

FOLLOW ME: THE LIFE OF A DISCIPLE

Follow

At the core of following Jesus as a disciple is a commitment to surrender...

“And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple...In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:27, 33)

What do you think Jesus means by taking up your cross? Is he asking us to sell everything we own and move to the desert to worship Him in solitude and silence? How can we take up our cross each day as a follower of Jesus?

¶ *Surrender: the collision of two wills – “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” (Luke 22:42) During His passion, Jesus asked His Father to take the cup of suffering and separation away, but in the same breath immediately yielded to the will of the Father. What does this attitude tell us of surrendering our wills? Read Hebrews 12:2 and reflect on the attitude and action of Christ at the cross.*

The challenge of surrender...

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” - Luke 9:57-58

There is an old saying that says “before we decide to follow Jesus, we need to reflect on how we will look on wood.” The reference simply means that if we truly follow Him, we must nail our plans and agendas to the cross. Have you counted the cost of things you believe are “rightfully yours” but may have to surrender in truly following Christ? What are they?

- *Following Jesus on your own terms – “He said to another man, ‘Follow me.’ But the man 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.’” (Luke 9:59-60) What do you think Jesus is talking about here? Why would He tell the man that the “dead should bury their own dead” in the context of following Him? Does this sound callous or is Jesus trying to make a point about priorities in discipleship and the kingdom of God?*
- *Looking back at what you gave up – “Still another said, ‘I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.’ Jesus replied, ‘No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.’” (Luke 9:61-62). How is the attractiveness of “the old life” often an obstacle to following Christ? Why does the Lord ask us to surrender the things in our past in order to follow Him? As a disciple of Jesus, why is it important to live in the present instead of the future or that past?*

¶ *If you’re going to follow Jesus, you have to lay down your “net” – “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him. (Mark*

1:17-18) In asking us to “lay down our nets” what is the Lord trying to tell us? What things do you depend on in life that might offer security, comfort, convenience and human relationship, that really inhibit your ability to truly follow Jesus?

The reward of surrender...

- **A fruitful life** – “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” (John 12:24) **When we truly surrender our wills to the Lord, he promises that “many seeds” will result. Have you ever paused to consider how following Christ reflects on the people around you? Why is surrendering to Jesus and dying to ourselves the first step in creating disciples for the kingdom of God?**
- **An easy rest** – “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30). **When we surrender to Jesus, we truly “come to Him.” What is the great exchange that he promises in the verses above? Is it a paradox that when we submit our wills to Christ, he gives us the “peace that passes all understanding?” Why do you think we are so reluctant to truly exchange yokes with the Lord?**

He must become greater; I must become less. (John 3:30)

It’s safe to follow in surrender because He’s faithful to lead in love...

“...I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12b)

Jesus makes us a promise that the world will never be able to deliver. Christ’s promise is filled with love, peace, and ultimately glory. Most of us have learned that we can only really entrust ourselves to people that love us. How much greater do you think that “faithfulness in love” will be guaranteed by the One who died to redeem us?