

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Renouncing Reminders

(Jerry Fite)

Who is the “Christian”? By definition, the Christian is one who belongs to Christ. But what does this mean? A disciple of Jesus is the Christian. “...*the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*” (Acts 11:26). The learner or follower of Jesus Christ (disciple) belongs to Christ (Christian). When we look deeper into what constitutes a disciple, we will understand the nature of true Christianity.

In the context of “counting the cost”, Jesus said, “*So, therefore whosoever be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple*” (Luke 14:34). You cannot be a disciple, or truly a Christian unless you renounce all that you have!

The Greek word translated “renounce” denotes “setting apart”. Therefore Paul was doing this when he “*took leave*” from the brethren in Achaia to set sail for Syrian (Acts 18:18). One is doing this when bidding “*farewell*” to people in his or her house (Luke 9:61). Separating oneself from his or her possessions is the

demand of the Lord. Can you see why this statement is in the context of counting the cost regarding true discipleship?

What does this mean in practical terms of our daily living? Is the Christian not to possess anything? If the Christian works to give all of his or her earnings to those in need (Eph. 4:28), how does one provide for his or her own family (1 Tim. 5:8)? If a Christian may not possess a house, why were there so many houses among Christians in which private teaching and sharing a meal took place (Acts 20:20, 2:46)? Possessing clothes, a house, a refrigerator, a stove, or even a car does not mean you are not a disciple of the Lord or a true Christian.

Jesus is reminding us that when we must choose between Christ and any of our possessions, we will always choose Christ. In counting the cost, the Christian sets himself or herself apart from everything in order to “have Christ”. Therefore, if a Christian must choose between accommodating the demands of a spouse or

submitting to the clear demands of the Lord, then following the Lord will prevail every time. (1 Cor. 7:15, 23). If lying to customers or sleeping with the boss is demanded in order to have a paycheck, then separating oneself from that paycheck will occur. If denouncing Christ is the condition for saving one from a beheading, then separating from the body in death is the path that will be taken.

Paul writes, “...*and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... and do count them but refuse, that I might gain Christ*” (Phil. 3:8). Gaining Christ; knowing Christ; finding righteousness in Christ was supreme in the life of Paul. In comparison, all his fleshy attainments were but waste and filth. “Set apart” from things unto Christ demands constant circumspection. Have you spent more of your time this week in viewing entertaining videos than reading your Bible? Maybe some “taking leave” of one and absorbing yourself in the Lord is needed, dear disciple.