

"THE WORDS OF THE LORD ARE PURE WORDS, LIKE SILVER TRIED IN
A FURNACE OF EARTH, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES.
YOU SHALL KEEP THEM, O LORD, YOU SHALL PRESERVE THEM FROM
THIS GENERATION FOREVER." (PSALM 12: 6 & 7)

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AUGUST 25, 2006

DISCIPLES

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;"
(Matthew 28:18-20)

Emphasis Added

Dear saints, hear the word of our Lord – There are no part-time disciples in the Kingdom of God! Jesus Christ declared that He alone had been given all authority, not only in Heaven, but also on Earth. As Jesus exercised His authority, He commanded that we "go and make disciples." He did not command that we make "believers," or "church members." No! He commanded that we make disciples and teach them to obey all things that He commanded us to do (see Matthew 28:19-20). There is a world of difference between one who believes and one who is a disciple. James tells us in his letter (Chapter 2, verse 19) that even the demons believe, and we know that demons are not disciples of Jesus Christ.

The Greek meaning of "disciple" is: "a learner, one who follows both the teaching and the teacher." Webster defines "disciple" as: "One who accepts and helps spread the teachings of another." Today, we have many who call themselves Christians, because they believe in Jesus, and yet the demons of hell also believe in Jesus, and they tremble (James 2:19). Certainly no intellectually honest person would classify demons as disciples of Jesus, even though they believe in Him. A person who calls himself a Christian and a disciple of Jesus Christ, but who does not "believe" Jesus and follow Him, may be considered a disciple by organized religion, but not by God. True disciples of Jesus Christ love Him more than their family (Matthew 10:37). True disciples of Jesus Christ demonstrate their love for Him by obeying Him over all other men (John 14:21). True disciples of Jesus Christ take up their own cross and they follow Jesus alone (Matthew 10:38). I can speak from experience when I say that frequently one's cross might be that of rejection. Especially the rejection of the religious ones who use the name of Jesus and claim His promises, but have not met His conditions to become one of His disciples. Of these, Jesus said:

***"These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the
commandments of men."***

(Matthew 15:8-9)

I cannot help but wonder; how much of our worship today is in vain? The answer to that question should shake us to our very spiritual foundation. The fact that it does not reveals just how far we have fallen into the pit of man's religion. May God have mercy on us.

Today, religious pride is the banner that flies over what we so confidently call – The Church. Today, the people of God have taken their seat on the throne of human reasoning and have judged the Word of God – adding to It and taking from It – according to the dictates of their own heart. Man's traditions that were birthed in the dark corridors of deception have taken precedent over God's holy word. Man has now become his own god and declared that he will determine what defines spiritual rebirth and salvation. He will determine who is qualified to be a disciple. He will determine what man must or must not do to incur the favor of God. No longer do we accept the words of Jesus as commands from God Himself. Instead of becoming as "little children" where God's word is concerned, we have become as the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus day. Listen to Jesus:

"Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

(Luke 18:17)
Emphasis Added

A little child, of lets say 3 or 4 years, does not question whatever their loving father tells them. If that father asks his child to get his flashlight because in a few minutes it will be pitch dark, even though it is high noon on a clear sunny day, the child will obey, without question, because the child trusts father's word. We too should trust our Father's word, and our obedience to His word should be that of a loving child. Those who teach otherwise are enemies of the Cross.

The true disciple accepts totally, and helps to spread, the teachings of the One they follow.

Not only did our Lord command that we make disciples, but He also spelled out the conditions for discipleship. If these conditions were not met, you were disqualified from serving Him as one of His disciples. Listen to His own words:

"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed."

(John 8:31)

"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. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

(Luke 14:26, 27 & 33)
Emphasis Added

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

(John 15:7 & 8)

For those of us who choose to "believe" Jesus, it becomes quite clear that ----

"Many are called, but few are chosen."

(Matthew 22:14)

Today, in our fearless spiritual arrogance, we have created a new gospel. Our new gospel is coated with grace and what sounds like love, but in the end, it is as bitter as wormwood and every bit as deadly. The modern day gospel is designed for the "many" and not the "few" of Matthew 7:13 & 14. Again, listen to Jesus:

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

Dear reader, meditate on these words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Soak in them – chew them up – digest them – let them take deep and abiding root in the depths of your soul – otherwise you have no spiritual life in you.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man (See John 1:1-4 & 14) and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

(John 6:53)

What about you dear reader? Who's word do you believe? Who are you following? When it comes down to what Jesus says, and what your pastor, your priest, your Pope or your favorite teacher says, who then do you believe? If you say that you are a follower of Jesus, are you willing to accept the left foot of fellowship from the modern day religionist, for His sake? Are you willing to bear the scorn of your closest family members and friends, for His sake? Are you willing to crucify your flesh and forsake all of your religious idolatry and follow Him?

Your answer to the above questions will determine whether or not you qualify to become a disciple of Jesus Christ and a friend of God. As you examine yourself, before God, always remember that God will judge you by the attitude of your heart. The fact that we may not as yet measure up to His high standard is not our problem. The real issue is – do you desire to measure up, and will you demonstrate your desire by sacrificing yourself in favor of His word? When we say we agree with God's word, but our actions speak otherwise, we mock God openly, and invite His certain judgment. Never forget, God will judge His people first (1 Peter 4:17), and that is not good news for those who so carelessly call him "Lord" but ignore His word.

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

(Luke 6:46)

Emphasis Added

Dear friends, one thing is absolutely certain, and that is if Jesus Christ is not our Lord – whose word we choose to obey – He will never be our Savior. Jesus saves and redeems those who acknowledge His Lordship and whose hearts desire to obey Him. Apart from a heart that desires to obey the Lord of all Lords there is no salvation. Listen –

"And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."

