

Luke 9:46-62

The Cost

Good morning, please open your Bibles to Luke chapter 9, as we will be finishing the chapter today, as we look at verses 46-62.

If you are new here, we welcome you, and we are so happy that you have joined us this morning.

We are currently in the midst of a verse-by-verse study of the Gospel of Luke.

All the previous teachings in this series are online, if you decide you are going to stay with us, you can get caught up either on our website, our app, or even our YouTube page.

We love God's Word here, and we believe that it is through God's Word that God speaks to His church today.

In our church services, men's and women's studies, and even our home fellowships, you will find that the focus of it all is God's Word.

We hope you choose to stay with us and grow with us as we study the most influential Book of all time, the Bible.

Of course, an endeavor like this will take years, so please be patient as we make this journey together.

Let's pray...

This morning our message is entitled “The Cost.”

Now if we were to honestly assess the church today, and the aspirations, egos and personalities that are leading it, we will find ourselves bewildered as we hold up today’s leaders to Jesus’ Words in our text today.

It really seems much of the church today does not believe the Words of Jesus.

Many churches embrace the world’s models for success, and are driven by powerful and ambitious men.

Especially in our culture, we see celebrity pastors and CEO Pastors creating a new kind of success within the church.

When we see Jesus’ instruction this morning, we will understand why many have thrown out much of God’s Word as irrelevant.

Instead of teaching the whole council of God, church leaders pick through God’s Word, to please the hearers and themselves.

And with all the arrogance of man, they usurp God’s Divine Inspired Word, to teach nice platitudes and gracious sermonettes.

But today we will find, as we have committed ourselves here to remaining under the Authority of God’s Word, and as we handle each chapter and verse with care, that God’s Word abruptly challenges our

manmade ideas of what a good religion should look like.

This next section of teaching and correction for the disciple of Christ should be a soul searching, and self-evaluating portion of scripture for us all.

Jesus lays out the requirements for a True Disciple, and as we look honestly at this text, and hold it up to our own lives, I imagine some of us will find our attitude and our commitment to Christ and His Church are greatly irrelevant to what He desires.

Every part of this next section is a blaring confrontation of the modern church.

So let us remember what has taken place right before this next section, when we do it amplifies the disciples misconduct that is found in our text this morning.

Remember after Jesus healed the poor suffering demon possessed boy. Immediately after that, Jesus gives the father his only begotten son back to him.

Jesus could tell the powerful miracle was causing the disciples to be hopeful for the establishment of the Kingdom.

Jesus said these words, **Luke 9:44-45**

44 "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men." 45 But they did not understand this saying, and

it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.

Remember Jesus has now turned His face toward Jerusalem, and He is now in the final chapters of His ministry.

Jesus has over and over again tried to get the disciples to understand that He is the Suffering Servant spoken of in the Old Testament, and Jesus is here now to die.

But once Peter in Caesarea Philippi declared that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ of God, the disciples have been deaf to all that Jesus is trying to tell them.

And since that revelation of Jesus' Messiahship, we saw them last week without any power to heal as they went from dependency on Jesus, to a false self-confidence.

These men have had a little bit of success in the ministry, and as we can see, success is very dangerous.

They come so far from their humble beginnings and they are starting to think something of themselves.

J.C. Ryles explains, "Of all the creatures man has so little right to be proud, and of all men none ought to be so humble as the Christian."

You see we become Christians by confessing our sinful state, and appealing to God's Mercy and Grace.

We above all, have no position in this world to have a prideful heart.

Now because Christians come lowly to Christ, does not mean that Christians do not have position in this life.

I know one woman, a very powerful lawyer, a woman of great respect as far as this world is concerned, many others who follow her leadership.

Yet she mixes with the rest of Christ's Worshipers with the greatest humility, and carries herself no higher than the repented heroin addict.

I think too of one Doctor, who I have served with in the slums of Mexico, who in his office was respected by many employees, and yet, he was not above getting dirty in his lowly service to Jesus on the mission field.

