



Is the Price of Christianity Too High?

Matthew 20:22: (NASB) *But Jesus answered, you do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They said to him, we are able.*



What does it mean to be a Christian? Seriously, what is the bottom line, true meaning of following in the footsteps of Jesus? Is being a Christian like an entitlement program? By professing Jesus, do we receive protection from evil, deliverance from trials or the healing of our maladies? Do we receive a promise of an abundant and prosperous life? Or, is being a Christian more like a “getting whipped into shape” work and endurance program where we lose our own will, learn to do without and have to somehow rejoice in tribulation every day of our difficult lives? Is the price of true Christianity a simple acknowledgment of Jesus being in your life or is it a “sell all that

we have and change what we are” mentality? What does it cost to be a true Christian? Is it a price that we are willing to pay?

Many churches today are not teaching what is really involved with following Jesus.

 **Clever adversary, *Wide is the Gate - The Emerging New Christianity, Volume 2***

- *We have a very clever adversary who knows how to redefine and reinvent the Christian faith, and that is what we are watching happen right before our very eyes.*
- *In the world religions, there’s always been this fascination with the mystical and it’s kind of a hallmark of what they believe. We have that all the way back within Christianity through the Gnostics and then through the desert fathers and the Middle Ages and a lot of the mysticism that came through Catholicism, but those things were more out on the margins. They were only in particular groups of people within denominations. What we’re finding now is that it is hitting the mainstream of Christianity.*
- *Barbara Marx Hubbard, probably the matriarch of today’s contemporary New Age movement, has a book called “Emergence: The Shift from Ego to Essence - Ten Steps to the Universal Human.”*

Is Christianity supposed to be a mystical, entitlement experience?

To begin, let us look at this question through the eyes of Jesus’ own twelve Apostles. The context of our theme verse takes place just weeks before Jesus’ death. The miracles had been performed, the teachings had been given and Lazarus was recently raised from the dead. The raising of Lazarus dramatically accelerated the Pharisees’ desire to trap and destroy Jesus. This was the first resuscitation from the dead where someone had been in the grave for multiple days - he began to decompose - there was no way to rationalize this and the



Pharisees felt their positions were threatened. They needed to kill both Jesus and Lazarus before word spread. It is in this context we look at Jesus talking with his followers and see the true cost of discipleship.

Matthew 20:20-21: (NASB) ²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of him. ²¹And he said to her, what do you wish? She said to him, Command that in your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on your right and one on your left. (Also found in [Mark 10:35-45](#))

What a question! Clearly, there was no thought of what such a position might cost, some sort of trade-off that would have to happen. What would have provoked such a question, by their mother, no less?

What happened just before that request?

Matthew 20:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way he said to them, ¹⁸Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, ¹⁹and will hand him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify him, and on the third day he will be raised up.

This revealed pain and suffering. Why would they want to be elevated to Jesus' right hand and left hand if it was in the context of human suffering?

Did the Apostles listen to what Jesus said, or did they only hear about the coming kingdom? Sometimes what we need to hear are not the things we want to hear.





Jesus knew their hearts and he knew their limitations. The mother of James and John was a follower of Jesus. There was a family loyalty to the cause of Christ. Of course she would want her sons to be as close to the Master as possible. Her heart was good even though the question was immature.

He addresses this immature question with compassion, tact and a dose of reality:

Matthew 20:22: (NASB) *But Jesus answered, you do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They said to him, we are able.*

Did they know what he was talking about? He just told them a few verses before that he would be going to Jerusalem, would be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, they would condemn him to death and he would be handed over to the Gentiles to be mocked, scourged and crucified! When Jesus asked, *Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink*, he is referring to what he just told them his experience would be. Jesus was not asking this because he was thirsty! Could they walk through the same experiences he would go through?

Without the Holy Spirit, they would have had limited understanding. They responded, *We are able*. While that might sound foolish, it shows how loyal they were. They wanted to be with him regardless of the experience.

Again, they hear Jesus' words but really do not understand his meaning:

Matthew 20:23: (NASB) *He said to them, my cup you shall drink; but to sit on my right and on my left, this is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.*

God's plan included the creation of a "church class" who would follow in Jesus' footsteps - those who would figuratively sit beside Jesus. This honor was not Jesus' to give, but they would have to go through difficult experiences in order to prove their worthiness. They would have to drink from the "cup" of sorrow, the "cup" of trial, the "cup" of difficulty. Being his Apostle required this level of dedication.

With his reality check answer, Jesus settled the matter - there was no more need for discussion.

What was this "cup" Jesus was talking about and who has to drink it?



