

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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Necessary Attitudes for Discipleship

One day Jesus questioned His disciples who they thought that He was. Peter gave the correct verdict. He said, "Jesus was the Christ of God."

Jesus cautioned them not to tell anyone this truth at that time. He then affirmed that He had many things to suffer, and that He must first be rejected by the Jews and their leaders.

He told them He must die and then be raised on the third day. He then added, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it." **Luke 9:20-25**

This is the cost of discipleship! Let us look at this cost in a brighter light.

At this time, Jesus did not want His Messiahship known publicly. The apostles were not to broadcast this truth. Why? Because there was no way at that time to prove beyond doubt that He was the Messiah.

It is in His resurrection that He proved His Messiahship. The resurrection is the keystone to His divinity. His Messiahship was not to be revealed to others till He had suffered at the hands of the Jews.

He then went into the mountains and was transfigured before some of the disciples. While transfigured, He spoke to Moses and Elijah of His decease at Jerusalem. These two men were then overshadowed with a cloud, and they saw no man save Jesus only. It was a vision.

Then a voice from the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him."

It is neither Moses and the Law, nor Elijah and the prophets whom we now hear, but Jesus, the Son of God.

This event was also not to be known. I have always wished that I had been a little bird and could have heard all that Moses, Elijah, and the Lord spoke of on that day. In this life, we will never know what was said. We are only informed they spoke of what the death of Christ would accomplish in Jerusalem.

Upon going down the hill, Jesus came upon a demon possessed young man that His disciples could not heal. Jesus healed him. While they wondered at His power, He said, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men."

It is obvious Jesus wants us to observe carefully what He is saying. With this background, we begin our lessons on the cost of discipleship.

SCENE ONE:

Jesus knew that He was going to die in Jerusalem.

The disciples did not understand this even though He told it to them. They still had in mind an earthly kingdom. As a result, they begin to quarrel among themselves about which of them would be the greatest.

Jesus took a child and set him among them and said, "Whosoever shall receive this child in My name receiveth Me, and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me, for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."

THIS IS THE ATTITUDE TOWARD SELF THAT WE MUST HAVE TO FOLLOW JESUS.

We must have an attitude of humility to be His disciple.

SCENE TWO:

The disciples met a man who was casting out demons.

They forbade him to do so because he did not accompany them. Jesus answered them, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us." Of course this man was not a fraud or an empty cloud without rain.

THIS IS THE ATTITUDE WE MUST HAVE TOWARD OTHERS WHO ARE TRYING TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL THOUGH THEY DO NOT ACCOMPANY US.

SCENE THREE:

Next, they tried to come into Samaria.

Jesus had set His face toward Jerusalem to die. The Samaritans seeing He was determined to go there, would not receive Him. James and John wanted to call down fire from Heaven to destroy them. This is what Elijah would have done. Jesus answered, "Ye know not what manner of spirit that ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy man's lives, but to save them."

THIS IS THE ATTITUDE WE MUST HAVE TOWARD THOSE WHO REJECT JESUS.



We must think salvation not damnation, constructively not destructively.

SCENE FOUR:

As they journeyed, there came a man rushing out to Jesus saying, "Lord, I will follow thee wheresoever thou goest."

It was an impulsive statement. I wish there were more like him. At least he knew he wanted to go where Jesus was going. The Lord cautioned him with this statement, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath no where to lay His head."

These are not words of complaint. He's not seeking pity. He is not throwing out a cute little barb. This is the demand of discipleship! It may mean giving up one's home. It may mean that your roots must be dug up and you be transplanted. This is the condition of following Jesus. You must be willing to be detached from your own bed.

THIS IS THE ATTITUDE TOWARD HOME ONE MUST HAVE TO BE HIS DISCIPLE!

SCENE FIVE:

Now the scene moves to another man.

He spoke to him and said, "Follow me." The man replies, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." Jesus answered him and said, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God."

Is Jesus cruel? Will He not let the man go and bury his own father? No. Jesus is not cruel. The man's father is not yet dead. He wants to wait till his father dies and the family affairs are in order before he follows Jesus.

