

Christ's Terms for Discipleship

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- [0 : 0 0] Let's turn briefly back this evening now to the first passage we read in Luke, Luke's Gospel, chapter 14, and that section from verse 25 down to the end of the chapter.
- Where Jesus sets out what we can call Christ's own terms for discipleship or for being truly his disciples.
- Unfinished is a very sad word, isn't it? When you begin to build something and you leave it unfinished, like for example people who have projects in mind, they begin one project and then something else comes into their mind as another project.
- And before they finish the one they began, they move on to the next one so it remains unfinished. Maybe it's like it is in the parables that Jesus speaks here, the illustration he gives.
- The man who began to build a tower, probably in something like a vineyard, a vantage point that he could see down from. He began to build it but he wasn't able to finish it.
- [1 : 1 3] So people then saw him as an object of delusion. They mocked him for the fact that he had started something which he couldn't finish. And it's the same with anything really that's a project that we begin and don't finish.
- The word unfinished is always to some extent a very sad word. Even an unfinished plate of food is a sad spectacle, especially for people who like their food.
- So unfinished has these connotations with it, especially when you come to regard it in the context here in which Jesus is talking about unfinished on the part of this man that he speaks about.
- Jesus applying this to discipleship. Now this is not of course the first time that we've seen the Lord teaching this subject to those that were following him, the crowds that were following him, as we've made our way through the Gospel of Luke.
- It's obviously such an important topic in the teaching of Jesus because what we'll see from this evening is that Jesus was himself concerned in terms of setting out these terms of discipleship.
- [2 : 2 9] He was concerned above all things that people would follow him for the right reasons. And that their following of him would be the kind of following that would not fall away when something happened to try and bring that about.
- And it is very important that we understand that Jesus in this sort of teaching was not at all trying to put people off from following him or becoming his disciples.
- One of the difficulties in dealing with this sort of passage, especially in trying to preach from this sort of passage, is it's very difficult to put it across, or relatively difficult to put it across in a way that shows that this in fact was what Jesus was concerned for.
- Or put it the other way, it's not difficult to actually put across from this passage the idea that somehow Jesus was just putting people off from following him.
- That is not the case. His concern was not that people would actually find it difficult to follow him in the sixth sense, but that they would know that they were following him in the right way and following for the right reasons.

- [3 : 52] And really did appreciate and especially think through what discipleship meant. It's very interesting that Jesus here is speaking in the context of great crowds following him.
- And there are three things that he tells us about discipleship that are always important for us to remember in terms of what it means to follow Jesus. These are Christ's terms for discipleship.
- These are not things that were met up by the church. They're not something that a kirk session has invented. They're not something that ministers preach in order to really just make things as difficult as possible for people to become Christians or to follow the Lord.
- These are the Lord's own terms. And we have to be true to what the Lord himself set forth as the terms of discipleship.
- Not so that we would be put off from following him, but so that we would make absolutely sure that our discipleship is the right kind. That it's on the right basis and for the right reason.
- [5 : 02] That we're not like many disciples. They're called that in scripture. Who when the going became difficult decided that's it. This is not for me.
- It's so that we will not be like that. That Christ is setting out these terms for us. What are the three things? Well there's prioritization. In other words he says there in verses 25 to 26 that there is a priority to be given to him.
- Full stop. When he says here that if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters.
- Yes and even his own life. He cannot be my disciple. When he says that he obviously does not mean hate in the literal sense of hating them.
- Such as the word is used elsewhere. Because for one thing Jesus in chapter 6 verses 27 and 35.
- [6 : 10] But I say to those to you who hear me. Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you.
- Pray for those who abuse you. Chapter 35. Chapter 6 again verse 35. But love your enemies. And do good and lend expecting nothing in return.
- And your reward is great. In other words Jesus would not have said to those who follow him. You have to love your very enemies. And then turn around here and say. But you have to hate your father and your mother and your sister and your brother.
- And even your own life. With a literal hatred in mind. What he meant of course was in terms of priority. It is an expression that means you have to make me number one.
- You have to put me first. You have to give priority to me as the Lord of your life. And if you put your father or your mother or your wife or your children or your brothers or your own life.
- [7 : 17] If you put that first ahead of me. You cannot be my disciple. That is what he is saying. It is an issue to do with priorities. But it is interesting that Jesus actually chose those who he mentions here were members of close family.
- Father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters. And it seems that the reason he did that was that Jesus knew very well.
- That close friends or close relatives or family members are themselves at times a hindrance. To those who want to really follow Jesus fully and be his disciples.
- In the proper sense of the word. Fully committed to being his followers, his people, his disciples. And perhaps it is the case even more so in the context like for example if you belong to a Jewish family.

