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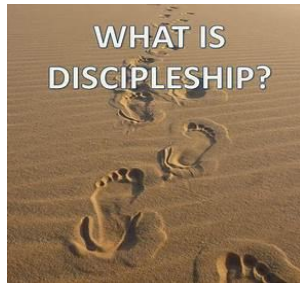
The Deeper Things

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."

Hebrews 1:1-3

"We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?"

Hebrews 2:1-3



What makes a true disciple or follower of Jesus? Is it the number of times someone attends a church service? Is it the amount of money someone contributes to good causes? Is it how much time someone devotes to reading the Bible and/or praying? Understanding the nature of a true disciple is essential to those of us who are committed to following Jesus. It is easy, I think, to misunderstand what Jesus wants of those who follow him, especially when our world pressures us to bend even the basics.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews addresses this concept at the beginning of his letter. He reminds us that God, who has spoken to his people in lots of ways over the centuries, is now speaking to us through his one and only Son. And, that this Son is the *"...exact representation of his (God's) being..."*

This means that when we look at how Jesus functioned in this world, what he taught, and what he focused his attention on, we are seeing God in action. To see Jesus is to see God. To hear Jesus is to hear God. When Philip told Jesus, *"...show us the Father and that will be enough for us."* Jesus' response drives home this concept so clearly. *"Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."* (John 14:8-10)

It is hard for us to understand that Jesus is God in the flesh. He is God all the time and so when he speaks he is speaking God. How he lives in this world is exactly how God would live here. That being the case, the Hebrew author warns us, *"We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away."*

At a time when so many who claim to follow Jesus are suggesting that we can soften his teachings or even ignore those teachings it is so important to remember just where those teachings originate. The Hebrew author would warn us, *For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?"*

Every word spoken by Jesus, every action that he modeled for us, and every command that he gave us are from God. Indeed, how shall we escape the condemnation we deserve if we soften or ignore the teachings of our Lord and Master who is the Son of that same God?

So, to be a true disciple, demands so much more from us than those surface measures that we so often accept. A true disciple is one who absolutely follows the teachings of Jesus in every situation. A true disciple chooses to model Jesus before the world all of the time and in every way.

True discipleship then, demands our whole existence, all of the time. It demands our absolute obedience to everything that Jesus taught. It expects and accepts nothing less than our absolute surrender to our Lord's will for us.

So, when the world suggests that we can be something, believe something, accept something, that conflicts with Jesus' teachings we are faced with that ultimate choice, aren't we? We can choose to absolutely obey our Lord and Master, or we can try to bend to the pressures of the world. We cannot do both. Which will we choose if we are, in fact, true disciples?

