

At All Cost

Luke 9:57-62 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, *that* someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head." ⁵⁹ Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house." ⁶² But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

- All 3 people in this text are people that want to follow Jesus. But Jesus seems to talk them out of it. Why?
- I have always been bothered by this passage. Jesus seems so harsh, and like He is discouraging people from following Him.
- But Jesus is giving a realistic picture of what it means to choose Him. He is interested in followers that are sold out. That will live sacrificially. That give their all to Him.
- This is the question for us. Will we follow Jesus? Not just with going to church, tithing, saying a prayer, but with our entire lives, no matter the cost?

Comfort or the Cross?

Luke 9:57-58 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, *that* someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head."

- "I will follow you wherever you go." This man was a teacher of the law (known from other accounts).
 - It was customary to attach yourself to a teacher to learn and to promote yourself. Jesus was gaining in popularity, so this would be a beneficial arrangement.

- With the miracles associated with the ministry of Jesus, following Him might have seemed more glamorous than it really was.
- **“The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”** Jesus makes it clear that following Him is not a path to riches. Not to more comforts. Not to higher status or greater ease. In fact, Jesus points out that He is basically homeless. Traveling and depending on the hospitality of others.
- Following Jesus is not a path of self-advancement. It is a path of self-denial.
 - **Luke 9:23** Then He said to *them* all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.
 - Jesus didn’t tell the man “No, you can’t follow Me.” But He told him the truth, without painting a glamorized version of what it was like to follow Him.
 - This is the opposite of techniques used by many evangelists today, but Jesus wanted the man to know what it would really be like.
- We tend to teach that God is our provider, He is our comforter, He is our hope, etc...
 - Those are true, and during tough times must be held on to.
 - But we also know the stories of Paul, Silas, Peter all being in prison. We know of the stories of hundreds of Martyrs.
 - So many want to focus solely on the benefits of God that we forget the sacrifices that He calls us to.
 - Jesus called this man to give up living in a home to follow Him. Most people are unwilling to give up a tv show if God convicts them for it.
- Do we believe that following Jesus should make our lives more comfortable, or do we believe that this life is worth sacrificing for the next life?
 - **Luke 9:24** For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.
- The reason this man turned away from Jesus was because Jesus lived a very simple life by faith, trusting His Father for every need and without reserves of material resources.

- **But living by faith is easy to admire, difficult to do.**
- It is no longer socially beneficial to be a Christian. It is now a risk to your friendships, your job, your reputation.
 - **John 15:20** Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.
 - If the world responded to Jesus with a cross, how will it respond to you as His follower?
- We are becoming increasingly more counter-cultural. This will create stress.
- But should it? What if our culture is not from here?
 - **John 18:36** Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."
 - **John 17:15-16** I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.
 - **Philippians 3:20** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
- We will be tempted to compromise our beliefs, or at best to omit certain beliefs.
- But if this world is not our home. If we are not of this world, why do the comforts of this world matter so much?

Our Plans or The Cross?

Luke 9:59-60 Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

- This time Jesus initiates the invitation. "Follow Me."
- "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."
- Jesus is not forbidding funerals. Instead He is pointing out that the Kingdom will not take second place to anything.

- Actually, this man did not ask for permission to dig a grave for his deceased father. He wanted to remain in his father's house and care for him until the father died.
 - He had his own priorities. Which included his aging parents.
 - He was **not** torn between the right and wrong. He was torn between the right and right.
 - The man wanted to follow Jesus, but not just yet. He knew it was good and that he should do it, but he felt there was a good reason why he could not do it now.
- Jesus pressed the man to follow Him now, and clearly stated the principle that family obligations – or any other obligation – must not be put ahead of following Jesus.
- But honoring Father & Mother is a command, right? So how does this fit? Jesus knows that following Him will result in that honor. A fruit.
- Jesus was not afraid to discourage potential disciples. He was interested more in quality than in quantity.

The greatest need people will ever have is for the Gospel. Not even clean water or food is a greater need.

- **1 Peter 3:18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit
- Jesus knew of people's physical needs. He spent time with the sick. With the dying. He had compassion on them.
 - **Matthew 9:35-38** Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. ³⁶ But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. ³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. ³⁸ Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

- Jesus recognized the physical needs of the people, but what moved Him to compassion was their need for a savior. And what He told the disciples to pray for was laborers for the harvest, not healers.
 - **Mark 2:1-5** = When a paralytic is brought to Jesus, Jesus prioritizes forgiveness of sin over physical healing.
 - Woman at the well – Jesus wants to give her the Living water over water.
- Jesus' priority was not to relive suffering, but to destroy the root of all suffering: sin.
- All people are eternal. We will either be in glory or in torment. That is why the Gospel is so important.
 - From our last point, the Gospel is not about improving our lives here, though it does. It is about our eternal lives.
- We are ambassadors. We have been given the message of reconciliation.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:18-19** Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.
- This is the fallacy of social needs ministry without the Gospel.
- According to research by sociologist Robert Woodberry, the work of missionaries...turns out to be the single largest factor in ensuring the health of the nations. Areas where ...missionaries had a significant presence in the past are on average more economically developed today, with comparatively better health, lower infant mortality, lower corruption, greater literacy, higher educational attainment.
- The greatest way to transform a culture is not by focusing on cultural transformation, but by Gospel proclamation.

Will we set aside the things we believe that we must do in order to fulfill what God is calling us to do?

- Anything from career goals, family goals, ministry goals, financial goals?
- **Is Jesus allowed to interrupt our life plans for His Kingdom?**

The World or the Cross?

Luke 9:61-62 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house." ⁶² But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

- "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house."
- This man wants to say goodbye to his family and friends.
- "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Once we choose God we are no longer the same person. So to look back at our former lives is to take our eyes off of God and who we are now in Him.

- Trying to live as a follower of Christ and as a worldly person results in lukewarmness.

Revelation 3:15-19 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

- This is not Jesus saying either be hot (on fire for God) or cold (rejecting God) just don't be apathetic. They did not use hot and cold in that context at this time. Jesus is comparing them to the city water that is lukewarm. Their works are disgusting before God. Vomit-inducing.

- Laodicea had learned to rely on themselves. They were not dependent on God, even for their spirituality and church. They could do it themselves.
 - Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—
 - The church at Laodicea put their trust in material things. They lost their dependency on God.
 - They could not see that they were impoverished. Spiritually they were wretched (miserable), miserable (pitied), poor (beggarly), blind (no discernment of spiritual matters), and naked (not clothed – either poor or not righteous – probably not righteous looking at the counsel of Jesus).
- There is a stark contrast between how they are viewing themselves and how God sees them.

What Jesus wants them to do

- Vs. 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

For Laodicea to change, they first had to recognize their need and spiritual poverty.

Jesus' reply to this man seems harsh:

- No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.
 - We simply cannot get saved, then continue in the world the same way we did before we got saved.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
- **Since we are now made alive to God with our spirit connected to Him, to live from the flesh is the same as walking in death.**

Colossians 3:1-3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When we choose Jesus and are born again we do not look back at our old life. The world and our flesh does not have anything to offer.