

SERIES: FOLLOWING JESUS TO THE CROSS

The Cost of Following Jesus

Luke 9:51- 62

Turn in Bibles to Luke 9:51-62

Intro: Extended section (9-19) - Jesus' journey to Jerusalem

Teachings and parables of Jesus - cost of discipleship; his coming suffering - preparing for rejection/suffering/death

Jesus - man who knew he had only a few months to live - must leave disciples equipped
they were to become leaders to carry the Gospel forward

Today's passage - Jesus corrects disciples about nature of His ministry - salvation, not judgement

But - way of salvation not easy - requires extreme sacrifice - Christ #1 over our obligations

Jesus doesn't ask for 2 hrs Sunday am - He asks for all - time, talent, resources - priorities straight

51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Jesus knew the end was near, - he would soon die - at Jerusalem

Almost like He needed to arrive at a pre-planned appointment - resolutely He set out

This was God's call/will for Him - conscious decision to obey and go - He was determined to go

We should have that resolve - when God gives us a course of action - face it and move towards it

52 And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; 53 but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem.

Jesus was going from Galilee to Jerusalem - straightest route was through Samaria

Animosity (Samaritans/Jews) so strong, many would go out of their way not to go through Samaria.

Cross over Jordon, travel on other side until recross towards Jerusalem

Animosity began hundreds of years earlier when Assyria invaded the northern kingdom of Israel and resettled it with their own people. The mixed race that developed became known as the Samaritans. "Purebred" Jews hated the "halfbreeds."

Ex. Beginning days of America, children of parents that intermarried between white men and Indians

Ex. Beauty pageant in Bouake, Ivory Coast - winner - parents were French and Ivoirian - scandal/unfair

Jesus had no prejudices - been through Samaria before (woman the well)

Sent some of his disciples ahead to prepare for overnight stay.

Not accepted *because they were headed to Jerusalem.* - Old time animosity

54 When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, * "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?"

James and John were outraged - how dare they? Didn't they know who this was? This was the Son of God! This was the Messiah!

Jesus had already told them in 9:5 that they were to shake the dust off their feet if towns didn't accept him

They didn't want to stop there - perhaps thinking of Elijah calling fire down from heaven.

They were so upset/angry/outraged they thought perhaps they could do the same.

Today: We get upset at how people act toward the church, prayer in public, Bible reading...

Why are we surprised when non-believers act like non-believers?

55 But Jesus turned and rebuked them, 56 and they went to another village.

I could see Jesus looking over at them and say: "Really?" "Are you serious? What is the matter with you?"

We don't know what the rebuke was. Did He yell at them, speak harshly, frown at them?

When we were kids, it took major spanking to keep my brother in line - me, it only took a look. Apostle Peter - Jesus describing his suffering and death. Peter says, "Never Lord."

Jesus responds: Mt 16:23, "*Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.*" It was like he had to slap him upside the face.

But, after Peter denied Him 3 times, Jesus just looked at him - Peter crumbled.

The rebuke was sufficient to put them in their place.

Why the rebuke? Preparing the disciples for future ministry. Love is to override our emotions.

Jesus didn't come to judge but to save the world. "*I have come that they might have life.*"

The Samaritans weren't rejecting Jesus, they were rejecting Jews walking through their territory.

"They didn't welcome them because they were headed for Jerusalem."

People today don't welcome Christians - Are they rejecting Christ? Maybe it's us they are rejecting. Maybe they've seen us acting as hypocrites/ holier than thou/ maybe we expect them to change, dress better, act better and come into our church.

Jesus was constantly going to them, loving them, caring for them, building relationships with them

Ex. Nicodemus - Jesus went to his house and ate with him - it changed his life.

Did Jesus give up on where God was directing Him? No. He was focused. "*They went to another village.*"

As He was heading to Jerusalem to face the cross and death, he didn't waste time. He continued to teach and minister (next 9 - 10 chapters).

Ex. Us in Ivory Coast, called to reach the African people - God put Lebanese in our path. Not sure what to do. Stepped up and God opened homes. (Started with rabbits and cages, ended with homes and mosques.)

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

Undeterred, Jesus continued toward Jerusalem. Man came up to him and said, "*I will follow you wherever you go.*" (Mt 8:19 says he was a teacher of the law - most were his enemies.)

