

J.J.

TO FOLLOW CHRIST

Luke 9:57-62

Luke 9:57 As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.”

58 Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

59 He said to another man, “Follow me.”

But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

60 Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

61 Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.”

62 Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

Pray

INTRODUCTION

There was this professor who was teaching some university students that Jesus Christ is not real and that God is not real. He quoted all the research that did and all the books that he read.

After explaining to the students, he asked are there any questions.

A student raised his hand and stood up. He was holding a brown bag and inside that brown bag, he pulled out an apple. He then bit the apple.

And he said to the professor, “Prof, I’m not as learned as you.”

Then he bit again into the apple and then afterwards said, “Prof, I did not read the books or even knows those authors.” Then he bit again into the apple.

“Prof, I don’t even know if your research is true.” Then he bit again into the apple.

Then he said, “Can I ask a question sir?” The professor said yes. Then the student finished the apple and said, “Sir, do you know if the apple I just ate is bitter or sweet?”

The professor said, “How will I know if I haven’t tasted the apple you just ate.”

Then the student replied, “Professor, the same thing, you haven’t tasted my Jesus.”

The Bible says,

Psalm 34:8 Taste and see that the LORD is good;

A person who have truly tasted the Lord’s goodness and kindness will definitely desire Him, His Word, His people.

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

A person who has tasted the Lord will long for His Word. That person will seek Him first and would long to follow Him.

And this is what we are going to talk about today. **What does it take to follow Christ?**

Obviously, the key text in this passage is “follow”

Our Lord Jesus have asked people to follow Him. He asked Peter. He asked Matthew. He asked Paul. What does it mean to follow?

Etymology : follow “akoloutheuo” Keleuthos (a road) way. To follow means to walk the same road or same way

Another thing about “akoloutheuo” is the how the verb was used. It is used as present imperative. So it means “keep on following”.

To follow Christ is an ongoing activity. You need to be a follower of Christ, not only in church or on Sunday but in whatever you do.

IT'S A 24/7 THING

Remember, you are Christ's follower wherever you are and whoever you're with.

What does it mean to follow; to be a follower of Christ?

Luke 9:23 “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

Etymology : *deny* “apameomai” do not want to be associated

A person who wants to follow Christ, doesn't want to be associated with themselves. They want to be associated with Christ.

How? *take up their cross daily*

During the time of Jesus, when people see someone carrying a cross, it means that person is on his way to die.

As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in the book “Cost of Discipleship”

Quote : “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

And that's what I believe is needed in our world today.

A lot of people are teaching, “God will accept the way you are.” Yes that's true.

Quote : God loves you just the way you are, but He refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus. ' – Max Lucado

And that is what happens when we follow Him. From a sinner, He now calls you a saint – and God will mold you to become like that.

What does it take to follow Christ?

I. FOLLOWING CHRIST MEANS FACING REALITY

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

The context of this is that Jesus has been performing miracles left and right. He's been casting out demons, healing the sick, driving out demons, feeding thousands of people. That's why the man says : *57 "I will follow you wherever you go."*

Note : This is obviously a time of emotional high for the person. He has seen Jesus perform miracles, he has heard him speak and so his emotions are stirred.

Illustration : Isn't that what happens sometimes when we attend special events like a Christian concert or hear a stirring sermon or we have an avalanche of material blessings or even victories? We say, "I will follow Christ. I will give my life to Christ."

But our Lord Jesus points out the reality of a person who wants to be His disciple :

58 Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

Do you see what our Lord is saying to the man?

He's saying that the foxes and birds have a place to retreat or to rest but to follow Him takes total commitment because sometimes it can really be tough. *but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."*

Important to read : That's what our Lord is telling the man. To follow Him means there will be times you will be facing insecurities and uncertainties – you will not know what's going to happen next. There will be times you will be facing discomfort and discouragements. There will be times that it will be tough.

That's why the Lord is just saying to the man, "Are you sure you want to follow me or is it just because of the emotional high of seeing the miracles or because of the blessings or because of answered prayers?

To follow Christ is a decision of the whole man: EMOTIONAL, SPIRITUAL AND RATIONAL

That's why our Lord said in

Luke 14: 27 And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?

31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

In short, our Lord is saying to the man. Have you really thought about it?

33 In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

But here's the promise of our Lord to those who will follow Him.

Luke 9:24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.

Let me explain : Anything that you offer to God, you will never lose it. You offer your talents to God, or your time, or your money... if you offer it, you will not lose it. It's because it's in God's hands.

In fact, He will even multiply it. Remember God is the multiplier.

Biblical Illustration : Remember the story of the rich young ruler in the Bible? He asked Jesus what must he do to have eternal life. Jesus tested him saying, you must do this and do that. But to gain life, you must trust your entire life to Jesus.

Matthew 19:21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Most of us know the story. The man *went away sad because he had great wealth*

Then Peter said in *27 Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?*

29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.

Read the Bible. Anything that you give and offer to God, He multiplies.

One proof? The boy who gave 5 loaves and 2 fish in John chapter 6.

II. FOLLOWING CHRIST DEMANDS OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY

59 He said to another man, "Follow me."

But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Context : I like how my study Bible explained this – *"If his father had already died, the man would have been (already) occupied with the burial then. But evidently, he wanted to wait until after his father's death, which might take days, months or years."*

There's a Middle-Eastern statement that is being used even today , "I must bury my father", it means I must stay home until he's gone so that I can get my inheritance.

