**"THE COSTS AND REWARDS OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP”**

***SCRIPTURE READINGS….ROMANS 8:1-258 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.2For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.3For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:4That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.5For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.6For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.7Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.8So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.9But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.10And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.11But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.12Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.13For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.14For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.15For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.16The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:17And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.18For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.\19For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.20For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,21Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.22For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.23And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.24For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?25But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.***

**PRAYER**

**INTRODUCTION**

**[Beloved, one thing I certainly have come to understand and that is that being a disciple of Jesus Christ can be costly. The reason for this is that often times we are "hindered", "burdened", with "trials, toils and tears" and "many a heartache". But the Lord tells us through His Word that "Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All"...]**

**So my question here today is this….**

**[Will heaven be worth it all? The answer is a resounding Yes! But it never hurts to be reminded of both the cost and rewards of True discipleship...]**

1. **As did Paul, in writing to the Romans –**

[**Ro 8:18**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%208.18)***18For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us***

***Paul is saying here that he has come to a complete conclusion of the whole matter, I have come to realize in my mind that all] the suffering that I am going through have no weight, have no value, have no true comparison to the glory which Christ has in store for us!!!! It does not matter if some leave earlier than others the fact of the matter is we will all be together in glory with him!!!!.***

***Be encouraged beloved, though you are going through some tough and rough times none of this can compare with what God has prepared for them that love him!!!***

1. **Paul again, this time in writing to the Corinthians –wrote the following…..**

[**2Co 4:17**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Co%204.17)17For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

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Beloved our affliction here on earth will be over in a blinking of an eye. The scriptures declare to us that ….**Sorrow endureth for a night, but Joy cometh in the morning!!!!!**

**First allow me to give you what….**

1. **THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP INCLUDES AND WHAT TO EXPECT !!!**

**FIRST OF ALL IN ORDER FOR ANYONE TO BE A FAITHFUL DISCIPLE o Jesus Christ A PERSON MUST FIRST AGREE TO THESE VERY STRONG AREAS OF DISCIPLESHIP….**

**THE FIRST THING ON Jesus LIST IS THE FOLLOWING…..**

1. **JESUS MUST COME FIRST...**

 1. **Before your own self –**

[***Lk 9:23-24***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%209.23-24)***23And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.24For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.***

 **2. Before anyone else, including family –**

[***Lk 14:26***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%2014.26)***; 26If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.***

[***Mt 10:34-37***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mt%2010.34-37)***34Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.35For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.36And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.37He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.***

 **3. Before anything the world has to offer –**

[***Lk 9:25***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%209.25)***; 25For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?***

[***Lk 14:33***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%2014.33)***33So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.***

1. **WE MUST BE WILLING TO SUFFER FOR CHRIST...**
2. **We must be willing to bear our own cross –**

[***Lk 14:27***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%2014.27)***27And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.***

 **2. Living in an ungodly world, we may find that following Christ**

 **sometimes involves ridicule and persecution let’s face it**

 **persecution comes in many forms…**

[***2Ti 3:12***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Ti%203.12)***12Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.***

1. **The persecution may be physical –**

[***1Pe 4:12-13***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Pe%204.12-13)***12Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:13But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.***

1. **The persecution may be verbal** –

[***Lk 6:27-28***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%206.27-28)***27But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,28Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.***

***THIS IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR SOME FOR THE CARNAL MAN WILL ALWAYS INTEFERE WITH THE WILL OF GOD IN A CHRISTIANS LIFE!!!***

***THE KEY IS …”But I say unto you which hear”…!!! Most don’t want to hear this!!!***

1. **There are other things we must endure for Christ's sake:**

 **a. Our very own personal weaknesses in our struggle against sin –**

[***1Co 9:27***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%209.27)***27But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.***

1. **Disappointments brought on by failing brethren –**

[***2Co 11:29***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Co%2011.29)***29Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?***

***Listen, here we understand that Paul is saying that he is not as strong as many think, in other words he is equating himself to everyone else by saying that he too gets just as angry as anyone else with those who should be producing yet are failing the mission! In other words Paul is making a point here and he is directing his attention specifically on those who fail to help in service to Christ…weak Christians…..***

 **1) E.g., Those whose apathy and neglect produce slothful service.**

 **2) E.g., Those whose irregular attendance makes it difficult to**

 **depend on them.**

 **3) E.g., Those whose unwillingness to serve creates extra burdens**

 **on those who do serve.**

 **4) E.g., Those whose murmuring hinders the efforts of those who**

 **try to do something that will enhance the ministry.**

1. **On a more positive note….Even if blessed to escape such things, we**

**must still be willing to expend time and effort in promoting the cause of Christ in positive ways.**

**It may come down to where….**

 **a. Sometimes alone, or with just a few to help the cause.**

 **b. Sometimes in difficult places, where few appreciate your**

 **efforts.**

**FROM THE PEN OF PAUL...**

 **1. A man who endured much hardship wrote the following…- cf.**

***2 Co 11:21-2821I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit wheresoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.22Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.23Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.24Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.25Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;26In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;27In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.28Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.***