Or to an Islamic family. What that really means is if you become a disciple of Christ. And openly confess that you are now a Christian.

[8 : 29] That you have become one of Christ's followers in the true and full sense. Then that will make it exceedingly difficult in that kind of context.

And we sometimes find it difficult. Even if there are difficulties for ourselves. In terms of our close friends or families. In terms of them becoming somewhat of a hindrance perhaps.

In a sense to our following Christ. It is not really to the same extent usually in our context. As it is for a Jew or for a Muslim.

To turn from their religion and begin to follow Christ. That is when they come to really experience persecution. And Jesus would have had that in mind.

In speaking this to the crowds. And knowing that this would mean for them. Those who followed him properly. A great deal of opposition. Particularly from their own family members.

[9 : 30] But it is the case that. In every context. In every home. Where someone is converted. It does introduce.

An element of tension. A bit of dissension. A clash. Because what is really happening is that. A person that is converted. Has come into a very different lifestyle.

Has very different priorities. In fact has the priority of Christ coming first in everything. And where people are other than that. Even within the same household.

They cannot at that stage. Fully understand or comprehend this. And it sets up a clash. And that is inevitable. That is what Jesus himself actually said. In chapter 15 of John.

In November. These chapters in John 14, 15, 16. Jesus was in the upper room with the disciples. Priming them. Teaching them. Preparing them.

[10 : 27] Just immediately before he went out to the cross. These were his final teachings to them. He was going to go to the cross. And he was going to leave them in the world. To be his people.

To face the difficulties. And the trials of living. As committed disciples of Christ. And he said if the world hates you. If that which is opposite to the way you live.

If that hates you. Don't be surprised. Because it hated me. Before it hated you. If you were of the world. The world would love you as its own.

But because you are not of the world. But I have chosen you out of the world. Therefore the world hates you. And so on. And he went on to elaborate on that. And you and I have to remember.

As we become Christians. As we begin to follow the Lord. As we set our minds to following the Lord fully. That is going to inevitably introduce.

[11 : 26] To some degree or other. A clash between ourselves and others. Hopefully not a great fallout. It doesn't need to come to that. But a lack of misunderstanding.

A lack of understanding rather. And a lack of appreciation. A tension. A difficulty. And Jesus is setting out for us that.

That is inevitably part. Of the life of following him. So in prioritization. Christ must come first.

That is what this is really saying to us. But then he says secondly. That there is a cross to bear. Verse 27. Whoever does not bear his own cross. And come after me.

Cannot be my disciples. The first thing they have to accept. As his disciples.

- [12 : 25] Was his own cross. The cross of Christ himself. And one thing. For sure. That we cannot appreciate today.
- Is the. Way in which. Crucifixion. Was such a common. Part of the world.
- In the days of Jesus on earth. Crucifixion. Was commonplace. Throughout the Roman Empire. And as you came into. Some of the major cities.
- Of the Roman Empire. That you would have crosses. Wood. Trees. Or deliberately made into crosses. Along the roadside. Into these main cities.
- With the corpses. Of those who had died. Still hanging on them. They were left there. Very often. Because this. To the Roman authorities. Was a deterrent. It was meant to deter people.
- [13 : 22] From certain crimes. That led to. Their crucifixion. It was regarded. As a thing of horror. Because it was.
- A thing of horror. A grotesque thing. A thing of just. Um. Awful. Obscene. Obscene. Public suffering.
- No civilized people. Would use the word. Cross. In their conversation. Because it meant. Such a horrid thing. It was. There was so much.
- Shame. And opprobrium. And stigma. Attached. To crucifixion. That it wasn't mentioned. In civilized conversation.
- It was just. Absolutely. Horrible. And you need to remember that. When it comes. To the crucifixion.
- [14 : 22] Of the son of God. In our nature. Jesus Christ. Was crucified. With all the suffering. And all the horrors. That that meant.
- For him. And what he is saying. To the disciples. Is. Whoever does not. Bear his own cross. And come after me. Cannot be my disciple. Now yes. He is talking about.
- His own cross. The cross of. The disciple. But before. The disciple. Bears his own cross. And her own cross. They have to accept. And they have to receive. And they have to live.
- By the cross of Christ himself. And that is why Paul. In so many of his writings. Spoke about the cross. In such a way. As talked about.
- The offense of the cross. Here is what really. Lies behind. The reason why so many people. Just could not accept. That this was the way. That God provided.
- [15 : 16] Salvation for his people. Through crucifixion. Surely not. Through such a grotesque. Horrid thing.
- Surely not. Christ. And it was one of the great tests. Of discipleship. Of becoming a disciple. Are you prepared.
- To accept the Savior. In terms of his cross. Are you prepared. To accept. That this is God's way. Of redemption. Are you prepared.
- To accept. A Savior. Who is ridiculed. And stigmatized. By this grotesque. Public spectacle. Of being hung. On a cross.
- To die. That's what Paul is saying. God forbid. That I should glory.
- [16 : 09] That I should. What he means is. God forbid. That I should find. My priority. Anywhere else. God forbid. That I should. Actually. Come to trust.
- In anything else. First and foremost. But this Christ. And the cross. Of this Christ. God forbid. That I should glory. Save in the cross. Of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Whoever does not. Bear his own cross. Well then. It begins with. The cross of Christ. But then you see. For somebody. Then coming. To say. Yes. This man.

