

Will You Also Be His Disciples?

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, teachability, and living in the love of God in order to become true disciples of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 6:19, Matthew 10:16, Luke 14:7, Luke 14:15, John 9:27, John 17:21, Romans 8:2, Philippians 2:1, James 1:19, 2 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Discipleship", "Humility"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. preaches on the importance of being true disciples of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the need for humility, teachability, and a heart that is transformed to bear the moral likeness of the Master. He highlights the dangers of pride, self-exaltation, and the love for material possessions that hinder one from fully following Christ. Phil Beach Jr. challenges the congregation to forsake all, take the low place, and serve others unconditionally, seeking only the reward that comes from God. He stresses the necessity of living in the love of God, being moved by this love in all words and deeds, and allowing God's grace to transform hearts into the likeness of Christ.

Transcript

(John 9: 27) Let's consider for a brief time the thought of whether or not we are the Lord's disciples. The man born blind (but just healed by Jesus) was being interrogated by the Jewish religious leaders. They were demanding that he tell them exactly what Jesus had done to him and how he opened his blind eyes. This blessed man responded to them by saying he had already told them what Jesus had done, but they were unable to hear. He then asked them, "Will you also be His disciples".

The Pharisees reviled him and told him that though he may be the disciple of Jesus, they were the disciples of Moses. As we read the story we can see that the anger and resentment of these Pharisees grew more and more evident as they spoke to the humble disciple of Jesus, who simply was telling them of the wonders of his encounter of Jesus of Nazareth. Eventually, they became so angry at this man that they cast him out and wanted nothing to do with him because of his living association with the blessed Son of God.

Beloved, today if the same question were asked of us, would we react as these men did? Perhaps some of us feel quite sure that we already are His disciples and that we have been so for some time. Or maybe we would feel as these Pharisees did when they became offended at this man that they perceived as someone trying to teach them, when in their own eyes, they did not need someone like him to teach them

(John 9: 34). Perhaps it would be best if we refrained from answering the question as to whether or not we are His disciples and allowed God's Word to reveal to us the truth of our own hearts before God.

Let's not assume, dear ones, that we are His disciples, and let's come to God in deep humility asking Him to give us honest hearts before His light and His Word so that we do not resist Him, but in submission, bow to Him. (James 1: 19-22) These Pharisees were deeply offended at the thought that they needed to be taught, especially by this man that they perceived to be a sinner and much less spiritual than themselves. Because of this heart condition, they were unable to receive anything this man said to them.

This attitude may lurk in our hearts as well. Whenever we believe that we are instructors of others, and no longer see ourselves as being mere students and pupils before the Lord and one another, we fall into the trap of Satan and our hearts become blinded by pride. In this state, we reject much of the Lord's dealing in our lives because we are offended at the means that He uses to teach us, including the kinds of people He may use in our lives to make us more like His Son. IMITATION OR TRANSFORMATION Let's look now and see some of the conditions that Jesus places upon those who would become His disciples.

As we have seen, the first and elementary feature of being His disciple is living with a heart that is teachable before Him and others and not quick to defend itself when being corrected, rebuked or humbled by others or the Lord. Some have a spirit of teaching and this is nothing more than the spirit of pride. When a beggar finds bread and shares it with others, it is hardly grounds for this beggar to perceive himself to be some great teacher when he is actually just one beggar telling another beggar about the bread he has found.

If in our hearts, we think of ourselves as more than this, we are falling into the sin of pride and Satan is swallowing us up in his jaws of death. He loves to find proud hearts that think of themselves as great teachers instead of humble believers who long to be true disciples of the Lamb of God. Yes, some may be teachers, but that is only an office they are called to occupy. A great teacher is first a great student--the greater the teacher, the greater student he is. The honest teacher sees himself, not as a great one, but as a humble disciple of the Lord.

Although called to be disciples, or "pupils", the literal meaning of the word "disciple" in the New Testament, connotes far more than simply being a pupil. It means one who accepts and adheres to all the instructions that are given to him by his teacher and makes them the absolute rule of conduct for his entire life. A true disciple takes on the character and lifestyle of his teacher so much that those who see him cannot tell the difference between the pupil and the teacher!

