

The Cost of Discipleship

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Luke 9:57-62

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head. And He said unto another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow Thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Many are like this first man, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." This man had enthusiasm. But the Lord was letting him know that he would not have what it takes to go through the trials that he would have to face if he was to follow Jesus as a disciple.

He was not counting the cost. We want to see from these three where discipleship should be the sole priority in one's life as a follower of Jesus. We need to count the cost of discipleship as the sole priority in one's life.

Many back off when it comes to a choice of following Jesus or following what self wants to do. It's not what God wants them to do that has priority, but what self wants to do. They put themselves and others before Christ.

Not everybody is willing to deny themselves and take up their cross to follow Jesus.

Now, Jesus claims first place in our lives. I believe that as a believer of Jesus Christ, our love for Him will be great. We will love Him with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind, and all of our strength. When this is the case, one finds it is not hard to put Him first in our lives. First . . . above self and everything else and everyone else!

Luke 9:23

And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

The first thing that we should do is to put the Lord first in our lives. But not too many are willing to do this. Not many are willing to lay aside the gratification of the fleshy desires to follow the Lord with all their heart.

Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

If God didn't want to seek Him first place, He would have never told us to do so. He has commanded us to have no other gods before Him, to put Him first and foremost in our hearts and lives.

So many in this world worship false gods. They pray to them, even though their god can't hear them. They're not able to meet the needs, to answer prayers: but when we serve the true and living God, putting Him first place in our lives, He will be there to help us go through whatever we may have to face in this life.

QUICK TO RESPOND

Jesus called Peter and Andrew, and James and John the sons of Zebedee. When He came by they were busy fishermen. Yet when He called them they were quick to respond:

Mark 1:17-21

And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him. And when He had gone a little further thence, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway He called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him.

They didn't let any grass grow under their feet—but immediately left all to follow Him. They left their occupation. James and John even left their father that they might follow Jesus, and become fishers of men.

We need to take up our cross *daily*, and follow Jesus. Our cross must be taken up every day, to do whatever He may ask us to do. We need to daily deny ourselves, and take up our cross—and keep His commandments.

PUT THE LORD ABOVE SELF

We should never put self ahead of the Lord. We've got to deny that self-life, have nothing to do with it. If we cling on to that self-life we shall lose life: but if we lose our life down here we shall gain life, life eternal.

Luke 9:24,25

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

We cannot hold on to that old self-life, and expect to gain eternal life. We've got to get rid of self-life. We cannot be His disciples and serve ourselves.

Mark 8:35,36

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake

and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

We need to realize how serious it is to love ourselves above the Lord. We must deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Jesus.

Matthew 10:37-39

He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.

He wants us to put Him first and love Him more than our family.

Luke 14:26,27

If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.

. . . and his own life! Nothing and no one can come before the Lord, not even self. To be His disciple is to put Him first, denying self, bearing your cross, and coming after Him. Many stumble at the message of self-denial not understanding the beautiful work of the Spirit it brings in our lives.

Now, that word hate in this passage is not speaking of the sin of hatred. It merely means we are to love the Lord with all of our heart, putting nobody ahead of Him, not even self.

John 13:34

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Jesus did not teach us to hate. He taught us to love as He has loved.

WHO IS FIRST IN YOUR LIFE?

Who is first in your life? You, or the Lord.

Galatians 5:24

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Those affections and lusts should be denied, crucified if we are to be a disciples of Jesus. Only you can choose who will be number one. Those who have made Christ first will deny their flesh.

Then there are those who have the call of God upon their lives, yet lay the call aside to put self ahead of the Lord and His will. You can't be all wrapped up with self and obey the Lord.

Many have turned aside from following the Lord's calling and will after a season to let self take over. They no longer want to be tied down to His calling, want to be free to do what they want to do, go where they want to go—with no strings attached.

Luke 14:33

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.

We saw in Luke 9 where three half-hearted disciples were being tested. Would they put the call of God first? Or were they wanting to do what they wanted to do first, and then follow Him?

NO TIME FOR PROCRASTINATION

We look at the second man in this passage: And He said unto another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

This man wanted to go home and stay with his father until he passed away. Many procrastinate when it comes to taking up the call of God upon their lives. This was this man's stumbling block.

I knew a woman who took up her call and went to the mission field. While she was there her step-father passed away, leaving her mother alone. This woman left the mission field to go home and be with her mother until she passed away. And she never did return to the mission field!

She did what self wanted to do, at the cost of forsaking her calling. Listen. It's a very serious thing to have the call of God upon one's life. Following Jesus is to have first place—denying self, and taking up one's cross daily to follow Him.

1 John 2:15-17

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

You can't cling on to the world, and the things of the world—and expect to belong to God. He must be first and foremost in your heart, loving Him with your all.

Mark 8:36,37

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

In closing, we need to take to heart the seriousness of living our lives according to self and the flesh. What will you choose - Jesus and His will or self and the world? To be a disciple of His is to have eternal life—but to pursue this world and self will cause us to lose eternal life.