This person. Is now my king. He's my savior. I accept him. As the savior. Of my life. And I commend him. To you. As a savior. As well.

That person. Is also going to be. Stigmatized. In the world. Of Christ's day. And in the world. Today as well. And what Jesus meant. By bearing. His own cross.

[17 : 10] That's the cross. Of the disciple. What he meant. Was that. Because of his association. With Christ. Just as the cross.

For Christ. Was a stigma. And a thing of shame. And ridicule. So following Christ. Becomes. Virtually the same.

The same response. The same view. From those who don't accept this. The same opposition. The same ridicule.

The same comments. That's what he's saying. If you prioritize me. He's saying. You'll have a cross.

To bear. You'll be associated. With my cross. You'll be associated. With this object. Of shame. And ridicule. That doesn't make sense.

[18 : 09] To the world. But if you follow me. That's the path. That you must follow me on. Because that's the path. Of discipleship. It needs to be properly based.

And it's based upon. His cross. And his death. Everything that you find. Associated with that. You accept. As the foundation.

Of your hopes. That's what true. Discipleship rests upon. Indeed. As we saw this morning. With Joash. Very similar.

Sort of idea. As to what you find here. Joash. While he was. Under the influence. Of Jehoiada. The priest. He carried out. Everything properly.

As the king of Judah. When Jehoiada. Died. The influence. Died with him. Another influence. Came into Joash's life. The princes of Judah.

[19 : 11] He followed them instead. He went away. From the ways of the Lord. He abandoned the temple. He brought shame. On himself. He brought disaster. Upon his people. Why? Because he had never.

To begin with. Been a wholehearted. Disciple of the Lord. And when the test came. He fell away. He didn't have it.

Within himself. To stand. When an alternative. Lifestyle. Was offered to him. Or when it became. Really difficult. To follow that.

Same path. Because. He would have had to say. Then to those princes of Judah. No. I can't go along with you. I can't accept you. Counsel. I'm going to stick with. What Jehoiada taught me. Because that's the right way.

That would have been difficult. That would have caused a crisis. In his life. He wasn't for it. He wasn't up for it. He wasn't prepared for it. His mind. Just gave way.

[20 : 07] Because he had never. Really been properly. Grounded. In the truth of God. God. And what Jesus is saying. Is very similar to that.

Whoever does not bear his own cross. And come after me. Cannot be. My disciple. In John. Chapter 6. We read. Of those who are called as disciples.

Disciples. Of course. Really meant those who followed him. Even these great crowds. You could say. Listening to his teaching. In the widest sense. Were disciples. They were followers.

They were listening to him. But what Jesus is saying. Is. To be a disciple. Truly. Needs much more than that. And in John 6. When he. When he became.

When it became obvious. To them. That. His teaching. Was just. Going too far. For them. That he was offering himself. Really. As the sacrifice. For their sin.

[21 : 04] That they would have to believe in him. That they would have. Partake of him. Spiritually. That was a stumbling block. To him. That they couldn't accept that. After this.

Many of his disciples. Turned back. And no longer. Walked with him. So Jesus. Then typically. Said to the twelve. Do you want to go away as well?

