

“Why Trust and Follow Jesus?”
(Luke 16:19-31)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Two week ago, we considered what it means to trust in Jesus.
 - a. It’s not just believing the facts of His existence – who He is, and what He’s done. The devils believe these things, those who are already in hell believe these things, but that by itself isn’t enough to save them.
 - b. You must place your whole hope of entering into heaven on what Jesus has done and is doing; you must look to Him in faith and call upon Him to save you; you must trust Him to do it.

2. Last week, we saw what we must do after we trust in Jesus: we must follow Him.
 - a. We follow Him by listening to what He says in His Word and doing it; we must follow His example of love – the love that He showed to His Father, the love that He showed to His brethren; we must follow the examples of the saints as they followed Christ; and we must follow Him as He sovereignly opens and closes doors according to His will/Providence.
 - b. We must follow Him no matter what it costs.
 - (i) Most are willing to follow Jesus as long as the path is easy.
 - (ii) But we must follow Him no matter how difficult it gets, and no matter how much it costs us personally, even at the cost of our lives.
 - (iii) Jesus said we must count the cost before we take up His cross.

B. Preview.

1. This evening, I want us to consider some of the reasons why we should be willing to pay whatever it costs to trust and follow Jesus.
2. Perhaps the Lord will use it to encourage you who haven’t trusted Him to do so; perhaps He will use it to encourage you who have struggled to pay that price to be willing to pay it.
3. We only do what we *want* to do: why should you *want* to trust and follow Jesus?

II. Sermon.

A. You should first, because you owe it to Him.

1. Think about what the Lord has already given you.
 - a. He made you, gave you your existence, brought you into this world. This isn’t something your parents did, it was something God did: “So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son” (Ruth 4:13).
 - b. He has taken care of you every day you have lived: “He waters the mountains from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of His works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so

that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine which makes man's heart glad, so that he may make *his* face glisten with oil, and food which sustains man's heart" (Ps. 104:13-15).

- c. And of course, the greatest gift He has offered you is His love demonstrated by giving you His infinitely precious Son to save your soul from destruction: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:16-17).
2. What are you saying to God when you refuse to trust and follow Him?
 - a. How do you feel when you go out of your way to show you love to someone, and they reject you?
 - b. When God has shown you all this love and favor, and you reject Him and His Son, what does He think?
 - c. This is why you should trust and follow Him.
- B. Second, you should trust and follow Jesus because this is what He commands you to do.
1. The Lord has the right to require this of you for several reasons:
 - a. He has the right not only because you are His creation, but also because you belong to Him.
 - (i) The things we make from the materials we own belong to us.
 - (ii) God made you from the materials He created, and you belong to Him.
 - (iii) "Know that the LORD Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and we belong to Him; *we are* His people and the sheep of His pasture" (Psalm 100:3).
 - b. Second, He has the authority to require this of you.
 - (i) God is the Lord of Creation. Jesus, His Son, has been given all authority in heaven and earth; He is the King of all kings, and the Lord of all lords (Rev. 17:14).
 - (ii) We have no right to refuse Him.
 - c. And, of course, we should not refuse Him because He has the power to enforce what He commands.
 - (i) You've heard the expression, "Might makes right": the strong can enforce their will on those who are weaker.
 - (ii) In the Lord's case it's, "The One who is right has might": He has the strength and power to enforce what He commands.
 2. Will you rebel against the One who owns you, the One who has the right to command you, and the power to enforce His will?
 - a. Jesus commands you to trust and follow Him.
 - b. It's certainly in your best interest to do so.