If it had been us, we would have said, "Great, come along, no problem."

Jesus pointed out the cost of becoming a disciple. It wasn't all roses.

Those who really wanted to be His disciple needed to understand that it was going to cost them.

Don't expect luxury or even a warm welcome. (as in Samaria)

Must be willing to put aside worldly security - willing to give up home and safety & comfort.

People need to know the cost. We need to understand the cost.

When things get slightly uncomfortable, we say, "Why God?" Your supposed to take care of me.'

We think we should have a charmed life. Why? Look at Jesus' life.

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."

Wow! That was harsh. What happened to Jesus' love, concern, compassion, kindness, gentleness?

Not "normal."

1st man came to Jesus on his own, 2nd Jesus called to follow Him.

Man explained that he needed to first *bury* his father. Ancient times burial of dead was sacred duty.

Was father dead, dying or elderly? Don't know.

Man asking permission to wait until his father died - an indefinite delay.

No great success comes without sacrifice - athletes - winter Olympics, "I gave up everything."

Family, friends, free time, work and money

Mothers give up a lot to raise children (plans, desires)

Nothing worthwhile comes without sacrifice - also applies to Christian discipleship

Incomparable blessings/benefits to having a living relationship with God - not without price.

Jesus didn't even have a home, place to call His own.

What sacrifices has God asked you to make for privilege of following Jesus?

Don't know reason for man's excuse, but he wanted to do it "first."

First born, wanted inheritance?

Didn't want to face father's wrath for not sticking with family business?

Weather fulfilling a duty, financial security, keeping family approval or something else
he didn't want to commit to Jesus yet.

Jesus challenged his commitment - must be complete, without reservation.

Not advising children to disregard family responsibilities. Challenging the concept of "first"

Jesus must always come first, above all human loyalties.

Ex. Louisville Council - giving up our children

Jesus is not heartless - we must examine our primary loyalties.

EX. Missionaries - They face this exact commitment all the time

Family loyalty - not to take priority over God's demand to "go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Ex. When we were young parents preparing for mission field, we knew we had to send kids to boarding.

Other mother's would say to Nancy - "Oh, I could never do that."

We are so often like that mother. We're not ready to sacrifice, to really put Christ & kingdom first.

There is a cost to following Jesus - each follower must be ready to serve - even if sacrifice required

Don't wait for a better time to follow and serve Jesus - He is calling you now.

61 Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family." 62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Maybe this man overheard last conversation - this man was willing not to bury the dead.

Surely Jesus would allow him to just go say good-bye.

The issue is still the same - the "doing something first" syndrome.

Who knows what might come up on the road home to say good-bye.

Ex. In previous church - family that couldn't commit to service or activity at church - something might come up.

Who knows what this attitude might do when you are serving the Lord - "Oh, something came up, I'll be right back."

Picture of man plowing a field, look back, go off course (driving a car and look into back seat)

Elijah's call too Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21) Elisha called to be a prophet right in middle of plowing field.

He never looked back. He even slaughtered the oxen so there would be no temptation to return.

Simon, was cleaning his nets getting ready for his next fishing trip when he was called. He dropped everything and didn't look back.

Wholehearted commitment to serve God.

What does Jesus want from his followers? Total dedication - not half hearted commitment. His followers must accept the cross along with the crown, judgment as well as mercy.

They must count the cost and be willing to abandon everything else that has given them security. Nothing should distract us from service for the kingdom.

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

Folks, God is calling us to re-dedicate ourselves to Him and to preaching the Kingdom of God. Where did Jesus preach the Kingdom of God. Where did His disciples preach the Kingdom of God? It wasn't in their churches - it was out in the community where the people were.

The Elders and I are in the process of re-visioning the church to be outward focused/community focused. We will be setting up ways that we can preach the kingdom of God out there to them.

I believe God is laying the foundations for us as He has already begun to open up opportunities for us in the community.

Jesus is saying to us - put aside our priorities, our desire, our comfort zones.

For the most part, our outreaches have been trying to get people to come here to the church to hear the message.

We're going to change that - we're going to go out there and share the message.

Jesus says, "Follow Me." Are we ready?