

Hymns: 40 He Leadeth Me 3 Amazing Grace 15 It Is Well with My Soul  
Scripture: Psalm 23

Big Idea: What is a disciple of Jesus?

Luke 14 starting at verse 26 Jesus said:

*[26] If any man  
come to me, and  
hate not  
his father, and  
mother, and  
wife, and  
children, and  
brethren, and  
sisters, yea, and  
his own life also,  
he cannot be my disciple.*

*[27] And whosoever doth not  
bear his cross, and  
come after me,  
cannot be my disciple.*

*[33] So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath,  
he cannot be my disciple.*

With that primer on qualifications for **not** being a disciple of Jesus, let's get our bearings since it's been a while since we last explored this topic.

We're studying of the Dispensations of the Bible in order to understand God's Word better. We're presently examining the Dispensation of Law. We finished a six-part sub-series on John the Baptist and are now in a sub-series into the **difficult teachings** of Jesus. As you just witnessed, we have another difficult teaching of Jesus before us today.

To review, so far, we've covered:

- His statement to cut off your hand and pluck out your eye.
- Selling all that you have and following Him.
- His statement and then personal example to forsake blood relatives
- Conditional forgiveness
- The unpardonable sin
- The Golden Rules
- Judge not that ye be not judged.
- Eating His flesh and drinking His blood
- His hard line on divorce

In order to decipher Jesus' teaching, we're using the following rules:

1. Heavenly/spiritual point of view – We saw that in our first message in this series. As **compared to** the spiritual, He had disregard for the flesh.
2. Singleness of heart – we saw that **with** His own family and those people wanting to follow Him. He was resolute and undeterred in His mission. We’ll expand on that today.
3. Intentionally taught so the people would **not** understand. We’ll see that in a future message.
4. Parsed words. Watch out for that word **if!** Again, in that first message the flesh was **not** the problem but instead it’s the **heart of man** that’s the problem. He said, **if** your eye offends thee, **if** your hand offends thee. It’s not those things that are offending you. It’s what’s going on in here – directing those body parts. It’s futile to cut them off. There’s nothing inherently wrong with them.
5. Used double-meanings
6. He frequently used metaphors. He especially liked “I am.” – the way, life, bread
7. Some of His statements had limited scope: context is key.
8. He evaded questions by not answering directly. We saw examples of that in the first message. He frequently answered questions with questions.
9. He taught using parables.
10. He spoke in proverbs. We saw a good example of that in the *judge not* message.

One of the issues today in our country involves a huge controversy over building a wall to keep people from entering our country illegally. We have laws that permit people to apply for citizenship, but many are seeking a shortcut. And this is not just an issue in our country.

The prosperous nations around the world have an enormous problem as well. People from the third world are flooding into those countries in search of a better life. They have learned that they can latch onto the safety-net system of developed nations and gain access to a modern infrastructure, “free” food, “free” housing, “free” healthcare, and “free” education. Of course, none of this comes without cost to taxpayers, but it may be free to them.

Back in Jesus’ time we had something similar going on. Let’s return now to that opening passage in Luke and take a closer look. What is the context? Backing up one verse:

*[25] And there went great multitudes with him: ...*

It’s telling to note that the crowds following Jesus swelled to **great multitudes** as He performed multiple miracles that **fed them unlimited tasty buffets**. It was in **that context** that Jesus made these rather shocking and impossible-sounding statements to these people. He was telling them not to follow Him for another handout. In a nutshell, to be His **disciples** He said, they had to forsake all.

While the word *disciple* is in the Bible, there’s another word religionists love to bandy around. It’s *discipleship*. That word is **not** in the Bible. Legalists who often call themselves fundamentalists are among the **worst offenders**. They rely heavily on Jesus’ statements like this one in Luke 14 to concoct a schema for Christian living. Some even go so far as to require following their self-deluding *schema* to attain favor or acceptance with God.

