

Devotional and Reading Plan for 2022, Week Forty-two

Week 42 — October 15th-21st. Matthew 19; Mark 10:1-31; Luke 10:-18:30; John 8:21-11:57

I was reading something today that described a disciple of Christ as one who follows behind Him with head bowed low wearing a long dark robe. That may display some kind of reverence, but I'm not sure it displays the passion and joy a disciple of Christ should have. This week's passages will describe various aspects of what it means to be a believer/disciple of Christ and how that plays out daily in our lives.

October 15th

Luke 10:1-11:13; John 8:21-59. "Disciple Disposition"

Today's passages describe the character of a disciple of Christ. One of the first things we read is that a disciple of Christ is one who is willing to go where God asks with a message God gives. A disciple is obedient and submissive. They are also a tool God uses to bring the good news to others. Secondly, we read that a disciple of Christ is in love with the Lord with all their heart, soul, strength and mind—that pretty much covers everything. The disciple is also to love their neighbor, and love them as the Samaritan who felt pity on another hurting person who was not even of the same race. He cared for the man and even provided the money for further care. Thirdly, a disciple is also a person of prayer. Their prayers are sincere and fervent.

Each of those three characteristics display a committed relationship with God. Everything they do is because of their love and reverence for their Lord. Does everything you do display that love?

October 16th

Luke 11:14-12:34. "Money and Hypocrites"

It is interesting how instruction concerning both money and hypocrisy come up in the same chapter (Lk. 12). Jesus discussed the topic of money more often than Heaven. Money is such an enormous part of our lives. It is in front of us daily at work, at the store and at home. It can get to a point where it consumes our thoughts as we think of what we could do with more of it. It has the potential of realigning our priorities and shifting our focus from where it should be. This is where the potential for hypocrisy is greatly increased. I have met many "disciples of Christ" who have been guilty of hypocrisy as they fell prey to greed, coveting or other detours incurred by money. If you are godly in church but at work you don't pay an employee as you should, they will soon conclude you have a problem with hypocrisy. If you say you love God but you're not willing to share with the poor you have a problem with hypocrisy.

October 17th

Luke 12:35-13:21; John 9. "Be Ready"

I love the way this passage starts out, "Be dressed for service and well prepared..." My dad retired from the airlines, and when I was young we would get an occasional special treat in the form of an airplane flight. As an employee's family we were required to dress up a little. I remember dressing in a nice button up and slacks before the flight. I didn't regret it a bit because I knew it meant something special was coming.

It should be exciting for us to get dressed and prepared for something special and extraordinary. And not only should we want to be prepared because of our excitement about Christ's coming because it is something special and extraordinary, but we are also encouraged to be prepared because there will be a reward in it. Jesus says, "There will be special favor for those who are ready and waiting for his return... whenever he comes, there will be special favor for his servants who are ready!" Be ready because something special is coming!

October 18th

Luke 13:22-14:24; John 10. "Like Sheep"

Things to know about sheep: Ranked as one of the most helpless animals on the earth; Have a number of enemies; No protection like a dog with sharp teeth or a deer with a fast foot, or a bee with a sharp stinger, or a skunk that can drive away any beast with his smell; It is not adapt at sensing danger; They are very easily frightened; They like to wander away from the flock, and have a terrible sense of direction when they get far away, but they will follow one another anywhere (even off a cliff).

Do we need a shepherd? Oh yes. But far more than just having a shepherd present is our need to listen to our Shepherd. The "true sheep" (10:8) are those who follow the good Shepherd and recognize His voice and listen to His voice. Do you recognize the good Shepherd's voice? I don't know that we will ever experience all of the benefits of knowing the good Shepherd. There are advantages today and 1,000 years from today for those who recognize His voice.

October 19th

Luke 14:25-17:10; John 11:1-37. "Weigh the Cost"

What will it cost to purchase that product? What will it cost to build that? What will it cost to speed through that school zone and get a ticket? What will it cost to go to war? Whether small or large items, we wisely weigh the cost first. Have you ever sat down and listed the pros and cons of a decision you are about to make? It's good to consider the advantages and disadvantages of a decision.

The beginning of today's passage clearly informs us that there is a cost associated with being a disciple of Christ. Jesus made the following statements to the crowd following Him: "Love Me more than your parents," "Carry your cross," "Follow Me," and "Give up everything for Me." He then concluded those words with the statement, "Don't begin until you count the cost." There are obvious advantages to being a disciple of Christ, but Jesus said there are things you may consider a disadvantage in being a disciple (cost, sacrifice, surrender, persecution, etc.). If you don't think being a disciple has cost you anything maybe you should explore your depth of submission.

October 20th

Luke 17:11-18:8; John 11:38-57. "Genuinely Grateful"

Out of ten lepers who were healed by Jesus only one came back to thank Him. Jesus even wondered about the other nine who were healed from the most awful skin disease imaginable. And then the one who came back was the foreigner, the Samaritan. Upon coming back, the Samaritan found out the importance of thanks and discovered that his faith had made him well.

Only grateful Christians grow! The magnitude of understanding the importance of this aspect is terrific. A professing disciple of Christ who is not truly grateful for God's forgiveness will struggle with guilt and also have difficulty forgiving others. A professing disciple of Christ who is not truly grateful for God's grace will never understand true humility. A professing disciple of Christ who is not truly grateful for God's purpose will never truly rest in the place God has presently placed him/her. A professing disciple of Christ who is not truly grateful for God's love... God's discipline... I could continue to add things to this list that a disciple needs to be genuinely grateful for if they are to grow.

October 21st

Matthew 19; Mark 10:1-31; Luke 18:9-30. "Sincerity Reflects Humility"

Another feature of a faithful disciple of Christ is sincerity. The story Jesus tells in today's reading was told "to some who had great self-confidence and they scorned everyone else." One, a religious leader stands to pray, and what a prayer, even condemning everyone else and lifting himself up with a long list of credentials. The second, a despised tax collector, prays with his head bowed low in humility and reverence asking sorrowfully for mercy from God for his sin. He bared his heart. Jesus said the tax collector was the one who went home justified before God, and He then goes on to say the proud will be humbled and the humbled will be honored.

Therefore, a disciple of Christ who comes before the Lord (and others) transparent, genuine, authentic, sincere and honest will be the one who also reveals true humility. Why? Because the thing that keeps us from being transparent, genuine, authentic, sincere and honest is pride.