

The Cost of Discipleship

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Good evening everyone. Welcome to Calvary Road for our Wednesday Bible study. We will continue our study on discipleship and tonight's lesson is titled the cost of discipleship. So if you will turn with me to Luke chapter 9. Luke chapter 9 and we will be examining passages 57 to 62.

Before we go into the word of God, let us pray. Father, thank you for this opportunity to come before you. I pray that your word will speak clearly through my mouth this evening. I pray that our hearts would have a response that would pleasing to you. I pray God that you would bless this study, that it would help us, Lord, to remind ourselves how important a true disciple of Jesus Christ looks like, not just in word but also in our actions. I pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will be exalted tonight in this message. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

Well, I'll go ahead and give some introductory remarks before we dive into the passages that we will be examining. I want to take us back to what Luke records in chapter 9, some crucial moments in his ministry. He did many miracles prior to this passage that we're examining, many teachings. And at this stage of his ministry, many people have watched and saw what Jesus has done as far as teaching, what he has spoken as well as action in his miracles. And at this point in this passage, we're seeing him on his journey to Jerusalem. And as you know that is the last place that he embarks on before the cross.

And so we're going to see some things here in this passage that we have been seeing already is his **urgency**. He is now going to press and continue to press as we have been seeing more on what it looks like to be a true follower of Jesus Christ. There's been people following him, and now he's going to look at the crowd as it were and test them. And they're going to be dealt with answers that are non-negotiable. He has full authority. There is no wiggle room with what he says when he commands it. And that is the response of a true disciple is there is no negotiation. When Jesus commands something or tells us to obey him, we answer with the affirming yes. Amen. And we're going to see that urgency pressed on with these followers that have been watching and observing the Lord Jesus. And now they are no longer observing. They are now being confronted. And we will see where their heart is. We will see where their heart is.

So in this context we see three individuals, three encounters, three propositions, three answers. And we're going to see that what they will be proved with is: **are you willing to die to yourself?** Are you willing to die to your what you desire, what you think of as

meaning of what a true follow of Jesus is? The things you're going to have to deny. The things that you're going to have to say no to yourself and yes to the Lord Jesus. We're going to see all of that here in the text.

So, if you will, let's go ahead and read verses 57 and 58. You go ahead and read it silent with me. This is what the word of God says. "And it came to pass that as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, 'Lord, I will follow thee with whatsoever 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.'"

So, this is the first encounter of this follower, so-called follower of the Lord Jesus. Let me just focus in on that word **follow**. That word follow in its original context, it means **continual attachment**. It means continual attachment, not an occasional "I will follow you and then I will not follow you." This is important that this word follow in original context means a continual attachment, meaning if you're going to follow me now you are to focus and follow me all the way to the very end. So the way then the Lord Jesus explains to him that, "Okay, you're going to follow me. I'm going to deal with that by dealing with something that you're going to see. You're going to actually see what's going to happen when you follow follow me." And he answers in a way that is supposed to be causing some tension, that this is not going to be easy. This is going to be denying your comfort, that **obedience comes above comfort**.

And so we see that with this first follower of the Lord Jesus, so-called follower of the Lord Jesus. We also see the word **wherever**. We see that in text. Now wherever means **unconditional**. "Wherever Lord you want me to go this way, I will follow you this way. Okay, if you want to follow me, follow me that way, I will follow you that way." Wherever —there is no condition here. So his answer is actually very good. It's actually what a follower of Jesus is supposed to respond with. Now, we don't see the way he answers. We just hear how the Lord Jesus answers, which matters the most. Amen. It's not how we answer. It's how the Lord Jesus answers our questions.

And so this first individual, you see his **enthusiasm**. Do you see it in the text? Do you see? He says, "I will go wherever you go, Jesus. I will go in all the difficult places." That's "I will go in hard places, whatever." That's what it means. And I will continue to follow you. He knows that. Now Luke doesn't mention this person's name. You just see the word "a certain man." But you'll see that this passage is also found in Matthew and it was a scribe. But Luke here doesn't put that here I think for the reason that it doesn't matter what occupation you are in. Okay? It doesn't matter what your position is. Jesus concern is that anyone that's going to follow me, there is no requirement on your part. You just need to follow. And Matthew is more careful as the accountant. I can know that he's precise. But here Luke says it's a **certain man**. And you know what that means? That means it could be any of us. It could be any of us. Anyone in this room we are of this certain man.

Now let's to continue to see what we can examine in this text. We see again the word follow. We see the word wherever. And if you put that together, it's a **bold declaration**.

