



18: Is Jesus Worthy of My Life? (Matthew 8:18-34)

Within a few short years you will die or Jesus will return. In light of that certain truth, we must answer this most important question - *Is Jesus worthy of my life?*

Is Jesus Worthy of My Life? If He is, then we need to focus on what He expects of us, and be willing to lay down anything that interferes with giving Jesus first place in our lives.

❓ **Is there anything I'm NOT willing to give up to follow Jesus?**

✝️ **James Calvert** (pioneer missionary to the cannibals of the Fiji Islands) warned of possible death, said **"We died before we came."**

Matthew 8:18-20 (NIV) When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

A **teacher of the law** copied, studied, and taught the Scriptures to others. This trained expert in the Hebrew Scriptures comes asking Jesus to be his rabbi, his teacher - to follow, learn, and practice the ways of Jesus. Obviously, this man thought a lot of Jesus to want to **follow** Jesus wherever he went, but Jesus thinks it's just talk and he isn't 'all-in'.

EVERYBODY supports the home team when they are winning, but what about when the tough times come? Jesus warns the man that he might want to reconsider signing up. It will cost the disciples of Jesus. Many of them would be chased away & even hunted down and killed. Many followers of Jesus would be banished from their families. **Following Jesus is COSTLY.**

But *at the end of the journey for the men and women who DID follow Jesus* throughout His ministry, to His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and empowering of the Holy Spirit...these people *would say that...*

LIFE WITH THE KING, IS WORTH THE COST

✘ Many prosperity preachers are calling people to follow a comfortable Christ (build-a-bear Jesus). They emphasize a Jesus who guarantees health, wealth, & earthly security...but is this what Jesus was pointing this scribe to? Of course not. We do people a disservice to tell people, "Just pray this prayer, you'll be saved and live happily ever after," instead of pleading with them to examine the evidence, count the cost, and TRUST Jesus with everything they've got.

✘ People in the 21st century think they can make deals with Jesus: "I'll follow You if...".

✓ But Biblical Christianity says, "I'll follow You...**EVEN if.**" *Even if...it cost my job, my relationships, my comfort.* Biblical Christianity is recognizing...

LIFE WITH THE KING, IS WORTH THE COST

❓ **Have YOU counted the cost? Are YOU all in?**

›Then another man then expresses interest in following Jesus...after he takes care of something first.

Matthew 8:21-22 (NIV) Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus told him, "**Follow me**, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Burying your father sure seems like a reasonable request.

1. If his father had just died, why is this son with Jesus now instead of making burial preparations?
 2. Why would Jesus - who commands his followers to love their neighbors and their enemies - not allow this man a time to love his own family?
 3. Since the Scriptures gave priority to burying the dead family members (e.g. Joseph asks Pharaoh's permission to leave and bury his father - [Gen 5:1-14](#)), and honoring your mother and father ([Ex 20:12](#); [Deut 5:16](#)), why would Jesus tell him to disobey the Scriptures?
- Commentators note that this man might be awaiting his father's death in the next few days/years. "**First let me go and bury my father**" might be understood as "*Some day, after my father has died, after I receive my inheritance, I will follow you.*"
 - There's another possibility. Jews buried the corpse the same day as the death. One year later they would open the tomb for the second stage of burial - to put the bones into a small ossuary and seal the tomb again. Is this what he is awaiting?

➡ **Jesus is calling this man to immediate obedience without delay**, to decide WHO is most important in his life. **Let the dead bury the dead** is referring to the spiritually dead burying the physically dead. *You want LIFE? Follow me!*

❓ Will WE would put the commands of Jesus before the desire of our families!

Following & obeying Jesus must be our first priority, even above the desires of our family, because...

LIFE WITH THE KING, IS WORTH THE COST

Matthew 8:23-27 (NIV) Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and **it was completely calm**. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

This has some similarities to the story of Jonah!

- Disobedient Jonah gets thrown overboard to appease the storm.
- Obedient Jesus does something...a little bit different...than ANY OTHER PROPHET has ever done in the history of time! They didn't hear Jesus pray and ask God to calm down the storm. He simply told it to stop...and IT DID - immediately!

Who IS this? Psalms - written 1000 years before this event - gives us a glimpse of Who has this authority - Yahweh!

Psalm 89:9 (CSB) You rule the raging sea; when its waves surge, you still them.

Matthew 8:28-29 (NIV) When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way.

"What do you want with us, **Son of God?**" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

Mark and Luke give us some more interesting info about this situation (Mk 5:1-17; Lk 8:26-37). They focus on the man that ends up speaking to Jesus. These men lived among the tombs, and were so strong that they couldn't be restrained - even tearing chains & shackles apart. It's no wonder that people were afraid of them. But Jesus wasn't. In fact, they were afraid of Him! Because they KNEW Who He was!

