

Discipleship

Luke 9:57-62

A Tale of Two Cities was written by Charles Dickens in 1859. It is one of the best selling novels of all time.

Opening line: "It was the best of times, it was the...worst of times."

City No. 1: Ephesus. Specifically, the church of Ephesus. Ephesus in the first century was a metropolitan city, a port city, an important City for Rome. It was rich in art and culture, and home to the ancient shrine of the earth goddess Artemis (the goddess Diana is the Roman equivalent). This means it was a city steeped in demonic influence - likely a spiritual stronghold.

Revelation 2:1-5: "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place."

Today Turkey is characterized as 99.8% Muslim and only 0.2% Christian.

Longevity in following Jesus is difficult. It's hard.

The best of times: Ephesians 6. The worst of times: Revelation chapter 2 - City No. 1 losing their first love.

City No. 2: Corvallis. Calvary Corvallis. We are thriving in the best of times. God is on the move! But what about in five years, 25 years, 100 years? Where will we be?

Discipleship is hard. Playing the long game is hard. Longevity in following Jesus is challenging and difficult.

We are all disciples.

What are you giving your life to?

Following Jesus is superior to following any other person, thing, or worldview.

Benefits of Following Jesus

- Life and Truth
John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me."
- Rest
Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
- Peace
John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

So what does it look like to follow Jesus? Ordinary people doing the stuff Jesus did (through the power of the Holy Spirit).

What does this look like in our daily experience?

- Be with Jesus
- Obey Jesus' teachings and do what Jesus did (i.e.; imitate him)

The best part about following Jesus is Jesus!

Nothing communicates more deeply to the human heart or more meaningful in the human experience than the single four letter word, "with."

Second, obey Jesus' teachings and do what Jesus did. Imitate Jesus.

In Philippians 3 Paul says, "...I want to know Him...becoming like Him."

What is the end goal of following Jesus, of being a disciple of Jesus? The purpose/aim of our spiritual formation is to become like Jesus which means to become love. Jesus lived a life of love. He loved His Father with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and he loved others.

How do we do it? Not through a linear works-oriented spiritual formation (inspiration, followed by "try harder", followed by guilt, followed by disillusion). Rather, through the cyclical biblical method: see, practice, blessing - repeat. The cycle goes on and on until blessing is all that we live in.

Luke 9:57-58: As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "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."

Powerful truth number 1 from this passage: Following Jesus isn't easy. It will require giving up the comfort and security that the world offers.

Luke 9:59-60: He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Powerful truth number 2: Following Jesus requires focus. Distractions will kill your spiritual formation.

Luke 9:61-62: "Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Powerful truth number 3: Following Jesus requires looking ahead, not behind.

Mentoring

2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

Are you in a discipleship or mentoring relationship? There are some great benefits.

- Support
- Accountability
- Wisdom/Teaching
- Coaching
- Up-close example

House Church Questions

How do we ensure longevity in our walk with Jesus?

What does it look like to follow Jesus?

What is the end goal of following Jesus?

How do we follow Jesus well?