

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Following Jesus

Last time...in the previous 3 studies, Jesus has taught us

- Greatness in the kingdom of God
- Christ-likeness
- Forgiveness of offenses (sins vs hurt feelings)

Looking at His lessons together,

- A. To forgive another person who has offended us is to be
 1. like Christ
 2. like a little child
 3. great in the Kingdom of heaven
- B. To not forgive another person who has offended us is perhaps the most foolish thing we could ever do
 - to receive God's mercy but not give mercy to others is to reject it
 - opt instead for God's justice...hell fire, everlasting fire

This time...what it means...what it costs...to follow Jesus and to be like Christ

Learning what it means/costs to follow Jesus comes in the form of 3 conversations Jesus has while He is walking with the 12

We will be in Luke 9 and Matt 8

Note: The Gospels of Luke and Matthew are not chronological

Luke 9

In v49-50, Jesus rebuked the self-centered jealous zeal of John (and the others), part of the “greatest in the Kingdom of God” lesson 3 messages ago

Not in Luke (but in Mark and Matthew, the last 2 studies):

- offenses against a “little child that believes in Me”,
who are great in the Kingdom of heaven
- the gravity of offenses against God (all sin is against Him)
- forgiveness of someone who offended you, “sinned against you”

v57-58 I will follow You...foxes...birds...Son of Man:

The first conversation Jesus has while walking with His disciples is with a man who announced to Jesus that he would follow Him wherever He went

Does this man have any idea where Jesus is going?

To Jerusalem to be betrayed, to suffer, to die, to rise on the 3rd day

Does this man understand what the 12 do not yet, that the Messiah is come first to destroy sin and death and then will later to judge and reign?

This therefore is a declaration of the flesh, works to be pleasing to God

In responding to the man, Jesus speaks to re-orient his thinking and to elevate his perspective

Jesus, the Son of Man, the Kinsman-Redeemer has...nothing of this world

There is nothing of the world to gain by following Jesus

To follow Jesus, a disciple must have/cling to...nothing of this world

Luke 14:33 whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be My disciple

Matt 13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides forever.

James 4:4 ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God

Jesus Christ and the world are...contrary, not complimentary or “Coexist”

John 8:23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Jesus is not of this world...His disciples are in but not of this world

Following Jesus is not of the flesh...it is of the spirit and the heart
Following Jesus is not a pursuit of material wealth, it is a pursuit of God

btw, how does the Prosperity Gospel compare to what Jesus says?
(Jesus was rich and wants His followers to be rich)
Therefore, the preachers of the Prosperity Gospel are wolves in sheep's
clothing making merchandise of the people for their carnal lust of
deceitful riches

In the 1st conversation whereby Jesus teaches what it means/costs to follow Him:

- Leave the world behind...everything

Now, the 2nd conversation

v59-60 Follow Me...first to go bury my father:

Jesus initiates the 2nd conversation

He invites another person to follow Him

“Follow Me”...the call of God to all

This 2nd person “accepts” Jesus’ invitation...conditionally

“I will follow You after I bury my father.”

He gives an excuse to not follow Jesus now

Jesus’ response tells this 2nd person and us 3 things:

1. This person’s father is living
Dead people do not bury other dead people
But people dead in their sin (because of unbelief in Him) do
Eph 2:1-3 and Rom 6:3-9
2. Following Jesus is unconditional...no “But first”
3. To follow is to Go and preach Life to the dead, to be a fisher of men
i.e. do what Jesus does...go preach the Good News of the
Kingdom of God
 - forgiveness of sin...
the mercy and grace of God in lieu of justice
 - resurrection from the dead...
from dead in sin to newness of His eternal life

In the 2nd conversation whereby Jesus teaches what it means/costs to follow Him:

- Unconditional
- Now

Now the 3rd conversation

v61-62 I will follow...first go bid farewell...no man...is fit:

A 3rd person declares he will follow Jesus

- like the 1st – a declaration of the flesh, works to be pleasing to God
- like the 2nd – conditionally (after I say good-bye to my family)

But...what does “family” of the world do with a declaration to follow Jesus?

