

COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

“Christians are made, not born,” said Tertullian. In truth, there is nothing easy or natural about being made a Christian, being transformed into Christ’s disciple. At the very heart of Christian discipleship is Jesus Christ being made the “center” of your life, and not you as the “center”. Yet, the Divine Truth of the Gospel is that Christ chooses us as disciples (followers), we do not choose Him. What we do to be “made Christian” is “accept or reject” Jesus Christ’s choice of us as His disciples.

When Christ commands, “Follow me,” He is not asking your opinion on the questions of, “When, where, what, how and why?” He awaits you to live through His command to, “Deny yourself and take up your cross.” He is commanding you to answer His question, “Who do you say I am?”

There is no “middle ground” to Christ’s question and answer. You either accept Christ, the Savior, completely or you reject Him completely. The “middle ground” your soul desires as the condition of your acceptance is not acceptable to Christ. By your soul’s desire, you delegate to Christ’s questions about His Divinity and humanity. Christ answered these questions by His life and death. He answered His question, “Who do you say I am?” by “denying Himself, taking up His cross and following the Divine Way of life through His humanity.”

The question of “who Christ is” is not up for debate by His death upon the Cross for the redemption of all humanity. It is a question of you accepting or rejecting Christ, the Savior, who has come to “save” you. Your absolute acceptance of His Divine Salvation means your absolute acceptance to, “Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.”

It is in that exact moment you accept Jesus Christ to be the “center” of your life that you are made a Christian, made to “follow Christ” without the questions of “When, where, what, how and why.” The answers to these questions are revealed by the Holy Spirit. All you can do is await the revelation of Divine Truth.

Anyone who claims it is easy to wait upon Divine revelation or to accept Divine discipline when you

ignore Divine revelation has yet to be transformed into Christ’s disciple. They may embrace the primary inklings of conversion, a willingness to believe in Christ, but without absolute submission to Christ and the Cross, their conversion is without Divine direction, governance or purpose. They are merely giving “lip service” to Divine purpose for which Christ gave His life, and therefore live in the hypocrisy of their soul’s governance of their lives. Christians made by Christ bear the marks of the Cross’s broken-ness upon their soul.

Christ’s salvation; release from captivity, from your soul’s governance of your life, is made evident by the Divine gifts of Faith, Hope and Love. The proof of these Divine gifts being grown abundantly by Christ, and not by you, is by the Divine evidence of Christ’s peace He shares with those who follow Him. A Divine Peace “which passes all human understanding” that comes from the Divine alone.

Few converts (believers in the Divine or the Divine Christ) understand the Divine Truth that Christ and the Cross save their lives in their present. Most are too quick to believe their past conversion is sufficient for their future salvation by their justification of faith without acceptance of submission. They forget that between their conversion and submission stands the Cross that they must pass through to enter the Kingdom. The certainty of entering the Kingdom is promised by the Divine through Jesus Christ. No one enters the Way, the Truth, and the Life of Jesus Christ without entering through His Cross. Those unwilling to step through Him, discover themselves standing at the foot of the cross, observing Christ’s death upon it, but never accepting His sovereignty over them. They stand in their “apocalyptic present,” living to death instead of life.

Such is the way of human discipleship to the self, the soul alone. A kind of discipleship overflowing with a selfish, self-centered, pridefully arrogant soul, desiring to “bash” whatever displeases or offends them. A human superiority that degrades humanity to a less than human status, giving vent to the soul’s desire for pain and suffering, violence and destruction. A human exoneration and justification of

thought, word and deed under the hypocrisy of the soul.

If all the world sees is your human effort at transformation, how will the world know the truth about Divine transformation? If all the world sees is your hypocrisy, how can the world believe in Christ?

If you seek to understand your “apocalyptic present,” the embrace of death instead of life, then all you need to understand is your present lived by the desire of your soul. An illusion of human living, but in reality is human dying.