Simon Peter answered him. Lord. To whom shall we go? You have the words. Of eternal life. And we believe. And have come to know. That you are the holy one.

Of God. So there you are tonight. And there I am. In this crowd. You find yourself in it. Because the gospel. As it's preached to us. Brings us. To this very situation.

Where the words of Christ. Are coming across the centuries. To us. They're real tonight. This is his word. This is what he's saying to us. And as you find yourself. In that crowd.

[22 : 01] So you're finding yourself. Addressed by this great person. Of the son of God. And he's saying to you. And he's saying to me. If anyone comes to me.

And doesn't prioritize. And doesn't put me first. He cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not. Bear his own cross.

And come after me. Cannot be my disciple. Whoever is not prepared. To put up with difficulties. For my sake. Can't be my disciple. Whoever is not prepared.

To follow the way of the cross. Can't be my disciple. It's not to put you off. It's not.

To say to you tonight. If you've not yet. Really begun. To follow the Lord. You know. You shouldn't really do this. It's far too difficult for you. That is not what Jesus. Is saying to you. What he's saying to you.

[22 : 56] Is by all means. Begin this journey. If you haven't begun it already. By all means. Continue on this journey. If you have already begun it. But know what you're doing.

Know what it's about. Be sure that it's on Christ's own terms. Be sure that it's not the kind of following. That's just in your own mind.

And will come to nothing at the end of the day. Be sure that Jesus is saying. That it's the way of the cross. The way of following him. In other words.

You know. Some people. Think they can add Jesus to their lives. If you think of it in terms of. Of arithmetic. For a moment. Some people think they can. Add Jesus to their lives.

But. Really subtract nothing. It's not like that. You can't. Add. Christ. To your life. And leave everything else. The way it was. And there are some people that think.

[23 : 56] That's what a Christian is. It's a person. Who hasn't really changed essentially. Except that they've added Jesus to their lives. Well. By all means. Of course.

Add Jesus to your. You have to add. Jesus to your life. If you're going to be a disciple. But the addition. Isn't the only thing. That takes place. When you come to be a Christian. Because when you add Jesus.

You have to subtract sin. You have to subtract living for yourself. You have to subtract everything that Jesus is opposed to. You have to live by Christ's own terms.

Prioritization. Secondly. There's calculation. That's why he gives us these two illustrations. He says. For which of you deciding to build a tower.

Does not first sit down and count the cost. Whether he has enough to complete it. In other words. It's a calculation for finishing. That's this first illustration. This man who. Began to build a tower.

[24 : 59] Without really having sat down. First of all. And worked out the cost of it. And the fact that he's. Described as. Not having sat down. First of all.

Is important. Because. When it says. Sit down there. It means. You deal with it deliberately. You don't do it casually. You actually. Think it through.

You work out. All the implications of it. As far as you can. And when you're going to build something. You make sure. That you've got enough. In the bank. To finish it. Or enough.

Resources. To try. To bring the project. To completion. Otherwise you're going to be laughed at. That's what. The illustration. Really is about. Now.

That doesn't mean. Any delay. In following Christ. It doesn't mean. I'm not going to come to Jesus. Until I'm absolutely. Sure. Of so many things. That I want to get right.

[25 : 52] In my mind. That's not what this illustration. Is about at all. What it's saying is. You follow Jesus. Thoughtfully. You follow him. Calculatingly.

You don't follow him. Thoughtlessly. Or lightly. Or casually. But by no means. Does it suggest to you. For a moment. That you have to delay. For a long time. Until you get everything.

Sorted in your mind. And then when you've got everything. Sorted in your mind. And you're sure. About this thing. And that thing. Then you begin. To follow him fully. Then you come out. Openly. And confess him. There's nothing.

To suggest. That in the passage. It is saying. Simply. Quite clearly. When you begin. To think of discipleship. And what it means. It means.

A life. That gives thought. That really. Thinks through. What you're doing. So that you know. It's a serious business. And you notice.

[26 : 49] The element of shame. That's mentioned there. And I think that's important. In the context as well. It is. Something that. Is. You know. That attracts. An element of ridicule.

Or shame. When somebody. Just sets out. Without thinking. About what they're doing. And then finds out. They can't finish that. After all. They're left high and dry. This is not somebody.

Who had calculated. And then ran on hard times. And wasn't able. To finish the project. This is somebody. Who didn't really think about it. From the beginning. And therefore. Couldn't finish it.

The element of shame. Really applies to our lives. As well. Doesn't it. Because. It does bring.

A degree of shame. And stigma. To the cause. Of God. When people. Begin. To follow him. And then stop. When they come.

[27 : 46] To confess him. And then fall away. Because the going. Gets too difficult. Or something that. They can't accept. So they fall away. Peter says.

In the second epistle. Chapter 2. And verse 21. It would have been better. For them. Not to have begun. At all. Than to have begun. And then fall away.

There's a stigma to it. It brings. A great deal. Of. Of. Suspicion. And even. A degree of ridicule. To. To the cause.

Of Christ. To. To the gospel itself. And to the salvation. That is. Promoted in the gospel. If we begin. Something unthinkingly.

And then. Down the line. Somewhere. We just fall away. And give up. What's that saying. About our Lord. What's that saying. About his cause. It's more or less saying. Well this is really. Not worthwhile.

[28 : 43] After all. It doesn't come to anything. It's not satisfactory. Not only that. But. It does great harm. To the person. Themselves. Think about.

What J.C. Ryle. One of the biblical. Commentators. Of long ago. Wrote. He said. By far. The most painful.

And hopeless. Deathbeds. I have attended. Have been. Those of backsliders. I have seen. Some such people. Go out of the world. Without hope.

Whose conscience. Really appeared. Dead. Buried. Gone. And upon whom. Every truth. And doctrine. And argument.

Appeared. Alike. Thrown away. He seemed. To have lost. The power. Of feeling. And could only lie. Still. And despair.

[29 : 37] Fear. These are solemn words. These are words. That we must take to heart. Friends. I must take them to heart. Just because I preach the gospel.

Doesn't mean. That I don't need to have the same. Ranked foundation. As yourselves. I can't trust. To the fact. That I'm preaching the gospel.

As the basis of my hopes. And you can't. Look to the fact. That you attend church. As the basis of your hopes. Good though that is.

It must be Christ himself. And the terms. That Christ sets out. For our discipleship. For our good. For our eternal good.

For our lasting good. And for the glory. Of his name. Which is always attached. To everything we do. And to everything we fail to do.

[30 : 37] And then. There's a calculation. In the second illustration. What king. Going out to encounter. Another king in war. Will not sit down. First and deliberate. Whether he is able.

With ten thousand. To meet him. Who comes against him. With twenty thousand. And if not. While the other. Is yet a great way off. He sends a delegation. And asks for terms. Of peace. Some people.

Take the view. That. This is really just. Pretty much the same thing. As in the first illustration. And it is to some extent. But yet. There seems to be. An additional element.

There. Which is not there. In the first illustration. The first illustration. There is saying. You have to count the cost. And you have to. Calculate. That you must finish. The job. That you must see it.

Through to the finish. Whereas this one. Is saying. In your calculation. You must also calculate. Where it is. You need to surrender.

[31 : 32] Your life. To someone greater. Here's a king. He has ten thousand. In his army. There's an enemy coming.

With twenty thousand. He's not going to be able. To defeat him. So he thinks it through. And as he thinks it through. He comes to the point. Where he realizes. I need to send.

A delegation. To this approaching enemy. With superior forces. I need to sue for peace. I need to actually. Just capitulate. Or at least. Find terms. Of peace between us.

That's what discipleship is as well. It's accepting peace. On Christ's terms. It's accepting peace with God.

Through what God himself has done. To accomplish that for us. It's accepting peace. In the way that God himself. Sets out for us.

[32 : 29] In Jesus Christ. In other words. It's what he calls there. Whoever does not renounce. All that he has. Cannot be my disciples. The third time. Cannot be my disciples.

Mentioned. In this short passage. Renouncing. All that he has. He cannot be my disciple. In other words. What he's doing. Is really. Summarizing.

This matter of. Surrendering to God. You just surrender. All that you have. And all that you are. Into his hand. In order to become.

A disciple. And that's something. That continues. For all of us. Who are already disciples. Already Christians. Already converted. This is something. That you have to put.

To yourself. Constantly. As you go on. In your life. Of discipleship. That you actually. Look at yourself. And calculate. What it means. To be a disciple.

[33 : 27] That you realize. You need something. Far more. Than what you have got. In yourself. And your own resolve. Which is what Peter. Made the great mistake. Though all people.

Should deny you. I will never do that. Peter. Before the cross. Three times. You will deny me. Three times.