Now, let's again ask ourselves, "Are we His disciples too?" This goes far beyond a mere profession of being called a Christian or far beyond becoming active in a church or being busy in religious activities. The true nature of being a disciple is one of being transformed to bear the moral likeness of the Master and Teacher so much that the life on the inside of the disciple is exactly like the life on the inside of the Master and Teacher. (Mt. 10: 16-26) This is not likeness by imitation, beloved, but likeness by organic oneness.

Organic oneness means having the same kind of life on the inside as He has. One outstanding feature of being like the Master is that we are filled with His love for others. This love is exactly like His love and comes from Him. God's love is filled with forgiveness and kindness and does not become impatient. It never holds grudges against people nor does it resent or become bitter. It does not behave itself in an uncomely manner. God's love is full of longsuffering towards people, patient in trials and forbearing towards the weaknesses and faults of others.

It is never proud, does not boast and never thinks itself to be better than others. God's love does not remember the wrongs done against it. God's love always honors and seeks truth and is never happy or rejoices over evil. God's love is never happy when someone stumbles or falls into some kind of sin. It always seeks to believe for the best, hopes for the best and is filled with faith and trust in God's power to work out all things for His honor and glory. God's love does not fail nor does it ever get tired or weary!

The divine call to become Christ's disciples is not one which allows us to serve Him in the manner that would be pleasing to us. We cannot retain our own ways, likes, and earthly nature, while adjusting them to imitate the teachings of Jesus. This type of imitation gives the appearance that we are like our Master when in fact, on the inside; we are filled with pride, and selfish ambitions, evil thinking and love for our own name and glory. No, dear one, this is not at all what the Lord has in mind.

Being a disciple involves receiving a living faith in a living Christ that enables us to live in the power of the living Holy Spirit who imparts to us the new life of the Son of God. This new life is nurtured by the Word of God and the power of the Spirit of God, as the eyes of our heart are flooded with light from heaven and we are enabled to see the Lord of glory and yield to His every movement. It is in this way that we, then, are changed, on the inside, into His moral likeness!

Peter says that we are actually made, by the new birth, partakers of the divine nature and by this impartation of God's Spirit in us; we can be freed from the law of sin and death that is working in our lives. (John 17: 21, 2 Peter 1: 3-11, Rom. 8: 2) **TAKING THE LOWEST PLACE** Jesus also makes it clear that to be His disciples we must be prepared to take the low place and not exalt ourselves in pride or self-importance, even as our Master humbled himself and did not seek to make a great reputation for himself. (Phil. 2: 1-16) We must see that the highest place we can attain to is at the lowest place, namely at the Master's feet, in brokenness and genuine thankfulness of heart.

Mary wept at the Master's feet, washing his feet with her tears of repentance and gratitude and wiping them with her long hair. She found the highest place to which God has called men of earth and was commended by her Lord for loving that place. A true disciple of the Lord will love the place of worship at His feet springing out of a heart of gratitude for being forgiven from so much sin and delivered from a hell-deserving destiny. Those who hate this highest place are not his disciples and those who rarely visit this place are falling backwards and have become cold in heart and are in danger of being set aside.

Additionally, a disciple of the Master will seek to serve others without any hopes or expectations of being rewarded in this life. (Luke 14: 7-14) This includes not only monetary reward, but also the reward one receives when recognition, appreciation, and honor are bestowed for one's service. Christ's disciples do not seek their reward from men; they do not look to men for approval, praise, or acceptance. They serve, according to the will of God, all those they are sent to, in God's love, unconditionally, and look only for the reward that comes in the age to come--being with their Lord and sharing in His likeness!

FORSAKING ALL TO FOLLOW HIM Another quality of being His disciple is the absence of giving excuses to the Master's call to follow Him and sit at His supper, which speaks of communion with the Lord and living by His life. (Luke 14: 15-33) Disciples understand that they cannot place anything above their Master's desire for them to sit at the supper He has prepared and to commune with Him in prayer, the Word and obeying His every Word. Father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters, and even one's own life, cannot be placed before the heavenly call to be His disciple and if such things are, that will disqualify us from being true disciples.