(Hebrews 5:9)

Emphasis Added

Who among us would dare to disobey Jesus Christ, to His face? Who? And yet that is exactly what we do each time we set His word aside in favor of our religion. The fact that we stamp His name on our behavior, and claim to be His disciple, makes no difference. We are exactly as were those that He spoke to in Matthew 15: 8 & 9. Make no mistake about it – if you or I mouth great swelling words of praise and adoration for Jesus, and at the same time choose to set His word (any of His word) aside, all that we say and do, we do in vain! It is not acceptable before a holy God. God will not allow us to mock His word – He will not!

True disciples of Jesus Christ have received, as an act of His grace, the revelation that He and His word are One (John 1:1 & 14). They know that you cannot separate God from His word. His word is alive, full of life, powerful, eternal (Hebrews 4:12) and they know that He magnifies His word even above His name.

***"For You have magnified Your word above all Your name."
(Psalm 138:2)***

Those who fail to approach God's word with an attitude of holy reverence are in danger of being counted among those who blaspheme His word and face destruction. Listen –

***"He who despises the word will be destroyed, But he who fears the commandment will be rewarded."
(Proverbs 13:13)***

***"I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good, According to their own thoughts."
(Isaiah 65:2)***

***" But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word."
(Isaiah 66:2)***

True disciples of Jesus Christ believe Him, they follow Him, and they show their love for Him by obeying His word (John 14:21, 23 & 24). True disciples will not compromise their Lord's word for any man, nor any man's religion. Neither will the disciple compromise, through silence, his Lord's word, for the sake of unity, peace or love. The true disciple knows full well that his or her allegiance to their King will assure them of persecution. His word rings in their ear -

***"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me."
(John 15:20 & 21)***

Even though ridicule and persecution await the true disciple – and though it come through the mouths of family members, friends, and those who call themselves followers of Jesus Christ – nevertheless they count it but a very small price to pay, and rejoice knowing that their reward is to be numbered among His friends!

Finally, the true disciple is the same on Monday, Thursday, Saturday or any other day of the week as they are on Sunday. There are no part time disciples in the Kingdom of God – none! You cannot get all religious and spiritual on Sunday and maybe at a midweek Bible study or prayer meeting, and expect to receive God’s favor if your heart is set on the world the rest of the week. Those who fall into this category are spiritual adulterers. True disciples have purposed in their hearts to be led by the Spirit, and they choose to set their minds on things above from the rising up to the lying down. They know that the world hates Jesus and all that He stands for. The true disciple has heard the word of God and knows that to please God, one must choose to walk in His Spirit and separate themselves from the corruption that so easily infects the heart of man.

"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

(Romans 8:5-8)

Emphasis Added

"Therefore - Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

(2 Corinthians 6:17 & 18 & 7:1)

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

(Romans 8:14)

As we begin to "believe" God, we quickly see what Jesus meant when He said that The Way of Life was narrow, difficult and hard to find. Is it any wonder that only a "few" find The Way? Is it any wonder that many are called, but only a few chosen? Should we be surprised that the "broad way" of modern day Christianity is so appealing to those who are "called". Our religious flesh loves the wide gate and Broad Way that the modern day church now presents to the world. We love the warm fuzzies, the electronically enhanced music, the promises of peace and prosperity – Especially prosperity! We really get excited about the promises of healing – and for those of us who like to stay busy, what more could we ask for, than a menu full of good works from which to choose. We love this modern day version of Jesus. We get all excited and teary eyed about our relationship with Him – until – He leads us outside the camp of modern day religion and says: "Follow Me." As soon as we see that His pathway is narrow, dusty and rough, we begin to withdraw from Him, especially when a rough sawn, blood stained cross comes into view, and we realize that He is calling us to mortify "self". As "our cross" comes into view, one of two things happen. Either we go on with Him, trusting Him as did Abraham when he took Isaac to the alter of death, or we flee back to the soft seats, the air conditioning, and the spiritually numbing music of Christian City.

What about you dear reader? As you stand with Jesus and gaze from afar at the cross that will qualify you to become one of His disciples and to walk with Him as His friend – What will you do? Will you be counted among the “many” or the “few”? You may not have much time left to make your decision. This is not imaginary – make believe! No! This is real – This is life and death. Everything hangs in the balance. In the end each of us will be counted either among the “many” or the “few” depending upon our response to God’s word. Listen –

“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges Him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”

(John 12:48)

My prayer is that of all those who take the time to read this message, maybe one or two – I cannot imagine that it would be more than a few – will hear with their spiritual ears, and fall down before our Lord and ask Him for the grace to become one of His true disciples. If you are one of the few, be assured that He will not turn you away. You are much needed, as at present, there is a shortage of disciples – that have little form, but walk in His power. Not because they desire power, but because they desire that He receive much glory! Not because they desire to build a ministry for Him, but rather because they desire that He be honored and that His hearts desire might be filled. True disciples have received, by grace, the revelation that life as we know it, never was about “us”, but rather it has always been about GOD! – About His Kingdom – About His government – About His desires.

God had the first word and He will have the last word! May you and I be found worthy to be counted among those who are engulfed in His love and affection, and may we be good company for Him as He walks among His people.

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Your Brother,

Tom

P.S.

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"EVERY WORD OF GOD IS PURE; HE IS A SHIELD TO THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM. DO NOT ADD TO HIS WORDS, LEST HE REBUKE YOU, AND YOU BE FOUND A LIAR." (PROVERBS 30:5 & 6)