

Art not thou one of his disciples

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[0 : 00] John chapter 18 and to verse 17. John chapter 18 and verse 17. Then said the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He said, I am not.

Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? Before Jesus died, he submitted himself to a series of court appearances, both ecclesiastical and civil. It was necessary for the civil court to pronounce the death sentence demanded by the ecclesiastical court.

And here in this chapter we are permitted to look in on his ecclesiastical trial that was held before Caiaphas the high priest.

And our informant is John who knew the high priest and managed to get into the trial. But the person we are concerned with here, Peter, we are told in verse 16, stood at the door without. That is, he stood there until through the good offices of John, he too was admitted.

It seems that John went into the court, the court house itself, while Peter stood in the courtyard where he warmed himself because it was cold.

[1 : 37] And it was while he was there in the courtyard, along with others around the fire, that he denied his law. What a tragic situation we see here in this chapter.

And also, of course, in the account that the other evangelists did. That inside the court, there was Jesus making his grave confession of his divine sonship.

And outside there, in the courtyard, was Peter making his grave denial of the Son of God. Peter, I know not the man.

Peter was felled and floored by a girl who put him into a state of panic by this question which he addressed.

Are you not also one of his disciples? It sent him reeling and led him to this denial. Now, I want to take these words that raise the whole question of Peter's discipleship and allow them to raise the same question with ourselves.

[2 : 51] I want to speak not so much of Peter's denial as of our own discipleship. And I want to think of Christian discipleship in a threefold way.

First, to think of the making and then the marking and then the marrying of a Christian disciple.

First of all, the making of a Christian disciple. How does it come about that a person can be one of this man's disciples?

How is that possible? Now, let me remember right away what a disciple is. Whether he is a disciple of Christ or a disciple of Karl Marx or a disciple of Moon of the Moonites.

He is a learner. He is a pupil. And he sits at the feet of his master whom he admires and by whom he is taught. A disciple is one who follows the teaching of another, whoever the other may be.

[3 : 59] Whether it is John or the Pharisees, for they have their disciples too. But there is much more to a Christian disciple than that. We accept Christ's teaching for sure.

But that does not in itself make us disciples. Many people believe Christ's teaching. Many people have been brought up on nothing else than Christ's teaching. all their days under the sound of Christ's teaching.

But they do not profess themselves to be true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. To be true disciples we must indeed accept and receive his teaching. But we go further and through the influence and benefit of his teaching we receive his person and his work.

We must be involved with the Lord Jesus experimentally and savingly. He must not only be our teacher and our leader but our savior.

And no one is a true disciple of Christ who does not have Christ as his savior. Well now how does this come about? And it's most important that we should know for these two reasons apart from many others.

[5 : 12] One is this. But the last charge that Jesus gave to the apostles before he ascended was go and make disciples of all nations.

Make disciples of all nations. Discipleship is at the very heart of the Great Commission. And this indicates therefore the sheer importance of it.

And for that reason we ought to know what it is that brings a person into the state of discipleship. And also for this other reason that in the book of Acts the word disciple is used synonymously with the word Christian.

So that a disciple is essentially a Christian believer. Well now what goes into the making of a Christian believer?

What goes into the making of a disciple of Christ? Do disciples make disciples? Or what? It's the or what? We are concerned about because the other thing doesn't arrive.

[6 : 24] And there are so many ways of explaining how one enters into discipleship and how one becomes a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look at it this way. For one thing, we are made disciples not by our own works but by Christ's work.

We are disciples and followers and believers not by our works for him but because of his once for all work for us.

Now I think it's quite alarming to realize the number of people who although they should know better cling tenaciously to a doctrine of work and to a doctrine of good works because they have done this and that and have avoided doing the other then they feel entitled to be considered disciples and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But that kind of teaching will simply not stand up against scripture. You cannot you cannot argue like that in the case of what the Bible says. And what does the Bible say?

The Bible says not by works of righteousness which we have done but by his mercy. He said that where do you get that in the Bible? You get that in Titus chapter 3 and verse 5 and it's as clear as a sun there not by works of righteousness which we have done not by doing this and that and avoiding doing the other works of righteousness but by his mercy he makes disciples of us.

[8 : 03] And notice that the one who said this in Titus 3 verse 5 was one who whose entire religion was at one time was at one time built on a doctrine of good works of works of righteousness.

It is the apostle Paul who says not by works of righteousness which he have done but by his mercy he saved us.

And my dear friends the once for all work of Jesus Christ cannot be called anything less than mercy as Paul calls it. For that once for all work is a work of mercy and mercy indicates that there is no there is nothing on our side that deserves it.