Emergent spirituality, *Wide Is the Gate - The Emerging New Christianity, Volume 2*

- *David Spangler, father of the New Age, called the Shaman of the New Age, has a book called "Emergence: The Rebirth of the Sacred, The God Within." The book ...written by the editors of New Age Magazine talk about the emergent spirituality and they talk all about contemplative prayer and esoteric Christianity.*

This concept may be new, exciting and mysterious, but as we listen further, we will see it is not the Christianity taught by Jesus.



The "cup" experiences Jesus had that we could share in:

John 15:18-21: (NASB) ¹⁸*If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the word that I said to you, a slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. ²¹But all these things they will do to you for my name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent me.*

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. - He was preparing his followers for what they would encounter. Are you able to drink of the cup? Part of that includes not being held in high standing by those around you. Do we stand for something different and higher that makes people uncomfortable?

You are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world - You are different.

If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you - Being pursued with bad intent - the "cup experience" is intense, requiring devotion, discipline and the desire to stay focused.

All these things they will do to you for my name's sake - You will have these experiences as a result of being a follower of him.



A caller from Connecticut tells us Mahatma Gandhi observed seven mortal sins in the world. One in particular was "politics without principle." Another was "pleasure without conscience." The one relevant to this topic is "worship without sacrifice."

Worship without sacrifice - our worship will cost us something if we are truly following Jesus.

Jesus revealed three times to his Apostles that he would be crucified. These three accounts give us clues as to the price he would pay and therefore the price to which we would be subject.



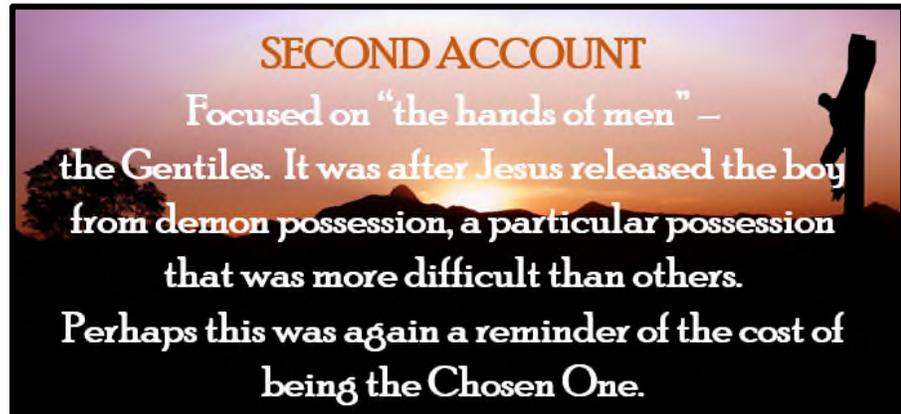
Matthew 16:21-23: (NASB) ²¹*From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. ²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to you. ²³But he turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.*

Peter must have felt terrible hearing, *Get behind me, Satan!* He was out of harmony with God's will.

Suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes - We, too, could be subject to ridicule and persecution from the religious authorities of our day. This means we could be on the outside of established thought. Today we have a gospel of abundance - the idea that it will bring you all kinds of wealth and positive feelings. But security comes in the form of experiences,



trials, persecution and character growth/development. These are not obtained with ease; peace in Christ comes as a result of being tried.



Mark 9:30-32: (NASB) ³⁰From there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and he did not want anyone to know about it. ³¹For he was teaching his disciples and telling them, the Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he has been killed, he will rise three days later. ³²But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask him.

They were afraid to ask him - Why would they be afraid if they were so close to Jesus? Because he said something that sounded contrary to the good he just did - removing the demon from the boy. Surely he couldn't have meant that - it sounds so opposite of the power we just saw demonstrated.

In this instance, he was focusing on the hands of men, the hands of the Gentiles. We, too, could be subject to ridicule and persecution from the civil authorities.