We will now analyze the statements in our passage in Luke 14 – but with a twist this time. I took the liberty to carefully pull similar statements from parallel passages and merge them into a single text (Matthew 10:37-39; 16:24-25; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-24):

Luke 14

[25] *And **there went great multitudes with him**: and he turned, and said unto them [and his disciples]*

[26] *If any man  
come to me, and  
**hate not**  
his father, and  
mother, and  
wife, and  
children, and  
brethren, and  
sisters, yea, and  
**his own life also,**  
he cannot be my disciple.*

How do we understand this call to **hate** your parents and others? The Ten Commandments say to **honor** your parents. The Torah (Leviticus 19:18) and even Jesus Himself said (Matthew 12:30-31) to love your neighbor.

The solution is that this **literal** translation obscures the *sense* of the usage. What Jesus was **actually** doing was making a **comparative** statement. He was saying to love these other things **less** than Him. As we compare scripture with scripture, Jesus made this clear in the following verse:

Matthew 10

[37] *He that loveth father or mother **more than me** is **not worthy of me**:  
and he that loveth son or daughter **more than me** is **not worthy of me**.*

In Matthew 12:46-50 we saw that Jesus applied this same principle to His own life. He practiced what he preached and did not allow the urgent plea of His mother and brothers to divert His attention from His mission. Remember, Jesus' family lived with Him for thirty years. He was on the most important mission of any man of all time. They had to understand as he told them even at age twelve (Luke 2:49-50), that His priorities were those of His Heavenly Father.

[Luke 14]

[27] *And whosoever **doth not**  
[deny himself]  
**bear [or take up] his cross [daily], and**  
come [or follow] **after me,***

*[is not worthy of me] and cannot be my disciple.*

So what exactly does that expression to *bear or take up your cross daily* mean? According to my Greek friend, it means to be strong through the difficult times and trials of life.

*[33] So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

We saw this standard applied to the rich young ruler in the first message in this series. Jesus wanted no followers tagging along and dragging any baggage if they expected to follow Him.

Along that same line, three others proposed that they would like to follow Jesus eventually:

Matthew 8

*[19] And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.*

*[20] And Jesus saith unto him,  
The foxes have holes,  
and the birds of the air have nests;  
but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

In other words, it's going to cost you. Jesus was roughing it.

Luke 9

*[59] And he [Jesus] said unto another, **Follow me. But** he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

*[60] Jesus said unto him,  
Let the dead bury their dead:  
but go thou and preach **the kingdom of God.***

Being Jesus' disciple was not only **rough**, it was **urgent**.

*[61] And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; **but** let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

*[62] And Jesus said unto him,  
No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back,  
is fit for **the kingdom of God.***

Notice the emphasis on *the kingdom of God*. Clearly, Jesus had no desire for these kinds of people weighing down His ministry. In summary, Jesus said:

Mark 8

*[35] For whosoever will [notice the proverb-like couplets here]  
save his life  
shall lose it; but whosoever shall  
lose his life for my sake and the gospel's,  
the same shall save it.*

A life lived for the Lord and proclaiming the gospel is worthwhile.  
A **spiritual** focus will produce lasting fruit and eternal dividends.

As Jesus said to the self-righteous, rich young ruler:

Matthew 19

*[21] ... If thou wilt be perfect,  
go and sell that thou hast,  
and give to the poor,  
and thou shalt have treasure in heaven:  
and come and follow me.*

He goes on to say in verse 29, those who **do** sacrifice in this life will be rewarded **a hundred fold**. By contrast, a life lived for the **physical** will ultimately produce loss.

[Mark 8]

*[36] For what shall it profit a man, if he shall  
**gain** the whole world, and  
**lose** his own soul?*

*[37] Or what shall a man give in **exchange** for his soul?*

Jesus continues His point related to the **physical vs. the spiritual**. It matters not if you are a Warren Buffet, Bill Gates, or Jeff Bezos. You cannot buy your way into heaven, and you can't take your possessions with you. What **does** matter is what you do with Jesus Christ's free offer for salvation.