He was an honored man, a man of great wealth, and yet he lowered himself and served countless people in that impoverished slum.

You see, this is the desired character of the Christian, we are followers of Christ who was meek and lowly of heart.

Who we are told in **Phil 2:5-9** Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

And that is our template Christian.

It makes you scratch your head at why many Church-goers today are so ambitious for prominence and their hearts ache to be noticed.

I do however find some comfort knowing that it is not just a problem for our day, but even the very first Christians and Church leaders suffered from this plague of pride.

Look now, as Jesus is heading to Jerusalem to die, we see the disciple's misunderstanding of Jesus, and it leads them next to an appalling argument...

Who Is the Greatest?(Matt 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37)

9:46 Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. 47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great."

We see here the sad thinking that has overcome these self-confident, and really now powerless disciples.

These are kinds of things a heart is concerned with that cause people's ministries to lose effectiveness and power.

The concern for position, recognition, and greatness.

Isn't it strange that God found these men not in prestigious schools, not in temple service, not at palace

tables, but he called these men, in His Grace from very ordinary places.

These are common men, they were nobodies when Christ found them, some fishing, another at a traitor's tax collecting tables, and none were extraordinary, not even a little.

Yet they show the sad reality of the Christian progression.

We all typically begin humble, needy, we all come as beggars to receive that free grace and mercy, and a pardon from our sins.

But overtime as Jesus cleans up our minds, and He begins to bless us with an abundant life.

How soon we forget the rugged condition we came to Him as.

And soon, we look down on others, and hold ourselves up high.

As our clothes get nicer, and our lives more orderly we began to seek places where we are noticed and appreciated.

After all, I am pretty good now, much better than them, and the Holy Spirit's working in our lives, the sanctification process becomes now a bragging point, as our Bible knowledge increases, and our religious routines increase.

And many become proud of their own spirituality.

Many times the positioning heart is concealed with pious overtones and talk.

But you can smell the pride, it has a putrid aroma.

The person, who cuts down others, to promote themselves, as they condescendingly talk about others when they are not present, all the while keeping that smile, concealing the hostility.

They tear down others, only to promote their own agenda, as they truly believe they are something special.

But they fail to understand that is not Christ's way, it is that Old Serpent, the Devil using their cursed tongue to tear down all that God is building up.

As they are convinced of their own greatness, they look at those who serve in positions of Grace, and they desire the position for themselves.

And it has been the satanic scheme since those who were first chosen by Jesus.

And here we see the Apostles arguing their personal claims to greatness over others.

I am sure they spoke of all those that they ministered too, they gave their spiritual resumes, calculated all their healings, all the teaching engagements, they boasted of the lives that they are touching in their own ministries.

And we can imagine their fleshly arguments getting more and more aggressive, or even passive aggressive.

Sometimes those passive aggressive attacks are so much worse, because they are usually left vague enough to where you cannot directly confront the person.

Now, what a scene Jesus finds these guys in here, and Jesus interrupts them here with a powerful demonstration of how His Kingdom is ran.

Jesus in verse 47 took a little child, and set him right next to Himself.

And He taught them with this powerful illustration, “Whoever receives this little child in My Name, receives me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who is least among you all will be the greatest.”

Now to understand the severity of this picture, we have to understand the time and culture Jesus was doing this.

Understand, although in the Hebrew culture children were loved and cherished, a child was the weakest and least important in the Hebrew culture.

Kent Hughes writes, “The Talmud regarded spending time with children to be a waste of time. One rabbi wrote ‘morning sleep, midday wine, chattering with children and tarrying in places where men of the

common people assemble, destroy a man.' (Ab. 3,10:R Dosa b. Archinos).

This cultural mindset was deep rooted into the disciple's hearts, even later in Jesus' ministry they will be corrected again on this.

Luke 18:15-17 Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 17 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

They considered Jesus too important of a Man to have time to associate with the lowest in their society.