It comes free to us by the grace and mercy of God and it is that mercy that is his delight. And again that same writer whose religion at one time was built entirely on good works that same writer says we are his workmanship discipleship comes from his hand his hand our discipleship is divinely wrought it is skillfully made and it is permanently there for once it is given it can be taken from us it will never die but it is not by works that we have done for him but that once for all work that he has done for us.

then we can put it this way too that our discipleship is not by our feelings but by our faith Jesus being said to us.

[9 : 57] Now there can be no true change in our spiritual nature without our feelings being involved. Feelings and emotions have been given to us by God and to become disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ calls for a response from our feelings and from our emotions.

You see it is a traumatic thing for example for a person who has been living a life of utter degradation to be lifted into a life of sonship and heirship and joint heirship for Christ.

His feelings and emotions must be deeply stirred at the change. But my dear friends the lift into sonship and discipleship is not by his feelings it's because of faith.

Our involvement with Christ is a faith involvement. Our union with Christ is a faith union and discipleship is by grace through faith and that's the abiding apostolic pattern.

and he who believes not far from being a disciple is condemned already. Let us not rest on our feelings although feelings are there but faith by grace are you saved through faith.

[11 : 26] And then this other way of putting it that it's not by growth but by conversion. we become disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ not by growth but by conversion.

No one grows naturally into the kingdom of God. No one grows naturally into discipleship. Now there are many people I know and they believe that we just grow up to be Christians.

We just grow into it if that's what we want and if that's where our interest lies we just grow into discipleship because of our Christian environment our Christian upbringing our Christian homes and families our Christian baptism.

Nothing dramatic needs to take place within us. We just grow up and do it if that's where our interest lies. Now again you see one of great difficulties in putting that against scripture because there's no ground in scripture to support that for one moment.

Grow we do that growth comes after not before. Growth is never a prerequisite for discipleship.

[12 : 36] Growth is never a precondition. You see there can't be no growth until first of all there's planting. And it's that conversion that the seed of faith is planted.

and whatever we say about faith in our definition of faith in our understanding of faith whatever we say we must not omit this supremely important fact that faith is a donation.

Faith is a gift. It is God giving us something we never had in our lives before. And it's ours at conversion. Now discipleship requires not only the work of Christ for us but the work of Christ but the work of the Spirit in us.

And this Holy Spirit is the author of conversion. For conversion is the act of God the Holy Spirit who turns us Godward and Christward.

And the result is that it's also our act in turning to God from Idy to serve the living and the true God. And it's this turning about through the gracious work of the Spirit of God within us.

[13 : 56] That is conversion. And no one as a disciple who has not been turned by the Spirit of God and given new life and brought into a saving relationship with Christ.

Bishop Ryle of Liverpool says conversion is a scriptural thing. It's a real thing. It's a necessary thing. it's a possible thing and it's a happy thing.

And then he says I shall have written in vain if I leave that last point untouched. The notion that conversion is a miserable melancholy and sorrowful thing is very common and very mischievous and I protest against it with all my heart.

It's a blessed thing. the happy man the happy man is the man in whom the work of conversion has been wrought and whose consequent discipleship has been established and established forever.

And no one is a disciple who has not been converted. the making of a disciple. It's not by work, it's not by feelings, it's not by growth, it's by grace.

[15 : 19] God working enough to will and to do this good pleasure. Let's pass on now to the second thing. I notice the marking of a disciple, the marking of a disciple.

You are a disciple of this man, are you not? The girl said to Peter, you were with him in the garden, were you not?

You're speech betrayed, you, does it not? You see, the man who warmed himself of the fire was a masked man and so should every disciple.

Indeed, so is every true disciple. The work of conversion cannot be hid. The workmanship of God cannot be covered up.

The gift and presence of faith cannot be ignored. If it's there, it will be seen. And for anyone to boast, and some people do, for anyone to boast that no one in the company knew that he or she was a Christian, is nothing to boast about, but to be profoundly ashamed about.

[16 : 38] Well, now, what are some of the marks? Well, the two disciple is known for one thing by the company he keeps. By the company he keeps. The girl said to Peter, did not I see you in the garden with him?

With him, and of course Peter was there, and Peter was with the Lord Jesus on many occasions, and Peter was with the others who loved the Lord Jesus on many occasions. How important it is that we be in good company, for that can make odd break if we are not.

When Peter was released from prison, what did he do? He went to the house where he knew there would be people praying for him. He went to the house of John Mark, and when Rhoda slammed the door in his face, it wasn't to keep him from knowing that people were praying for him inside.