**II. THE REWARDS OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**2. Yet in spite of all these sufferings Paul looked forward to his reward and the fulfillment of the promises of Jesus:**

**The first thing was…..**

 **a. A house not made with hands –a new tabernacle!!!!**

[***2Co 5:1***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Co%205.1) ***For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.***

***In other words, Paul was completely focused on his mission because he had a complete understanding of the promises of God through Christ Jesus… do we have the promises of God and heaven in view? There is a new body awaiting those who are faithful to Christ!!!***

1. **The riches of God's grace –**

[***Ep 2:7***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ep%202.7)***7That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.***

***This is saying to us the following….*With respect to others: *That in the ages to come he might show*, etc. (**[**Eph. 2:7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Eph.2.7)**), that he might give a specimen and proof of his great goodness and mercy, for the encouragement of sinners in future time.**

1. **Paul states to the Philippians that they are to expect A glorious transformation –**

[***Php 3:20-21***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Php%203.20-21)***20For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:21Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.***

***All I can say to this is…I am ready Lord Jesus!! No more Pain, sicknesses, worries, anxieties, no more doctors, no more falling teeth, no more hair that falls, no more joint pains, no more heart failures, no more kidney failure, no more tumors, no more brain dysfunction, in other words we are presently going through all these manifestations so that we can learn to appreciate our new bodies when we get them!!!!!! I don’t know about you but, If this won’t keep you focused then what will???***

1. **The bible reminds us also of a crown of righteousness –**

[***2 Ti 4:8***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Ti%204.8)***8Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.***

1. **He also reminds us of A heavenly kingdom –**

[***2Ti 4:18***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Ti%204.18)***18And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.***

1. **FROM THE PEN OF PETER...**
2. **A man who likewise suffered hardship – Here are his words….**

[***1Co 4:9-13***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%204.9-13)***For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.10We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.11Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;12And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:13Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.***

 **2. Peter in spite of all this …Yet looked forward to: u**

 **a. An inheritance imperishable, undefiled, reserved in heaven**

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[***1Pe 1:4***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Pe%201.4)***4To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,***

***Peter says to us all hold on, a great new world awaits us….***

1. **A new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness dwells**

**So Peter encourages all Christians everywhere to be diligent….**

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[***2Pe 3:13-14***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Pe%203.13-14)***13Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.14Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.***

**These two apostles have said plenty but I can’t leave out the Apostle of Love**

1. **FROM THE PEN OF JOHN...**
2. **A man who suffered tribulation and exile - cf.**

[***Re 1:9***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Re%201.9)***9I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.***

***The Isle of Patmos….*Patmos is said to be an island in the Aegean Sea, One of those called Cyclades, and was about thirty-five miles in compass; but under this confinement it was the apostle’s comfort that he did not suffer as an evil-doer, but that it was for the testimony of Jesus, for bearing witness to Christ as the Immanuel, the Saviour.**

1. **Yet was blessed to be shown:**

 **a. The bliss and joy of those who were triumphant over tribulation –**

[**Re 7:9-10**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Re%207.9-10)***, 9After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;10And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.***

 **b. he also was shown The destiny of the redeemed, who would live forever, and forever with God –**

[**Re 21:1-7**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Re%2021.1-7)**,** ***And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.2And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.3And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.4And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.5And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.6And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.7He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.***

**CONCLUSION and TOTAL SUMMARY ….**

1. **Can there be any comparison...?**

 **a. Between a few years of service, even with hardship?**

 **b. And an eternity of bliss in the presence of God?**

 **-- I BELIEVE…."Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All"!**

1. **We have read the words of those like Paul, Peter, and John...**

**AND CAN’T HELP BUT TO ASK THIS QUESTION?????**

 **a. What if they could return and speak to us today?**

 **b. What if our loved ones who died in Christ could return and speak**

 **to us today?**

 **-- Would they not tell us, "Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All"?**

**Whatever the cost of following Jesus in this life, may the words of these**

**scripture and the promises of Holy Scripture remind and comfort us to be**

**faithful and persevere...**

**I’LL CLOSE ON THIS LAST SCRIPTURE TO FILL YOUR HOPE AND CONFIDENCE….**

 **"Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.**

 **For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will**

 **of God, you may receive the promise:" (**[**He 10:35-36**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%2010.35-36)**)**