

October 29th, 2023 – (full sermon outline)

“Cost of Following Jesus”

Luke 9:57-62

See Mark 1:14-15.... After John the Baptizer was put into prison by Herod, Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven had indeed come to earth. The Son of God had come from the Father in heaven in order to proclaim the good news of salvation, calling people to repent of their sin and believe in God’s Son for salvation.

See Mark 1:16-17.... Jesus then told Simon and his brother Andrew (fishermen) to follow Him and He would make them become fishers of men; they would become the first of Twelve Disciples who would spend three years with Jesus, watching, listening, learning, and then taking the message of forgiveness and eternal life to the Jews first and then to everybody else.

See Luke 9:57-58.... The title "Son of Man" was first used in **Daniel 7:13**, where Daniel has a vision, "One like a Son of Man was coming [in the clouds]," (cf. **Revelation 1:7**), "Behold, He [Jesus Christ] is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen."

See **Matthew 8:19-20**, "Then a scribe came and said to Him, 'Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.' Jesus said to him, 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' This is a parallel passage of the same event, and so, we know that the man in **Luke 9:57**, who is a tentative "disciple" or "follower" of Christ, is a scribe, a teacher of the law who came to Jesus, calling Him Teacher, declaring that he would follow Jesus wherever He went.

Scribes and Pharisees were authorities on Jewish law and typically were highly educated and prideful of their position; they were normally teachers, not followers or students of "other" teachers. So, for this guy to call Jesus "Teacher" was a big deal; but Jesus gives him a reality check saying to him, "foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

The phrase Son of Man is used more times in the New Testament than the phrase Son of God. Jesus loved the title Son of Man, for it spoke of His relationship with humankind, which He had created. Jesus is God, the Creator, Sustainer, and Judge over all.

John 1:3, "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

Colossians 1:15-16, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him."

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Hebrews 1:1-3b, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Revelation 4:11, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”. And even though the "Son of Man" has divine authority and power to heal and to perform miracles, He doesn't have the simple comforts that most people and many animals have; He has no house, no place of safety or comfort, not even a tent to call home; but then, He was born in a stable and laid in an animal feeding trough for His bed as newborn baby.

Interestingly, the scribe who said he would follow Jesus anywhere seems to disappear and nothing more is heard about him. This scribe may have been impressed by Jesus' miracles or His teachings, or he may just be identifying with Jesus for some personal benefit, some imposed recognition; but he clearly has not counted the cost of associating with, let alone following Christ, which may include religious excommunication, suffering, sacrifice, even death.

See Luke 9:59-60.... Jesus says to another tentative disciple, “follow Me,” but the man asks if he can first go and “bury” his father; not at all implying that his father had died, I mean, why would the man be there conversing with Jesus if his dad had died? Much more likely this man is speaking of his obligation to assist his father in business or in working their land, etc., until such a time as his father dies and the inheritance is distributed among the heirs, i.e., “Lord, first let me go fulfill my obligations to my father until he dies, then with my inheritance, I will come back and follow you.”

Like the first tentative disciple, in **verse 57**, the teacher of the law who disappeared, it would seem that this second guy also wants others to think he is ready to follow Jesus, but more likely he just wants some imposed recognition for having an association with Jesus, when actually he has other priorities in his life that override any real commitment.

Jesus' response to this man is “Follow Me! Let the dead take care of themselves; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.” Jesus knows this man's heart, he was not ready to commit himself to Jesus as Lord. This man's spirit was not regenerated, for he had rejected the gospel of the kingdom of God, and therefore he could not tell anyone else about it either.

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Remember in **Mark 1:15**, Jesus declared that the kingdom of heaven (which is holy, where no sin can exist) had come near to [sinful] mankind in and through God’s Son, Who is Perfect; therefore mankind needs to repent of their sin and believe the good news that Jesus came to save us, and He is the only Way to God, the only Life with God, and the only Truth of God.

See Luke 9:61-62.... Jesus has an encounter with another “tentative disciple,” who says, “I will follow You, Lord, but first, let me go home and say good bye to my family and friends.” Jesus knows this man’s heart, he is not ready to commit to the Lord, he is still looking for fulfillment from the things of the world. So Jesus says, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Jesus is talking about a farmer using a plow to make straight rows for planting, keeping his eyes on a distant object, never looking back to where he came from.