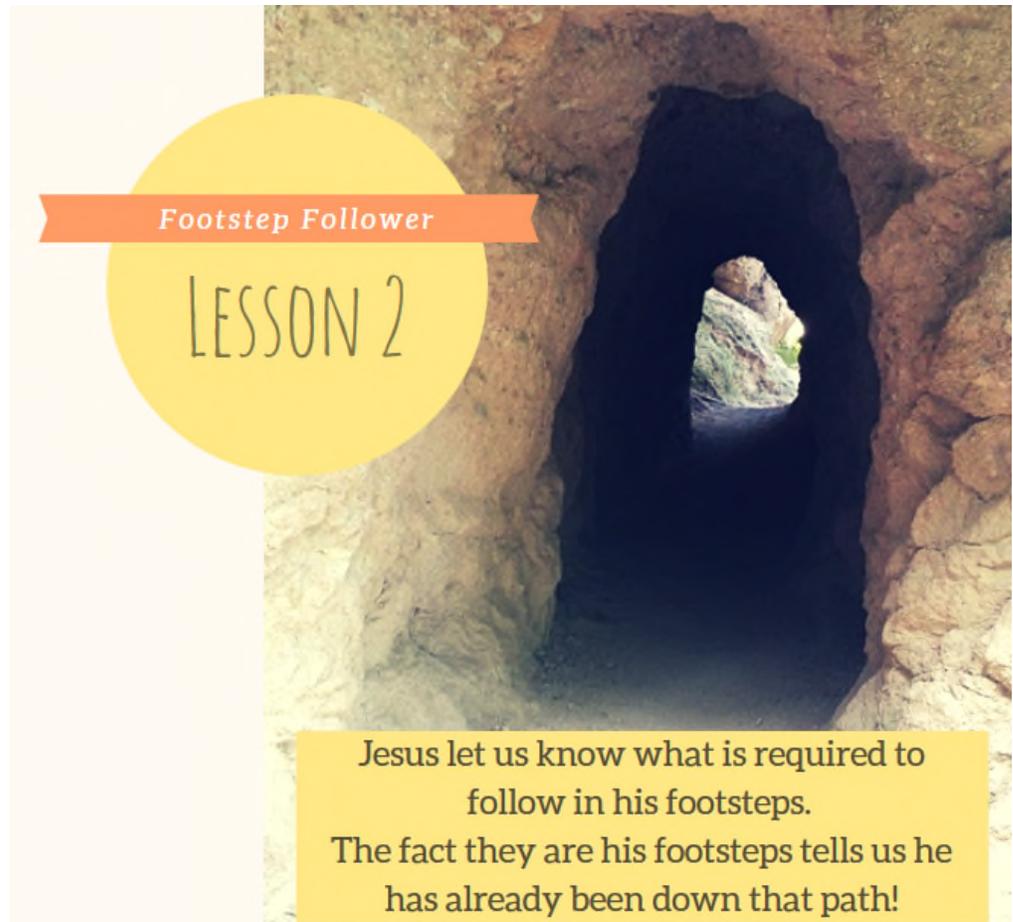


Luke 18:31-34: (NASB) ³¹Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. ³²For he will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, ³³and after they have scourged him, they will kill him; and the third day he will rise again. ³⁴But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

We, too, could be subject to the necessary and prophetic trials needed to fulfill God's plan. Jesus was able to tell them what would happen based on the



prophecies. Following Jesus means being subject to whatever is necessary to fulfill God's stated plan. The prophecies include persecution for followers of Christ. This is part of the "cup" Jesus was talking about. Are we willing and able to drink that cup - to follow in his footsteps?



How would you react if some of your fellow Christians sought the highest positions in the kingdom?

Zen-centering prayer, *Wide Is the Gate - The Emerging New Christianity, Volume 2*

- *Thomas Keating is a Trappist monk who in the 60's realized that there was a tremendous influence of eastern mysticism with the young people. He discovered that these practices by one of the early mystics and Roman Catholic contemplatives was virtually identical in substance and practice to the techniques they had been learning from Zen masters. Thomas Keating popularized the movement called "centering," where you take a single word and start using that as a mantra for focus and center your mind and your spirit through which you can open up and commune with the divine. Actually, Thomas Keating has acknowledged that that practice of contemplative meditation, even in its Christianized version, is identical to the eastern meditation and will also, like the eastern meditation, open up the serpent power, the kundalini demonic force, to rise up even in devoted young Catholics practicing these occult techniques.*



Jonathan: To get a woman's perspective, we have invited our very own Kathy from the CQ Team to share on tonight's topic. Welcome, Kathy!

Kathy: Thank you! I read an article in one of my favorite Christian books by one of my favorite Christian authors, called "Pilgrim Echoes" by Benjamin Barton. The article is called, "Moses,"

and it is taken from [Exodus 2:1-10](#). We learn there the story of Moses' beginning. Moses was born with a curse of death over him, for Pharaoh had ordered all Hebrew male babies be put to death.

Jonathan: Because the Israelites were too large in number, the Egyptians were very worried about rebellion.

Kathy: We, too, are under the death penalty. [1 Corinthians 15:22](#) says, *All in Adam die...*

Jonathan: So you're saying, we are all under this penalty of death. The picture of Moses and our Adamic curse is symbolic for the Christian.

Kathy: Yes, and you can see it in the beginning when Moses' mother clung to him. She tried to hide him and prolong his life as long as possible before he was taken from her. But she willingly gave him up not knowing what would happen.

Jonathan: Kathy, so what happened and how does it relate to us as Christians?

