



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 9

June 18, 2023

No. 25

## The Call to Discipleship

Nick Woods

Many of us who faithfully gather each week to worship gladly answer to the call of Christian. And while that is of course an accurate description of those who follow the Christ, it is worthwhile to note that in the New Testament, the term "Christian" appears only three times. This designation was made by those outside this belief system to describe people zealously embracing their new faith.

However, throughout the Scriptures, early disciples primarily referred to themselves as "disciples." We can examine the New Testament to determine significance of being a disciple, and the characteristics of a true follower of Jesus.

First, being a disciple means being devoted to learning from the Master. This is demonstrated when Jesus commends Mary's choice to sit at His feet and listen to His words while visiting her home. Luke 10:38-42 emphasizes that learning from Him is of utmost importance. As disciples, we should eagerly absorb everything Jesus taught and allow His teachings to shape our thoughts and actions.

Equally important, disciples must follow Jesus' example of sacrifice to truly become like Him. Jesus emphasized this when He instructed His disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. He also warns us in Matthew 16:24-26 that gaining the world at the cost of one's soul is a worthless pursuit. Discipleship requires that we be willing to suffer for Jesus, giving up worldly attachments, and embracing a different life path if necessary (Luke 14:26-27, 14:33, Matthew 8:18-22).

And, as disciples, we are called to mold ourselves into the image of Jesus. We must renounce sin and align our lives with His teachings (Matthew 5:20, 16:24). Jesus is our ultimate example, and we are to become like Him (Matthew 10:24-25). This transformative process may involve tribulations and challenges, but it is worth the effort for the reward that awaits us (Acts 14:21-22).

Being a disciple of Jesus is more than a mere label. It is a commitment to transformation, even when that transformation comes at a cost. We strive for holiness and seek to be with God for eternity. We must embrace the journey of discipleship and be willing to suffer and endure hardships for their devotion to Christ.

Today, many people claim to be Christians, but fewer embody the true essence of discipleship. Let us examine ourselves and ask whether we are truly disciples in pursuit of learning, sacrifice, and transformation. Jesus commanded us to go and make **disciples**, baptizing them and teaching them to observe His commandments (Matthew 28:19-20). By embracing our own discipleship, we become equipped to fulfill this Great Commission.



## Things Just Happen in Life

Ecclesiastes 9:11-12 "I returned and saw under the sun that—The race *is* not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all. For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, Like birds caught in a snare, So the sons of men *are* snared in an evil time, When it falls suddenly upon them."

Things just happen in life. "Time and chance happens" to us all. We often say "he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time." Sometimes what happens unexpectedly happens at a convenient time. Recently I had an unexpected and sudden blowout on a trailer tire. It was on a two lane road with no shoulder for miles. The tire happened to blow just as I was passing by a convenient store. Sometimes however things do not work out quite that well, like the time I suddenly and rather quickly had my foot slip off the edge of the sidewalk. I was sore for weeks.

The fastest runner as Solomon points out does not always win. The fastest runner may be disqualified for a false start. He mentions a weaker opponent who wins the battle perhaps by a well calculated maneuver. Men do become wealthy by chance; perhaps a valuable discovery in the backyard. Yes, things happen and time and chance happens to us all.

The same is true about the day of our death. It is an unknown day but it is a certain day. (Hebrews 9:27) Solomon describes that day as a fish swimming along but is suddenly caught in a net and soon ending up on someone's plate. So a man's life can end quickly by time and chance.

Solomon also mentions a time when men find themselves in an evil time that has suddenly fallen upon them. How relevant that is today. Evil has come upon us rather quickly over the last few years. History repeats itself obviously because Solomon warned us about this.

While we do not know when something might happen by time or chance, we can know that things just happen and we can learn how to deal with them as they come along because we know they will come along. This is a reason to love the Scriptures even more. The Scriptures tell us these truths so we can know some things just happen.

While preparing for our own death, another certain event may supersede it. The Lord may return and judgment day will arrive. We are to be ready and prepared not knowing when that day will come.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." Matthew 24:36

"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4

Yes things just happen, but we also know they will just happen so be ready for the time and chance happenings of life and be ready for the certain things with an unknown day or hour.

STACY CRIM