

youngsters are remembered as the first Christian martyrs of Uganda. By 1887 the end of the first decade of the church hundreds had died, there were martyrs out of every village that had believers. They were only beginners, they knew little theology and some could barely read but they had fallen in love with Jesus Christ, life had taken on a completely new meaning, the value of living and living eternally had been discovered, they were not hugging their lives but ready to give them up for Jesus.

During these dangerous days there was an immediate and steady increase in the number of those embracing Christ.

Now that is just a little slice of the history of the church in one place at one time. But that kind of story goes on and on and on.

Little boys, little girls, men, women, old folks, people throughout the history of the church who have been unashamed of Jesus Christ, who have been willing to confess Him, as verse 32 says before men. No matter how hostile those men might have been. No matter if the cost was their own life, and that says our Lord marks a true disciple. Not necessarily educated in theology, maybe not a Christian very long, but nonetheless willing to confess Christ before men at any cost. That marks a true disciple. On the other hand, says our Lord in verse 33, one who denies Christ before men, marks one who will also be denied before God, a false disciple.

Now what is the Lord saying to us in these two verses? How does this really relate to us? What does it mean to confess and be confessed, to deny and be denied? people, this is the basic message that needs to be preached in every place where Jesus Christ is named, this is a message that calls so called Christians to self examination. It is a message that says look at yourself' in your life and confrontation with the world, are you confessing or you...are you denying? For your eternal destiny depends on that.

Let's back up and see if we can't understand the context in which our Lord speaks. In verses 24 to 42 you have one great section on discipleship. And I told you before that this is really the summation of all of our Lord's teaching on the subject, the greatest single sec-

tion on discipleship in all of the Bible. It sums up everything the Lord wants to say, as it were about discipleship, and He has a marvelous masterful way of summation, it's all right here. I also told you that this is some of the favorite teaching of our Lord, teaching which He repeats in many other places and many other times. Little pieces and bits of this teaching are here and there all over the gospel record, sometimes with a little different nuance of meaning and application. but this is the heart and soul of His instruction on discipleship.

Now let me set the context for you even broader than just this particular message beginning in verse 24. The 10th chapter in total is our Lord's preparation and sending of the twelve, and so it is in the context of the training of the twelve that He gives this general teaching about discipleship. He starts out for example in chapter 10 with just the twelve, and then the chapter begins to telescope, and it telescopes outward until finally it embraces all men in all times, in all places who will name the name of Jesus Christ. It starts with the twelve and even names them. But it begins to move outward, and I think the key is verse 25, the end of the verse mentions, "till the Son of man be come." In other words it talks about the second coming, and that is the key to seeing this instruction as pressing all the way through all time until Jesus comes again. Some of what He says in the first 25 verses is explicitly to the twelve, some of it begins to reach beyond them, some of it is explicitly for that time and that place, and some of it begins to reach beyond, but by the time you hit verse 24 it is a full-orbed general instruction on the matter of being a genuine disciple. He uses general terms such as, the disciple, or the servant, or whosoever, or he that, and He says, he that, he that, he that over and over, it could be any he, any whosoever, anyone who calls himself a servant or a follower, a disciple of Jesus Christ.

And so in a sense then we're looking at something that was for them and for us, what a marvelous thing that the Lord should have such a clear word on discipleship that it embraces all people in all time and all places. This is the genius of Scripture, it knows no limitation as to date, it touches us as profoundly as it touched them in their own lifetime.

Now basically speaking it is written to a disciple, verse 24, and a

servant of the Lord. That would be anyone who follows Jesus Christ.

Anyone who lines up to go after Jesus Christ. Anyone who decides that he wants to belong to Christ. Now having said that, it is important that we learn the marks of a disciple so we can tell the true from the false, right? And what are they? Well the hallmark is in verse 24 and 28. "The disciple is not above his teacher, the servant is not above his lord. It is enough," in other words it is sufficient, "for the disciple that he be like his teacher, and the servant like his lord." And you remember we talked about Luke 8:40 where it says, and when a disciple is fully matured he will be like his teacher.