Kathy: Pharaoh's daughter found Moses in a basket in the river and Pharaoh's daughter hired Moses' mother to nurse and care for Moses. So, she got him back and was paid to take care of her own son! But, he no longer belonged to her - he belonged to the royal palace who told her how to care for him and who provided royal protection for him.

The second half of [1 Corinthians 15:22](#) says, *...even so in Christ shall all be made alive*. In [Matthew 11:28-29](#), Jesus invites us to come to him now, and Paul tells us more in [Romans 12:1](#) about presenting ourselves in sacrifice. We are given the opportunity to surrender our lives before they are taken from us in death.

Jonathan: Oh, like Moses' mother gave up Moses, we are to give up our lives...that's the connection.

Kathy: Yes, because we trust God we give Him our entire selves, and He gives it back to us to use as He directs.

Jonathan: Well, where do we get directions?

Kathy: From the Bible. It contains all the answers for life written by the Creator of the Universe who has been around forever...and knows EVERYTHING! Who better to take direction from? [2 Timothy 3:16](#) tells us, *all Scripture is given by God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness*. It even tells us what to think in [Philippians](#)



[4:8](#) and what to eat and drink in [1 Corinthians 10:31](#).

Jonathan: *Do all to the glory of God!* How else does He direct us?

Kathy: Like Moses, we are now under Divine protection and nothing can happen to us without God's permission so we can firmly trust Him. [Romans 8:28](#): The "wages" He gives to us are better hopes than the world has, joy and peace that cannot be taken away and greater happiness to our hearts. God never does less than He promises. He promised to give us bread and water, but just look at all the extras He threw in! Whether your day brings trial or joy, God will send you exactly what you need to get through it: [Deuteronomy 33:25](#): *As your days, so shall your strength be.*

Jonathan: So, the picture of Moses' mother giving up her son and him being given back to her, is like us giving up our will to do God's will and everything we have He returns back to us to use in His service. This is the cost of discipleship. Kathy, what an awesome picture of the price of Christianity. Thank you for sharing with us this evening.

We are to be stewards over ourselves as we have given our wills over to God.

Back to our story, what was the reaction of the other ten after the "sit on your right and left" question?

[Matthew 20:24-28](#): (NASB) ²⁴And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵But Jesus called them to himself and said, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; ²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Jesus made quiet the angst of his followers by further revealing what true discipleship looks like. He was saying, "It is not what any of you think - it is about service and humility. You become 'less than' in order to be 'more than.'" Look at how Jesus lived every day.

Jesus hammered home his clarity on discipleship the night before his crucifixion:

[John 13:12-17](#): (NASB) ¹²So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments and reclined at the table again, he said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. ¹⁶Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Jesus puts humility and servitude on display. This is an obvious lesson.

But the lesson goes further:

[Luke 22:21-23](#): (NASB) ²¹But behold, the hand of the one betraying me is with mine on the table. ²²For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed! ²³And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing.



First, Jesus gives them an obvious physical lesson in humility - he washed their feet, stooping below everyone in his service to them. Next, he would reveal that one of them would betray him.



A caller from Wisconsin suggests a quote about suffering from Viktor Frankl's, "Man's Search for Meaning." (Mr. Frankl is a holocaust survivor.) "Dostoevsky said once, 'There is only one thing that I dread: not to be worthy of my sufferings.' If there is meaning in life at all, there must be meaning in suffering." As Christians, we are told in the Bible that our sufferings are common to what all of man experiences, but for us it comes down to really understanding what opportunities there are to bear fruit from those experiences. That is part of the cup and understanding what Jesus was asking us to do. We can go through sufferings and they can destroy us, or we can really grow and learn from them. We need to look for this in any experience we go through.

Regarding the idea of suffering as a Christian, we should not be focused on just grinning and bearing it; we should be focused on learning from it. This helps put us in Jesus' footsteps. Are we worthy of the attention God gives to our life experiences that produce sufferings so we can rise up and grow?

Back to the betrayer: The disciples asked Jesus who the betrayer would be. Judas was revealed and then he left.

What happened next?

Luke 22:24: (NASB) *And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.*

Um....they are already back to who will be the greatest?!? What happened to that obvious lesson in humility? Human nature! This is why we have to be so focused on seeing what the will of God is.

Jesus refocuses them:

Luke 22:25-30: (NASB) ²⁵*And he said to them, the kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. ²⁷For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves. ²⁸You are those who have stood by me in my trials; ²⁹and just as my Father has granted me a kingdom, I grant you ³⁰that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

He gave them the hope of greatness, but not before they would have to be servants! Humility and servitude would eventually sink in but they would need constant reminders (as do we).