I have written these words in the hope of revealing the truth about discipleship of the soul. A discipleship that demands strength instead of weakness, wealth instead of poverty, human intelligence instead of Divine Wisdom. An illusion you have “saved” yourself by your hypocrisy.

The evidence of Christian discipleship is set before you by the words of Paul, who was at first an enemy of Christ, but through conversion and submission became an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He defined what it means to love:

“If I had the gift of being able to speak in tongues, and could speak in every tongue there is in all of heaven and earth, but I didn’t love others, it would be of no value whatever. I would only be making a lot of noise. If I had the gift of prophesy and understood all mysteries - knew everything about everything - but didn’t love others, what good would it be? Even if I had the gift of faith so that I could speak to a mountain and make it move, I would still be worth nothing at all without love. If I gave everything I have to poor people, and if I were burned alive for preaching the Gospel but didn’t love others, it would be of no value whatever,” I Corinthians 13: 1-3 Tyndale translation

What Paul seeks to reveal is a very simple truth - disciples of Christ are made by Divine love which makes us willing to allow God to grow the gifts of Divine faith and hope in us. The love Paul writes about is a Divine gift of Love that only the Divine gives. It is not a conditional love that most live out in their lives. A human love of the soul that demands the conditions of human slavery to the soul. No, the kind of love Paul writes about is a Divine gift of Love rejected by the soul.

It is pleasing to the soul's desire to command a love that is "jealous and envious, boastful and proud, haughty, selfish and rude. A love that demands its own way, and when the demand is not met by others, to be irritable and touchy, holding grudges that makes the soul desire to notice the wrong in others. A love that rejoices in the injustice of untruth, a disloyalty through lies. A love that disbelieves all things, expects the worst in all things, giving ground easily to the soul's governance.

No, the gift of Divine love that Paul writes about is "very patient and kind, is never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Divine love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to them no matter what the cost. You will always believe in them, always expect the best of them, and always stand your ground in defending them," I Corinthians 13: 5-7 Tyndale translation.

No, we cannot "fake" for long the gift of Divine love. All too quickly we reveal the truth of our souls. Without the implanting of Divine love, we stand before the world in our hypocrisy.

It is the Divine truth of Christ's discipleship that His command, "Follow me," means to follow through the Divine absolute of His love - a Divine love without condition, a love without counting the cost. A love, without the boundary of human limitation, sealed forever through Christ's love for you upon the Cross. An acceptance of such boundless love causes every thought, word or deed of your life to reveal the proof of true Christian discipleship in a Divine peace. A Divine peace that accepts the three gifts God wills to share with those who consign their lives to the Divine.

As Paul put it, "There are three things that remain - faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love," 1 Corinthians 13:13 Tyndale translation. It is no longer "my faith, hope and love," but the Divine gift of "faith, hope and love."

If "(Divine) love be your greatest aim," St. Paul wrote, then Divine peace proves the gift of Divine

love. A Divine peace given when you willingly submit your soul to Divine brokenness, releasing the Divine spirit of transformation to a new life.

The proof of Christ's discipleship is allowing Him to transform you into a new creation - loving and forgiving as Christ loves and forgives you. Only by the power and authority of the Holy Spirit can you be released from your soul's governance, demanding a lessor, human love. A release from your soul that comes through the Cross.

The cost of discipleship is knowing the absolute acceptance that **you** do not belong to **you**, **You** belong to the **Divine** alone! Paul said it best when he wrote, "I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love. Death can't, and life can't...Nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when He died for us," Romans 8:38a and 39b Tyndale translation.

The Cost of Discipleship is the Absolute Truth of human and Divine, Christ and the Cross, and the Divine faith, hope and love that equals a Divine peace. A cost that never raises our humanity above the Divine, but offers our humanity to the Divine, for His Divine purpose.

The Cost of Discipleship is "Christ the Center" - yesterday, today and forever.

∞

The Rev. Ronald E. White



©2004 DoveTracts, Inc

Cost of Discipleship

timeless
truths
for
turbulent
times