The disciples thought as many do today, that a person's prestige and success is determined by who they keep company with.

I had a teacher who engrained this line of thinking into his students.

"If you want to be somebody in this life, surround yourself with successful men."

"You will only be as successful as those you surround yourself with."

All really good advice as far as the world is concerned.

However, Jesus here reverses it all.

Jesus presents Himself to them, the most important person in their lives, and Jesus puts the least in their society right next to Him as an example of the greatest and says, “Whoever receives a child receives Me.”.

Jesus is not saying act childlike to be great, but a man’s greatness will be determined how they relate to the least of these.

Understand the greatest ministry is not the pulpit ministry.

Yet the greatest ambition in the church is to be at the pulpit.

We see the upfront positions, and we think worldly, and we desire to have a platform, to have a voice, to be respected.

But that kind of ambition is not Christian.

But we see here, to seek the lowest ministry according to this world is to seek the greatest ministry in the Kingdom.

Greatness is a gift of God, and in His economy it is given to those who serve and receive the lowly.

Jesus finished this great revelation by saying, “He who is least among you is greatest.”

Now, this is a saying we say often in our house.

We are trying to train those four little selfish hearts to let others go first, and to be okay with not being noticed or even being last.

And really our oldest Sofia, she is such a tender soul. She is so shy and the least aggressive in the bunch. So the other little sinners, are usually first to get the treats, the best seats, the last piece of pizza.

And Sofia seems to always be at the end of the line and left standing without.

So, I often tell her, "Sof, remember Jesus said whoever is least, is the greatest, whoever is last will be first in heaven."

Jesus says in another place...

Luke 13:30 And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."

And the other day, Sofia was of course last to get a treat, and she confidently said, "Its okay, whoever is last on earth will be first in heaven."

Oh I just rejoiced, that she was learning this lesson joyfully.

But then I saw her little wheels turning, and she looked at me, and asked the profound question... "Daddy, out of all the people who went last in this life, how are they going to figure out who goes first in heaven."

She stumped me, so I said, "Go ask your mother."

No I told her "I am sure God has a special way of working it all out, just keep obeying Him Sof."

So a powerful lesson for the disciple of Christ here, for us as a ministry, it should be our earnest desire to reach and minister to those who are overlooked by others.

Minister to the least, they are so very important to Jesus.

Again, this confronts the modern church designed to attract the professional and the wealthy.

Which are welcome too, but they must come spiritually bankrupt and lowly.

So next Jesus will confront another disorderly and rebellious spirit that is so very prevalent today, the bigoted and narrow exclusion of those who do things differently.

Jesus Forbids Sectarianism(Mark 9:38-41)

49 Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us."

50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side."

The thunderous John now with great passion and dedication to Jesus, remembers when he was going about in his own Galilean Ministry, that he saw a man performing an exorcism in the Name of Jesus.

And you can hear the commitment and devotion to Jesus in John's statement.

He loves Jesus, but this other man had not been commissioned the same way the Apostles had.

So they indignantly tried to stop the man.

And they overlook the ministry to the one suffering under this oppressive spirit.

Really, they are mimicking the Pharisees here who were always looking at procedure over the person.

They only care that someone else is being used as they were, and this person was not of their group.

The sin here stems from the same root the previous sin came from, pride.

And it is a prevalent sin today in the church.

When people see others succeeding in a ministry, they become indignant and even manipulative.

Many usurpers have come through, not happy with the leaders God has chosen, and when it comes down to their displeasure, they are really upset they are not being used in that capacity.

They begin to malign, with the spirit of Absalom, David's rebellious son, they whisper, and say, "if only I was the one leading."

They go from ear to ear trying to promote their own worth and godliness, and they can care less about those lives being ministered too, they only want recognition.

They pay no mind to the suffering or the least of these, those are only pawns in their end goal, to be the one in the front.

But they fail to understand this sinful competitiveness destroys the work.

