Like Master, Like Disciple

Jesus speaking to his Twelve comes to a place in his monologue where he tells them “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher...” (Mt 10:24-25). What was Jesus telling his disciples at the time, and what is He telling us today. I believe Jesus was clarifying to his disciples an important principle that a disciple is not above his master. Not in the sense of what a disciple might achieve personally throughout his or her life. Jesus could not have been, strictly speaking about one’s position, because on another occasion, Jesus, was again talking to his disciples. And this time we find him saying in the gospel of John, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do (Jn 14:12, emphasis mine).

The point I am making, is not about what the disciples would do, where they would go, how many conversions to the new religion, called Christianity, they would make, or how many new churches they would establish; it was none of those things. What Jesus was telling his disciples, is that the disciple was not above the treatment of the master. The disciple was not above escaping the fires of persecution, or the stones of cruelty. What the master endured, so the student. Someone has said “Like master, like servant” this was the point of Jesus’ words on that day. Two millennia have elapsed since Jesus first uttered that phrase; his words continue in force, they are the same yesterday, today, and forever. You and I will never be above our master, and we must not be surprised when trials and tribulations are encountered along the highways and byways of life.

For those upcoming disciples who are in our churches this must be, clear; they must understand, that today the words of the Great Schoolmaster continue to ring true. Therefore, the disciple’s lot in life will not exempt them from persecutions, suffering, problems, and the hardships they will face in life and ministry. It is a privilege and honor accepting the idea that to be a true disciple of
our risen savior, the cross will not be lightened for us. As Jesus carried the cross, so shall we carry the cross. The cross is a symbol, a symbol of honor, if you will, of walking the way of the Lord. The cross symbolizes the bond that exists between he who bore it, and we who follow.

Matthew, the once, tax collector wrote, “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master” this portion of scripture comes in the middle of some challenging words. As disciples, we are told that our field of ministry is in the midst of wolves. Jesus said, “I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves”, even though we are among wolves; the disciple must not allow the world and the wolves to change us. The disciple will be dragged before governors and kings; but the disciple is not to be anxious about what he will say because the Holy Spirit will speak through the disciple.

Being a disciple would not be easy; families would feel the sword of dissension as it cuts through the ties that bind kin. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you, the disciple will be hated (10:21, 22); that is the cost of being a disciple of the One who hung on a cross on, a hill called Golgotha, for you and me.

Throughout the ages, every disciple has had to experience and learn that even though there is a cost there is also a reward. Jesus said to his disciples that he “who endures to the end will be saved” (v.22). The Lord promises his disciples that they will be saved, but it is conditioned. The disciple must last; they cannot abandon ship, or drop out of the race. If the disciple stays in the ship in spite of the storm, if the disciple finishes the race in spite of the obstacles, they will be saved—that is a promise.

The same promise given to his first disciples is ours, if we but endure to the end. Sufficient is the promise to steady us through today’s turbulent times. We cannot complain to our savior that we were caught off guard and we did not expect to go through personal persecution. We have been given ample warning, in fact, two thousand years and hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of witnesses have testified that serving Jesus would divide sons from fathers, and that persecution,
and trials would be on the heels of those identifying with Jesus—this then was
and is the cost of discipleship.

Jesus said, “It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher....” Another way of
putting it is that we, his disciples, should be satisfied with being like our teacher. If
the world jeers and mocks you, and shouts isn’t he... isn’t she one of Jesus’
disciples; then be content in knowing you’re going through what your Master
went through. It is a privilege to suffer, to undergo ridicule, to be dismissed as
someone who has not kept up with the times and is irrelevant, or to be viewed as
naïve, ignorant and foolish for believing an old antiquated myth as if true.

Is the saying “Like Master, like disciple” true it should be, especially for believers?
Every Christian, every leader, every minister should follow Jesus. And as we follow
whatever life brings we must hold on and finish the race; Jesus did and who are
we that we should have it better? We are not called to compete with him, or to
outshine him, or to be exalted above him; no, you and I have been, simply called
to walk in his footsteps all the way to the Cross.