

IDENTITY

DISCIPLES

IDENTITY - DISCIPLES PART 4

In this resource we are going to unpack the second stipulation that Jesus put in place in relation to being His disciple.

Luke 14:27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

Being a disciple of Jesus on His terms, terms which He defines as His disciple, can be very different than the terms which we may come up with. This second stipulation of carrying one's own cross and coming after Him, is each individual's personal responsibility and ownership. We can not jump on the back of anyone else and be piggy backed along. We must lay hold of this reality for ourselves, as we have been bought, purchased with His blood, which was an enormous cost to the Son and the Father.

Revelation 5:9-10 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

What does it mean to carry one's own cross and come after Him? It means we must follow the perfect example we have been given by our Lord and Saviour. When Jesus carried His cross where was He going? He was going to be crucified. When Jesus instructs us to carry our own cross, where do you think we are going?

We must know what it is to be crucified with Christ, be resurrected by Christ, and come into the brand new life that is contained in Him alone, called an Eternal life, learning to walk in the manner in which He walked.

This rite of entry is called Christ, Christ crucified, which to the Jew was a stumbling block and to the Gentile was foolishness. Is this rite of entry to an eternal abundant life a stumbling block to you as well or foolishness to your way of being?

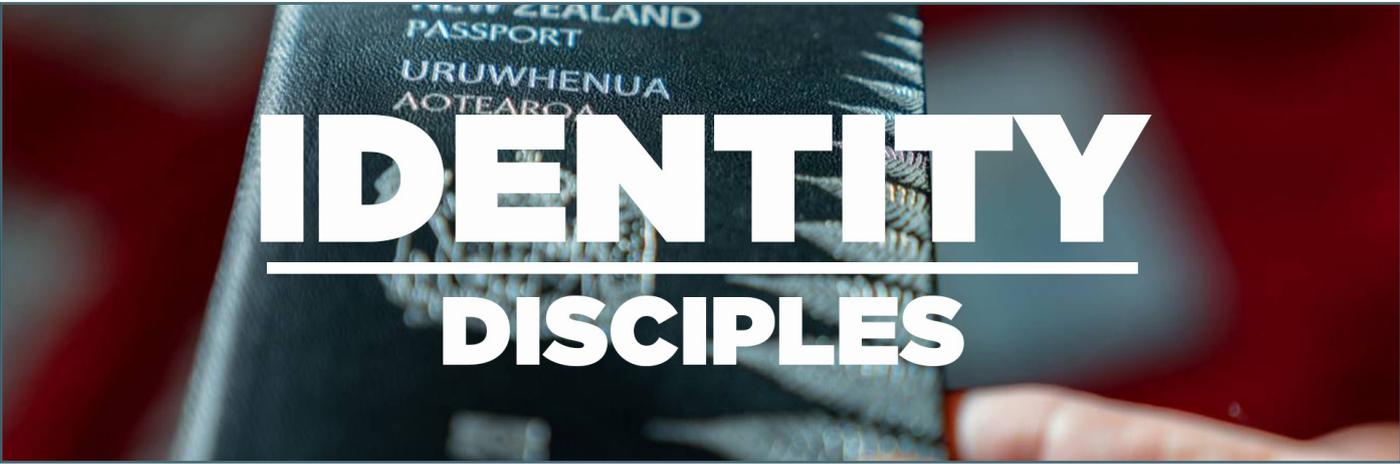
None of this is possible in our own strength and ability, but it is made fully possible by our complete yielding and the losing of our lives, coming to Him in absolute weakness, knowing His grace is sufficient to do what He has said it will do - raise us from death to life.

To take up our own individual cross and follow Him means to also have fellowship with Christ's sufferings. There is no way around this. If we truly are a disciple of Christ we will experience persecutions and sufferings for being His and living as He did.

Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

1 Peter 4:12-14 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

1 Peter 2:21-24 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while



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being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

There is absolutely no way around the reality that disciples of Christ will suffer for Christ and the Father's will. Living a life of righteousness is just that. You will be hated by followers and non followers for the true living out of picking up your cross and coming after Him, while you will be loved by Him and empowered to run well until the end.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is each person taking personal responsibility and ownership of their relationship with God so essential for becoming His disciple?
2. What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?
3. What is it to be resurrected by His power?
4. How does one know if they are truly suffering for His sake or just suffering through personal poor choices?
5. Why is personal suffering for His sake such an integral part of being His disciple?

ACTION POINT: What action point do we need to take away from tonight?