We may remain quite busy in doing things for the Lord, and even be full time in some ministry but we will not be His disciples. When we are given ears to hear the Spirit of God calling us, we must forsake all that we have or we cannot be His disciples. To forsake all that we have is to place away from ourselves all that we have, all that even God has given to us, so as to prevent them from becoming a part of us and by doing so, divide our heart from being single for the Lord alone!

Now this is quite challenging to us, is it not? Many of us may say that such a call is too great for us and who can ever come up to such requirements. Yet, we cannot deny that this is the teaching of the Word of God and that God cannot lie. God makes this impossible for us to do on our own, dear ones, so that we fail, if we are honest. An honest heart will come to the Lord and say, "Lord I have not been at all what you expect me to be, and I am very far from being a true disciple, according to the Word of God."

It is at this point of being honest and remaining honest that God will perform in us what He alone can do, by the power of His grace working in our broken hearts. Finally, God says we cannot serve both Him and mammon. (Mt. 6: 19-34) Mammon takes in the entire material world. We cannot be the Lord's disciples if we are trying to serve both our Master and any part of the material world. We cannot be devoted to both the Lord and mammon. We will either love the one or hate the other or be devoted to the one and unfaithful to the other.

If we esteem and hold in high regards anything that men hold in high regards, then we are an offense to the Lord. God says that anything which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. This word abomination means the absolute loathing of something so deeply as to turn one's face away from in disgust and abhorrence. Can we be His disciples and, at the same time dear ones, esteem and place value on the things that God hates and detests? Never! Yet, don't we try to and deceive ourselves into thinking that it's somehow o.k.?

What about the subject of being greedy or covetous? To covet, according to the plain definition of the word, is to desire something that one does not have! Now, dear ones are we being honest before God or are we not hearing Him? How often do you desire something you do not have and come under deep conviction of the Spirit of God because you are being convicted of being covetous? Dare I say that most of us do not even feel troubled about wanting things that we do not have and even like to look at books, magazines and go to shopping malls to try and even find things we do not have so we can buy them and we do this often without any convictions at all?

This is a dangerous state to be found in, beloved! Can we be His disciples while being in such a state, openly practicing greed and covetousness? I think not! May the Lord search our hearts today, beloved and give us very honest and open hearts before Him! FINAL FEATURES OF A DISCIPLE OF JESUS So, in conclusion, we learn a number of important lessons. The Pharisees were unable to receive the testimony from the sinner who was healed from blindness because of the pride of their hearts.

This pride blinded them from seeing their true state and prevented them from being taught. Because they refused to repent of this pride, they became more and more angry and resentful towards the man who had a living revelation of the Son of God. Eventually they cast the man out of their lives and religion. Being a disciple requires that we have a humble heart and remain teachable towards the Lord and others. We must not see ourselves as instructors of others and want to be perceived as a teacher when our hearts are full of pride that make us think we are better than others.

Being a disciple requires that we do not seek to exalt ourselves above others but seek the low place of being a servant, humbly worshipping at the feet of Jesus with grateful hearts that God has saved us from our sins. Additionally, we learn that to follow Christ and become His disciple requires that we stop making up excuses when we are called to spend time with the Lord, in prayer and His Word. We will not seek to make a reputation for ourselves among men. God will teach us to forsake all to follow Him, to repent of all forms of greed and covetousness and to cry out to Him for the grace and help to be transformed into His moral likeness.

Finally, if we are to become His disciples, we will seek to live in the love of God and be moved only by this great love, in our words and deeds. Are we His disciples today and if not, what are we going to do about it? May the Lord bring much grace to us these days and settle this issue in our hearts so that we, like true disciples, can go on to spiritual maturity and become the living body in whom His fullness can be seen! May the Lord help us to come to the Lord and in quietness discover God's way of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, and truly become as our Lord.

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