

Jesus Is the One Thing Above All Things

Luke 9:57-62

In our text we have three people who have conversations with Jesus about being a disciple of Christ's. There's much that we can learn from these conversations, but there seems to be one dominant theme:

"If we would follow Christ then He must be the One Thing above all things in our lives."

I. The person who "volunteers" to follow Christ must count the costs (v. 57-58).

The first man says to Jesus, "I will follow You wherever You go!" - notice his claims of commitment. I've learned that he who thinks much of his commitment and little of Christ's is often disappointed. "Foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (v. 58).

A. God is more interested in our character than He is our comfort.

Matthew tells us that this man was a religious scribe (Matthew 8:19-20). It's ironic, is it not, that Jesus responds the way He does to cleric, or "a man of the cloth" - a religious leader in Israel.

In the journey of life, anyone who has influence in the lives of others must learn that to follow Christ means "truth-telling" may very well lead others to avoid giving you comfortable things.

"We continue to preach Christ to each person, using all wisdom **to warn and to teach everyone**, in order to bring each one into God's presence **as a mature person in Christ.**" (Colossians 1:28)

B. Salvation comes by Christ giving us something, not us giving Him something.

Salvation does not come by us giving our hearts to him. Salvation comes by Him giving grace to us, by which we are compelled to give our hearts to Him, regardless of the costs in following Him.

II. The person who is "called" to follow Christ must deal with displeasure (v. 59-60).

This displeasure is from those who are "not" called to follow Christ, and they will never understand your thought processes, your decision-making, your values, or the way you choose to live your life. The second man in this three-fold conversation is called by Christ: "Follow me." The man responds:

"Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father" (v. 59)

It definitely sounds like a "reasonable" request, right? Jesus responds by saying, *"Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God"* (v. 60).

A. There are two kinds of death - "allow the dead (spiritually) to bury the dead (physically).

There will be times in your life when those without Christ will not understand or accept you.

B. There are two kinds of life - "go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God."

"No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier" (II Timothy 2:4). To be entangled in the affairs of this life means that you lose sight of the Kingdom. Are you prepared for the criticism coming?

C. There are two kinds of security - "the kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of this world."

Jesus said, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing." (Luke 22:35). Kingdom provision is more like a rear-view mirror than a periscope.

III. The person who "commits" to follow Christ must serve with single-mindedness (vs. 61-62).

"Another also said, 'I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.'"

But Jesus said to him, 'No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' (vs. 61-62). Again, this seems difficult at first glance; but it's a great visual.

Kingdom service is work - loving people, proclaiming Christ as the source of all life, is tough work.

Jesus takes an illustration from farming. A hand on the plow looking back leads to disaster. So too, committing to follow Christ, but always looking back at what "might have been," is short-sighted.

Christ Jesus is to be the One Thing above all things in our lives. Serve him with single-mindedness.