

Marked: Called to Sacrifice: Luke 9:57-62

If we're going to seek to see big things happen in the church and in our lives, we're going to have to stay committed when we run into challenges.

INTRODUCTION

What's something that initially looked easy on the surface, but you later found to be quite challenging?

When have you found it difficult to leave someone or someplace behind?

Most things in life just don't come easy. That's especially true of things that have the most potential for good. For the Christian, everything we do is rooted in our relationship with Christ and our journey with Him. That journey begins with counting the cost of following Him and continues with a steadfast commitment that pushes us past all challenges that will come.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 9:57-58.

In these verses, three sayings of Jesus are addressed to potential followers, and all three center around the term "follow." The three sayings remind Luke's Christian readers of the stringent nature of discipleship. The first saying shows that Jesus seeks no flippant, frivolous decision to follow him. Following Jesus means one must first count the cost.

Why might someone have wanted to follow Jesus?

Why do many say they want to follow Him now?

What are the costs one should consider in following Christ?

Luke reminded his readers that these teachings of Jesus took place on the way to Jerusalem. So Jesus' demands of the disciples are accompanied by His own unconditional sacrifice for His disciples. Jesus doesn't ask us to do anything that He hasn't already shown Himself more than willing to do. In fact, He did for us what we could not do for ourselves by dying on the cross for our sins and conquering death by His resurrection.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 9:59-60.

Following Jesus does not only require a cost, but also a deep commitment. For a Jew, burying one's father was a religious duty having precedence over everything else. Jesus communicates through this demand an allegiance that transcends even this greatest of family obligations. This was going to require a commitment that could only come from a heart fully submitted to God.

Why would Jesus ask something so hard of someone considering following Him?

What's something hard that Jesus has asked of you or someone close to you?

When have you been encouraged by someone else's obedience and perseverance?

The saying in v. 60 may seem harsh, but the kind of love and commitment we have for Christ must supersede any earthly allegiance we have. Jesus followed up this uncompromising command with a mandate to proclaim the good news of the kingdom. This should always be the focus of our discipleship.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 9:61-62.

Following Jesus requires a cost, a deep commitment, and also a willingness to face challenges. The third man's request was similar to a request made to Elisha in 1 Kings 19:19–21. Although Elijah granted the young man's request in the Old Testament, Jesus did not here. God's kingdom has come, and the summons to follow Jesus takes precedence over everything else. Even earthly family ties must be placed behind the commitment to following Jesus. The life of a Christ-follower will have many challenges, like this one, that we can only overcome through the power of Christ.

Why do our hearts sometimes yearn for the things of the past?

What practical steps can we take to keep our eyes focused ahead instead?

How does the seriousness of the call of Jesus make you feel? Where do you need to be honest with God about this in order to seek to trust His call more?

The call to follow Christ is a call to follow without excuse or delay. Once you answer the call, you have a permanent calling. No looking back. That's our challenge.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What has it cost you to follow Christ? Why has the cost been worth it?

What are the costs for us as a church in following Christ?

How can our group carry out our responsibility of going and spreading the news of the kingdom of God?

How can we help one another overcome the pull of what's behind in order to press forward to what's ahead?

PRAYER

For your closing prayer time, give your group members the opportunity to confess sin and commit themselves to following Christ without condition. Pray together that God would grant the courage to press through whatever challenges come and for courage to not look back at the things left behind. Pray that we would encourage one another as a group to follow Him with passion.