

Following Jesus: Week 1

Jan. 12, 2020

Matthew 8:18-22

Warming Up

1. Reconnect with your group and share the most meaningful moments of your holiday season. What was great? What was not so great? How did you celebrate Christ's birth this year?

Knowing the Gospel...

2. v.19: Peter also proclaimed he would never leave Jesus...Did Peter really mean it? What happened to him after Jesus was arrested? What was the result? What do you think contributed to Peter's boldness? His weakness?

3. What does Jesus' command to "Follow Me" tell us about his own claims to authority, Lordship (Jn. 14:6-7, Acts 4:11-12, Jn. 10:30-33).

4. Jesus claimed that people must follow HIM in order to know God. How do you think the religious leaders of Jesus' day felt about this? Why? There is no doubt that God wants us to honor and respect our spiritual leaders (1 Thess. 5:12-13, 1 Tim. 5:17, Hebrews 13:17). But how can we protect ourselves against the danger of following human leaders more than Christ?

Living the Gospel...

5. In Matthew 8:20 Jesus makes it clear that a life of following Him is not a guarantee for "easy street" living. Check out these passages and answer the following questions: Matt. 10:22, John 15:18-26, 16:33, Hebrews 12:1-3, 1 Pet. 4:12-16, James 1:2-4.

a. Have you ever been hated or disliked or avoided because people know you're a follower of Christ? How? Where? When?

- b. How have you dealt with these situations?
- c. What encouraging promises does Jesus give?
- d. How have you seen God keep these promises in your life?

6. Compare Matthew 8:21-22 with Luke 18:18-30. What is similar about Jesus' responses to the 2 men in these passages? What is different? What is Jesus' main objective in each case?

7. We all have things in our lives that compete for the throne of our hearts. What is it that is keeping you from following Jesus more closely, or following Jesus at all? If you're brave enough, share with your group 1 or 2 things that tend to hinder your complete surrender to Christ. Take the opportunity this week to give them over again to God.

Telling the Gospel...

9. Take up the challenge to pray for someone in your life that you know is apathetic or even antagonistic towards Jesus. Take up the stiffer challenge to tell them you love them and are praying for them.

10. How would you explain to someone who doesn't follow Christ yet, that the cost of following him is more than worth it? How would you articulate that?

Next Week:

Matthew 9:9-13

