

A CHRISTIAN IS A DISCIPLE

Part II

II. We must learn to give as Jesus gave

In His own words Jesus taught us to give our lives as He did. He said that He had come to do the will of the Father who sent Him and to complete the work that He sent Him to do. (John 4:34 – paraphrased). Then Jesus said, “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”

In other words Jesus is saying, “My life is a life of service to the Father. My purpose is to do His will.”

As a result of this He agonized in Gethsemane crying out, “not my will, but thine be done.” And then giving, “His life a ransom” (Matthew 20:28) on Calvary’s cross.

We today will probably never be called upon to die for our faith, but we are called upon to give ourselves completely to do His will even as Jesus did. It does mean that we “present our bodies living sacrifices” in complete surrender. (Romans 12:1-2)

Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, even so do I send you.” He sends us to give our time, talent, testimony and treasure to bring others to God.

One of the most beautiful illustrations of this is seen in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. He is challenging them to give sacrificially and he reminds them of the example of the Savior – “you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich.” (II Corinthians 8:9)

But He also reminds them of the Christians in Macedonia. When given an opportunity, they gave sacrificially even in the midst of their extreme poverty. They were able to do so because they “first gave themselves to the Lord.” This they learned from the Savior and so must we.

III. We must learn to sacrifice as He sacrificed.

It may surprise you to know that Jesus never used the word “sacrifice” in regard to His life or His ministry. He didn’t need to! His entire life was a sacrifice. His death on the cross was the ultimate sacrifice.

The writers of the New Testament however, constantly referred to His sacrifice. In Ephesians 5:2 Paul exhorts us to “walk in love as Christ also loved us, giving Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God.” The writer of Hebrews says that Christ, “put away our sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26)

As His disciples we are called upon to “offer ourselves as living sacrifices.” Our time, our talent, our treasure must be offered to Him as sacrifices which are acceptable to Him.

An illustration of this is seen in the Apostle Paul’s giving thanks for the offering sent to him by the Philippians. He says that their monetary gift was a “sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God.” (Philippians 4:18) They had made a sacrifice to the work of Christ and Paul rejoices in it. He then promises that in turn, “My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19) God always meets our needs when we, like Christ, offer to Him the sacrifice of self and substance.

When God is leading us to sacrifice time and treasure – remember the Scripture – “Don’t forget to do good and give what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” (Hebrews 13:16)

In fact, on our Journey to Victory, we will have opportunities to love as He loved, to give as He gave, and to sacrifice as He sacrificed. We need to begin praying that we might have “willing hearts” filled with love for our Christ, our church and our cause.

Lord, I want to be a giver. I am willing to be used for your kingdom work.

I have a willing heart that is filled with love for you.

Lead me to understand what you want to do through me. I’ll do it.