

Luke 9:57-62 - The Cost

Sermon Outline

Intro

Let's come to God's word in prayer: ***Father we thank you that you faithful. That during times when things are difficult you sustain us. We thank you of your calling on our lives, although following Jesus isn't easy, we thank you it is worth it. With every moment we fail, you restore us. As we come to reflection our word now, would you prepare our hearts to hear what you are saying, In your holy precious name. Amen.***

Let me ask you a question to ponder on...

What would you be willing to give up to help someone else?

Context (v51-56)

Our passage today is helpfully broken up into three interactions. As we look through these few verses we get a sense of different attitudes and heart positions that can be stumbling blocks for truly following Jesus. Applicable then and applicable today.

Three Attitudes to the Cost of Following Jesus

Within these interactions we see three different attitudes towards following Jesus which we can learn from, all coming at a cost. We have a Cost to our Comfort, the cost to our priorities and the cost to our commitment.

1. The Cost to our Comfort

Verse 57-58 says this "As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

The man is enthusiastic about following Jesus, a good thing to be, but maybe he needs to understand the nature of the call to follow before he commits. Much like in the parables of the sower, who scatters seeds that falls on rocky ground with little soil. The plant shoots up but quickly withers and dies.

It is thought that this man is a teacher in the area and saw an opportunity to attach himself to Jesus which could improve his status and position. Jesus quickly shuts this opportunity down. He says if you are going to follow me you are called to homelessness, you will have no base, you will be a traveler, foreigner, wandering, the opposite in a rising popularity. You are called to leave all comforts and follow.

We see throughout the Gospels and all of Scripture. God's people are often wanderers and foreigners with very little as they continue through this world.

One of the blessings of moving house is that you get to see all the things you have, whether they are stored in a back room or in the loft, you see all that you actually own.

This is a great challenge for us. We must think through what we own. God blesses us with many things, that is something to be rejoice in but when we have things in excess, we can cloud our vision and easily lose our focus of Christ.

It's exciting to be looking at Heaven as Roy leads us through our latest series and ...

On a deeper level there is a wonderful bit of teaching from Jesus here. Jesus is calling all who follow him to realise that we are travellers in this world. Hebrews 13:14 put it like this 'For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.' This world is not our home. We are simply passing through as travellers to our ultimate destination. Heaven is our home. Following Jesus, with all the cost that entails, doesn't seem so hard, when we have a view of the hope of heaven in our minds.

2. The Cost to our Priorities

Our second attitude is seen when Jesus initiates the conversation in verse 59-60. "He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

I wonder what your first reaction is to this, because on the surface this can seem like a harsh rebuke from Jesus.

Well there are a few things which help us see more of what is happening here. As we should always do with the bible we hold it with a wider view of the whole of Scripture. Jesus isn't against taking care of family matters. In Matthew 15:3-9 he calls for the care of elderly parents over that of getting caught up in religious traditions.

The likelihood with this man was that his Father wasn't necessarily dead but was ill or very elderly and what he is saying is 'let me stay, sort out my family matters, and once it is dealt with I will follow you'. It's also likely that the man really wants to stay around to make sure he gains his father inheritance.

The fundamental problem here is that the man has his priorities flipped. Jesus isn't his number one focus, he wants to follow Christ on his own terms. That cannot be the case, we follow him on his terms.

Verse 60 shows the true priority of Jesus, 'go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' If this man is truly spiritually alive and willing to follow him, then he is called to leave something that can be dealt with by unbelievers and instead go and do the task which only those who know Jesus can do.

It's not just home comforts that we need to be willing to sacrifice but all home priorities. Priority must be placed with the call to 'go and proclaim the kingdom of God.'

3. The Cost to our Commitment

There is a cost to our comfort in following Jesus. There is a shift needed in our priorities. Lastly we see in verse 61-62 that there is a cost to our commitment.

Similarly to the second interaction, Jesus response can on these surface seem harsh. The man wants to follow but just want to say goodbye to his family.

Well, contextually there a few things to know. We can quickly think that for us saying goodbye to someone might be a brief moment. But for this man, it wouldn't have been just 20 mins or so. It would have meant a prolonged goodbye over days or weeks.

I think the key aspect of this third mans interaction with Jesus was not what he was turning back too but that his vision was lost by turning back at all. His commitment was lost on other things instead of Jesus.