Think of Absalom in the book of 2 Samuel, and be on guard for those who whisper "if only I."

2 Sam 15:3-5 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." (The Leadership is worthless) 4 Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." 5 And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him.

Absalom won the people's heart and eventually weakened the kingdom.

Don't entertain the Absalom's among us, they are only here to divide.

God puts His leaders in place, next time the Absalom comes whispering in your ear, reply with...

Ps 75:6-7 For exaltation comes neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south. 7 But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another.

The disciples are rebuked, they should have been rejoicing that Jesus' Name was being used to minister to others.

Jesus is reprimanding the heart that watches others ascend to positions of responsibility with jealousy.

The heart that is unhappy when someone else is put in a place to teach and they are not, when honor is given to another they are angry and vicious, and Jesus makes it clear that that heart is wretched and ugly.

Rejoice that others are being used in the ministry.

We are all on the same side, and no one has cornered the market on the ministry.

We should marvel that God would use any man to do His work, and when we see others being used, rejoice that God has lifted them up to the place to serve and be used.

I will tell you, if you can be happy when others are being used in the ministry, when you can rejoice and pray for those chosen to lead, when you can rebuke that ambition and jealousy in your heart, than you are not far from being chosen to lead yourself.

But that jealous ambition will always keep you just out of reach, you will never ascend to the place your heart longs to be.

And you will go from church to church angry and dissatisfied.

So Jesus rebukes segregation or even the sole denomination ideas we see so prevalent today.

It's our way, and only our way!

I think John the Baptist gave us the best view on self and ministry when he said.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Keep that mindset and stay humble Christian, this Kingdom has no room for pride and positioning.

If you want to be used, the key in our Kingdom is clear.

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time

Jesus says he who is not against us is on our side.

We are all working for the same thing here, we want to reach this world for Jesus.

But we must not give room to pride or seclusion.

Prov. 16:19 Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Every time I have seen this spirit of exclusion arise in any church, when people begin to murmur against the church leadership, when people begin promoting their own ministries and Self-Importance begins to rise, the Church divides into factions.

The work of Christ is hindered and those being ministered too are hurt the worse.

When “I or Us” is your concern over the ministry to “Them” you are walking on dangerous ground.

Jesus desires His followers to have an open heart and not an elite’s heart.

To put aside personal hopes for success to surrender to God’s plan.

The truly great person in our Kingdom is the one who comforts the lowly and has no ambition for grander things.

Understand, the truly great are not the ones in the seen and prominent places, the truly great are rarely honored or noticed, they are hidden.

The servant who has found contentment to serve in the Nursery for decades upon decades, and has remained faithful.

That servant is great.

Also, those of you who give your Saturdays to do outreaches in our parks, to the homeless, prostitutes, criminals, and addicted, your reward will be far greater in the Kingdom that is coming.

The Usher who has operated his post faithfully week after week, keeping alert and watching over the flock.

For years, he has gotten nothing more than a pat on the back, and he serves happily and dutifully, that man is great.

The Greeter who every week finds joy in greeting the people of God with a gracious smile and acknowledging every visitor, your faithfulness is greatness in this Kingdom.

The man and his wife who give their Friday night date night up, to come to the church to minister to those struggling in addiction and no one sees them, you are great in this Kingdom.

The men who have faithfully prepared the Men's Breakfast for years, and never received or desired any public praise from man, they are great.

You see those who find their place, and are content to serve there until they leave this earth to glory, those are the greatest.

Those in the front now, will be least in the day the rewards are given.

Those who are honored now are the lowest, for they received their reward and good things in this life.

But it is you, the prayer warrior, who faithfully meets with God in your closet, your work has not gone unnoticed.

I think now of many great widows who have given years to unseen prayer closets for the lost sinner, who have given of their mite to the ministry of the work of the Lord, who selflessly give themselves to the least of these, they will be the greatest of those honored in eternity.

It is the faithful that are great, there is no place for positioning and promoting self over others.

Stay faithful, be vigilant against ambition, and rest in God's will for your life, and you will unlock the secret to the blessed life.

So next we see, the loyal disciples again corrected because of their zeal without knowledge.

A Samaritan Village Rejects the Savior

51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"

Understand here, Jesus is set for Jerusalem.

This is a huge turning point in Jesus' ministry.

Understand from this point on in Luke's Gospel Jesus will be on the road, and will be ministering along the way.

He knows His earthly ministry is coming to an end and He is ready for all that lay ahead for Him.

Kent Hughes explains “Divine Grit marks these next chapters.”

Now the quickest way to Jerusalem was through Samaria.

Jesus has a large following at this point, it is unclear just how many disciples were following Him.

But it was necessary for Him to send messengers to make preparations ahead of time for their arrival.

Now, the Samaritans were half-breed Jews, they were not full Jews, and at this point there was centuries of hatred between them and the Jews.

The Jews thought they were corrupted and not true blood Hebrews, and of course, the outcast Samaritans begin to promote their way as the true way.

The Samaritans set up their own temple on Mount Gerizim and even established their own liturgy and worship to Yahweh.

The divide and racism went deep, and both sides claimed they were the true worshippers of Yahweh.

However, Jesus and His followers were headed to Jerusalem, and that infuriated the Samaritans who refused their passage, because they despised Jerusalem.

And we see the depth of the hatred inbred into the heart of the disciples, they ask Jesus, “Do you want us

to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

And notice in their fiery indignation they could even use scripture to justify their misguided passion.

These brothers just saw Elijah on the mountaintop with Jesus, so perhaps the scriptures about him are fresh in their hearts and minds.

And they reason that these rejecters of Christ should be destroyed in the same manner as Elijah destroyed God's enemies in 2 Kings chapter 1.

We can understand how these brothers got their nickname from Jesus in **Mark 3:17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"**

These men get a lot of flak for their destructive demeanor.

But these men were as genuine and dedicated as a disciple could be to Christ.

These men were not joking here, they loved Jesus greatly, and they are offended that their beloved Teacher was rejected in this manner.

So their first instinct is to Rush to God's judgment.

But this is a great lesson for us as disciples of Christ, our Kingdom's ethics are not worldly, but we are to be led by compassion and mercy.

This is why God's Word is authority over our lives, even above our emotions and hurt feelings.

Jesus has already taught them.... **Luke 6:27-28 "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.**

We are set apart to Jesus, by our love, not by our power.

In fact, it is an even greater display of power to show love to those who come against your life.

Listen, if you are a follower of Christ, a disciple of Christ this morning, vengeance should have no place in your heart.

We do not get even, or get back at people.

Revenge is not in our Kingdom's ethics.

Listen if you are in ministry, people will hurt you, come against you, and say all kinds of evil about you, it comes with the territory, and not without warning.

Jesus said in **Matt 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

I will tell you this if your first instinct is to call fire down on those who hurt you or malign you, if you want to

get them back, or hurt them as well, you are not cut out for ministry.

Look how Jesus corrects the disciple's thinking now in verses 55 and 56.

55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village.

Understand as Disciples of Christ, none of this is about us.

Our hurt feelings do not matter, retribution is not for us to decide, because it is not about us.

Those who walk in this life with Jesus, must share in His ministry of mercy.

When we walk with Jesus, we will be led by compassion, grace, and a forgiving Spirit.

I don't know about you, but I find it is really easy to forgive someone, when I take a moment and meditate on all that Christ saved me from.

Oh, the treacherous monstrous filthy things my heart was given a pardon too, makes it easy for me to understand I have no high ground to stand on.

Christ found me a beggar, and my job now is to lead other beggars to His wonderful Grace.

If you are struggling with offense this morning in your heart, you have bitterness and turmoil over how you

have been mistreated by someone, take a simple moment and look at the things Christ has forgiven you of, I guarantee it will make forgiveness easier for you.

