

June 10, 2007 -- 10:00 AM
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

Cost of Discipleship **Luke 9:57-62**

READ: Luke 9:57-62 – Have your bibles???

Dr. Luke, the Greek physician, is one of my favorite gospel writers. I have told you many times that his gospel is arranged geographically and that plays a big part in today's text. Everything in Luke's gospel points toward Jerusalem – to the goal of the Christ.

Luke – Up to this point ...

People of God forming around Him ... he is building a populace – a following
Jesus calls sinners (tax collectors, etc) to be disciples (who leave all to follow him)
Designates 12 as apostles – picked specifically to be called apostles.
Jesus and the 12 preach the kingdom of God & many hearts are won to God.

Chapter 9: a chapter jammed with activity - Let's look at some of the items of interest...

Sends out the 12 with power and authority – They preach and teach about the Kingdom of God and perform miracles of healing and deliverance. They are the stuff. Jesus had prepared a ministry of power and authority, and the 12 have walked in it.

Then they return – They must have been flying – What an awesome experience they had.

So, what does Jesus have them do next? These 12 important, powerful, apostles?

Jesus tells them to serve lunch to the crowd of over 5,000 people who had gathered.

Disciple? Serve the people. Jesus was teaching them that discipleship is not only about power and authority, but also about service. It's not about position and title, but it's about serving people's needs, it's about washing some feet now and then, or cleaning a bathroom, or helping out in Sunday School, or showing up for that work day, or helping wherever needed – participating not just kicking back.

Peter confesses Jesus is Christ – the Messiah – the Son of the Living God

Jesus tells of His death

Then He teaches on the sacrifice of discipleship.

Disciple must take up their cross and follow Him – completely committed.

Transfiguration – Jesus meets with Moses and Elijah to discuss the exodus He is about to accomplish in Jerusalem for the salvation of humanity.

Jesus tells of His death again

Samaritan village rejects Jesus

The apostles ask Jesus if they should call down fire from heaven to consume them.

He rebukes them. ☺

JESUS RESOLUTELY SET OUT FOR JERUSALEM (v. 51) – This is the turning point of Luke's Gospel. Some versions say – He set His face toward Jerusalem. This is a literary technique to signal a change. From this point forward, Jesus' focus and direction is on the goal – the agonizing death that awaited him in Jerusalem – the atoning sacrifice that He would become for the sins of the world.

Jesus teaches on the cost of discipleship – This is our text and our focus for today.

Luke uses the familiar pattern of three in this teaching passage. He uses three conversations between Jesus and three people and situations to make his point.

Disciples would choose who they were going to follow. They might pick a famous philosopher and then pick up and follow him and his teachings. In our case today, the teacher or master is Jesus who disciples chose to follow and learn from. They traveled around with the Master, learning and observing along the way. Ancient philosophers often tested their disciples' loyalty by requiring possessions or valuables from them.

Teaching discourses took place as the group traveled along the road from place to place.

Here a definition for follow since it is used in each teaching conversation in our text.

FOLLOW:

O.T. – “after” or “behind”

Follow after God's ways, decrees, laws, statutes

N.T. – (Gr. Akoloutheo) – “to follow”

A disciple chose to follow Jesus – His teachings – His example

Commitment – daily choices of obedience

Jesus, teacher & master, gave up everything – including His home to travel and do the Father's will. He was completely dependent on the hospitality and support of others.

What is expected of His disciples?

An old farm couple was driving along in their pickup and she says, “We never sit all snuggled up in the truck like we used to.” He looks over at her and replies “I haven't moved.” When we discover as a church or as individual believers that we aren't as close to God as we once were understand this – He didn't move, we did.

Pastor Jerry said this in his sermon last week (6/3/07) – It's available on our web site. He said ...

“We get attached (literally “nailed to”) behaviors, habits, things, and people in unhealthy ways. We rarely realize how attached we are to something until it is removed. Ever have a power struggle with God because He wants to remove something or someone from your life? I have.”

Let's look at our text more closely and see what Jesus' instructions are about discipleship.

DISCIPLESHIP COSTS – POSSESSIONS

57 As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

What zeal – what enthusiasm. This guy is on fire for Jesus. We learn from Matthew's account of this teaching that this man is a scribe - - a religious scholar. He just jumps out at Jesus and volunteers his commitment – **I will follow you wherever you go!** This must have made Jesus very happy.

Notice that this man initiates the conversation and Jesus raises the argument.

This would be exactly what I would be looking for in a disciple. This makes Jesus' answer very strange – one might think. We have to realize that Jesus knows our heart – He knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows the genuineness of our actions and the integrity of our commitment. So:

58 Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

I know your enthusiasm and your desire to follow Me, but you haven't really considered the cost that will be demanded by your decision. Can you really handle this? You have let your emotions drive you to a pre-mature commitment that you can't live up to. For him to be a disciple of Jesus, it was going to cost him something – something he had and didn't consider giving up in this life of commitment. Jesus had no home – no place to go to – nothing to call His own – no possessions.