Renouncing. Renouncing. All. All. Surrendering. All. To Jesus. See again.

It comes back. To this issue. Are we prepared. To put all our life. Into his hands. Are we prepared. To let him. Be the Lord. Of every aspect.

Of our lives. That's what it means. To be a disciple. and there's nothing better than that because then he takes the weight he takes care of you and do what you can't do for yourself there's an account of someone in America in New York not sure just when this happened I think last century but he was in the habit of taking people that he was witnessing to and trying to impress upon them the need to follow Christ and yet being met with oh well I'll manage the way I am and what he did was he took them first of all to a certain place in New York where outside of this building there was a big big statue of Atlas now you remember the figure of Atlas this supreme specimen of manhood with the world on his shoulders going way back to Greek mythology you'll still find illustrations of of Atlas all over the place but Atlas is that figure in Greek mythology that figure carried through into other mythologies as well where the whole globe or the world the earth sat on his shoulder and there is

[35 : 37] Atlas bent down almost to the ground in all the figures in all the representations you see of him with the world on his shoulders carrying the world on his shoulders but you see the effect of it it's just about crushing him he's the biggest the strongest the most virile representation of manhood and the world is weighing him down he's almost crushed under he's just about holding it and no more that's where he took them first of all and then he took them to a cathedral and in the cathedral in a certain place in this cathedral was a statue of the boy Jesus whatever we make of that that's not the point at the moment there was a statue of the boy Jesus with his hand outstretched and the whole world easily held up in his hand and then this man used to say to those that he was witnessing to well you know it's either one or the other for you you can try yourself to carry the world your own life and your world the whole of your world you can try to carry it on your own shoulders and it will curse you or you can give it to the Lord and he'll hold it up for you that's what he's saying to us tonight are we going to try and carry our own world into eternity or are we going to give it to him and say

Lord I want to be your disciple and to be your disciple I give you myself I give you my world I hand everything over to you I renounce all things into your hand that's the wise course that's what Jesus says discipleship is about so there's prioritization there's calculation and there's finally preservation notice he mentions salt here in verses 34 and 35 why does he mention this doesn't it just seem tacked on without a real connection well maybe it seems that but it's not what it's saying really is not here as elsewhere the things that salt can be used for you notice what it's mentioning here is the property of salt in terms of its saltiness now in those days salt was often taken from the area of the Dead Sea or places around about there where it was impure it wasn't pure salt like you find when you're using your homes nowadays and therefore because it wasn't pure salt a lot of other elements were mixed in with it which actually sometimes meant that the salt could go bad it would just leach away into the ground if you left it then it's no use for anything you can't use it for food you can't use it to preserve you can't use it even on the manure heap on the compost heap you just have to get rid of it it's no use for anything and Jesus is saying if we lose our taste our saltiness what he means by that is if we falter if we go aside from following him if we don't follow him in the right way if our following is not really deep down sincere and wholehearted we've lost the purpose for our life just as salt loses the purpose for what it exists for by losing its saltiness so do we if we actually don't find ourselves following

Christ on his terms we'll have no saltiness we'll be good for nothing so there you are in the crowd and there I am in the crowd tonight what are we seeing of ourselves we're all followers of Jesus otherwise we wouldn't be here tonight but is our following on his terms is our following one that really means we're disciples through and through have we made him and do we keep making him number one and when we realize that at times we lapse from doing that do we get back quickly and say Lord I repent of this I'm putting you back in number one place are we calculating what it means to be a disciple are we calculating on finishing as much as starting are we calculating on the need to surrender everything into his hand and not keep so much to ourselves are we determined to preserve the essence of our discipleship in our faithfulness to

Christ Christ these are his own terms my friends I haven't made them up it is my duty as a preacher to set them before you as your minister it is my duty and your duty to live by them to walk in this path of true discipleship and then the glory will be Christ's and is that what we all want let's pray oh lord oh god we give thanks that you have specified these important issues for us that you have not left it to ourselves to devise a way of following you but you have given us these terms that we should be your disciples we pray lord for the grace of your spirit to enable us to do so wholeheartedly to enable us to walk in this path of discipleship so that each day we come to take up our cross and follow you denying ourselves give us grace we pray for all the times that we lapse for the many occasions in our lives when we know that we have not done right when we have failed to be followers of this way truly we thank you for your patience with us we bless you for the availability of pardon with you and for the way that you call us back into the way of obedience graciously accept us now we pray for

Jesus sake amen