

Sunday, October 29, 2023 | The Road to Redemption

Week 2 | Luke 9:57-62 | “Would-Be Disciples Beware”

Last week, we started a new subseries in our study of Luke’s account called “The Road to Redemption.” And, in this series, we’ll be following Jesus as he makes his way to Jerusalem (cf. 9:51). And though he will have many interactions between here and there, his primary focus will be to teach his disciples (and, by extension, us) what it means to truly take up a “cross daily and follow [him]” (Lu. 9:23).

We kicked off our new study by tackling vengefulness. Many promising up-and-coming disciples—e.g., James and John—have been led astray by their desire for revenge. But vengeance is not the Christian way. **Jesus’ disciples seek reconciliation, not retribution.** Those who’ve been given grace are *forbidden* from getting even. We ought to be a gracious people, not a vengeful horde. We turn the other cheek, not bring down the hammer. We extend an olive branch, not take aim. Enemies are potential allies, not targets. This is the age of grace, not wrath.

Today, we’ll see what it takes to *prioritize* Jesus. Too often, western Christianity is sold as an attachment, as if following Jesus is nothing more than an add-on to one’s already loaded list of responsibilities. But, as we’ll see, discipleship cannot be an accessory. Following Jesus cannot be tenth, fifth, or even second on the list; it either holds the number one spot or, make no mistake, it isn’t on the list at all. Jesus is Lord of our life, or he isn’t our Lord at all.

So, would-be disciples, beware: following Jesus will cost you *everything*. Half measures will not do. It is either all or nothing. But, rest assured, what you gain by giving your all is far greater than anything you could’ve gotten on your own (cf. Rom. 8:18). Or, as missionary Jim Elliot wrote seven years before his martyrdom, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

Following Jesus is more important than...

i. Material Accommodations (vs. 57-58).

READ: Luke 9:57-58 (ESV)

⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

Contrary to what people like Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Joyce Meyer, T. D. Jakes, and Paula White might tell you, the gospel is bad news for our material accommodations. Jesus did not have an earthly home. As far as we know, he didn't own property. He was, by all outward appearances, poor. In fact, as the Lord himself pointed out, *animals* had more stable accommodations than Jesus.

So, if you're following Jesus thinking you'll have a rich life, you are in for a rude awakening. Though the Lord has promised to provide for our needs (cf. Mat. 6:32), he has not promised to satisfy our greed. In fact, as a good Father, he will intentionally not indulge your wayward appetites. Part of maturing in your Christian walk is being able to notice when you need something and when you're being greedy.

Is Jesus saying stuff is bad? Is owning a house wrong? No. Money and possessions are **tools**. But where a tool turns into an idol is when we start thinking that our stuff is really "our stuff" and not *God's stuff*. The growing Christian knows that whatever he possesses is, ultimately, God's. He sees himself as only a **steward** of God's things, not the **owner**. As such, they look to God to tell them how they should use their treasures for him. Why? Because their actual prize is in heaven, not earth.

READ: Mathew 6:19-21 (ESV)

¹⁹ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Many would-be disciples have stopped following Jesus because they realized it would hurt their bottom line. They're not charitable. They refuse to give to the poor. They don't give the church regularly. They were willing to be a disciple so long as the Lord kept his nose out of their financial affairs. What will you do?

ii. Parental Obligations (vs. 59-60).

READ: Luke 9:59-60 (ESV)

⁵⁹ To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and **proclaim** the kingdom of God."

There are two ways to understand the man's words. Either the man's father had just died, or the man was postponing discipleship until his father passed away sometime in the future. But

either way, whether the man was headed to a funeral or procrastinating, Jesus' words would've been shocking no matter the man's context. He told him not to worry about the dead or dying; instead, Jesus wanted the man to follow him. **To follow Jesus would mean abandoning his parental obligations.** Death was the only thing that awaited the man if he stayed; however, if he followed Jesus, life incarnate would be his companion. Rather than bury the dead, Jesus would have the man "go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Rather than be a pallbearer, he would be a life-bringer.

Now, was Jesus saying that Christians shouldn't go to funerals? No. Was he saying that it's wrong to bury one's parents? No. Was he advising that every child abandon his parents? No. Paul once said that any so-called "Christian" who doesn't provide for his family has "denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8). The Lord's point is that the parent is no longer the ultimate authority in a child's life. Jesus' commands trump those of mom and dad.

READ: Matthew 10:34-39 (ESV)

³⁴ "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a **sword**. 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 person's enemies will be those of his **own household**. ³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother **more** than me is **not worthy** of me, and whoever loves son or daughter **more** than me is **not worthy** of me. ³⁸ And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is **not worthy** of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Many would-be disciples have stopped following Jesus because it would hurt their relationship with their parents. And, sure, it might not have been because of some funeral responsibilities. Instead, it is something more like a fear of disappointing their parents. Potential disciples might ask, "What will Dad say if I tell him I'm going into ministry?" Or, "My mom will never forgive me if became a missionary instead of going into the family business."

iii. Social Expectations (vs. 61-62).

READ: Luke 9:61-62 (ESV)

⁶¹ Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶² Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is **fit** for the kingdom of God."

The phrase "those at my home" includes both friends and family. So, more than parental obligations, Jesus was touching on social expectations. Jesus' words apply to your interactions with your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc.

Now, was the Lord saying it would be wrong to say goodbye to people? No. Was he saying Christians must sever all contact with those outside the faith? No. His point was that those who care ***too much*** for what others think about their devotion to Christ are ***unfit*** for the kingdom of God. When you follow Jesus, you're supposed to care only about what God thinks about you and no one else. Because if you become overly concerned with popular opinion, you will compromise on truth. Rather than being proud to be called a Christian, you'll be ashamed. And such people are not regarded with favor by Jesus Christ.

READ: Luke 9:26 (ESV)

For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Many would-be disciples have stopped following Jesus because it would hurt their reputations with their friends, bosses, or neighbors.

So, what's the takeaway?

Even **good** excuses are **bad** excuses if they keep you from following Jesus.

Follow Jesus! Yet some will say, "I've got bad health." Or "My family wouldn't understand." Or "The world might be offended."

Now, here's the great irony of today's message. Luke gave three good excuses that either delayed discipleship or stopped it completely: concern for one's needs, care for parents, and consideration for others. And herein is the ironic part: have any of the excuses you gave in your life on the same level as these? Most of the time, we don't follow Jesus for selfish reasons, or we're lazy. Or, even worse, sometimes there isn't a reason at all! Sometimes, we're just flat-out prideful, defiant, stubborn. So, if even so-called "good excuses" are bad excuses if they keep you from following Jesus, then what should we think of all the 100s of other excuses we give for not following Jesus?

Video Description

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SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

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