The goal then of a true disciple is Christ-likeness, that's the basic hallmark. First John 2:0, "If we say we abide in him then we ought to walk as he walked." In other words if you say you are a Christian it ought to be manifest in the way you live, right? And if it isn't then you're not very convincing, and you may not be a Christian at all.

This is the message of the Scripture, I'm absolutely appalled at how many people miss this message. But the Scripture is inevitably saying, you say you follow Christ then show me your Christ-likeness. Is His character manifest in you? It has to be if you're genuine, it has to be. For you are in the process of becoming like your Lord, it doesn't mean that there aren't some lapses, oh there are. There are times when we fail but there is a flow and a pattern of Christ likeness, there.

So the first thing is that we are called to be like Him, that is the meaning of discipleship. So when somebody comes along and says as J.p. Murray of Trinity College Dublin once said, "I am a Christian but inoffensively so." What do you mean by that? Well I mean that I don't want it to interfere with anything. Then that's not what Christianity is. There is this basic Biblical principle that if you follow Jesus Christ, you will be becoming more and more like Him.

And if you're not then you may not be a Christian at all. It's also possible that you might be a wayward disobedient Christian, and this might be just a seasonal thing for you. But there's also the possibility you're not even in the kingdom.

Second element of this first hallmark, to be like Christ is to be treated like Christ was treated. Look at verse 25, the second half,

and if they called the master of the house Beelzebub or Satan, you shouldn't be surprised if they call you evil names as well. In other words, if they say that your leader, the worthy one, the highest one, the glorious one is Satan, if they don't have any compunction about saying that about a perfect person, you think they're going to have any compunctions about condemning you as an imperfect one? And if they call your leader Satan, don't you think they're going to identify you who are less than he is with the same system? They're going to blast you as they blasted him. So we see two things that mark a disciple, one, he is like Christ, two, he inevitably will...treat...be treated as Christ was treated. Now that's the heart of the text. Jesus is sending out the twelve and He basically...He says to them, the world is hostile. Go back to verse 18, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." Verse 17, "Beware of men; they will scourge you. They will bring you before their kings and their governors." "They will deliver you up." Verse 10. Verse 21, your own family will kill you or deliver you to be killed. Verse 22, "You will be hated." Verse 25, "You will be persecuted." "But the disciple is not above his lord." That is your goal is to be like Him and in being like Him you will inevitably be treated like He was treated.

May I hasten to add that the more Christ like you become the more of a problem you become. It may be manifest in your family as we see down in verse 84 when we'll get to that, He came to bring a sword to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother etc, etc. "And a man's foes may be they of his own household."

It may be in your job, in your school, in your neighborhood, in your relationships, inevitably the more Christ like you become the more you become an irritant to the system. So a genuine mark of a disciple is that he is like Christ so much so that he tends to be treated like Jesus Christ was treated, and that simply means beloved that you cannot survive living the way the world expects people to live. And if you do there is no genuineness there. So discipleship involves an identification with Christ in His person and His rejection. I think Paul summed it up so wonderfully in, in Philippians 5 he said, "That I may know him," first, "the power of his resurrection." That was the

positive identification, wasn't it? That I may know the fullness of His power, His person, His life, and the fellowship of His what?

Sufferings, that was the negative part of it, "being made conformable unto his death." I want to be identified with His power and His person, and I know I will be identified also with His pain and His suffering. That's how it is for a true disciple. We are like the Lord and we are to be treated like the Lord was treated.

All right now that puts us in the middle of a hostile environment.

And I really think that we need to understand this and the tendency for us is to try to make things comfortable and make things easy and, and soothe over the waters and never be confrontive and never be bold and so forth. And that is really not what the Lord wants, that is the picture of an untrue disciple. Frankly I feel that we go back Matthew, you know where Jesus said, "The way is narrow, and the gate is narrow, and few there be that (what? that) find it." There are very few people He says in effect that are genuinely saved, there are masses of people identifying with the movement but you can pick out the truly saved because they are confronting their world, and they are being treated as their Master was treated. Not necessarily constantly, prolifically and totally but there are times of persecution, times of confrontation, and they respond as a genuine disciple.

