

Are you prepared to lose your job, social relationships, and comforts for your identification with Christ & His gospel?

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The Apostle Paul provides a wonderful example of God's grace working in a man even while going through hardships. Paul stated that believer can be sorrowful, yet always rejoicing (2 Cor 6.10). Suffering and hardship is not something Christians can opt out of or choose to steer clear of. Rather, the Bible portrays believers as being destined for afflictions of various kinds and sorts. Child of God, are you prepared to lose your job, social relationships, and manifold comforts because of your identification with Jesus Christ and your commitment to His gospel?

1. The COST of following Christ.

Let us not forget that Christ demands everything. Every person must count the cost because following Christ requires everything a person has. If one does not love Christ supremely, he cannot be His disciple. If one does not willingly give up all his possessions, he cannot be Christ's disciple. If one does not carry his own cross and come after Christ, he cannot be Christ's disciple. Let us never forget the high calling and the demanding calling of Christ. The cost is high. The demands are ultimate. The reward is worth it. Christ Himself is infinitely worth it all!

2. The REJECTION of following Christ.

God's people receive much hostility from those who reject Christ and hate His free gospel. Many are the enemies of the godly and they hate God's people with a violent hatred (Psalm 25.19). Believers must readily understand and willingly embrace the call to be rejected by the world and labeled a fool by the lips of nonbelievers for the sake of Christ. Let an adopted child of God rehearse these words without end: "the word of the cross is foolishness [*moronic folly*] to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor 1.18).

3. The BLESSEDNESSES of following Christ.

Living as an alien in a hostile world, every Christian must remember and rehearse the happy privileges and hopes of following Christ. Indeed, a believer can say with Paul that he's suffered the loss of all things and counts them but rubbish so that he can gain Christ (Phil 3.8). The ultimate blessedness of being a Christian and following Christ is not the *blessings* that it brings but the *Possession* that the believer enjoys, namely, Christ Jesus. The blessedness of following Christ finds its climax in gaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess 2.14). With the swarming sins, and the violent hostilities, and the worldly temptations, and the manifold mockings, let every child of the risen King remember that following Christ is the greatest sacrifice but it always comes with the greatest blessedness of gaining Him in His glory!

4. The ALIENATION of following Christ.

One can survey the Book of Acts and quickly ascertain that the church of Jesus Christ spread rapidly. And at the same time, believers spoke of Christ, followed Christ, suffered for Christ, and found themselves alienated from the world. They lived more and more with the undeniable understanding that this world is not their home. You speak of Christ and you'll find yourself being treated the way Christ was. He loved sinners and found himself the object of their scorn. He was intriguing to sinners and yet the masses refused to submit to his summons to repent and believe for the eternal welfare of their souls. So Christians should prepare that as they speak of Christ — which every believer will do, for we always speak of that which we love — they will find themselves alienated because of their pursuit of Christ. The direction of the Christian's life is gapingly different than that of the world. The pursuits of the believer's heart are not those of society. Therefore, let believers pay attention to the precious promises of Christ that comfort and console Christians during seasons (lengthy and harsh, though they may be) of affliction. All the while, let the child of God remember that it's worth it! Only eternity will show the infinite and unspeakable worth and happiness of following Christ with our all.