Gen 24:48-59

Hinders, gets in the way, gets in between, delays and delays

Following Jesus is not a family decision, it is an individual decision

But it is a “family decision” – which family, worldly or God’s is priority?

Jesus responds by saying that

No man...without exception

having put his hand to the plow...having decided to serve the Lord

(vs Self) by following Jesus (Servant of God)

and looking back...longing for the world, a friend of the world,

not leaving the world and cleaving unto the Lord

is fit for the kingdom of God...

not fit = not worthy

Matt 10:37-38 He that loves father or mother more than Me
is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or
daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.
And he that takes not his cross, and follows
after Me, is not worthy of Me.

In Sodom amongst the sodomites, Lot was told in Gen 19:17,
“Escape for your life, look not behind you.”

In the Days of Lot before Jesus returns to earth, we are told in
Luke 17:32-33,

“Remember Lot’s wife! Whosoever shall seek to save his
life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall
preserve it.”

A repeated teaching by Jesus

In the 3rd conversation whereby Jesus teaches what it means/costs to follow Him:

- Unconditional
- No one is more important than Him

No relationship is more important than our relationship with Jesus...all other relationships are built upon our relationship with Jesus
And there is to be no turning back!

Let's go to Matt 8 to consider the cost of following Jesus

Matt 8

v19-20 a certain scribe...foxes...birds...Son of Man:

The "certain man" of the 1st conversation in Luke 9:57 is a scribe...
a student and teacher of the Law of Moses

The scribes believed they were righteous/acceptable/pleasing to God by keeping the Law, when in fact the Law was given to expose their sin against God (Rom 4, Gal 3)

Therefore the scribe's declaration to follow Jesus is

- of his flesh, a work to earn God's favor
- a devotion as strong as his flesh (Rom 7)

Again, Jesus seeks to re-orient his thinking and elevate his perspective:

- to not live according to the flesh and the letter of the Law but according to the Spirit and the Spirit of the Law
- to not live by works of the flesh but by the faith of Christ
- to leave the world behind...including your religion
All religions are of the world, not from above like Jesus Christ
All religions are man-centered systems of salvation by works

Now, the 2nd conversation

v21-22 first to go bury my father:

Notice in Matthew's account of the 2nd conversation, there is no invitation from Jesus as there was in Luke 9:59 (And He said to another, "Follow Me.")

Why did Matthew not record the invitation?

Was it implied because God initiates and man responds?

Was it implied since it is the calling of God to every disciple...and Jesus is calling all whosoever will believe to follow Him?

Is the invitation also implied therefore for the 1st and 3rd conversations recorded by Luke?

Questions...but no contradictions

The 2nd person tells Jesus that he has more important business to attend to; "My business is more important than Your business."

What is Jesus' business?

The Father's business...to seek and save the lost
(dead in their sin, headed for hell)

There is NO business more important than following Jesus and being about the Father's business!

The present pales in comparison to eternity

Matthew does not record the 3rd conversation as does Luke

Application

The 3 conversations Jesus had while He was walking with the 12 teach us what it means/costs to follow Jesus, to be a disciple of Jesus:

1. Leave the world behind...everything...including your religion/philosophy/tradition!
2. Follow Him unconditionally...absolutely no "But first's"
 - a. No more important relationship than one with Jesus (1 Cor 6:19-20)
 - b. No more important business than the Father's business
 - c. No more important time than right now, not later! (2 Cor 6:2)

As we ask the Holy Spirit to apply these words of God to our hearts, the Holy Spirit is going to make us uncomfortable...

Because Jesus so paid the price, salvation is a gift...it is free for whosoever will believe
But...what is the cost of being a disciple of Jesus Christ, of following Jesus?
Everything...sold-out to the will of God
Unconditional

Who am I?
What does my life, what do my actions, say to God and man as to who I am?