Now there are five marks of a true disciple. The Lord then goes on to give these in the section all the way to verse 42. Now we're not going to be able to cover all of those in one lesson, maybe we'll cover them in five lessons, I'm not sure. I've already done the whole chapter, I just have trouble getting it all out, and I really don't know till I get up here where I'm going to end. Some of you are aware of that. Number one we said, a true disciple fears not the world. A true disciple...this is the one we talked about in our last discussion, fears not the world. Verse 28 to 31. Now He says you're going to be in a hostile environment, you're going to be in a difficult place. I believe there were times in, in America years back when we were so Christian in our orientation that this was somewhat lessened and mitigated, but I think it's going to become more and more a problem.

I received a letter last week that told me...it was written by The

American Civil Liberties Union, and it came...I don't know why I got it, I think somebody passed it on to me, I'm not on their mailing list by any stretch of the imagination. But I received this letter and what it said in there was, watch out for the Christians, they are deadly. If they had their way homosexuals and abortionists would all be killed, and it went on for like five pages warning people about Christians, and about people with morality.

So the battlelines are being drawn. And it may be that the protectiveness that we've known in our Christian society here is lost in our post Christian society, and we may see a little more of the kind of heat. And by the way, may I confess to you? That I, I've been here twelve and a half years and secretly, at least for the last six or seven, down deep inside I have wished for all out persecution on the church. You say, what in the world are you wishing that for? Now I want you to know I have not prayed that yet, that is not a prayer request. The Lord is listening, He knows. That is not a prayer request. But there's something in me that wishes that, you know why? Because the heat would blow away the chaff, and then we'd know what we really had, and we could mark out the ones that weren't saved and go after them. And we could find out who's really committed, it would all clear, see? As I say, I haven't quite come to a request yet, time will tell. But we see that the mark of a true disciple is that he doesn't fear the world. And He gives three reasons, and He encourages them to show their genuineness in this way, in verse 28 He says, fear not, in verse 28 He says, fear not, and in verse 31 He says, fear not. And you remember what we went over? He says don't be afraid, first of all because of vindication.

Someday the truth will be revealed, verse 28. Someday what is hidden will be made manifest. In other words God's going to overturn all the inequities and He's going to vindicate the righteous. Don't be afraid of the world, the world will be condemned and you will be glorified, you will be lifted up, you will be honored, you will be exalted. If you just have an eternal perspective, see? The true disciple has come out of this world, his affections are not of the world, he is transcending the world, he is a new creation, he's living in the heavenlies, his citizenship is there and he has an eternal perspective

and he's not afraid of the world because he knows ultimately it'll be overturned and he'll be vindicated. He lives for eternity's value.

Secondly, is what I called veneration in verse 2? He says, "What I tell you in (in) darkness, speak in light; what you hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops. And don't fear them" that is men "who can only kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul;" or the real part of man, "but fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." And that is just a comparative title for God, don't fear men, fear God. And I'll tell you something, if you truly fear God you don't fear men. What can men do to you? They can only kill the body at the worst and God is the one who controls eternity and the soul of men. In other words what He's saying is instead of fearing men, fear God. And it comes down to that, doesn't it? Let's say you're in a situation where you know you ought to speak for Christ, you know you ought to stand up for Christ, you know you ought to say something for Christ, there's something going on that isn't right and you know you ought to confront it. Maybe it's at your job or in your classroom or whatever, and you know you ought to do what's right and so the fear of God says, I must speak for God, the fear of men says, shut up, don't make a fool of yourself. And it comes right down to that, and you can determine by how you reacted whether you fear men more or God more. But a true disciple fears God, because he knows the worst that men could do is with the body and God is the one who controls eternal souls.

And then the third thing, He says is we don't fear the world because we know in the end God values us more than anything. Two sparrows, He even knows though they're worth a penny every time one of them hops or dies, the hair of your head, He's got it all labeled and numbered.

Now if He cares about sparrows, don't you think He cares about you?