He is bold in his statement: "I will follow you wherever you will go." Those are bold. And by that enthusiasm, by that bold statement, Jesus responds to **temper this certain man's enthusiasm** because in real discipleship, it's not all about enthusiasm. In fact, most of discipleship is difficult. You will know that. So Jesus cuts to the heart and he speaks to the heart. Says, "Okay, you're enthusiastic. Your words are very good. That is what a true follower is supposed to say." Now, let's back that up with action because the Lord Jesus is going to be in difficult situations. And he goes right at the heart of **comfort**.

We all have the privilege of going to a bed tonight. All of us, I believe, here. And that's the most comforting thing that we can experience is us in our pillow, in our bed, and having a good night's sleep. And he says, "You know what? That very day, if you're going to follow me, you might not have a bed to sleep in." So he deals with **comfort** with this individual. That's how to temper enthusiasm. Okay. You want to follow me while **obedience rules over comfort**. That is the bold statement back to this particular follower of Christ. And that's the cost of discipleship. Your cost is your comfort. Is the Lord Jesus worthy to follow by not having the privilege of comfort all the time? It's worth meditating on, worth examining continually, again, continual attachment. Have you found yourself in **uncomfortable situations** where you had to deny yourself, where you have to say, "Yeah, this is the cost of discipleship but Jesus is that much worthy to follow. Amen."

So he says essentially no place to lay my head, again drawing the distinction of comfort because at the end of the day he is the Lord Jesus going beyond the superficial, basically the emotions, and getting to the heart of what it means to obey is **endurance**, that this is not a one-time incident that you may not be comfortable. This is again an ongoing continual attachment of **discomfort**. Are you willing to have continual attachment to discomfort? That's the idea. **Enduring obedience**.

So this verse reveals about discipleship. Following Christ begins with a willing heart, not coercion. He did not say, "You have to come and follow me," and then he explains the difficult part later. No. He confronts the difficult situation right up front and says, "Are you willing then if this happens, will you follow me?" Not by force, but by willingness because he wants our lives to be aligned like he's speaking to this certain man. A life ready to **sacrifice** already, a life ready to sacrifice our own comforts for the obedience of the Lord Jesus. And so he wants **deeds** in our lives rather than a display. He's not looking for that. He's not looking for pomp and circumstance. He wants to deal with our hearts. He wants to deal with ultimately our **sin**. And he's going to the depth of where we have that problem of sin. He confronts us at that level.

So true discipleship prioritizes Christ above comfort, our own plans of how we're going to go about our day, and our own personal agenda. He, the Lord Jesus, sets the agenda in our lives and where we're going to go with him if we're going to follow him. So it's a **daily surrender**. Again, what he says something once, it's meanings a daily occurrence, a continual attachment. That's what following means. Psalm 119:11 says,

"Though thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee." Because God's word shapes reshapes our desires. I rather not sin. I rather not sin if it comes to obeying the word of God. God's word is that much more important and that's a reminder.

So loosening our attachments is crucial to our discipleship. Possessing comfort hinders hinders our responsiveness to the Lord Jesus. So the idea is **hold loosely to your comforts**. Another way of this examination of what Jesus, the Lord Jesus tells us, hold loosely to your comforts because you will be uncomfortable almost on a daily basis. So how we invest our time and our resources is connected to how we hold on to this world. And so Luke 9:57 challenges all of us as true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ to be mindful of **impulses of enthusiasm**.

Impulses of enthusiasm. Reflect for a moment. How many times have you been enthusiastic to follow the Lord Jesus? How many times were you consistent rather when the Lord Jesus and you listen and you actually go beyond enthusiasm and you go to the heart level where the Lord Jesus does all the time and when you have in your heart agreed, how many times were consistent then? I'll tell you the latter is far more of a better response than the former. Amen. It is. That's what allows you to **persevere in your faith** in the Lord Jesus. That's what helps you to **grow in the grace and knowledge** of the Lord Jesus Christ when you take it upon how you respond to his answers.

Let me just also focus in on some other things that are themes in this part of the passage. One other thing is how he touches on **renunciating your security**. You know, security has a way of touching on comfort, right? The more secure you feel, you tend to feel more comfortable. What he wants us to do is secure ourselves in **him** above all of our own security. That's another way of looking at this text because those things will constantly clash: my security over being secure in Christ. That is what we see here. We see the Lord Jesus touching on that and that that deep level.

Let's continue on with more of we're going to see in the text, but let me just share one more thing came to my mind. Luke 14:26-33. We're not going to go there tonight, but you'll notice that from Luke 9 and then when we touch it in Luke 14, he, the Lord Jesus, **presses even harder**. You think this is hard? Well, in that passage, he literally says that your relationship with your family should look like hate compared to the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Think about that. So the Lord Jesus is moving in that direction. But you see his **patience**. You see that he wants to get to our hearts before the actions. You see when you are dealt with this situation and you agree with the Lord, when that happens in Luke 14, it won't be as difficult because you've already dealt with it in your heart. And that's the idea. The Lord Jesus gets to the **heart first** before anything that might happen in the future with actions in Luke 14. He he he prepares us for that. He's all about **preparation**. Do you see that? Just right here in this text.