This man, like most of this day, would have had a home and some possessions. Was he really willing to give that all up to follow Jesus? Being a disciple may cost us:

Home – things – comfort – security

Luke 9:23 – *If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

Unfortunately, I know many who have turned away from following Jesus after some period of time. They seemed on fire for the Lord in the beginning. They talked about Jesus, sang about Jesus, studied about Jesus, volunteered their service for Jesus, but after some time (it could even be years), they stopped following Jesus and now serve a different lord. I'm sure you could stop for a minute and think of someone you knew who seemed all Christian and now is doing their own thing. True discipleship is costly. It may even cost you your possessions.

Are you a true disciple of Jesus Christ?

DISCIPLESHIP COSTS – PLANS

59 He said to another man, "Follow me."

But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

ANOTHER: Gr. "heteros" – a different kind

This was a different kind of man than the first one. The first man was willing to follow, but didn't count the cost. This man is not willing, but makes excuses not to follow.

Notice that Jesus initiates this conversation and the man raises the argument.

Jesus challenges this man (and others like him) to take the next step in a commitment to God.

Follow Me! This guy was there with the crowd all "following" Jesus and learning from Him. There must have been many like him in the crowd – curious but not truly committed. He replies to Jesus – **FIRST – let me go bury my father.** He is not willing to follow Jesus – not really. This might sound like a legitimate request at first.

It was a very important religious thing to provide a proper burial for one's father in this culture. It was expected by family, community, and the Jewish faith. Jesus knows this.

There are two thoughts about this situation. One is that the man buried his father initially, and is now waiting for the first anniversary of the death when the bones would be exhumed and placed in a box in the tomb wall. The other thought is that the man's father is still alive and this is an excuse that he is not willing to follow Jesus while his father is still alive. Either thought brings the same teaching to this conversation. This man doesn't really want to follow Jesus as a committed disciple. Discipleship might cost:

Social – religious – family obligations – future goals

This man had a plan for his life and following Jesus this way would mess up his plan.

I call this the – **Let me pray about it first** – syndrome. What plans do you have for your life, your family, your future, or your retirement, etc. Would being a true disciple of Jesus – truly committed to Him – mess up YOUR plans?

Luke 9:24 – *For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.*

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Jesus is showing an example of the radical transfer of loyalty that is required for a disciple.

Discipleship is for those who are spiritually alive. He instructs the man and us, let those who are spiritually dead take care of the earthly matters. Your first priority must be for the kingdom of God. True discipleship is costly. It may even cost you your plans.

Are you a true disciple of Jesus Christ?

DISCIPLESHIP COSTS – PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

61 Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family."

Notice here the man both initiates the conversation and raises the argument.

Notice also that in this conversation the man also says **“but first.”** He is also “another” – a different kind of person than the others. He is saying, I want to follow you Lord, but not just yet – not like you want me to. I used to think like this when I was young. I don’t want to really commit to Jesus, because then I would have to give up all the things I like to do. **Can’t I just live like this first and then follow Christ?** This may be a little out of context, but Jesus once told a rich man in, Luke 12:20 - ***You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.*** We must commit to Jesus when we learn we are required to, not somewhere down the road – You’re road may end before you realize it.

This man wanted to do something BEFORE he would be willing to follow Jesus. He had family and friends to be with and to reason with about all this. They might not be so willing for him to desert all to follow some teacher who had nothing to show for himself.

Discipleship may cost us:

Parents – children – family – friends – acquaintances

Luke 9:25 – ***What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?***

What’s more important in the eternal scheme of things? God is concerned about your soul – you being with Him for eternity by believing and committing to Jesus. I wish you all had been with us in the Revelation study. I think some of the commitment issues would have been answered for you. Those who remain faithful to the end will be rewarded with eternity in the presence of Almighty God. Don’t disqualify yourself by changing the priorities God has established for your life.

62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

He uses an agricultural example here. The people understood what it was to plow a field. They used a light hand-held plow pulled by an ox. The farmer walked behind with the plow in his left hand and the whip in his right hand. His eyes had to be riveted in the direction he was going. If he looked back or away, he would inevitably dig a crooked furrow. Full attention must be maintained forward only.

Nothing can come before our commitment to Jesus. He must take first priority in all things. I know that sounds hard, but it really isn’t. He gives us His Spirit to help us stay committed. All we have to do is listen and obey His Word. Don’t plow crooked lines in your life’s field. Keep your eye single – focused on Jesus – in obedience and commitment. You will be blessed. **Are you a true disciple of Jesus?**

Following Christ is COSTLY

Jesus must have priority over your:

POSSESSIONS – PLANS – PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ?