

True Disciples Know His Voice and Follow

The first thing Jesus said to the first ones He called to follow Him was, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19b). This was about more than just relating to them in their current profession. This is basic to following Him. *Fishermen catch fish, so how would one catch men?*

Fishers of Men

There are similarities in how we catch fish and men, such as using different kinds of bait to catch different kinds of fish. Similarly, we must use different methods to draw different kinds of people. This skill is developed with experience and devotion, and one of the first skills we must also be devoted to as His followers. However, like the first disciples, when we are called to follow Him, we are called to radical change in our lives.

The next thing He said to those He called was, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matt. 16:24b-25, NASB1995). The cross was a well-known instrument of torture and death. Why would anyone want to follow Him if it led to a cross? The only ones who would were those who loved Him and loved truth more than they loved their own lives in this present world.

The definition Jesus gave for being one of His disciples was so severe that, as we read it, we will likely think we do not know anyone who lives like this and that is the point. There are few Christians who are His disciples by His own definition. Many claim to be following Him but they are really following a religion, a doctrine, or others who claim to be

His leaders. So, what do we do? We go to His words about following Him and resolve to do them instead of just following what others have said or done.

Know His Voice and Follow

In John 10:27-28, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand." Every true disciple must know and follow His voice for themselves; not just doctrines, other disciples or even other great followers but Him. Of course, lambs may not yet know His voice and may need to follow more mature sheep until they do, but when they mature, they will follow the Shepherd and not just other sheep, *no matter how great they are*.

In Scripture, we are all sons and daughters. No one is called "grandsons" and "granddaughters." We are all called to be first generation children of Him, not to just know Him through others. That is why the Shulamite maid in the Song of Solomon, who is a type of the bride of Christ, said to Him:

"Tell me, O you whom my soul loves, where do you pasture your flock, where do you make it lie down at noon? For why should I be like one who veils herself beside the flocks of your companions?" (Song 1:7)

We should thank the Lord for all the great apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers He has given to build us into what we are called to be as His body; but even the greatest of these can never measure up to the Lord Himself. We must never settle for just knowing Him through anyone else, as those who settle for this do "veil" themselves.

The Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations is to make them disciples of Christ, not our disciples. We may be used to teach and lead them for a time but if our ministry does not lead them into a closer relationship with Him rather than us, we have fallen far short of being the ministry we are

called to be. How many have been “led to Christ” when all they ever really got was us?

A “New Breed” of Ministry

As we approach the end of this age, there will be a “new breed” of ministry released that will be true disciples of Christ and help make true disciples of Christ. About this new breed, we will have more to say [in the days ahead]. {eoa}

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