And so that's that. And then let's go beyond just Luke 9. Philippians 3:8. The Apostle Paul says **all things lost for Christ**. All things, all comforts, that's included in there. All

security is included in there. That word **all**. And so he, the apostle Paul has thought about everything. And he says all things are lost for Christ. So we see a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ considers **wherever and all**.

And then Genesis 12:1-4 recounts the story of Abram before he became Abraham to leave his homeland. So we're not just talking about in the gospels, we're not just talking about in New Testament, but in the Old Testament. This is **consistent with God's call on commitment** that we leave everything just like Abram left everything behind in his previous homeland.

All right, so we're going to continue on here in the text. Verse 59 and verse 60. "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.'"

Verse 59 highlights the **uncompromising nature of Christ's call**. The Lord Jesus personally commands this person to **follow me right away**. See that in the text, expecting immediate response, again a **wholehearted response**. Say you're going to continue to follow me with everything, with everything, with wherever. And this would-be disciple's request is first his first thing is family obligation, namely to bury his father. So we see here that his **heart is divided**. He's compromised in that wholeheartedness of being a follower of Christ. He wants to **honor his parent**. He's touching on an area of honoring. "I want to honor my father. I want to bury my own father." Honoring. Nothing sinful about it. Nothing sinful about it. Jesus, the Lord Jesus, didn't say that's a sinful thing. It's a **good thing**. But again, we're going to see **collision** just like we saw with security and comfort. Same idea. Is honoring your family more important than honoring the Lord Jesus Christ? That is the test. And that's the most difficult test because fathers are to be honored. That's been traditional. And it's not so much now today, is it? But that again, we need to go back to the original context. Honoring her father was a **high privilege**. It was something very important. And we must not forget that. No matter how we are living in our culture today, that was something that was of much dignity, of much respect, of much honor.

So again, he deals with our own weakness, with our own sense of what it means to honor. And he goes above that and he says, "No, I'm going to touch in an area that you hold on to dearly. I'm going to say honoring **me is above all, most important**." And so he says that to him that this would-be disciple. And scripture affirms again honoring parents is noble. But again, when you put it against the backdrop of this text of the Lord Jesus saying, "Follow me, who's more important? Who's more important?" It is worth to constantly remind ourselves of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

And Luke 60, the Lord Jesus Christ's call demands to **let go of our worldly duties**, even if it's respectful, even if it's good, even it's worthy, it must never eclipse the most important, which is here. The Lord Jesus answers is **spreading the gospel** because that is a big part of true discipleship. It's not our message. It's not about us. It's about the Lord Jesus Christ and his gospel. And so he confronts that here with this would-be

disciple. This is the most important thing when it comes to honoring. "You want to honor? Honor my words. Honor the good news and preach. Go out and preach." Because the idea is if you're going to preach the kingdom of God, you must not have a **divided heart**. That's his answer. That's for him to meditate on. You cannot have a divided heart if you're going to be preaching the kingdom of God. If that's the most important thing, if you honor God in his kingdom, then if you are divided with still wanting to honor your father, more important, again, he's checking our heart. He's checking our heart, saying you're going to have a problem when it comes to preaching the gospel. It's going to be diluted. It's going to be confusing because he wants our life backed up with words. But we see that here. He deals with what are you going to say is going to be backed up by your actions because he came up with, "Well, I want to do this." Well then it's going to **compromise what you proclaim**. It's very clear here. So he doesn't want any distortion with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So that is the second would-be disciple. Now we're going to look at the third and the last, verse 61 and 62. "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.'"

Verse 61 exposes the subtle danger of **conditional discipleship**. This man's polite request, we see it in the text, reveals a heart that wants **Christ plus his own personal priorities**, his family. So the Lord Jesus demands again **undivided loyalty** that anything placed ahead of him, even good gifts of family, disqualifies a true disciple of Christ. See a true disciple surrenders the right to set his or her own terms. I mentioned that in the introduction. Our response must be **immediate** and keep our eyes fixed on the path that Christ has marked out for us. You see, he'll take care of us. This is just a good reminder. When he says something like this, it in the back of your mind, I know it has come to me is, "Then what's going to happen to my family or what's going to happen to the people in my life?" We have to just always remind ourselves we are **not in control of them**. We are ultimately not in control of them. He wants us to **fully submit to him, fully trust him** in our lives so much that we know that God is going to take care of the rest. You see, it's that **one-on-one personal relationship** with the Lord. He's not saying you and your family here. No, it's one-on-one. "Don't worry about your children. Don't worry about your spouse. I will take care of them." We have to see that as God's the Lord Jesus calls demands again immediate wholehearted obedience here just like he did with the second would-be disciple and he places again the importance of a **wholehearted devotion to him**. He does not want any half-hearted responses from our lips and from our actions.