This makes the most sense when thinking through the analogy Jesus uses. Verse 62 "Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

I don't know about you but I really enjoy mowing the lawn. And one of the satisfying things about mowing the lawn is getting perfectly straight lines. Like on a sport pitch, those you see perfect

strips of different shades of grass. Well to do that you have to choose a point of focus at the start of your line and stick with it.

Jesus uses this analogy of ploughing, to help us see that commitment and focus is key to the following him.

Like someone ploughing, if you take your eyes off a fixed point you will quickly go way off course.

This is why Jesus response, is so strong. If you look back, if you aren't 100% committed to following me, you'll quickly move off course and stumble.

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So we see in these three brief conversations the cost that is required to follow Jesus is a significant one. It requires you to lay down comforts, to rearrange you priorities and commit 100% to Jesus without looking back. It's a call to be a living sacrifice as Paul says in Romans.

Why would anyone accept that Cost?

The cost is significant, Jesus wants to make this clear. There is a call to shift our attitudes and take up the cost to follow.

Maybe you have struggled with that idea. If you are a follower of Jesus the likelihood is you will have seen the reality of the cost that is required. Im sure you'll agree its tough in many ways but you'd hopefully also say that you've seen great Joy in following Christ.

The question we might ask ourselves, in light of these verses in Luke 9. Why would anyone accept that cost to follow Jesus?

Well at the heart of Jesus is Gods love. He wants to see lost souls reunited with there loving heavenly father. This is achieved through the Cost of the Cross.

Let me outline some of that cost. From a physical point of view we only get glimpse of the details found in the bible of the horrific nature of crucifixion as all who were there would have seen this form of punishment in person. Firstly Jesus was beaten to an inch of death, then to have to carry a cross to the place that he would eventually die on hill outside the town, all this in public humiliation. With crucifixion you never intentionally killed the person. Instead you bought them to the point of death, in agony, and then gave them the ability to live by drawing one more breath through the excruciating pain of lifting yourself up through pierced wrists and ankles. In essence the person had to choose when they are to die.

And the truth of the matter is this physical torment is just a part of the real spiritual pain that Christ went though for us. Jesus suffered beyond the physical as he took on the weight of all sins on himself, received the righteous anger of God that we should have received and was separated from God.

God is just and fair and must deal with all the bad things we have done in this world. These bad things are called sin. And the bible states that in Romans, that the wages for sin is death. So everyone who has sinned must pay the penalty of death... But Jesus, because he was God in human form... perfect and holy... was the only sacrifice worthy of taking that sin and punishment on himself in our place. He is exchanged for us if we believe in him. And not only does his work on the cross remove our sins but God through his grace gives us life and life to the full as stated in John 10:10

So when we weigh up the cost of following Jesus, remembering all that Jesus has done for us, the cost that we are being ask to give up seems so insignificant. Life is hard at points but there is beauty in being able to step back and see what Jesus has done for us by marvelling at the beauty of the cross as Jesus made a way to save us.

Application:

As we come to finish... Have you weighed up the cost of following Jesus ?

Maybe you need to challenge yourselves as you follow Jesus, to look with fresh eyes to see if I have counted up that cost and if I am living in light of the sacrifice?

It could be for the first time, you've come to a point that you need to count that's cost completely. Are you going to live for Jesus or keep walking your own way?

As we challenge ourselves, whatever category you are in. Are we willing to lay down our Comfort, Priorities and Commitment?

I'd encourage you, at the start of this year, in your own heart to take check about realigning your comforts, priorities and commitments to follow Jesus with all our hearts.

I asked you to ponder a question at the start...

What would you be willing to give up to help someone else?

The first part of that question is what would **YOU** be willing to sacrifice... but the I would think the key factor that would determine **WHAT** you would sacrifice, is **WHO** you are helping?

The call is to follow Jesus. Who has given the ultimate cost up for you. The cost of himself on the Cross to reunite you with God himself, to offer the hope of heaven. Our cost seems so small when we weigh it up against the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Let me finish with Paul's words in Philippians 3:8...

"What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ"

Lets Pray and Worship together:

Father we thank you for the cross, we thank you for the cost you were willing to sacrifice for everyone of us. We pray that we would consider that afresh in our lives and be faithful in following you no matter the cost.

In your name Father, Amen.

(Free Gospels of Luke)