

TRUE DISCIPLES
Heb. 12:2.

*all of us should
desire to be true dis-
ciples.*

Dr. Clow states that Jesus has given us four marks of a true disciple.

if ye continue in my word ye are my disciples
a. A steadfast loyalty to truth. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

b. Love for the brethren... "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

c. A fruitful and winsome holiness... "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples."

d. But the one mark that Jesus certainly looks for is bearing the Cross... "Who for the joy that was set before Him bore the Cross... or endured the Cross." *Did you ever have a hard day before you and a joyous project for the next day?*

In the Scriptures there are three words that tell us of the darker and more difficult experiences of the religious life. They are:

I. Burden. 2. Thorn. 3. Cross.

I. Burden... Care and strain of earthly life

Wearing daily tasks

Responsibilities that shake our nerves

Sorrows of loneliness

Poverty

Disappointments

Thoughts of weakness of old age.

The only way to carry them is to cast them upon God and become sustained by His word. If you do not have any burdens just come over to the parsonage and meet the door for one day and you will get acquainted with burdens... Man and his family in town with no home and no job... being put out of the house he is in... sick baby... not even a chair to furnish a room etc.

II. THORN... An experience with a keener anguish... point to some singular experience... some humbling infirmity, some mortifying disability... some weakness that disqualifies us for our task... some affliction, some sore, some skeleton in the closet. It is something no body knows perhaps... and there is one thing about it we never name it. Paul said he had one but he never named it. All the world has tried to find out what it was.

The thorn has to be accepted in the grace of God...and just remember that Paul heard these words..."My grace is sufficient for thee."

III. Cross...Some speak as though their daily toil, loneliness, poverty, bereavement, or some impediment were their cross. There is a difference between these and the Cross...we may have these and be sinners...we may have these and think them our cross and feel that since we have had trial, poverty, bereavement, sorrow, etc. that we should have a free pass to heaven...but these do not constitute a Cross. No one escapes burdens or thorns but we may escape a Cross. We cannot take up a cross or refuse it. "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Now Jesus had His burden...Toil in carpenter's shop, poverty, pain, hunger, enduring the scorn of those opposed to Him.

Jesus had His THORN...He did not name it. It might have been the fact that His flesh in veiling His Godhead from man also veiled God from Him.

Jesus had His Cross...it was that life and death for sin that was consummated in His dying hour.

Your burden and thorn do not make up your cross. Your cross may not be the dying in one hour for some one but dying daily, in the language of Paul, in that you silently accept a wrong done you, step down from some place you might have held that would have been honor in this world...in order to help some soul to find the way...You may accept it or refuse it. It is certainly to live chastely in an impure world. You may do that or not do it.

The Rich Young Ruler could have laid down his wealth and received the Christ way of life but he did not choose to take up this cross.

Bearing our cross is a daily affair. We can not take it up one day and then be excused forever afterward.

What does it mean to us to bear it? It means a purer life, a smoother temper, a clearer vision of God, and a greater likeness to Christ.

In the Cross of Christ I glory..towering over the wrecks of time.

