**ARE YOU A TRUE DISCIPLE OF JESUS?**

* Recognize there are those “professed” followers of Jesus who are not really true disciples.
  + Not believers
* Sometimes the words of Jesus are hard to accept – but life-giving nonetheless.
* Examine how Jesus describes those who are “truly” His disciples.

John 6:60 – 71

1. Hard to Accept
   1. “His disciples”
      1. “**Disciple** means “learner” and is used in a variety of ways in the NT. It can include unbelievers (v. Joh\_6:64), believers who go beyond initial faith to baptism and obedience (Joh\_8:31), or it can mean the apostles in particular (Joh\_2:11). The context determines what meaning is intended. Here it simply means learner.” *Nelson’s Bible Commentary*
   2. “How are you going to handle Me ascending where I was before?”
   3. Not hard to understand
      1. Hard to accept
      2. Skleros = sclerosis
      3. Hardening; stiffening
      4. Harsh or severe
   4. They had come to Jesus to get something from Him.
      1. “Some who did not believe”
   5. When it came to suffering for Him and giving to Him, they quit.
      1. “To this day many a man refuses Christ, not because he puzzles intellect, but because he challenges his life.” *William Barclay*
      2. “This is why…” verse 65
2. The Holy Spirit Gives Life
   1. The flesh profits nothing
   2. It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no benefit.
      1. Romans 7:15 – “*For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate*.”
      2. Romans 7:18 – “*For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out*.”
      3. Romans 8:26 – “…*the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness*.”
   3. The Spirit works through the words of Jesus
      1. Spirit and life
3. True Disciples?
   1. Many turned back – no longer walked with Him
      1. “His disciples”
   2. Jesus offers an exit plan…
      1. “To whom shall we go?” You have the goods.
   3. We have believed.
4. Jesus’ Criteria for Disciples
   1. Similitude (resemblance; likeness)
      1. Luke 6:40
      2. “*For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers*.” Romans 8:29
      3. To be like Jesus…
         1. To be like Jesus  
            To be like Jesus  
            All I ask- to be like Him  
            All through life's journey  
            From earth to glory  
            All I ask- to be like Him.
   2. Complete Commitment
      1. Luke 14:26 – 27, 33
         1. Hating a Semitic expression meaning “loving less.”
      2. Embracing God’s will regardless of the cost
         1. Taking up our cross is not a pathological self-abasement or developing a martyr complex.
         2. Freedom to follow Jesus
         3. Letting go of self-determination and replacing it with obedience to and dependence upon Jesus the Messiah.
      3. Renounce and Relinquish
         1. Not encumbered by materialism
   3. Abiding in His word
      1. John 8:31 – 32

* + - 1. John 15:7 – “*If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you*.”
      2. John 14:23 – “*Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him*.’”
      3. John 14:24 “‘*Whoever does not love Me does not keep My words. And the word that you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me*.’”
      4. “Christianity is not a philosophy which we accept, nor a theory to which we give allegiance. It is a personal response to Jesus Christ.” *William Barclay*
  1. Love for One Another
     1. John 13:35
        1. Biblical **agape** **love** is the love of choice, the love of serving with humility, the highest kind of love, the noblest kind of devotion, the love of the will (intentional, a conscious choice) and not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship.
        2. **Agape** is not based on pleasant emotions or good feelings that might result from a physical attraction or a familial bond.
        3. **Agape** chooses as an act of self-sacrifice to serve the recipient.
        4. **Agape** love does not depend on the world’s criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality.
  2. Make Disciples
     1. John 15:8
        1. John 15:5
     2. Matthew 28:19 – “*Therefore, as you go, disciple all the nations*…” ISV