Obviously, this is an unselfish request and the Lord will grant it? No! The call to follow Christ must be obeyed immediately, not after family obligations have been met.

Christ is headed to Jerusalem to die on the cross. The call beckons Him there. He goes in spite of His mother and His brethren. The calling to do the Will of the Heavenly Father is superior to that of meeting the obligations of our earthly parents.

Had his father just died, Jesus would no doubt have gone and raised him from the dead. He never met a funeral procession that He did not raise the corpse to life. If the man was to be His disciple, he must leave the supposed earthly obligations to others and follow Jesus and preach the Kingdom of God NOW!

THIS IS THE ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR EARTHLY FAMILY – OBLIGATIONS WE MUST HAVE IN ORDER TO BE HIS DISCIPLE.

SCENE SIX:

Now another rushed to Him and declared, "Lord I will follow thee, but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house." Jesus answered, "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God." Don't despise the man. He had been caught up in the person and ministry of Jesus. His problem was one of

wanting to first meet the obligations of friendship and etiquette.

But by Jesus' answer we learn that following Jesus goes before such obligations. One does not follow Jesus after he goes back home and discloses to his friends what he intends to be done with his estate.

Elijah had allowed Elisha to run home and kiss his parent's good-bye. But the preaching of the Kingdom is more serious business than that of the prophets. There is no time for this disciple to run home and settle his estate or bid farewell. There is no time to argue with those who would not have him go. He needed him now! It is necessary that the one who plows must keep his eyes straight ahead. He must not look back at his estate nor at what his friends would think, nor at some girl's expectation for his return. Such a one is not fit for Christ's plowing. He must plow a straight furrow and not look back.

THIS IS THE ATTITUDE ONE MUST HAVE TOWARD ONE'S FRIENDS, SWEETHEART, AND ESTATE IN ORDER TO BE HIS DISCIPLE!

SCENE SEVEN:

It is after the above scenes that Jesus sent out seventy preachers into every city in which He would come.

Some had responded to these terms of discipleship! Jesus now laments, "The harvest is truly great but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His harvest." Having sent these forth, He continues His approach to Jerusalem and death. Jesus had sought followers. He had laid down the demands of discipleship and few had followed. He practiced what He preached.

He despised the things of this world. He had demanded what He Himself was already doing. He had left home. It was not that He was unnatural. He loved His family. On the cross He provided for His mother. But He never provided for

her at the expense of obeying the Heavenly Father. He wants us to remember our friends, but He came late to Mary and Martha in their grief because He was busy doing the work of God. He would not turn back from Jerusalem. He would let nothing defer Him from His appointment with death. He does not demand of us what He will not do Himself. He set His face toward Jerusalem and He would not look back. He recognized that such is not fit for the Kingdom of God.

THIS IS THE ATTITUDE JESUS DEMANDS OF HIS DISCIPLES AND IT IS THE KIND OF LABOURERS FOR WHICH WE ARE TO PRAY.

CONCLUSION:

It is obvious from the above that Jesus expects us to be disciples now and at all costs. Our attitude toward fame, family, friends, and fortune must be one of denial. We cannot be disciples in name only. We must not be shouters of, "I'll go as soon as such-and-such is accomplished." Excuses must not be in our attitudes.

There are to be no "estates settled", "kids raised", "father buried", "needs met", "spouses pleased", "money raised", or any other plausible excuse.

Paul did not consult with flesh and blood when he decided to follow Jesus. He never sought his parents' will, a sweetheart's okay, Professor Gamaliel's advice, a rich uncle's approval. He sought immediately to advance the Kingdom of God. He sought God's righteousness.

This is the kind of discipleship that took the message of Christ around the world in one generation. It can be done again! Oh, determine to leave and forsake all for Christ, if necessary. Purpose to follow Jesus at all costs.

Pray the Lord of harvest that there may be more labourers. Set your face right now toward the Heavenly Jerusalem. Take up your cross daily and don't look back!