And so we see in verse 62 his declaration comes as gracious as possible but **firm**, a firm warning that you cannot dilute the terms of following the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we see this throughout the gospels. Christ speaks with authority and we see that in Matthew 7:28-29, John 6:68. His word is final and it's binding. And we see this when he says, "No one puts his hand to the plow." We see that here. "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." Let me just draw the

illustration here for a moment. You see, let's go back to the original context. What does this illustrate? You see, farming, you had plowshares and you had bites into the it would bite into the soil and the farmer must grip tightly and move forward in a **straight line**.

Discipleship is similar. is **forward-looking**, not looking back. No half-hearted effort. This is **all hands on deck** as it were. And he says, "If you don't do this," it's not saying it here in the text, but when a farmer didn't do it this way, what would happen was you tear up the field and you you **waste seed**. Think about that. You waste seed. You waste in another way of saying you **waste away the word of God**, what it's supposed to do in your life. And then what you share in your work, this is really where it is. Is it's going to be wasted seed because you just plowed and the seed cannot fall. And so the idea is it's important to have this **forward look, all hands committed, no half full commitment** and the seed will not go to waste. You will be **fit to serve** the Lord Jesus Christ in proclamation and in your life and there will be **growth** with the seeds because most of it will flourish. Most of it will flourish.

And so we see further in this text that I want to also share. Just look at that word **fit for the kingdom of God**. Fit for the kingdom of God speaks to this notion of **suitability**. What I mean by that is it's not earning salvation. You see what what he's saying here is is there there's no requirement for salvation. But the the key is we **don't look back in our lives** in our salvation. Once we are saved, **all past is dealt with by the Lord Jesus**. That's what fit means. Our life is no longer in the past. Let me just share with you. I think a lot of individuals have difficulty in their Christian life because they're still thinking about the past or they still live in the past. Think about it. There's a situation with in the world's perspective of people that have lived during the Vietnam War and they are still stuck living in that time frame. Even though they're living in this time period, their minds are still fixed in that time frame. They can't get out of it. It's the same idea in this text. Fit for the kingdom is that you **don't look back**. Everything has been taken care of by the blood of Jesus Christ. All sin is that how you look at life that you truly don't look back in your but you're fit for how he says to look forward. See that's really important in the Christian life, that's what takes away all this unneeded burden, unnecessary hardship that you put on yourself, justly suffering because you keep thinking back of the past and don't think about current. It it it leads to all sorts of things. So the Lord Jesus again cuts to the grain and cuts to the heart and going this is what it means to be fit for the kingdom of God. This is how you're going to be used by the Lord in incredible ways. And that's what Matthew 6:33 says. **Seek ye first** what? **The kingdom of God** and all these things shall be add unto you. There's another way of putting it. Just keep seeking. That's a **forward-looking** way. You don't seek to the back, you keep seeking to the front.

So Jesus, the Lord Jesus, plainly states that discipleship permits **no reverse gear**. Plow didn't have a reverse gear. Once we grasp the plow of Christ's call, our eyes and our hearts and our full commitment must remain **locked forward**; locked forward on the Lord Jesus and his kingdom because looking back ruins the **furrow**. Furrow was

the where the plow would would go and prepare the soil and none of us, I don't think anybody that's a true disciple would want to be called **unfit for the kingdom and for his service**. So **wholehearted commitment forward** looking towards obedience towards the Lord Jesus Christ. This path honors the Lord. It proves our loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ and we are fit to do what he has called us to do. And this is the part of being a true disciple of Christ.

These are the costs, but they're not really costs when it comes to **eternity**. It's just this temporal world. Again, when you when you when you're not focusing on this world and you're thinking about heaven or kingdom of God, **temporary things become less and less difficult**. Right? That word cost associated with difficulty, doesn't it? It's not as difficult when you compare it with the **kingdom of God**. That's what he he does with both of these people. Why does he emphasize the kingdom of God to both the people? Let's think about that. It's **eternal perspective**. Amen. Keep having eternal perspective. And God will do great and mighty things through you in Jesus name.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for this time. Thank you just the for the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, how much he cares for us, how he really wants a relationship to look like with with him. And I pray, Father, that wherever we are at with each one's heart tonight, that we would examine it and through the lens of scripture, not through our own understanding, but through what simply the Lord Jesus speaks with authority that we would we would respond with simply, "Yes, I will continue to follow," and not include any of our terms, not include our own excuses, but to simply follow him **continually forever and ever more**. Thank you in Jesus name. Amen.