Remember Jesus said **Matt 5:7**

**7 Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.**

Also He taught **Mark 11:25-26** "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Understand the same measure you use will be given to you.

So, so far we have learned from these three encounters what a disciple must not be and do.

First, we must not aspire for greatness, but associate with the lowest.

Secondly, we must not be offended when God uses other people instead of us to minister, and instead of seeking recognition, we should aspire to be faithful where God has us.

And Thirdly, we must not be vengeful as ministers of Christ.

Now after these three don'ts Jesus will give three dos or three expectations for His disciples.

And if you found the don'ts hard to follow, these dos are going to up the Anny big time...

So often, Christianity is presented to this world as a place where dreams and fairy tales come true.

Some false doctrines abound that Christ will make you healthy and wealthy, all you have to do is name it and claim it.

“Come to Christ, and life will be a breeze.”

“Come to Christ and all your problems will go away.”

And the sales pitch is not much different than a used car salesman trying to seal a deal.

Now this morning, you all will be much wiser than much of the so-called church today, because you will see Jesus' own words that are often overlooked or misquoted.

Understand when we offer the gospel, the true plan of salvation, it must come with a warning, as Jesus will now tell His followers to count up the cost.

You see salvation is free, Jesus paid it all upon the cross, but discipleship comes after salvation, and that life, our walk with Christ in this world has a cost on our part.

Jesus makes it clear that a disciple must have an unwavering commitment, and must be willing to sacrifice and lay down their own lives.

He will have a series of three explosive sayings that will shatter the modern teacher's ideas to pieces.

First, we see in verses 57, 58...

The Cost of Discipleship (Matt 8:18-22)

57 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, 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."

Again Jesus is on the move, and journeying on the Road to Jerusalem.

This is very important to understand when we see Jesus' reply here.

A fellow from the crowd following Jesus, asserts His loyalty and claims "I will follow you wherever you go!"

We see these types often, their words are always great, but the high talker usually speaks from ignorance.

What they really mean, is "Jesus I will follow You wherever You go, as long as it does not affect my pocket book, my comfort or my convenience."

Jesus knew in the end, no one would be found with Him, alone He would bear the cross, and alone He would die.

So Jesus quickly countered, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

Now, people usually read this with pity for the homeless Jesus.

But Jesus did stay with friends and lay His head in many places.

But understand the context here.

This is not a sad statement at all, Jesus is headed to Jerusalem to be received up, to go to His true Home.

This is not a sad statement at all.

Jesus is saying, “I have nothing in this life that is holding me back from my mission.”

Jesus has no earthly strongholds that are tearing His heart in two directions.

No, His face was looking straight ahead.

And this is the steely commitment Jesus is asking of His disciples.

The apostle Paul modeled this for us, when at the end of his life, before he went to that Roman chopping block, to have his head removed.

He could look at back at his life, and he too had nothing holding him back to this earth.

2 Tim 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

So don't pity the homeless Jesus.

Pity the man who spends his whole life, maintaining his things in this life, keeping up in this life, pity the man who sees only his home and life now, and completely forsakes his life to come.

A true disciple of Christ understands they will be uncomfortable at times in this life, it is not a life of ease, but one of constant dependency on Jesus, and built on faith, the unseen.

A true disciple looks to rewards that have more value than anything lost in this life for Christ.

And in the next exchange Jesus raises the bar even higher...

59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me."

But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

Now at first glance this does not seem like an unfaithful request by the disciple, and it seems a little harsh on Jesus' part.

But understand this, Jesus is not coming against the Ten Commandments or the Law, in having this man dishonor his father.

No, this man would not be on the Road with Jesus, if his father was dead, he would be at home tending to the funeral arrangements.

What this man is saying here, is he will follow Jesus, but only after his father dies.

This disciple's father was perhaps getting older, and if his father turns up sick, he wants to be there to receive what is his, and the man was really putting off the ministry until he could get his inheritance.