It was because that was the, because the very thing that Peter wanted and the very thing that strengthened Peter's heart was the fact that people were praying for him.

People who were like-minded were remembering him in his time of need. And again we are told that when the disciples were let go, they went unto their own company.

[17 : 56] They went to their own company. Let our friendship not be the friendship of mammon or the mammon of unrighteousness, but let our friendship be with the friend of the friend of God.

And that in itself will mark us to be the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ if we identify ourselves with those who are friends of the Lord. And then the disciples also know not only by the company he takes, but also by the stand he takes.

Peter was with Jesus in the garden, the place of Jesus agony and sorrow and bloody sweat. And Peter was also with the Lord Jesus at his arrest and trying to defend his master by drawing his sword.

and after Peter's restoration, Jesus did not have a more loyal, he didn't have a truer friend or follower than Peter.

For Peter was as good as his name, Petros, a rock. And Peter was indeed rock-like and dependable and was prepared to stand for the Lord.

[19 : 09] and my dear friends, this is that quality that is always needed in the church in that church of which Peter was a foundation stone. Secret discipleship is not to be admired, but open concession is something that is pleasing to God.

True disciples will go to him without the camp, bearing his reproach, and that simply means we dare to be a Daniel, and if necessary, we dare to stand alone, but stand we must.

But I think there's something else. We are also known as a disciple of Christ simply by the kind of people we are.

By the kind of people we are. There was something about Peter's person that marked him out. And so they said to him, you are a Galilean, are you not?

You're not told how they were not told explicitly how they knew it. It may have been perhaps because of the way he was dressed. It may have been something in his demeanor, in his deportment, in his manner, that marked him out.

[20 : 20] But certainly what did mark him out was his speech. As Matthew tells us, thy speech berates you. Your accent gives you away. You have the brogue of a Galilean.

You have the brogue of a Galilean. Now one of the marks of being followers of the Galilean is just the kind of people we are.

Not doing this mighty work or the other mighty work or taking this particular stand or the other, but just the kind of people we are in our day-to-day living. By our demeanor, by our lifestyle, by our consistent walk with God, but also by our speech.

Peter's speech gave him away that he was a Galilean, that he was a follower of the Lord Jesus. I wonder if that's true with us. Does our speech give it away?

What does the Apostle Paul say about speech? He says this, let your speech be with grace. Colossians 4, 6. What is, speak the truth in love.

[21 : 25] Avoid, avoid harshness and abusiveness in your speech. Speak the truth and let your speech be with grace. Gracious.

And then he says, let your speech be always seasoned with salt. In other words, let it be clean and pure. Let it not be insipid or empty, but helpful.

And then Paul says in Ephesians 4, 29, let no corrupt speech come out of your mouth. You see, by our conversation, by our speech, by the very way in which we speak, we can be known as disciples of Christ.

But above all, remember Christ's supreme mark of discipleship. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have loved the one for the other.

And you see, if we have, then we will not sin against one another without tongues, but we will use it rather to glorify God. The mark, if we are true disciples, there are marks upon us that indicate our discipleship and that it is of the Lord.

[22 : 36] And finally, the marring, the marring of a disciple. Peter denied the Lord Jesus. Peter disavowed any knowledge of the Lord.

Peter dissociated himself from the Lord Jesus Christ. Now notice, first of all, the nature of this marring, the nature of the marring, that which spoiled his life and his witness and his discipleship. For one thing, he lied. You're one of this man's disciples? I'm not. That was a lie. It wasn't an unconscious lie.

It was a deliberate lie. He was aware of what he was saying. There was a lie in his right hand as he warmed himself there at the fire in the courtyard. And the fire in the courtyard reflected the fire of

guilt that must have been burning in his own soul.

And then he, one of the other evangelists tells us that he cursed and he swore. And this never adorned a person's profession but this forgiveness. Again, Peter was ashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[23 : 44] He didn't want to know. He didn't want to be known as a follower of Christ. He was ashamed of Christ. And any who are ashamed of Christ and any who are believers and yet are ashamed to profess him in public, remember this, that he is not ashamed to call us brothers.

He is not ashamed to call us brothers. And yet again Peter was afraid. He was afraid of his own skin and to save his own skin he declaimed any knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

Now I believe that such marring and marring it in. I believe that such marring does not unmake one's discipleship but it scars it, it disfigures it and it brings it into disrepute.