So on the one hand we don't fear because of promise. On the other hand we don't fear because of power. On the other hand we don't fear because of protection. God cares. And so the first mark of a true disciple is he doesn't fear the world, he'll stand up and boldly speak, he'll be confronted with the evil system and He'll confess Christ.

Now, let's go to the second one, verse S2 and S3. I call this a true disciple favors the Lord. Fears not the world and favors the Lord. In other words when it comes down to the decision he'll favor the Lord. Verse S2, just one word, "therefore." "Whosoever, therefore."

What do you mean, therefore? Well it's all built on the previous passage that's why I had to go over it. If you know that you have the promise of God for vindication, if you know you have the power of God, and that He is the one you truly venerate and fear, if you know you have the protection of God therefore you would be willing before men to confess Jesus Christ without fear, right? So He says, where..."Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, who is in heaven." You mean you have to confess before men to be a true Christian? Sure, because in order to be a true Christian you have to believe one, that in the end God will gain the victory and lift up His people. And you believe that God has a greater power than men, and you believe that God is a Father who cares for His children, and if you believe that then you're going to be willing to confess Christ. That's just basic. If you've got the right doctrine of God, you're going to be anxious to confess Jesus as your Lord, and get in on that blessedness. And so in view of God's promise and power and protection, what could be more reasonable for a disciple of Christ than to fearlessly confess Jesus before men no matter how hostile they might be. Any shame would be overcome by eternal glory. Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because I know it's the power of God unto salvation." I'm not ashamed of it because I know its power. He was not ashamed also because he knew God would protect him. I mean after all he'd been stoned one time and God raised him from the dead. If God didn't want him dead he wouldn't be dead. And so there's the real heart of discipleship.

Now I want to look at verses 32 and 33 and it's a very simple word that I want to share with you this morning, and I didn't even plan to do this and in the first service I found myself doing it for forty five minutes and so I just figured the Lord was in it. Now if I can remember what I said I'll say it again. The real heart of discipleship is to be committed to being like Jesus Christ, and to being like Jesus

Christ means to be being treated as He was treated and that means having to face a hostile world and to face it fearlessly, and in the midst of it to be willing to confess before men, Jesus as your Lord, and have the confidence that He'll do the same before the Father.

Now verse 32, confess. What does that mean? That means to affirm, to acknowledge, to agree. The idea is a verbal statement of identification, faith, confidence' trust, belief in Jesus as your Lord, and subsequent life that follows that confession. You confess before men. You can confess with your mouth, as Romans 10, and you confess with your life as you live out that confession. God will protect His own, God will care for His own, God is the ultimate judge of the earth and so we have no excuse for shrinking from our duty through the fear of men.

This goes for times of persecution as well as good times. Whether you're standing in front of a, an agreeing group and confessing the Lord, whether you're standing in front of a neutral group or whether you're standing in front of an utterly hostile group, a true Christian confesses. Now look at verse S2, here's the key, "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me" here it comes, "before men." In front of men literally it says. Standing up in front of men. This emphasizes the public character of the confession, and it cannot be reduced in any way. You cannot be saved genuinely unless you are one who does this. If someone is not willing to do this, if you think you're some secret Christian and nobody knows you've missed it folks. Romans 10, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, having believed in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be (what?) saved. For with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

It says, as well as with the heart, where there is faith. There must be this verification. Now this is not a work of man, this is a work of God. Some people say, that's work's righteousness if you have to confess, if you have to do anything. Listen, that's what the Bible says. The Bible says it's all of God, and the Bible says you must confess with your mouth, therefore confessing with your mouse... mouth must be the work of God. And so it's going to cost us something to be a Christian, it must be public, it must be genuine, and its

genuineness is marked by our willingness to confess, to affirm and acknowledge that we belong to Christ no matter how hostile the elements around us.

In First John 4:15, "Whosoever" just listen to it, "shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God." How do you know a true Christian? Well he's one who confesses Jesus as the Son of God. How does he confess? With his mouth and with his life. he makes that confession. That's the mark of a true disciple. Sometimes people say, well so and so you know once walked the aisle or once did this or did that but now their life gives no evidence. Then they are not a genuine disciple, for this is the mark, this is the mark. In Revelation 2:13 He says to the church at Pergamus, "I know thy works, where thou dwellest, you dwell where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast my name, and have not denied my faith, even in those days in which Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you."