- C. Third, you should trust and follow Jesus because of the blessings you will gain in this life if you do.
1. The Lord doesn't tell us to follow Him for nothing. Think of the blessings He promises:
 - a. A conscience free from the fear of judgment: Jesus says, "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" (Matt. 11:29).
 - b. He will meet all your needs; you never need to fear that you won't have enough to survive: "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matt. 6:31-33).
 - c. He promises that things will go well for you: "Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God" (Deu. 12:28).
 2. Consider, on the other hand, the troubles you will avoid.
 - a. It's true that following the Lord will make you the devil's target and the world's scapegoat.
 - b. But think about the things you won't have to deal with:
 - (i) The guilt of having injured someone.
 - (ii) The physical damage to your brain, lungs and liver that drug, cigarette or alcohol abuse causes.
 - (iii) The horrible mess that immorality can bring in your family relations.
 - (iv) Jail and prison for committing crimes.
 - (v) People seeking revenge against you for injuring them.
 - (vi) The poverty, disease, sickness and injuries that result from sin.
 - (vii) You will suffer tribulation because of the cross – and will be better for them – but there are many life destroying things you will avoid.
 - (viii) This is another reason you should trust and follow Him.
- D. Fourth, you should trust and follow Him because life is short.
1. Consider how brief your life is on this earth.
 - a. Even if you lived to be a hundred or a thousand, it will still be just a moment compared to how much time is yet to come.
 - (i) James tells us, "You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away" (4:14).
 - (ii) Peter writes, "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off" (1 Pet. 1:24).
 - b. When you're young, life seems so long, like it's going to go on forever; but as you grow older you see how quickly it passes.

- c. As Watts writes, “Time, like an ever rolling stream, bears all its sons away; they fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day” (“Our God, Our Help in Ages Past”).
2. My point is this, Will you spend an eternity separated from God because you didn’t want to trust and follow Jesus for your few years on earth?
 - a. Consider the trade you’re making: 100 years at best, for a million, million, million years, and millions of millions times more, and that is only a moment compared to what’s left.
 - b. And what are you trading all this time of blessing for? Something that will make you happy for a few years?
 - c. Think about it, and then trust and follow Jesus.
- E. Fifth, and following on the last point, you should trust the Lord and follow Him because the world is worthless, but heaven is valuable.
1. Are the things of this world really it?
 - a. Whatever you might hope to gain for refusing to come to Jesus will soon wear out; if not literally, the thrill it brings will:
 - (i) Can you think of anything you really wanted and you finally received, but now it just sits in your room or your house and doesn’t get used at all?
 - (ii) The things of this world all lose their appeal; and even if they didn’t, you will have to let go of them someday.
 - b. That’s the reason the Lord usually gives those of the world more of these things: because they’re really worthless.
 - (i) The psalmist writes, “I was envious of the arrogant *as* I saw the prosperity of the wicked” (Ps. 73:3). But he soon learned the truth of what Solomon wrote, “Do not be envious of evil men” (Prov. 24:1): “Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!” (Ps. 73:18-19).
 - (ii) Solomon writes, “Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, cease from your consideration *of it*. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For *wealth* certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies *toward* the heavens” (Prov. 23:4-5).
 2. But the same isn’t true of the things in heaven.
 - a. These never grow old, and they never come to an end.
 - b. The reason is that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are there.
 - (i) They make heaven to be heaven to the saint – it’s not because of any supposed golden streets or city or giant pearl gates or mansions.
 - (ii) This may be hard for someone to understand who doesn’t understand the glory of God, but try to see it like this: whatever you see in anything you really enjoy in this world that is really beautiful is in God without measure.
 - (iii) The saints understand something of this, which is why they’re willing to part with everything they have to possess it: As Jesus said, “The kingdom

of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matt. 13:44-46).

- (iv) There is nothing as beautiful or glorious or pleasurable as heaven because of God’s presence, which is why you should trust in Jesus and follow Him, because He is the only way to get there: Jesus says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6).

- F. Finally, you should trust and follow Jesus because there is a coming Day of Judgment when everything you’ve ever done will be judged and rewarded or punished accordingly.
 - 1. If you trust and follow Jesus, you won’t need to be afraid of that day.
 - a. None of your sins – and all of us have committed many sins – will be remembered or brought up against you. Jude writes, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (Jude 1:24-25).
 - b. All of the things you’ve done for Him will be rewarded: Jesus will say, “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master” (Matt. 25:21).
 - c. And then you will enter into that everlasting joy we’ve just talked about:
 - (i) Into a world where there is no sickness, pain, or death.
 - (ii) But where there is perfect happiness and love forever in the presence of God and of the Lamb.
 - 2. But if you don’t trust and follow Jesus, you will have every reason to fear that day.
 - a. Every sin you’ve ever committed will be brought up against you; everyone of them will increase your judgment in hell; and you will suffer forever for all eternity in a place of God’s wrath, where His anger will burn against you as a raging fire forever.
 - b. “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation” (Rom. 2:5-8).
 - c. Consider these things this evening and let them motivate you to trust and follow Jesus. Amen.