“Christian” is just a label...with Truth In Advertising issues

- Holy Roman Empire – not walking as Jesus did
- Mormons – different Jesus
- JWs – different Jesus
- “American”

Social – man-centered not Jesus-centered, Cross-less

Matt 7:21-23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? (using His power/authority does not = believing) and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Rev 3:16, 20 because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will
 spue thee out of my mouth
Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my
voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and
will sup with him, and he with me

The question is, “Am I a follower of Jesus Christ...am I a disciple?”
a hearer AND a doer (learn by doing/obeying...James 1:22)
in a personal and pre-eminent relationship with Jesus Christ
a lifestyle sold out for Jesus Christ

Living in but not of the world, amongst those dead in their sin,
Are we living (doing as Jesus did and as the Word teaches) by faith (action)?
Are we paralyzed with fear (anti-faith)?
Have we given excuses for why we cannot follow Jesus now?
Are we different to those in and of the world?
Have we slipped back into the world, deceived by riches and love of the world
Have we forgotten Lot's wife and turned back?
Are we going and preaching the kingdom of God to the lost/condemned?

Jesus came to preach the Kingdom of God and has sent every disciple of His to do the
same
Matt 4:19

We all know people who are marching themselves into everlasting fire;
Are we loving them enough to share the Good News of the Gospel with them?
Have we invited them to church to hear what God says (Truth)?

Democrats have lied...serving themselves vs the people
Republicans have lied...serving themselves vs the people
Jesus never lies...served the Father and us vs Himself

The Gov't/politics is so broken and corrupt, Jesus is whole and pure
The Gov't/politics has no answers, Jesus is The Answer
The world is so confused, Jesus is Truth...absolute and unchanging

Are we sleeping, complacent, stagnant, content, comfortable in our relationship with
Jesus?

He is none of those things toward us and wants none of those things in us
So if we are spiritually sleeping, complacent, stagnant, content, comfortable,
it is not His problem, for He changes not
it is our problem...heart disease

“Christians” tend to be sleeping, complacent, stagnant, content, comfortable...
disciples are not because Jesus isn't
“Christians” tend to be spectators...
disciples are not because Jesus isn't!
“Christians” retire...
disciples never do because Jesus isn't!

If you are not a disciple of Jesus Christ, why “on earth” are you here?

There are many “Christian” options in the marketplace

If you are not willing to follow Jesus (sold-out and unconditionally), why are you here?

Because here, we are making disciples

The totality of the 3 conversations demands...a decision by the unbeliever

The testimony of the Word of God is

- none are pleasing to God, no not one
- all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God
- the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord (Supreme Authority)
- God demonstrated His love for us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us
- everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (from wrath of God and eternal death)
- since we have been justified thru faith, we have peace with God thru our Lord Jesus Christ
- there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Salvation from eternal death and the holy wrath of God is a gift of God, paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ

This gift is for the taking...by faith/belief/trust/confidence

Will you accept the gift of forgiveness and grace of God?

Once the gift (free!) is received, the calling is to follow Jesus...the cost of which is

1. Leave the world behind everything, including your religion or philosophy
2. Follow unconditionally...absolutely no “But first”s
 - a. No more important relationship than one with Jesus (1 Cor 6:19-20)
 - b. No more important business than the Father’s business
 - c. No more important time than right now, not later! (2 Cor 6:2)

I have counted the cost and have decided to follow Jesus

Will you count the cost and decide to follow Jesus?

It is the most important decision of your entire life!

If you are facing a decision of an unbeliever

I am here to

- warn you of continuing in your unbelief
- invite you to receive the gift of eternal life and to follow Jesus
- help you from this point forward

If you are facing a self-examination of a believer,

I am here to help you

- lead by following
- exhort and encourage
- equip
- not rule over but be a helper of your joy because you stand by faith
(2 Cor 1:24)

Together...[Matt 28:18-20](#)

Make disciples/learners/followers

Serve (action, doing) the Lord vs Self

[Rom 13:11-14](#)