He says, you have named My name and you have never denied My faith even in the midst of persecution when somebody died. And that's the point, that's how you tell a true believer, the hallmark of genuineness. You see a kind of a converse illustration, Second Timothy, I'll just mention this to you but Paul says, "I'm now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I've fought a good fight, finished the course, kept the faith;" talking about the warfare and the struggle and all, and he says in verse 10, "That Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." Here was a guy who identified with Paul, followed along, said he was a disciple, but when it got tough and the heat was on he was gone. True disciples confess the Lord in the face of any hostility at all. This is a good place for us to examine ourselves, you know we say to ourselves, boy I, I'm...find myself ashamed often to speak of Christ in my family or here and there, I wonder what I'd do in the middle of a persecution.

Well that's a good point, maybe you'd better examine your heart, see if you're really genuine. Now may I hasten to add that there are lapses in all of our lives as Christians where we fail to live up to the standard, right? I mean that's what forgiveness is all about, if the Lord said, all right if you're a genuine disciple this is how it'll be, and

you were always that way you'd be perfect. There will be lapses, can you think of one classic individual who was a true disciple but lapsed into denying his Lord? Of course. Peter. He denied his Lord, but you know what his reaction was? Ha. he went out and what? "Wept bitterly." His heart was broken, because he knew the standard and he was broken when he failed to live up to it. Then there was Timothy, imagine Timothy the protege of Paul, the finest that he ever disciplined, the man who was to take over, the pastor who followed him into the church at Ephesus, this incredible young man with all the talents and the gifts that God could ever give a young man, and Paul writes to him in Second Timothy chapter 1 verse 8 and says, Timothy, stop being ashamed of our Lord. How would you like to have to hear that from the one who disciplined you? Stop being ashamed of our Lord, and of me, His prisoner. Timothy had a lapse.

Peter had a lapse. I've had them, you've had them. But still there's a turning around, and Timothy turned around and Peter wept bitterly and he turned around. A true disciple confesses. As it says in Philippians 2:11, "Confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, to the glory of God." That is the mark of a genuine Christian, a willingness to speak no matter how hostile the environment might be. Now, you look at your life and you're the only one that can really tell. I don't know you well enough, cause I don't know what goes on inside. That is all of you, some of you I know. But you need to ask yourself the question and it's a fair question as Paul said to the Corinthians, "Let a man examine himself." Take inventory. Are you willing to stand up and confess Jesus Christ? If you will, look at the end of verse 52, "He will confess you before the Father, who is in heaven."

What does that mean? That means He will say to God on the day of judgment, this one belongs to Me. He will affirm His loyalty to you as you have affirmed your loyalty to Him. Now this is the way our Lord is looking at true discipleship, and I really think in many ways this, itself was the first of many pointed messages that...messages that should have pierced deeply into the heart of one named Judas Iscariot, for he was the false among the true. But the Lord says, that's the one I will confess before my Father in heaven. You can tell a true Christian because they're willing to confess Christ, oh

lowship and we thank you for being able to fellowship around the truth. We confess Jesus as Lord and we confess that we're His slaves. What a privilege. As slaves in the Roman Empire who happen to have the privilege of being slaves of Caesar, which speak frequently of the dignity and the honor, being slaves of the one who reigned. We speak with honor and dignity, being chosen and bought to be slaves of the One who reigns over all, King of kings and Lord of lords. May we be obedient slaves, may we be slaves who do what our Lord commands and in all things endeavor to be pleasing to Him, the One who chose us, the One who bought us with His own precious blood.

Lord, thank You for this great high calling. Thank You that we're Your friends, and we have Your Word, and we know Your mind. Thank You for the promise of eternal reward, which we will enjoy in Your presence. May we be faithful to bear the name, a slave of Christ. We desire to honor You in all we do, and we thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