Yes, this man is amazed with Jesus but if it's a choice between Jesus and money, or Jesus or comfort, they would choose money, comfort or their own convenience over Jesus.

This is the reason our Lord said,

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Quote : "Most people fail to realize that money is both a test and trust from God." – Rick Warren

Story : We had a church member before (male) who goes to Japan and admitted that he sells his body for sexual favors. Contract basis sya doon. But medyo natagalang dumating yung papeles niya uli so medyo nauubos na pondo niya and panic mode na siya. Sabi ko sa kanya, hindi ka papupuntahan ni Lord doon dahil malulugmok ka uli sa kasalanan. Ang sagot niya sa akin, "pastor, pagbigyan lang uli ako ni Lord ng isa pang pagkakataon na makapunta sa Japan (and obviously sell his body again for sexual favors), makaipon lang ako at promise hihinto na ako afterwards." Na-denry uli siya pumunta sa Japan and he had to go back to his home province na lang.

This is the reason Jesus says :

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

We will really know if we truly believe in this promise in the way we prioritize our lives.

III. FOLLOWING CHRIST DEMANDS OUR GREATEST LOYALTY

1. It demands our greatest affection

"...but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family."

To love Christ means to love Him more than our family or our friends.

Question : If it's a choice following or obeying Christ over your family or your friends who would you choose?

Matthew 10:37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;"

Illustration : There was this man who was a staunch Catholic before and even wanted to become a priest and his father and mother were proud that this man wanted to become a priest because that father's family had a priest and a nun on it. Because of this, this man was the darling of the big family reunions on the father's side. This man loved his father and mother so much. But what happened, this man was born again. He knew the truth about the Bible and decided to follow Christ according to His Word and

leave the only religion he knew before because he discovered it's about the relationship and most of the things that were being done in the old religion was not biblical. When the parents knew about this, the mother called him, that he was already on the devil's side. When he went to the grand family reunion, he noticed something changed and the aunt who was nun approached him and even said to the man, "You have not been very good." But this man already knew the truth and he kept on following Christ remembering the song sung during baptism, "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back."

2. It demands our greatest devotion.

"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Imagine the imagery. There's no turning back, it's always looking forward. You are focused in just serving and following Christ wherever you are.

Explanation : A Christian whose heart is still on worldly things will create a disaster.
Imagine a driver of a snow plow who doesn't keep his eye on the road.

In short, nothing harms the message of the Christian faith more than the Christian who is still alive, meaning a Christian who is still full of himself or herself.

Biblical Illustration : Get the Bible You remember Abraham? God asked him to offer his son, the son he has been waiting and whom he loves. What did he do?

Genesis 22: 3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac

Abraham never had to think twice, there was no emotional struggle recorded...nothin' He was fully devoted to God. And you know the rest of the story in Genesis 22.

Illustration : I know of this man from his youth he really wanted to follow Christ and during high school he was sharing with the pastor that he wanted to go to Bible school and become a missionary. The father and the mother were also believers. But during the time, the young man had to decide, he told his father. The father was disappointed because the father was worried that there's no money in being a missionary, how will he feed his family in the future and all of those kinds of stuff. The father said to take a business course instead of a Bible course. The son eventually followed what the father wanted and still as a grown up man in his 30s is still living with his parents when by God's grace, he could have been used mightily in God's kingdom and fulfill the purpose God has put in his heart.

CONCLUSION : REMEMBER THE OPPORTUNITY TO OFFER

Remember salvation is free! We just have to receive it but to follow Christ will cost us everything.

But think about it. Why will you pay a hefty price for something?

In short, what are some of the reasons we buy something that costs us a bit of money. It's because of the perceived value. You know it's of extreme value to you.

Illustration : Have you heard the names of the boxers Abner Mares or Vasyl Lomachenko? Do you know that the average ticket resell price just to enter the venue where they are fighting is around \$10k? The ringside seat is now selling at 100k per ticket. But people are not shelling out \$100k to see Abner or Lomachenko. Abner and Lomachenko are being considered as the undercards (meaning the fight before the main fight) for the Pacquiao vs Mayweather fight. That's the fight that people are willing to shell out a \$100k for because they know it's worth that much to see that fight.

If we have tasted that the Lord is good, how much are we willing to give and give up for Jesus?

ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE YOUR LIFE TO JESUS? A young man was eager to grow in His Christian life. He got a piece of paper and made a list of all the things he would do for God. He wrote down the things he would give up, the places he would go to minister and the areas of ministry he would enter. He was excited. He took that list to the church and put it on the altar.

He thought he would feel joy, but instead he felt empty. So he went home and started adding to his list. He wrote down more things he would do and wouldn't do. He took the longer list and put it on the altar, but still he felt nothing.

He went to a wise, old pastor, told him the situation and asked for help. The pastor said, "Take a blank sheet of paper. Sign your name at the bottom. Put that on the altar." The young man did, and then peace came to his heart.

Love is all about the willingness to sacrifice all for the person they love.
And that's what God did.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Are you willing to give your life to the One who gave us all even the life of His own Son – our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

Altar call.

S.G.D.