

LET'S GO: The Comfortable Cross

In Luke chapter 9, after Jesus had just fed 5000 people.....

Luke 9:18-25 Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?” ¹⁹ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.” ²⁰ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “The Christ, the Son of the living God.” ²¹ Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. ²² And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” ²³ Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?”

I want to dig in to this one verse that clearly lays out how to be a follower of Christ:

Luke 9:23 “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

-Jesus knew this was his LAST stop on the way back to Jerusalem to be crucified!

-Last month.....”I will build my church, and the gates of hell with not prevail”

BUT.....JESUS WAS PREPPING THEM IT WOULD NOT BE EASY!

There is a point in any relationship when you move from:

- convenient to committed
- taking to giving
- casual to close

THERE IS A POINT IN ANY SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP WHERE YOU AND YOUR DECISIONS ARE “INFLUENCED” BY THE OTHER PERSON!

-Selfishness is just thinking through your view or need.

-We often change the lens we process through!

3 THINGS THAT CAN BE UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT THE CROSS:

- 1) Jesus is the “ONLY” way!
- 2) It’s not about ME!
- 3) I am called to be different!

1) JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY!

John 14:1-6 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

That is not a “Comfortable” message! NOT ALL ROADS LEAD TO HEAVEN!

-THERE IS A HEAVEN AND A HELL! (GOOD NEWS IS WE CAN BE SAVED)

Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

-Goes on to talk about “False Prophets & False Disciples”

-PEOPLE THAT WOULD LEAD OTHERS IN THE WRONG DIRECTION!

In John chapter 6. Jesus is in the height of His ministry and we read that large crowds were following Jesus.

-His MIRACLES were popular.....His MESSAGE.....not so much!

Later in John 6.....Jesus was teaching in a local synagogue

Saying “He” was the bread of life and that he was sent by God! (And people wouldn’t believe)

Many were fans of Jesus for what HE could do for them, but when the miracles were over and Jesus was teaching how to follow him.....many left!

“Many Disciples Desert Jesus” (Scripture heading)

John 6:60-68 On hearing it, many of his disciples said, **“This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”** ⁶¹ Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, **“Does this offend you?”** ⁶² What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! ⁶³ The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. ⁶⁴ Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. ⁶⁵ He went on to say, **“This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.”** ⁶⁶ **From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.** ⁶⁷ “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? **You have the words of eternal life.** ⁶⁹ **We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”**

John 3:16 **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

-This is a gift! THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS!

First uncomfortable message: Jesus is the ONLY way!

2) IT’S NOT ABOUT ME!

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through **faith**—and this not from yourselves, it is the **gift** of God—⁹not by **works**, so that no one can boast.

-Hard to grasp! EASY TO FEEL LIKE IT IS ABOUT “WORKS”

Galatians 5:1-6 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. **Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.** ² Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that **if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.** ³ Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴ You who are **trying to be justified by the law** have been alienated from Christ; **you have fallen away from grace.** ⁵ For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. ⁶ For in Christ

Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

-LOVE.....NOT CIRCUMCISION!

John 13:35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Ephesians 2:8-10 ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Jesus is the only way.....It’s not about me.....AND

3) I AM CALLED TO BE DIFFERENT!

1 Corinthians 1:27-31 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

THE GOSPEL IS COUNTER CULTURAL.....BACKWARDS THINKING!

THINK OF OUR KING JESUS:

**Jesus was born in a manger
Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey
Jesus had no palace of kingdom**

JESUS TAUGHT:

**First will be last
Be a servant to lead
Give more to receive more
Love your enemies & bless those who curse you
When slapped, turn to the other cheek**

When wronged....offer forgiveness

James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

HOW DO YOU SHOW YOU ARE WISE?

- 1) By living a GOOD life!
- 2) By deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom!

I THINK JAMES WAS SAYING "ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS"

Do you want to be wise.....THEN DO SOMETHING!

James 3:13-18 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. 16For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 17But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Comparing and Contrasting Two Kinds of Wisdom

Wisdom 1 (Godly wisdom): A deep, wide, ranging insight in how to live... accomplished through actions and humility of spirit

Wisdom 2 (Earthly wisdom): A shallow, narrow-focused view of life through which decisions are based on what is best for the individual.

EARTHLY WISDOM

Harbors envy
Selfish ambition
Prideful (boast)
Deceptive (to self)
Is not from god
Is earthly

GODLY WISDOM

Good deeds
Causes Humility
From Heaven
Is Pure
Is peace loving
Is considerate

Is unspiritual
Is demonic
Causes disorder
Causes evil practices
Causes death

Is submissive
Is merciful
Brings good fruit
Impartial
Is sincere
Causes Righteousness

EARTHLY wisdom produces pride (MORE OF US)

James 3:16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

Society tells us:

- if it feels good, just do it...you deserve it....even if it hurts others!
- survival of the fittest
- climb over anyone to get to the top
- do what it takes to take care of you

WE TEACH OUR KIDS:

- Be Nice
- Watch your mouth
- Don't be selfish
- Do what I say!

Exactly what James was saying!

James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

-If you just try to do those things.....YOU WILL STAND OUT!

Matthew 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

SHINE.....PEOPLE SEE GOOD DEEDS

WHY.....TO GLORIFY GOD!

*AND EVEN WHEN YOU SHINE BRIGHT.....YOU MAY GET ATTACKED! (Counter cultural)

1 Peter 3:8-16 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. ¹¹ They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." ¹³ Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." ¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Philippians 2:3-11 (Imitating Christ's Humility) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

MAKES NO SENSE IN OUR EARTHLY WISDOM!!
REMEMBER WHAT HE HAS DONE! (Last Supper....sacrifice)

1 Cor 11:23-36 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