Mark and Luke say the demon(s) to reveal his name, "**We are legion, for we are many.**" (Legion in Roman army was 6,000 men.) While Jesus was outnumbered, He wasn't overpowered. The countless demons inside these men are AFRAID that this Jewish rabbi would torture them by sending them to a place of punishment that awaits them at **the appointed time**.

Matthew 8:30-32 (NIV) Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs." He said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. [Mark 5:13 says there were 2000 pigs]

Send us into the herd of pigs. This was clearly NOT a Jewish culture, as pigs would were considered unclean (Lev. 11:7; Deut. 14:8), never to be touched, eaten, and certainly not farmed. Jesus gives permission for the *UNCLEAN SPIRITS* to enter the *UNCLEAN ANIMALS*.

WHO is in charge here?

Just as Jesus calmed the weather, Jesus calmed the man, & kicked out the fallen angels - **all it is...His creation** (Col 1:16).

Colossians 1:16 (NIV) For **in Him all things were created**: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all things have been created through him and for him.**

Matthew 8:33-34 (NIV)

Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus.

Mark and Luke give us insight into what they saw when they arrived.

Mark 5:15 (NIV) When they came to Jesus, they saw **the man** who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, **dressed and in his right mind**; and they were afraid.

Afraid? WHY? We don't know for sure. Here are a couple of options:

- 1) Since they knew the power these demon possessed men, and they were afraid of *them*; and since Jesus was more powerful than those men, they were afraid of *Him*.
- 2) Maybe it was because they didn't want any more of their herds being destroyed by Jesus.

Matthew 8:34b (NIV) And when they saw **Him**, they pleaded with **Him** to leave their region.

That's how Matthew ends this story, with people pushing Jesus away..

✗ Like them, many of US don't want Jesus disrupting our comfortable way of life. We rather He leave us alone.

❓ **Is Jesus Worthy of my Life?** or will I ask him to leave me alone?

The rest of the story!

Mark 5:18 (NIV) As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him.

This man believed that **LIFE with the KING was worth WHATEVER the cost!** He was ready to go with Jesus. This time (different than Jesus done with the other 2 men in Mt 8:19-22) Jesus didn't try to dilute his enthusiasm. Instead...

Mark 5:19-20 (NIV) Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." So **the man** went away and **began to tell** in the Decapolis **how much Jesus had done for him**. And all the people were amazed.

The people *KNEW* who this man was before this and his transformational story **amazed** them as he spoke about about **how much Jesus had done for him!** I wonder how many of these Gentiles later left the comfort of their lives to go hear and see more from Jesus Himself!

✓ People might actually listen to you talk about Jesus if they see a DIFFERENCE in your life!

If Jesus is WORTHY of our lives...then it's no brainer for us to tell others what He's done for us!...and to tell them that...

BIG TRUTH: Life with the KING, IS worth the COST

✗ OR...we can tell Jesus to leave us alone

✗ OR tell Jesus "I'll follow you...IF..."

✓ OR...we can follow the example of the first followers of Jesus who said. "**Jesus, I'll follow you EVEN IF...**"

- *EVEN IF* you don't keep me and my family from tough times,
- *EVEN IF* you don't give us long life, *EVEN IF* you give us only what we need - but NOT what we WANT.
- I'll follow you *EVEN IF* you keep me from facing persecution from others."

heretoseveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Steve & Debbie Bass (850-673-7952), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. **Read Matthew 8:18-22.** Some people might wonder why Jesus is being so impatient, but what are some likely reasons why Jesus responds to these men this way? What are some significant COSTS for following Jesus? (We will talk about significant rewards in a moment [question 8].
2. **Read Matthew 10:37.** While taking care of our family's needs and desires is a huge part of our lives, what priority should our family have compared to Jesus? Share some examples of how families are tempted to put their desires before what Jesus desires.
3. **Read Matthew 8:23-27 & Psalm 89:9.** What does Jesus' control over the storm say about His authority and identity?
4. **Read Matthew 8:28-33.** While Jesus' primary ministry was to Jewish people, what does this adventure into Gentile territory say about His care for Gentiles like you and me? What does the power of Jesus over demons say about His authority and identity?
5. **Read Matthew 8:34.** Why do you think Matthew might leave his readers with this ending (with the people asking Jesus to leave) instead of the ending of Mark & Luke (where the man wants to follow Jesus, and then obeys Jesus to go tell others about what has been done for him - Mk 5:1-17; Lk 8:26-37)?
6. **Read Mark 5:18-20** and discuss how this transformed man should be an example to us. When's the last time you shared what Jesus has done for you with a non-Christian? Share some practical ways you might start that conversation and some reasons why it's difficult for you to initiate spiritual conversations with others.
7. Let's practice: Take a few moments to share why **life with the king is worth the cost**.
8. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching and how might you apply it to your life?
9. Share prayer needs and pray for one another.