

ON BEING A DISCIPLE

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Scene: Interviewer and applicant sit at table or desk. Interviewer has a clipboard (which can also act as a prompt!) and applicant has a folded piece of paper on which there are scribbled notes (which can also act as a prompt). There could be a sign saying 'Employment Agency.'

Interviewer: So you want to be a disciple?

Applicant: Yes. I thought it sounded interesting.

I: What experience do you have?

A: Well, I've always tried to do my best.

I: Your best what?

A: Well, er, my best – er, my best – anything.

I: For example?

A: Example? Um, I try to help people when I can.

I: To do what?

A: Um, to do anything.

I: Right or wrong?

A: Well, right of course. You don't think I'd help people to do wrong do you?

I: You tell me.

A: I just did.

I: O.K., O.K. All right then... What about your qualifications?

A: I went to Sunday School when I was a child.

I: Good.

A: And I can recite the Lord's Prayer.

I: Good.

A: And I go to church... sometimes.

I: So this qualifies you to be a disciple?

A: Isn't that what it's all about?

I: If you say so. Now you haven't yet asked me about conditions.

A: Oh yes. What are the working hours?

I: Hours?

A: Yes, how many hours a week does the job require?

I: All of them.

A: No, you don't understand. Would I have to work overtime?

I: Well, no, because you'll already be working 24/7.

A: What do you mean, 24/7? No one can work 24/7.

I: Well you will – if you want to be a disciple.

A: That's absurd. Next thing you'll be telling me I have to be disciple even when I'm asleep.

I: Ah, now you're getting the idea.

A: No I'm not. So what are you going to say next? That I work 168 hours a week and don't get any pay?

I: Right first time! See, you are getting the idea.

A: What! Work for no salary. You've got to be joking.

I: Not at all. I'm very serious. Disciples don't get paid anything. In fact, you will probably pay us.

A: This is crazy!

I: Yes, it is rather. That's what makes it interesting. Being a disciple is rather an unusual calling. Oh, and did I mention conditions?

A: Do you have to?

I: Well, you should know what they are. Mm... Ah, here we are. You must be willing to work in freezing cold or searing heat. You will probably be criticised and abused. You may even suffer physical assault. Your friends could turn their backs on you. Your own family might reject you. You will forego many of life's pleasures. There is no worker's comp. In fact, it could even cost you your life... But the retirement package is out of this world.

A: I'm beginning to get the feeling this is not the job for me after all.

I: Oh, that is disappointing. I was rather hoping you would give it a go.

A: You don't seriously expect me to take up this position, do you?

I: Why not?

A: Why not! You want me to work day and night for no return in woeful conditions and no compo, to risk my life and then to pay you for the privilege!

I: Yes, it's rather fun, really, isn't it? Now, there is one other important thing we haven't discussed.

A: And what's that?

I: The identity of your Employer.

A: I thought that was you.

I: Oh, now. I'm just the interviewer.

A: O.K. So who is this mysterious Employer?

I: You see, the thing is, He is not asking you to do anything for Him that He hasn't done for you.

A: I don't understand you.

I: Well, He sacrificed everything for you. He turned His back on unbelievable wealth and power for you. He was despised and rejected and abused – for you. He was beaten and bruised and ultimately executed – although He had done no wrong—for no reward. And all for you. So you see, being a disciple is just doing what He did.

A: For me? How?

I: Well, that's how He works. First He gives everything for us and then He asks everything of us. It's pretty simple, really.

A: Simple? It's absurd.

I: Yes, from a human point of view I suppose it is. But look at it from His side. If you gave up everything for someone you love, wouldn't you be rather pleased if they wanted to do something for you?

A: I guess so. If I... Did you say, 'someone you love.'

I: Yes, I did.

A: Are you saying the Employer loves me?

I: Yes, I am.

A: Why?

I: Good question.

A: But He doesn't even know me.

I: Actually he knows you better than you realise.

A: Really?

I: And even though He knows you, surprisingly enough, He still has an enormous love for you. More than you could ever understand.

A: What sort of love? He's not a philanderer, is He?

I: Far from it! He only wants what's best for you. There's really nothing in it for Him.

A: Are you serious? Maybe I'd better look at this position more closely after all.

I: Why not. What have you got to lose?

A: Everything, if what you say is true!

I: Well, yes. But why grieve over losing something worthless to gain something priceless?

A: Priceless?

I: Oh yes, the personal benefits are immeasurable.

A: I don't know what to think. This whole business sounds impossible but it also sounds sort of exciting somehow. All right, if I decide to take this job, what do I do next?

I: Well, you need to think about being immersed.

A: Immersed? Immersed in what?

I: Water, of course.

A: What, go swimming? Why on earth would I want to do that?

I: Well, if you really are going to say goodbye to your old life, bury it and begin to live a new life, you show it by immersion. Going under water shows death and burial and coming out of water shows new life.

A: So I have a bath? And then I'm in?

I: Well, it's not quite like that. It's a special kind of bath. Some people call it baptism. You do it by faith, trusting that the Employer will change your life – so you can begin your life as a disciple.

A: You're going to have to explain that to me.

I: Well, O.K. why don't we do that? Look, let's relax and have a cuppa in the coffee shop next door while we talk about it.

A: You mean I can be a disciple and still drink coffee?

I: Well, actually I was going to suggest orange juice...

Off-stage voice reads while they walk off together—

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."