1 Peter 5:6-9: (NASB) ⁶*Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*

What kind of experiences do I have to go through in order to be humbled by them?



Humility is an *accurate* assessment of one's self. We see our talents and abilities and use them. Humility does not mean being a doormat or having a "woe is me" attitude. We are good for what God has blessed us to be good for - let us use that in His service to glorify Him.

 Experienced-based faith, *Wide Is The Gate - The Emerging New Christianity - Volume 2*

- *One thing that permeates all throughout those different belief systems is a movement towards an experienced-based kind of Christianity. They want something that is different from what they can just hold in their hands or read in the Bible. They want something that is sensual.*
- *We are being told, not only by the New Age spirituality, but by many who are now in leadership, that we need to have spiritual experiences for an authentic faith.*
- *As far as Christianity is concerned, the corruption is coming into the church from outside. We're embracing those things that God speaks nothing of in Scripture unless He's speaking against it.*
- *A lot of Christian leaders are really devaluing the Bible, and that's very common in the emerging new spirituality church.*

This idea of experienced-based faith is really an emotion-based faith, where you have to feel your Christianity to know you have it. Christianity is a committed focus of life we are to fulfill through very difficult times.



Jesus described what it takes to follow him in a variety of ways; one was drinking of his cup. Another was self-denial and all that goes with it:

Matthew 16:24: (NRSV) *Then Jesus told his disciples, if any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*

A three-step process:

1. Deny themselves
2. Take up their cross
3. Follow me

How do I apply this to me?

Deny: Strong's #533 (ap-ar-neh'-om-ahee); to deny utterly, disown, abstain;
to affirm that one has no acquaintance or connection with someone;
to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests



We could deny the wrong thing:

Luke 22:34: (KJV) *And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny **<533>** that thou knowest me.*

Jesus used the same word *deny* to describe what Peter was going to do three separate times. How could Peter have gotten to that point? He was human. Our faith gets surrounded by life's experiences and sometimes we cave in when we are intimidated. We end up denying that which we most love. Peter must have been broken-hearted at his actions, but Jesus brought him back with grace and love. Peter was eventually given important responsibilities.

Which will we deny - ourselves or Jesus, whom we profess to love?

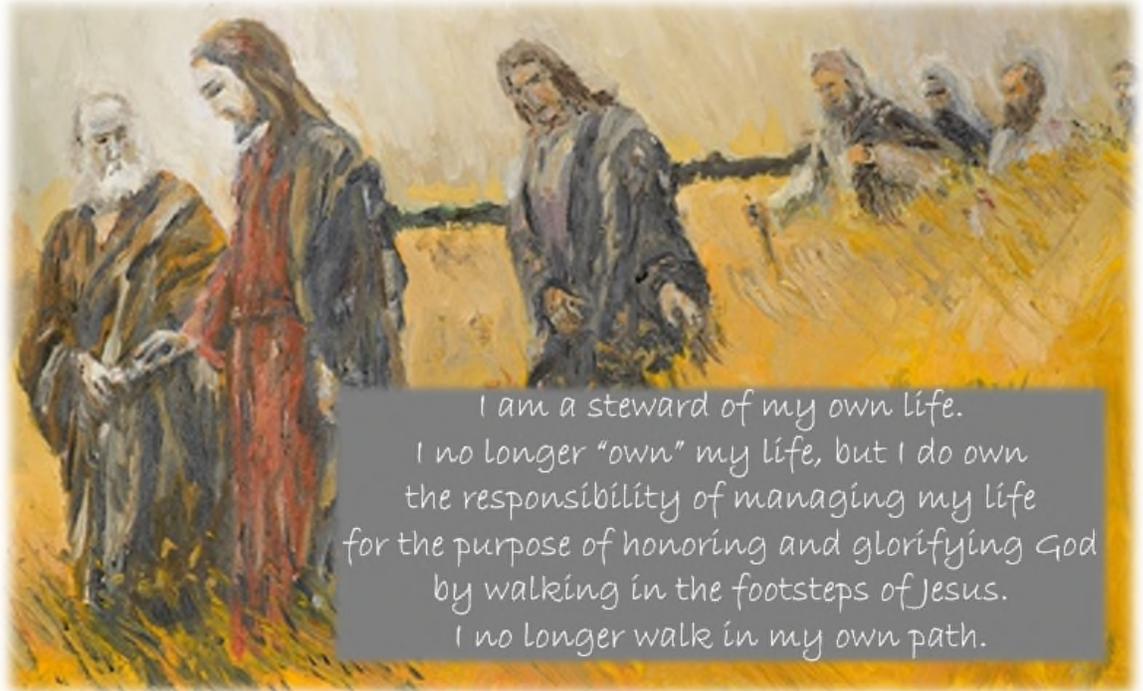
Denial put to the test: To love and serve is one thing, to sacrifice and follow Jesus is another:

Mark 10:17-23: (NASB) ¹⁷As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ¹⁸And Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, Honor your father and mother. ²⁰And he said to him, Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.

