

The Making of Disciples

Lesson 6e

Fellowship with Believers

Explain the Disciple's Cross with Scripture Passages

Fellowship with Believers

- (6a) Developing a Discipleship Priority of Time
- (6b) The Mark of a Disciple (John 13:34-35)
 - ★ "just as" as the standard.
- (6c) One Member of One Body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)
- (6d) Living Disciple's Love (Colossians 3:14; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13)
 - ★ Doing the "one another's" in Church.
- (6e) Discipleship and Martyrdom

Discipleship and Martyrdom

"Count the Cost"

(Luke 14:28)

Persecution Is Part of Being A Disciple of Christ

- ★ (2 Timothy 3:10-12) Living a godly life will bring persecution. Persecution is a mark of a true follower of Christ.
- ★ (Philippians 1:29) Just as it has been granted (graced) to us to be saved (believe) it has been granted (graced) to us to suffer for His sake."
- ★ (John 15:18-21) If they persecuted the HEAD they will persecute the rest of the Body. The world hates Christians. (1 John 3:12-13;)
- ★ (John 16:33) Tribulations are a part of life for a Christian.
- ★ (Acts 14:19-23) "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."
- ★ (1 Peter 4:12-16) Persecution is to be no strange thing to a disciple of Christ.
 - ☆ (v. 12) "as though something strange happened to you"



- ☆ (v. 12) "which is to try you"
- ☆ (v. 13) "rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings" (Acts 5:41; Colossians 1:24; Philippians 3:10; James 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:8) See Matthew 5:10-12.
- ☆ (v. 14) Suffering for Christ's sake is evidence that His Spirit rests on/in us. Christ is glorified in our suffering.
- ☆ (vv. 15-16) We are to be sure to glorify God when persecution comes to us.
- ☆ (vv. 17-18) God uses persecution/tribulations to "cleanse" His Church. God's Church is not exempt from trouble but appointed to it! (1 Thessalonians 3:2-4)
- ☆ (v. 19) "let those who suffer according to the will of God". See Revelation 6:9-11.

The Church of Thessalonika (2 Thessalonians 1:4)

- A church to be boasted about!
- **BUT** Paul's boasting was not in anything that the Thessalonians were doing – BUT what God was doing in and through the Thessalonians. (See Philippians 2:12-13)
- The church of Thessalonika was a TRUE church of God.
 - She had realized that she was PURCHASED by God Himself. (Acts 20:28)
 - She realized that she was NOT HER OWN. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
 - She had PICK UP HER CROSS and decided to FOLLOW in the FOOTSTEPS of her Saviour and LORD. (Luke 9:23; 1 Peter 2:21)
 - She had COUNTED the COST! (Luke 14:28, 33)
 - She understood that she had been granted (given the gift) of FAITH and the PRIVILEGE of suffering for (with) Christ. (Philippians 1:29; Acts 5:40-41)
- Despite severe persecution the Thessalonians were GROWING in FAITH (towards God) and LOVE (towards each other). (v. 3)
- (2 Corinthians 8:1-5) Ministering to others despite great tribulations!!!
- PERSECUTION, TRIALS and TRIBULATION is a PART of God's plan!

Promises of Persecution (1 Thessalonians 1:4)

- Consider carefully what God says about persecution:
 - Persecution is a MARK of true followers of Christ. (2 Timothy 3:12)

- Jesus Christ PROMISED His disciples that they would be HATED and PERSECUTED. (Matthew 10:22-24; John 15:19-21; Luke 6:22; John 17:14)
- Tribulations are a PART of LIFE for a Christian. (John 16:33)
- Christ warned those who would consider following Him that they MUST pick up their crosses and deny self in order to FOLLOW Him. (Luke 9:23)
- Promise of reward because of persecution:
 - (Matthew 5:10-12) The reward of persevering through persecution for Christ's sake is a GREAT REWARD in heaven.
 - (James 1:12) A crown of life is promised to those who endure.
- CONSIDER Hebrews 12:1-4. "You have not resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin."

Our RESPONSE to PERSECUTION:

- If we REVILE back (criticize, attack, speak evil of, revenge) we have sinned because we have not FOLLOWED the steps of Christ.. (1 Peter 2:21-23)
- Our response MUST be GREAT JOY!
 - (Matthew 5:10-12) – Rejoice GREATLY.
 - (Luke 6:23) – Leap for JOY!
 - (Acts 5:41) – Consider it a privilege to suffer for His sake. (See 1 Peter 4:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 1:5)
 - (James 1:2) – Consider ALL JOY! Tribulations produce perseverance in us!
 - (Romans 5:3) – GLORY in tribulations because they work patience in us!
 - (1 Corinthians 12:10) – Take PLEASURE in them because “when we are weak we are strong” – because we learn to TRUST in Christ alone.

Patience in Persecutions (v. 4)

- **PATIENCE**: self-control; self-restraint; persistence; perseverance; endurance; determination; resolve. Present tense: continual endurance!
- How to ENDURE persecutions for the glory of God:
 - ① **EXPECT** tribulation and persecutions. (2 Tim 3:12; Acts 9:16; John 16:33)
 - It is God's plan to PERFECT our FAITH. (1 Peter 1:7)
 - Our FAITH is more important to God than our bodies.

- We are called to IMITATE Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1; Eph 5:1-2) Consider Paul's example at Acts 14:19-23.

- ② **PRAY** for endurance – not necessarily freedom from and deliverance from. (James 1:12)
 - **PRAY** for your persecutors. (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28; Romans 12:14, 21; Luke 23:24; Acts 7:60; 1 Thessalonians 5:15;)
- ③ **LEARN** from the tribulations and persecutions. (Psalm 119:71, 67)
 - It is WRONG to ask God, “Why is this happening to me?” in the sense that we feel we do not deserve this trouble.
 - God is FAITHFUL in all His judgments. (Psalm 119:75)
 - We should ask, “What do you want be to learn from this tribulation, trouble, and/or persecution?” (Romans 5:1-4)
- ④ **REJOICE** that you suffer for His sake as He suffered for your sake.
 - 2 Corinthians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 12:10; 1 Peter 4:13; Acts 5:41
- ⑤ **MEDITATE** on the glories to come and how they make today's tribulations like nothing.
 - Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Hebrews 10:34
- ⑥ **REMEMBER** that it is God's place to bring vengeance not ours – and He has PROMISED that He will.
 - Nahum 1:2, 6; Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19

