

DISCIPLE #1 NO CHRISTIANS ALLOWED

Welcome to week number one of the series called “Disciples”. The title of today’s message is “No Christians Allowed.” If you have your Bibles with you, let’s open them up together today to the book of Luke and the fourteenth chapter.

The title Christian, over the years, has really meant a lot of different things. You take 1950 or so, and most people had positive thoughts about the term Christian. You take the year 2000 and something, and a lot of people have varied thoughts from very negative to very positive.

You rewind the clock all the way a couple of thousand years ago, and you are going to find that the very first time the phrase Christian was used, it was used in a very negative sense. In fact, the very first time that it was used was in the First Century in Antioch by pagans, who were making fun of those who were Christ Followers. They called them Christianos, which is the term for Christ ones, or little Christs. They would make fun of those who were Christ followers. Instead of saying miny me’s, they were saying there are many him’s. They want to be like Jesus, and the term Christian started out as a derogatory term.

Great crowds were following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, "If you want to be my follower you must love me more than your own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters — yes, more than your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. And you cannot be my disciple if you do not carry your own cross and follow me. "But don't begin until you count the cost..." Luke 14:25-28 NLT

If you want to be a disciple of Jesus, you’ve got to love Him more than your own family, more than your own life. Intense. Isn’t it? Otherwise, you cannot be My disciple, and you cannot be My disciple if you do not carry your own cross and follow Me, but, He said, “Don’t begin until you count the cost.”

Think about that. Don’t begin until you count the cost, because if you are a disciple of Jesus, it will cost you something.

Disciple = mathetes (math-ay-tes'); a learner, pupil, disciple, follower.

In this series, for next few weeks it will not be a comprehensive study of what a disciple is, but we will look at some very basic, very tangible, very life applicable things that a disciple of Jesus does.

A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

- **TOUCHES LEPERS.**

- a.) In our culture we shy away from the unlovely
- b.) The Sauna no one like to hug dad when he’s all sweaty!
- c.) Lepers are about as unlovely as one can get!

A man with leprosy came to (Jesus) and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."
Mark 1:40

“ What does the word clean mean? Well, according to the Old Testament, in Leviticus 13, whenever a leper would enter into a village or a community, he or she would be forced to yell out of himself or herself, “Unclean! Unclean!” It was a warning so everybody could run.

I’ve got some pictures that show you just some people who were infected with this.

It kind of gives you an idea. It would make their hands and feet nobs, or stubs. It would cause oozing sores all over their bodies. It would start in the hands or the eyes and spread quickly until, literally, their body wouldn't function as it should. And this is what you see on the outside, but what you don't see is what happens underneath the skin. This is where the real damage would often take place. The people would lose their nerves so that they couldn't feel at all, and it wasn't uncommon for a leper in a certain colony to go and fall asleep at night, unable to feel, and a rat would gnaw off a finger. They would wake up in the morning, and there was a finger missing because they couldn't feel. Some people called them the living dead.

A disciple touches those who others won't touch. That's what Jesus did.

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man...Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. Mark 1:41-42

Jesus Was Filled With Compassion.

The Greek word for compassion, it's a rich, power-packed word.

Splagchnizomai (splangkh-nid'-zom-ahee); to have the bowels yearn, deep and tender mercy, to be moved to action.

Have you seen the movie Hotel Rwanda? Gut wrenching show based on a true story about the racial battle between the Tutsi's and the Hutu's, and the manager of a hotel, a true hero in all senses of the word, was protecting a certain group of people at the risk of his own life and his family.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QMKv3vRHtg&feature=related>

I can't tell you how many times in a week where I will be watching something and go, "Oh, that's horrible. Click." I'll drive by someone who's in need, someone that I could help. Someone that I have the resources to help, but instead of helping them, I'll say, "Oh, how horrible. God, help them," and then I'll go on to my own comfortable, materialistic, pathetic life.

A disciple, splagchnizomai, hurts so deeply that he or she cannot not help. Cannot not Help.

Who are the lepers in your world?

A disciple of Jesus feels so deeply for the hurting, the outcast, the down trodden, that he or she cannot not help. A disciple touches lepers.

- **BEFRIENDS PROSTITUTES.**
 - a. The sinners, the really, really, bad people.
 - b. Who was Jesus hanging out with?
 - c. Not the religious folks, the sinners.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. Matthew 9:10

The woman at the well, the prostitute, Zaccheus, the 10 lepers, Blind Bartimeaus

But so-called Christians, the more we listen to our own little music and learn our own little language, we often lose touch with that kind of person. You know that kind, the kind that smokes, drinks alcohol, watches rated-R movies, has tattoos in weird places, piercings of all sorts, in weird places on their body ... you can't hang out with them.

When did we forget that it was that kind of person that Jesus came for?

When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick... For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Matthew 9:11-13

Instead of drifting away from that kind of person, as disciples, we should be drawn to them. But it is often not that way.

Disciples, befriend prostitutes. Here's a question for you, Christians. When is the last time you have had a non-believer over in your home? ... And someone to repair something that was broken doesn't count.

When is the last time you just opened up your life and started doing something with someone who was that kind of person?

A disciple cares so much that he or she touches lepers, befriends prostitutes, and while doing these Christ-like things, They offend Pharisees, the legalistic overly religious church-y type that forgot the main message of why Jesus came.

- **OFFENDS PHARISEES.**

- a. Legalistic Christianity.**
- b. More concerned with the Letter of the Law than the spirit behind it.**
- c. THAT AUGHT NOT BE!**

On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years... Then (Jesus) put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. Luke 13:10, 12

Pause for a moment and think about that. Eighteen years. That's a long, stinking time this woman has been tormented. Then Jesus put His hands on her, and immediately, she straightened up and praised God.

Question: "Is that good, or is that bad?"

Depends on who you ask?

Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." Luke 13:14

I am convinced that the closer that we get to the true heart of Jesus, the more offensive it is to the overly critical, judgmental church folks out there.

Is this what it means to follow Christ? Does it always have to be this painful?"

To engage a society today, who is ambivalent, not paying attention to Jesus at all, we must go where they are, speak their language, take Jesus into their world aggressively, without hesitation, without reservation, without watering it down one bit.

We must confront the hard issues head on and when the controversy comes, so be it.

It is one of our greatest honors to hurt for the cause of Christ, and honestly, our hurt is so small compared to what is out there. Are you ready to be a disciple? Really? Consider the cost, because it is going to cost you something. You are going to be different.

I still drift in and out of cultural Christianity all the time.

I think that is why Jesus said, "If you want to follow me, you have to take up your cross. You have to carry it daily because daily, I have to make that decision to die to myself because so much of me wants it my way, but it cannot be that way. It will not be that way.

We will not be a church that is a safe place for people to come and hide so they can feel good, get fat & die.

We must be confronted with the Gospel to see the true state of ourselves and our sinfulness, and if we surrender, we will not be the same.

Do you want to be a Christian that blends in, OK?!, but if you want to be a disciple, it will cost you something. There will be sacrifice, in the end, though, you will gain more than you could ever imagine.

Let's Pray!