This young man loved God, served God and lived honorably. Was this enough to follow Jesus?

²¹Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, one thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. ²²But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. ²³And Jesus, looking around, said to his disciples, How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! (the heavenly reward)

Jesus recognized all the good and honorable qualities in this man, so he showed him the next step. More would be required.



I am a steward of my own life.
I no longer "own" my life, but I do own
the responsibility of managing my life
for the purpose of honoring and glorifying God
by walking in the footsteps of Jesus.
I no longer walk in my own path.

The truest test of discipleship is that of loyalty at any cost. What do we hold closest to our hearts? What are we willing to leave behind for the sake of the footsteps of Jesus?

A photograph of a cave entrance. The cave is dark and appears to be made of rough, natural rock. A large, thick tree trunk is in the foreground on the right side, partially obscuring the view of the cave. The lighting is natural, coming from the cave entrance.

Footstep Follower

LESSON 4

Self-denial is the first of the two essential qualities needed to walk in Jesus' footsteps, for it personalizes the meaning of "not my will but Thy will be done."



**We have looked at self-denial.
What does it mean to "take up your cross"?**

For the early Christians, this would have been a violently graphic picture of a life of suffering. Jesus used the picture to give full disclosure on what his footsteps may cost. We all might not go through such suffering and agony, but that is the recipe. The footsteps of Jesus means a difficult way.



Some of the aspects of Christian sacrifice used in the New Testament:

- ✦ Persecution: to pursue, being chased for a negative reason
- ✦ Suffering: to undergo, to be affected, to have an experience take root
- ✦ Reproach: to defame, i.e. rail at, chide, taunt
- ✦ Tribulation: pressure
- ✦ Temptation: (First Greek word) endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline, go through something so you can learn from the difficulty
- ✦ Temptation: (Second Greek word) a putting to proof - by implication, adversity, the proof is in what comes out of the experience

Is the average churchgoer taught that these things are part of the Christian walk and are to be expected? Is this really what it costs? Yes, according to Scripture.

Peter verifies the intensity of the Christian experience of taking up your cross:

1 Peter 4:12-16: (NASB) ¹²*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;* ¹³*but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice with exultation.* ¹⁴*If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.* ¹⁵*Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;* ¹⁶*but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.*

Fiery ordeals should not be surprising. But notice they are mixed with rejoicing. If these experiences are coming to you in your life, you can say the Lord is working with you, helping you to grow.

We have to be willing to accept these trials with open arms - that is difficult. But God perhaps is stretching you further than you have ever been stretched - are you willing to go through that? Even a physical stretching of a muscle by working out causes pain, but you are stronger tomorrow. These are the experiences of our life.

This too shall pass, and this lifetime is short compared to eternity.

Make sure the suffering comes to you *not* because you have done wrong; it should come because you are a Christian and are living life differently than



those around us. You must be willing to pay the consequences and be blessed of God for standing up for something higher.

It is not all bad - the pain and challenge are balanced out through faith, peace and God's love:

Romans 5:1-5: (NIV) *¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.*

This world does not have peace with God as it is contrary to Him.

Rejoice in our sufferings - Rejoicing is the calm, positive contentment that things are good because God has them under control. Why do we suffer? Because it is fertile ground for strong and necessary growth.

Consider writing about your difficult experiences in all their intensity. Look back when the experience is over to see the intensity of the deliverance!

Our suffering is not supposed to be like the Pharisees, who stood on the street corner after fasting, looking miserable because they were hungry. It was an outward show of piety. We should not necessarily be wearing our sufferings on the outside, because we have a calm peace within us. The grace of God should flow through the pain and difficulty - we want Him to shine through us.

All of this brings us into a NEW FAMILY arrangement:

Romans 8:14-18: (NRSV) *¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, Abba! Father! ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ— if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. ¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.*

Abba! Father! - Translates to "Daddy," showing our closeness with the Father; a very personal relationship.

This new family offers us to become joint heirs with Christ at the cost of suffering for a short time:

1 Corinthians 12:26: (NIV) *If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*

This proves ourselves trustworthy to be given heir-ship. It is not just us as individuals, but the suffering of the body of Christ. We share with one another and work through the trials to encourage each other.



Footstep Follower

LESSON 5

"Taking up our cross" is the second essential quality needed to walk in Jesus' footsteps, for if we do, our hands and heart will have no strength or focus left for our own interests.

