

A couple of week ago our nation celebrated the fact that 243 years ago there were 56 who were willing to sign their name to a document that declared 13 British colonies to be independent but united states. And as they did, the very last sentence that they read, the sentence that was right above where they signed their names read like this:

*For the support of the Declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.* In other words, by signing that declaration of independence those 56 men were really putting a lot on the line, everything in fact.

What did it look like as they did?

John Hancock gets most of the attention. He signed the declaration first and signed it with the biggest signature. So large to make sure that King George III of England would be able to read it. And legend has it that John Hancock said the reason why he signed his name so big was because he hoped to guarantee that the king would see his name and then double the price the British government would put on his head.

How do explain their behavior? How do explain their determination, their courage, their resolve, their total commitment to this cause? Only explained by looking at the top of that document. One of the first things said in the declaration, maybe some words that you are familiar with, is:

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among those rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*

Willing to risk everything.

What they were fighting for can only explain the total commitment they were willing to fight with. Similar with the Word of God before us today. Resolutely set out for Jerusalem last trip trial and crucifixion. Life on the line. Yet went resolutely. Made face firm solid like iron  
Jesus was willing to put his life on the line

Expects the very same total commitment

Tell us what a totally committed Christian looks like

1. Is not angry with opposition to Christianity (not fight back, desire retribution)
2. Expects to feel out of place and lonely in this world (expects never to quite feel at home)
3. Realizes the most important people in life are not the members of family, not kids, not parents, not spouses (they value eternal relationships even more than earthly ones)
4. Are willing to part ways with, are willing to give up, to leave behind things they hold near and dear to their hearts. And does not look back. And have no regrets.

Are you ready to sign your name? Maybe not. Or at least not yet. Show me from the Bible that's what he expects as his follower. Show me that's what a totally committed Christian looks like...you'd still want nothing to do with it

When Jesus Asks us to follow him, he very clearly ask us to put everything on the line.

Seems foolish, and would have no desire to do it unless we understand the reason why. And the reason why is not found on the very bottom where your signature would be. The reason why is found at the very top in the very first sentences of the gospel reading and at the very beginning of this account about Elijah.

“taken up to heaven”

Telling us to Jerusalem means thru Jerusalem necessary stop. Explains why willing to go through. Destination explains determination to take it.

Certain that a spot in heaven has been reserved for us. Your name written in Jesus blood. Your destination. Only way to understand and embrace the commitment he wants us to make.

1. Is not angry with opposition to Christianity (not fight back, desire retribution)

You're not welcome here. Not get angry. Not fight back. Destination is heaven.

King and Queen wanted him dead.

*Our home is with him.*

2. Expects to feel out of place and lonely in this world (expects never to quite feel at home)

Pour cold water on this enthusiastic believer. Wants us to know reality. Just as He was lonely out of place we can expect the never same.

Elijah thought only one left

*Our home is not where we lay our head, our home is with him,*

3. Realizes the most important people in life are not the members of family, not kids, not parents, not spouses (they value eternal relationships even more than earthly ones)

Deny request to bury his father, not love our families. Not go to funerals? AS important as those bonds of family are, those bonds They will be separated by death. Focus on heaven. Home not where relatives are home with him.

Elisha said goodbye to family

*Our home is not where all of our relatives live, our home is with him.*

4. Are willing to part ways with, are willing to give up, to leave behind things they hold near and dear to their hearts. And does not look back. And have no regrets.

Not go back to family.

Knew his Heart was still back there at home. Look back over shoulder

*Home is not where our stuff is stored. our home is with him*

When Jesus ask you to follow will you.

Mirror. Don't like what we see. Instead of commitment and resolve and determination to follow Jesus, we often show half-heartedness, hesitation, reluctance. As we look into the mirror Important to admit that no, this is not what a totally committed Christian looks like. And yet it's even more important that as we think about putting our name at the bottom we again go back to the top. WE always remember that in spite of our lack of commitment Jesus was always perfectly committed to being our Savior. That in spite of our sin, our destination is not death our destination is eternal life. And so that everything that Jesus leads us away from he is leading us toward something far better. For everything that he asks us to give up that is near and dear to our hearts he is inviting us to grab on to something that is far superior. And so what Jesus really wants us to is that the most important thing isn't even what a totally committed Christian *looks like*. Really, the important thing is what a totally committed Christian looks at. And when we as Christians are continuously looking at our heavenly home, our certain destination, then then we willing totally committed to make that journey