

What Makes Disciples Different?

Following Jesus will make us as distinctive as salt and as different as light (cf. Matt. 5:13-16). God has designed Christianity this way so that others can see His glory reflected in His own people (Matt. 5:16). But what, specifically, is supposed to make a disciple different? Notice what the Sermon on the Mount teaches...

Different hunger (Matt. 5:6) – The world hungers and thirsts for the gratification of fleshly desires, while Christians are to, “Hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Such a hunger will affect the way we think (Phil. 4:8), the way we speak (Matt. 12:36), and the way we act (1 John 5:17).

Different love (Matt. 5:44) – Anyone can love and appreciate their friends; even the “tax collectors” do so (Matt. 5:46). However, Christians are distinctive because of their determination to love, bless, do good to, and pray for their enemies (Matt. 5:44).

Different treasure (Matt. 6:19-21) – Money and things are the obsessions of most people in the world, but Christians are to be seeking a different kind of treasure. Christians look strange to the world because they invest in things that are unseen: heavenly treasures (Matt. 6:20).

Different Master (Matt. 6:24) – Jesus declares that no one can serve two masters, although many people still try. Christians have made the determination to serve God alone: “Him only shall you serve” (Matt. 4:10). Such a single-minded ambition sets disciples apart from the world.

Different priority (Matt. 6:33) – First and foremost in the mind of disciples is the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Such a priority shapes and colors every other choice in life. Do we consistently ask what will be best for the kingdom of God?

Different ethic (Matt. 7:12) – In a day when every man seems to be doing what is right in his own eyes, Christians are to treat others as we would want to be treated (cf. Judges 17:6). Applied lovingly and consistently, such an ethic will inevitably make God’s people distinctive.

Different path (Matt. 7:13-14) – Jesus says there is a broad way that leads to destruction, and many people are found therein. Those who follow Jesus will be different because they have chosen to follow a different path, and the Lord Himself declares, “There are few who find it” (Matt. 7:14).

Different foundation (Matt. 7:24-27) – Disciples of Jesus are determined not just to hear God’s word, but to do it (James 1:22). How strange it looks to the world when God’s word is taken seriously and obeyed, even at great personal cost to the disciple (1 Peter 4:1-4).

The authentic presence of Jesus in our lives is something that can never be hidden under a bushel. May His light be seen in us more!

--JB