Deny yourself, take up your cross - is it really worth it?



Follow him to where, through what and why?

To where? An eternal dwelling with the Captain of our faith:

John 14:2-3: (NASB) ²In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

Heaven is not an entitlement we receive by just speaking the name, "Jesus." We have to put ourselves into a position of living this costly but blessed lifestyle. We follow him through the sacrifice and suffering, and by God's grace, we will receive a heavenly reward.

Through what? Difficulty, but not without strength and support from above:

Matthew 11:28-30: (NASB) ²⁸Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.



My yoke is easy - Two animals are yoked together so they can pull a load more efficiently. An "easy" yoke is one fitted to the particular animal where they can do the most work possible without pain and strain. We have a lot of work to do, but we have a custom-made yoke. Our life experiences are ours alone, and we will not be given more than we can handle.



We CAN make it through the most difficult trials in life with our lives in Jesus' hands:

Romans 8:35-37: (NRSV) ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered. ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

The Apostle Paul literally went through these experiences.

A casual follower would NOT be led as a sheep to slaughter. This describes mature followers:

Romans 8:38-39: (NRSV) ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Only a true footstep follower would have this conviction and focus regarding their purpose, but this high calling is not taught in many churches.

A true follower prepares to fight - to actually be engaged in the event - to lay everything on the line:

Ephesians 6:10-13: (NRSV) ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Building the kingdom, *Wide Is The Gate - The Emerging New Christianity, Volume 2*

- *The church somehow thinks in some quarters it has the task of setting up the kingdom of God. It's Jesus who sets up his own kingdom and we're the ones who inherit it, but Jesus who ushers it in, not the other way around. We don't usher it in.*
- *The kingdom of God is not something that's made with man's hands. We aren't building. It's not something that we have a hand in making because the Bible says we inherit that. So, how do you inherit something if you're the one who builds it?*

Why? Because God's plan has ALWAYS been for the blessing of his entire human creation.

Galatians 3:28-29: (NASB) ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

Micah 4:1-2: (NASB) ¹And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. ²Many nations will come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths. For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

We want to be used in the kingdom to help reconcile the world back to God. We have peace with God now and the world will have it later.



Footstep Follower

LESSON 6



To follow him is not a thought or feeling or even an event; it is a way of life that encompasses all of our heart, mind, soul and strength and is fed by the grace of God.

Following in Jesus' footsteps is not an event or one-time decision or feeling. Daily we must be willing to show ourselves to be humble clay in the Potter's hands, to be shaped and molded to whatever He needs. We must be willing to go through the difficulty, trials and suffering. We will receive the grace and strength of the power of Jesus and God's Spirit working through us to be overcomers. The result will be the blessing of all the world of humanity.

*So, is the price of Christianity too high?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace. - Amelia Earhart

The price of greatness is responsibility. - Winston Churchill



Some further study on the theme context, using the Mark account as well as the Matthew account:

Mark 10:35-45: (NASB) ³⁵James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying, Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you. ³⁶And he said to them, what do you want me to do for you? ³⁷They said to him, Grant that we may sit, one on your right and one on your left, in your glory. ³⁸But Jesus said to them, you do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? ³⁹They said to him, we are able. And Jesus said to them, the cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. ⁴⁰But to sit on my right or on my left, this is not mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared ⁴¹Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John. ⁴²Calling them to himself, Jesus said to them, you know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. ⁴³But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; ⁴⁴and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

(Source: Biblical commentary by Albert Barnes) Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, etc. This was probably Salome, (Mark 15:40-16:1) with her sons. The names of these were James and John, (Mark 10:35). Mark says they came and made the request. That is, they made it through the medium of their mother; they requested her to ask it for them. It is not improbable that she was an ambitious woman, and was desirous to see her sons honoured.

Perhaps the event happened this way? The two sons begin the request:

Mark 10:35: (NASB) James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying, Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.

But they have mom actually ask the question:

Matthew 20:20: (NASB) ²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of him.

Bowing down: Strong's #4352: proskuneo (pros-koo-neh'-o), to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand; worship

- 1) to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence
- 2) among the Orientals, esp. the Persians, to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence
- 3) in the NT by kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication
- 3a) used of homage shown to men and beings of superior rank 3a1) to the Jewish high priests 3a2) to God 3a3) to Christ 3a4) to heavenly beings 3a5) to demons

Matthew 20:21: (NASB) And he said to her, what do you wish?

Mark 10:36: (NASB) And he said to them, what do you want me to do for you?

Question = To create a thought in a potential disciple's heart.

Jesus was able to read people's minds yet still he asked questions to reveal truth, to engage and to connect.