Jesus ‘message is “follow Me” and don’t look back. There is an old story about a farmer’s son who wanted to plow his father’s field. The father eventually agreed to let him try one day and told his son to look straight ahead at a far away object while he was plowing. This would result in straight rows. His son said he understood, so the father left. After awhile the father came back to see how his son was doing, only to find that the rows were uneven and crooked, for son had continually been looking back at a cow in the field, that was distracting him.

True followers of Jesus must constantly, continually, fix their eyes on Him (**Hebrews 12:2**), “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

This may surprise you, but Jesus said (**Matthew 10:34-38**), “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”

If you're going to follow Christ, you must count the cost and be willing to give up everything else if necessary.

Luke 14:25, “Multitudes were coming along. Jesus turned and said, ‘If anyone comes to Me and doesn’t hate his own father, mother, wife, children, brother, sisters, yea and hate his own life, he can’t be My disciple.’”

It doesn't mean that you hate the people in your family, it simply means that your love for the kingdom of God [salvation in Christ] is your deepest desire.

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Again **Luke 9:62**, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God," i.e., "You can't plow a furrow looking backwards." You can't follow Jesus looking if you are back at the things of the world: comforts, possessions, relationships.

The issue here is salvation, coming into the kingdom of God. Jesus is simply saying, "if you're holding back anything, you can't come in." The Lord may not take away your comforts, possessions, or relationships, but the value of belonging to Christ is so great that if He asked, you would gladly give it all up for Him.

It is not some superficial interest in Jesus, or a matter of just saying, "I will follow." It is a matter of self-denial, a willingness to give up everything because the value of Christ is so overwhelming. When a sinner has reached that level of desperation by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, he will take up his cross and follow Jesus is not worthy of Him, Jesus said (**Luke 9:24**), "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."

We are told **Luke 9:57-62** how these men responded to Jesus' command to follow Him, they turned away, remaining in unbelief, separated from life with God.

When the Holy Spirit comes to convict us of sin we must respond or remain unsaved (**John 16:8-9**), "And when He [The Holy Spirit] comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me."

True believers must follow Jesus (**1John 2:6**), "The one who says he [lives] in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked," following Christ.

The world hated and killed Jesus. His Disciples were martyred because they believed in and followed Him. Obedient Christians today will be in conflict with the worldly beliefs and behaviors all around them. Living as a Christian is tough! In **2Timothy 3:12** Paul writes, "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

Christianity is not for wimps! We must count the cost to follow Jesus. There are many who make a "profession" of faith and even show up for Sunday Morning Services, but when they are instructed about holy living and realize they are going to be held accountable to the Word God for how they live, they leave the fellowship of believers.

Serving God must include knowing and doing that which pleases God, just as it must also include knowing and not doing that which displeases God (**Romans 12:9**), "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good." "Good" is whatever pleases God. How do we know what pleases God? It is in the Bible, and the Holy Spirit encourages us, enables us, to obey the Word of God (**Romans 12:2**), "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

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You must love God and hate the world (all that opposes God), or you'll hate God and love the world, there is no third option.

Unbelievers are devoted to serving self; God's people are to serve God by knowing, living out, and proclaiming God's Word (as revealed in the 66 Books of the Bible).

The Bible is all about Jesus, so that we might personally and eternally know Him, the One who healed the multitudes of every illness and disease, taught with divine wisdom and authority, and commanded the wind and the waves and they obeyed Him. This is God's Son, who is both Lord and Savior, for He was crucified, resurrected, and is coming again, to take all those who believe in Him, to be with Him forever, in heaven.

Jesus is Lord and Judge over all and Savior to those who call on Him by faith (**Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13**), “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sin], will be saved,” becoming a brother or sister to all those who believe in Jesus Christ for salvation.

The question you must answer is this: Have you asked Jesus Christ to forgive your sins and are you willing to follow Him? If you have not done this, I pray you will do it right here, right now, and that you will tell me or someone else that you have committed yourself to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior for (**1Peter 2:9-10**), “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Ephesians 2:8-10, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

Don't delay, follow Jesus today! If you aren't clear about this, please talk to me, let me hello you understand how much God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, now and forever, in Jesus Christ the Lord.

Pastor Mike

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