He put off the urgency of the calling, for the sake of financial security.

Jesus gives what at first seems like a heartless response, "Let the dead bury their own dead."

That is "Let those who are spiritually dead, bury their own."

This man had a much more important task to tend to. To preach a message that would bring life to those who are spiritually dead.

He was not to worry about his security here on earth.

This life is so short, there is so little time, and we must spend it preaching the good news.

The true disciple has an urgency and commitment in their service, they are not distracted by earthly issues. So next, a third man will now speak up, and we will get our final expectation from Jesus...

61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house."

62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

This man too has a biblical precedent to make this request.

Remember when Elisha was called into the ministry by the prophet Elijah, he made a similar request.

1 Kings 19:19-20 So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you."

And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?"

And Jesus is completely aware of the imagery in this request, so He sticks with the plowing picture here.

He says, “no one putting his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.”

You can imagine anyone trying to plow straight and effective rows, if they were looking back instead of forward, the rows would be disastrously crooked and ineffective.

The illustration is clear, that if anyone is called by Jesus, if they continually are looking back at what they left behind, remembering comforts of the home, dreaming about what they might have, had they not stepped out in service to Jesus, those who continually are looking in the rearview mirror do not do well on the road of life with Jesus.

The calling must come first and remain the focus of the disciple's life.

The disciple's commitment to Jesus is expected to trump their commitment to anything else.

We cannot look back when we are serving Christ.

Everything else must fall behind Him, even our family, even our comfort, even our security.

This world is constantly bombarding us, our enemy is constantly tempting us, and our flesh is constantly drawing us away.

Jesus' Words here should be a constant reminder of the cost of ministering for Christ.

All of us, who call ourselves Christians, are called to journey this road of life with Christ, as He expects, we don't get to pick the expectations or requirements, the One who calls us sets the terms.

And as we have seen this morning, this means that we are to show unending Tender Mercy, even to our enemies, and we must have a Robust Commitment to this calling.

Faithfulness is a fleeting virtue among the disciples of Christ today, people throw in the towel over wrong looks, over slighted comments, over misinterpreted gestures.

They give up at the first sign of hardship or trials.

And the faithful few are getting fewer and fewer as people tap out.

Church we are to count up the cost....

You know, I have prayed for three years on what scripture to put up going out of the doors of our sanctuary.

This is going to be it, **Luke 9:62.... "But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."**

It will remind us each week as we leave this sanctuary of the cost of following Jesus.

This is a reality that has been lost in the church today, there is a cost for the disciple of Christ, it is not about

us, but about bringing Him glory and may God's Spirit sear this into our hearts and minds today.

May we decrease and let Him increase here in this ministry.

I will tell you, although the cost in this life is great, you will find no greater joy than surrendering your life to Jesus, and dying to yourself and picking up your cross daily to follow Him.

It is the blessed life, the best life.

Now, perhaps some of you are living a divided life this morning, and the pull from this world is tearing you away from what truly matters, you live a double-minded life.

Get prayer this morning for power to overcome, receive the power that is offered to you from on High.

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and equip you, this high calling is not something we can accomplish in our own strength.

The disciple of Christ's first mission is to preach the gospel, no matter where you are in this life, no matter where your mission field is, if it be in the factory, or distribution center, or on the jobsite, or selling cars, if it is the courtroom, or on the yard or even in the home with your kids.

Your first duty is to Christ. Serve Him first, and it is only by His Spirit's empowering can you maintain that resolute commitment.

Come up and be filled.

And perhaps this morning, you have never made a genuine commitment to follow Jesus, you perhaps have made flippant confessions, but it was only words.

You never had the grit to commit your whole life to Christ's cause.

Maybe you feel the call this morning to commit, and be faithful to the cause of Christ.

Come forward during this last song, and surrender your life to Jesus.

There is more to this Christian life than just being saved, God has plans to use your life to save others, but you must surrender all to Him.

No looking back.

Amen?

Let us pray.