Matthew 20:21: (NASB) ...She said to him, Command that in your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on your right and one on your left.



(Source: Biblical commentary by Adam Clarke) Verse 21. Grant that these my two sons James and John. (Mark 15:40) In the preceding chapter, (Matthew 19:28), our Lord had promised his disciples, that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes. Salome, probably hearing of this, and understanding it literally, came to request the chief dignities in this new government for her sons; and it appears it was at their instigation that she made this request, for Mark, (Mark 10:35), informs us that these brethren themselves made the request, i.e. they made it through the medium of their mother.

Mark 10:37: (NASB) *They said to him, Grant that we may sit, one on your right and one on your left, in your glory.*

(Source: John Gill's Exposition of the Bible) Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory; or glorious kingdom, which they expected would be quickly set up; and which they might conclude from his having lately promised to all the twelve, that when he should sit on his throne, they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and from his having just now mentioned his rising from the dead, which they might understand of some revival, or breaking forth of this glorious state; see Gill on (Matthew 20:21).

(Source: Biblical commentary by John Meggison) And the other on thy left hand in thy glory; Our Lord did not reprove the two, for doubtless he read in their hearts a great love and loyalty toward himself. Their desire for the positions indicated not a mere desire for the honors and authority implied but especially an eagerness to be near him. Had the Master seen in their hearts an evil form of ambition, doubtless he would have reproved it on the spot. His answer was so framed as to impress these brothers with what is implied in joint-heirship with him in the kingdom.

Matthew 20:22-23: (NASB) *²²But Jesus answered, you do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They said to him, we are able. ²³He said to them, my cup you shall drink; but to sit on my right and on my left, this is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.*

Mark 10:38-40: (NASB) *³⁸But Jesus said to them, you do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? ³⁹They said to him, we are able. And Jesus said to them, the cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. ⁴⁰But to sit on my right or on my left, this is not mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?*

Soon they would see how far they had to go regarding "the cup."

Jesus wrestles with it first:

Matthew 26:36-46: (NASB) *³⁶Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to his disciples, Sit here while I go over there and pray. ³⁷And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. ³⁸Then he said to them, My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with me. ³⁹And he went a little beyond them, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as You will. ⁴⁰And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, So, you men could not keep watch with me for one hour? ⁴¹Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. ⁴²He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done. ⁴³Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴And he left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays me is at hand!*



Then Jesus accepts it:

John 18:10-11: (NASB) ¹⁰Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus. ¹¹So Jesus said to Peter, Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given me, shall I not drink it?

Resulting seeds of self-seeking:

James 4:1-4: (NASB) ¹What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ²You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. ⁴You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?

Luke 12:49-52: (NASB) ⁴⁹I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! ⁵¹Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; ⁵²for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three.

(Source: Biblical commentary by Charles T. Russell): To be baptized with; It required all of the Lord's three-and-a-half-year ministry to complete the consecration symbolized by this baptism.

They said to him, *we are able.*

Jesus would soon tell them what they would have to bear:

John 16:1-4: (NASB) ¹These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. ²They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. ³These things they will do because they have not known the Father or me. ⁴But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

And Jesus said to them, the cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.

Acts 12:1-5: (NASB) ¹Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. ²And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword. ³When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. Now it was during the days of Unleavened Bread. ⁴When he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out before the people. ⁵So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.

Acts 9:1-2: (NASB) ¹Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, ²and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 11:23-29: (NASB) ²³Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. ²⁴Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and



exposure. ²⁸*Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.* ²⁹*Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?*

Mark 10:40: (NASB) *But to sit on my right or on my left, this is not mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.*

Jesus could only go so far and in his care for his Apostles and disciples, he truly went as far as he could:

John 17:22-26: (NASB) ²²*The glory which You have given me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as we are one;* ²³*I in them and You in me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent me, and loved them, even as You have loved me.* ²⁴*Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given me, be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory which You have given me, for You loved me before the foundation of the world.* ²⁵*O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent me;* ²⁶*and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

Our focus is to be solely on faithfulness - position, rank and honor are of no consequence:

2 Timothy 2:8-13: (NASB) ⁸*Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,* ⁹*for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.* ¹⁰*For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.* ¹¹*It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with him, we will also live with him;* ¹²*if we endure, we will also reign with him; If we deny him, he also will deny us;* ¹³*if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.*

Matthew 20:24-28: (NASB) ²⁴*And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers.* ²⁵*But Jesus called them to himself and said, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.* ²⁶*It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,* ²⁷*and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;* ²⁸*just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

Mark 10:41-45: (NASB) ⁴¹*Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John.* ⁴²*Calling them to himself, Jesus said to them, you know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them.* ⁴³*But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;* ⁴⁴*and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.* ⁴⁵*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.*