

W D J S
The Ultimate Call
Luke 14:25-33

This morning at our Southaven Campus, we are going to be ORDAINING one of our own pastors: Josh Campbell. This is a very special occasion in the life of a Christian minister, because it is a service that is designed to demonstrate and confirm that a person has been SET APART for SPECIAL SERVICE in the Church. Now, please understand, a person does not have to complete some degree in college or seminary (although Josh has done that!) in order to be ordained. He does however have to affirm that he feels CALLED by Christ to full-time Christian ministry and he has to exhibit clear evidences of that calling. A calling is essential for ANYONE who wants to serve Jesus. We will see WHY in the course of this message. I would ask that all of you who know Josh please pray for him as he continues on in his service of God here at CHC.

I want to use this occasion of Josh's ordination in this series to illustrate a truly remarkable aspect of Jesus Christ and his teachings that affects any and everyone who is curious about Jesus or who desires to become a Christian. He does not try to TRICK us. His words WILL create SHOCK AND AWE! Let me show you what I am talking about. **Luke 14:25-27 NLT**

25 A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them,
26 "If you want to be my disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison--your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters--yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. **27** And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

Matthew 10:34-39 The Message

34-37 "Don't think I've come to make life cozy. I've come **to cut**—to make a sharp knife-cut between son and father, daughter and mother, bride and mother-in-law—to cut through these cozy domestic arrangements and free you for God. Well-meaning family members can be your worst enemies. If you prefer father or mother over me, you don't deserve me. If you prefer son or daughter over me, you don't deserve me. **38-39** "If you don't go all the way with me, through thick and thin, you don't deserve me. If your first concern is to look after yourself, you'll never find yourself. But if you forget about yourself and look to me, you'll find both yourself and me.

No general ever asked more of his men than Jesus asks of his followers. He calls for COMPLETE OBEDIENCE and ABSOLUTE SACRIFICE. I want us to break down the specifics of just what it means to be CALLED by Christ.

His call is personal. "(YOU) follow me!" John 1:35-43 NLT

35 The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. 36 As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" 37 When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them. They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" 39 "Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day. 40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. 41 Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ"). 42 Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "Your name is Simon, son of John--but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter"). 43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me."

*He gives us the opportunity to check him out. (**"Come and see!"**)

-**The CHC Model:** Attract = Offer an opportunity for someone to come & see!

*At some point, he will extend a personal INVITATION to you! (**"YOU follow me!"**)

-He called each of the disciples BY NAME and right where they WERE.

[He found Phillip; Peter and John in the BOAT; Matthew at his TAX DESK]

[Where were YOU when Christ called you?]

*He called them **DISCIPLES (=Learners, Taught Ones)**

-He calls us each as INDIVIDUALS. (No GROUP salvations! – Tent crusades?)

His call is exclusive. ["Follow ME!"] (As opposed to any and everyone else!)

*He calls us to him ALONE! No RIVALS! [**To Decide = To CUT OFF**]

(This is NO DIFFERENT than what we expect in MARRIAGE.)

-This is a call to COMMITMENT!

What is the ultimate commitment to you? Signing a mortgage loan? Marriage? Having a baby? These are all pretty amazing and very demanding. Once you make one of these commitments, you will NEVER be the same. Never. Maybe this is why some of you have chosen NOT to make any of these commitments. You keep waiting until you have more MONEY, or more TIME, or more SUPPORT. Or, you will wait until you have no better or other OPTIONS! At any rate, you are choosing to wait. until LATER. Since you are a FREE, TAXPAYING ADULT, then you can keep on waiting. But Jesus tells us NOT to wait when it comes to following him. He calls us to COMMIT. **Matthew 10:34-39 AMP**

34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword [of division between belief and unbelief]. **35** For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; **36** and a man's enemies will be the members of his [own] household [when one believes and another does not]. **37** "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he

who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. **38** And he who does not take his cross [expressing a willingness to endure whatever may come] and follow Me [believing in Me, conforming to My example in living and, if need be, suffering or perhaps dying because of faith in Me] is not worthy of Me. **39** Whoever finds his life [in this world] will [eventually] lose it [through death], and whoever loses his life [in this world] for My sake will find it [that is, life with Me for all eternity].

-What have you LEFT to follow Jesus? Friendships? Pleasures? Careers?
[How Jesus tested my call in my relationship with Lisa!]

*This is nothing less than an ETERNAL commitment! (UNLIKE marriage)
 -You will be learning of him and following him FOREVER!

-CONSIDER what he is asking of you! **Luke 14:28-33 NIV**

28 "But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? 29 Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. 30 They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!' 31 "Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? 32 And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. 33 So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.

*Count the COST. (SELF-PAY will cost you EVERYTHING!) **(Vs. 28-30)**
 -Few people count the cost of trying to PAY on their own!
 -Christ paid the ultimate price so that we could have an eternal home!

*Consider the ALTERNATIVES: SURRENDER or DEFEAT! **(Vs. 31-33)**
(Christ is a conqueror headed toward you: SURRENDER NOW!)

His call is extreme. ["FOLLOW me!"]

*To follow = "To cleave steadfastly to one, to conform wholly to his example, in living and (if need be) in dying also."

-Requires that you STAY CLOSE to him. **[Takes T I M E]**
 -Requires you to LISTEN for his commands.

*He calls us to FOLLOW him in his DIVINE PURPOSE!
 -He came for a DIVINE PURPOSE! "To seek and to save the lost."
 -He calls us to that same purpose. "As the Father has sent me, so send I you!"

*His call is both an INVITATION and a MISSION.

- He calls us IN so that he can send us OUT! **(Apostles = Sent Ones)**
- Every follower of Jesus must expect to be “sent” to others. They do not live for themselves. **[This is true for PLUMBERS and PASTORS!]**

*We do not get to decide the EXTENT or TERMS of our SERVICE. **(Joining the Army!)**

- We are called to OBEY, not to CONSIDER! **[My Bertha Smith story]**
- The CALL comes BEFORE you know the specific details of what you will face!
- *Being sent implies that you will face the UNKNOWN. Adventure? Pain?

*The call is PERMANENT: No turning back, NO MATTER WHAT! **Luke 9:57-62 NLT**

57 As they were walking along, someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 But Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head." 59 He said to another person, "Come, follow me." The man agreed, but he said, "Lord, first let me return home and bury my father." 60 But Jesus told him, "Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead! Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God." 61 Another said, "Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-bye to my family." 62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

- Do you WANT to be used by God? You must set your face forward!
- His demands will seem unreasonable at times.
- Don't be deterred by the failure of others! His work in them is a MYSTERY!

*Humanly speaking, this is an IMPOSSIBLE DEMAND! But . . .

- He HAS NO DESIRE for you to try and DO THIS ALONE!
- He makes it clear that HIS CHOICE precedes OUR COMMITMENT.

John 15:16a NIV

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit--fruit that will last.

- His choice of you is why you heard him call you in the first place.
- He NEVER LETS GO of anyone that he chooses! **[Grace: Do-Overs happen!]**
- *This fact is the ONLY REASON for our GUARANTEE of SUCCESS!

Have YOU been CALLED by CHRIST?
Are you LIVING as a “SENT ONE?”

Let's pray.