The nature of the marring. You'll notice too the sea of the marring. This wasn't just a private matter, it was a public matter. Peter denied his Lord in the faith of Christ's enemies, in the courtyard there where there were men around and others, in the faith of his enemies.

It wasn't only the girl who asked the question who heard Peter curse and swear and deny the Lord, but others round about. May God keep us and preserve us from this.

[25 : 11] It's one thing to scar ourselves, it's another thing to be responsible for scarring the church and for bringing, and for letting down the entire side and for giving the opportunity of the enemies of the cross of Christ to rejoice when they see us letting the side down.

It was public and not private. And then notice finally the accompaniment of the marring and the scarring. The accompaniment was this, that Peter went out and wept bitterly.

He went out and wept bitterly. We're not told one, two, three, four, why he did. But it's not difficult to give reasons why it was that Peter wept bitterly.

I believe he wept for one thing because of the nature of his fall. He denied the best of all masters.

He turned his back in the hour of Christ's need, humanly speaking, on the Lord Jesus.

That must have cut deeply into his conscience. And I think too that he wept because of the cause of his fall. Because of the cause of his fall. He fell, he was floored because of a girl.

[26 : 31] Floored by a girl who didn't know perhaps what it was all about. Floored by a girl who perhaps couldn't write her own name. and when he thought of that how he must have wept with frustration that his fall could have been brought about by that girl.

He wept too I believe at the thought of having broken his word to Jesus so soon after he had given it to Jesus. A short time ago he said to Jesus I'll never deny you.

But that's just what he did. And then finally there was the Luke. the Lord turned and looked upon Peter after the cock had crowed.

That was the last straw. He went out and he wept bitterly. I wonder if the Lord is looking at someone here today and wondering if you're going to deny him when the opportunity comes next Lord's day to profess him at his table.

He has saved you but so far you have not professed him and the Lord is looking at you. Through his word today and wondering if you're going to deny him further. Well when we repent of our sins like Peter of those sins that grieve the Lord Jesus Christ may our repentance may the tears of our repentance remove our disfigurement may they wash away our detachment and may they restore what has been marred.

[28 : 15] But if we have been denying the Lord then whatever else we do we need to repent and may the tears of repentance be a means of restoring us and removing the scarring and the marring.

Let us take this for our encouragement my dear friends that with all our failure with all our failure our denial and so on we are in the hands of the potter against whom we sin and he is the one who alone can make us new and can give us a clean heart.

It was the potter who restored Peter. He said to Peter when you are converted when you are restored you will strengthen the brethren and Peter has been strengthening his brethren ever since through his writings.

But although he denied the Lord the Lord had mercy on him and restored him. He restoreth my soul. That's our great comfort.

Let us go to him today for restoration and then go to him without the count bearing his reproach. And so the question here is art thou not also this man's disciples?

[29 : 32] Art thou not also one of this man's disciples? You are one of this man's disciples? That's the question. Now there are those who say yes when they ought to say no because their lives show that their profession is counterfeit.

And there are those who say no and they say no truly because they are not and don't want to be one of this man's disciples.

But there are those who say no when they ought to say yes like Peter. And there are those who say yes and they say that truly because they are.

Now where do you belong? can we say with the family truly I am your servant and the son of your hand means you have loosed my bond.

And when our bonds have been loosed we are brought into discipleship and we become true followers of the Lord.

[30 : 52] Can we say then this morning truly I am your servant. You have loosed my bond. Art thou one of this man's disciples.

If so let us show it on a coming Lord's day when we remember the Lord's death till he comes. Let us pray. Our gracious God bless thy word thy word to us thou knowest our heart thou knowest the answer we may well give to the question.

We pray that thou wilt help us O Lord our God to give the answer that says truly I am thy servant for thou thou hast loosed my bond. I am thy workmanship created anew by Jesus Christ.

May this be true of us true of every one of us and help us Lord if it is so then to profess it to make it public and to show forth the praises of him who has called us from darkness into his marvelous light.

Help us to learn from Peter and help us to be encouraged by the fact that from the depth of his denial Peter through repentance was restored and we have one the same one who is able and ready to restore us when we repent and forsake our sake.

[32 : 27] Draw near to us we pray O Lord. We ask thy blessing on the communion season in the congregation we pray that thou will come in thy mighty power and glorify thy name in the preaching of the word and in the administration of the sacrament.

May it be to the praise of the glory of thy grace and may all who profess thee be strengthened and find the sacrament to be a means of grace a means whereby faith is deepened whereby love is strengthened whereby we glorify the Lord.

Plant us then thy presence and give us the blessing we need at this time for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake. Amen.