

Are We Truly Disciples of Christ?

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: John 8:31-32

Most religious people we meet would claim to be disciples of Christ, but are they truly His disciples? Are we? This is a vitally important question: Are we truly disciples of Christ? We need to be able to correctly answer this question for ourselves, then continue or correct as needed. We also need to be able to help others correctly answer this question for themselves. So we are going to examine this passage and see what it means to be disciples of Christ.

The Foundation of Discipleship

- When Jesus would give the Great Commission, He told His apostles to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:19) – by preaching (Mark 16:15), baptizing (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19), and teaching obedience (Matthew 28:20); the foundation of this was the authority of Christ (Matthew 28:18); otherwise, there was no reason to listen/obey
- Jesus was making the same point in the context of our original text – rather than specifying authority, He discussed His deity (which necessarily implies authority); Jesus said believing in His deity was essential for salvation (John 8:24); calling Himself “I AM,” he claimed to be God (cf. Exodus 3:14), and even His opponents understood this (John 8:56-59)
- This is the foundation – we must believe that Jesus was not just a man, but God in the flesh (Colossians 2:9); many religious people believe this (that Jesus is the Son of God); but that does not necessarily make them “truly disciples” of His; it’s a start, but is not all there is

How to Truly Be a Disciple

- When Jesus taught on this occasion, “many came to believe in Him” (John 8:30) – His comments about discipleship were directed at these ones who believed (John 8:31)
- True discipleship is conditional (if...then..., John 8:31) – belief does not automatically make one a disciple (cf. Matthew 8:28-29; James 2:19); a condition for discipleship is continuing in His word (John 8:31)
- This condition makes sense when we know what “disciple” means (a learner) – remember the Great Commission and how disciples would be made; the gospel would be taught (Mark 16:15), believed (Mark 16:16), obeyed (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19), and continued obedience was expected (Matthew 28:20)
- One might believe in Christ – but if he doesn’t hear, believe, and obey the gospel, he’s not truly a disciple

The Blessings of Discipleship

- Jesus is worthy of our faithful obedience – He will also reward those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6); there are three blessings taught in this text (two explicitly, one implicitly)
- Blessing #1: “You will know the truth” (John 8:32) – a disciple continues in His word (John 8:31); His word is truth (John 17:17); Jesus made it clear that He was speaking the truth that came from God (John 8:26, 28); it is important to remember that the truth (the word of God) is able to be known and understood (Ephesians 3:4)
- Blessing #2: “The truth will make you free” (John 8:32) – free from sin (John 8:33-34); we must give up sin and not continue in it (Romans 6:1-7); after being freed from sin, we must be slaves of righteousness (Romans 6:16-18)
- Blessing #3: Those who are truly the Lord’s disciples will be saved (implied in Jesus’ statement) – sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2); being freed from sin, we can be with God (Ephesians 2:16); salvation is for those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9); there is punishment for those who do not (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

Conclusion

- Those who are disciples will know the truth, be freed from sin, and have hope of salvation
- This is available to us as we recognize the deity and authority of Jesus and continue in His word