*[38] Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation;  
of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

The simple and sad truth is that those who reject Him will be rejected by Him. Given that He is their only hope, that's a tragic decision and fate on their part.

We've covered a lot of ground here but really need to sharpen our focus. Jesus insisted that his **disciples forsake all**. Who exactly are His disciples?

Disciple:

The Greek word for disciple *mā-thā-tā's* appears **only** in the gospels and the book of Acts. It means *student* or *pupil*.

Were disciples in the Bible limited to the twelve that Jesus chose? No.

Joseph of Arimethaea was called a disciple. (Matthew 27:57) as was Ananias of Damascus (Acts 9:10). There were women disciples like Tabitha also called Dorcas (v. 36). Timothy was called a disciple (16:1) as was Mnason of Cyprus (21:16).

Acts 11

[26] .... ***the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.***

In Acts, the term *disciples* refers to what we now call *Christians* (Acts 6:1,2,7).

At some point, a student's teacher dies and the learners transition to share what they learned with others. So it makes perfect sense that after the book of Acts, the word to describe these people is not *disciple* but *apostle*.

So what does *apostle* mean? An apostle is one sent forth, a messenger, or a missionary if you will.

And who were the apostles?

Former disciples Simon Peter (John 18:15; I Peter 1:1; II Peter 1:1) and John (21:24) became apostles. Indeed, all of the Twelve disciples except Judas Iscariot were apostles (Acts 1:21-22,25-26). Then there were the apostles Paul and Barnabus (14:14) and James the half-brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:19).

I Corinthians 9 the Apostle Paul said:

[1] ***Am I not an apostle? ...  
have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?  
are not ye my work in the Lord?  
[2] If I be not an apostle unto others,  
yet doubtless I am to you:  
for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.***

The church at Corinth was a product of Paul's missionary efforts.

I Corinthians 12

[28] *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

Note the primary place that missionaries play in God's order of assignments.

And Jesus Himself was called and apostle:

Hebrews 3

*[1] Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

And finally, here's an interesting verse that distinguishes an *apostle* from similar companion occupations:

II Timothy 1

*[11] Whereunto I [Paul] am appointed a preacher [a herald], and an apostle [one sent as a missionary], and a teacher [a professor] of the Gentiles.*

### Application

So let's pull this all together. Jesus had disciples. A disciple is a pupil – someone who learns from and follows a teacher. The Twelve were disciples of Jesus, but there were also others. Many were not serious students. They could not forsake all. Jesus left them behind. The word *discipleship* is **not** in the Bible and *discipleship* is **not** salvation. Remember Judas Iscariot was a disciple.

Disciples are not mentioned in the Bible after the book of Acts. That makes sense. When the professor leaves the scene, pupils can no longer have him as their teacher. While we can learn from Jesus' teachings, that's very different from forsaking all and following after Him as He **demand**ed of His disciples.

Many disciples transitioned to apostles. That is, the pupil became a teacher and a missionary. So what do we do with this? Stop trying to fool ourselves and recognize that we cannot follow Jesus like His disciples. We are not charged to do that. We are **not** living in the time when Jesus walked the earth.

We are **not** called to be disciples.

We are **not** called to take up our cross.

We are **not** called to forsake all.

We are operating under a different paradigm. While we will get into this deeper when we study the Dispensation of Grace, we need to close with a preview of the mission and calling given to Christians today. Unlike the **demands** Jesus made of his disciples, the apostle Paul **begs** his brothers in the faith to live a life pleasing to God. Here are three *I beseech you* statements:

I Corinthians 4

*[16] I beseech you, be ye followers [imitators] of me.*

Romans 12

*[1] I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

*[2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Ephesians 4

*[1] I ... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

*[2] With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

### **Benediction**

*Now*

*the grace of the Lord Jesus,*

*the love of the Father,*

*and the power, presence, and peace of the Holy Spirit,*

*be with you,*

*and keep you,*

*and teach you,*

*both now and forever.*

*Amen.*