went on with their lives.
- Jesus didn't turn either of these men away. He didn't refuse them or encourage them. He only asked them if they knew what they really saying.

**"Nothing has done more harm to Christianity than the practice of filling the ranks of Christ's army with every volunteer who is willing to make a little profession, and talk fluently of experience."**

Ryle

**"Nothing was less aimed at by our Lord than to have followers, unless they were genuine and sound; He is as far from desiring this as it would have been easy to attain it."**

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- Are we serious or just curious?
- Once again we come to priorities.
- Have we taken the time to really assess what it means to be a disciple of Christ?
- This isn't like joining a garden club.

- The only thing that will motivate us to totally follow Jesus is our appreciation of His grace and the salvation He has provided for us.
- The only thing that keeps us motivated is the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Sell out for Jesus!**
- **Make that relationship your top priority!**
- **“Jesus pulled no punches when it came to discipleship. He was blunt and crystal-clear about it: following Him is a choice, a choice that requires sacrifice, commitment, and making Him the number one priority of our lives. There is a price involved with being His disciple. He forewarned us, and many professing believers count the cost and decide it is more than they are willing to pay.” (Lk 14:26-33)**

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