

Following Jesus to the Cross
Cross & Resurrection, Pt. 1
Luke 9:51-62

Allan McCullough
Grace Hill Church
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I. PRAYER

- i. God would you, by your Spirit, help us to be aware and repent of the things in our lives that we value more than following your Son, Jesus. I pray that your Spirit would convict our hearts with specific awareness as we study your word and that He would convince us that the road of repentance leads to joy.

II. INTRODUCTION

- a. Isn't it funny how we, all human beings, have a tendency to take something that is not about us and make it about us.
 - i. And social media and the phenomenon of the selfie has put this into overdrive.
 - So, now, you labor over a great meal to feed your family, but you Instagram it so others will be impressed.
 - You run into a celebrity at the airport, and you take a selfie so others can see it too.
 - Got the new hair doo and the new outfit, and you gotta post a pic so others can enjoy it to.
 - This is one of the reasons why I have personally been taking a break from social media because I have often found that my mind is always thinking about how I can take circumstances in my life and post them on social media to impress others!
 - ii. What is it about our hearts that crave other people being impressed with us.



- My heart does this every time I preach!
 1. Preaching isn't about me! Preaching is about magnifying Almighty God and declaring His Gospel.
 2. Preaching is about declaring God's Word so the church can be built up!
 3. But my heart also wants you to be impressed with me.
 - Why do we take things that are not about us and make them about us!
- iii. I heard this funny story about Eugene Peterson...pretty prolific Christian Author (wrote the message – his paraphrase of the Bible).
- Well, Bono, the lead singer for U2, read some of his books and became a big fan of Eugene Peterson.
 - And he tried to reach out to Eugene Peterson to see if they could meet over dinner the next time Bono was in town during a tour.
 - And Eugene Peterson goes: "Who's Bono?"
 1. And he declined the invitation!
 2. And some of Peterson's students found out about this, had a heart attack, and made him go have dinner with Bono.
 3. And the two have actually become friends.
 - But, he declined a dinner invitation from Bono!
 1. I mean, if I found out right now that Bono wanted to meet me for coffee.
 2. I would be like: "Hey Nick, why don't you close us out in some song..." and I'd be out the door!



3. Then I'd take some pictures and post them on Instagram so everyone would see my new best friend.
- iv. We like to associate ourselves with people or things that impress us so that other people will be impressed with us.
 - It's the proverbial "I'm with the band" t-shirt.
- b. Our heart's crave others being impressed with us....why?
 - i. Why do our hearts have an instinct to make everything about ourselves?
 - ii. This is so hardwired into our being...that we even take our faith and Jesus Christ himself, and make Him about us.

III. SERIES PLUG

- a. Let me show you an example from Scripture...open up Luke 9.
 - i. Over the next three weeks, including Easter, we're going to do a short series called "Cross & Resurrection."
 - ii. And the text that we're going to read today in Luke is a pivotal passage in the Gospel of Luke...
 - ...Because it is the passage where Jesus literally pivots from his ministry in Galilee, the northern part of Israel, and begins his journey toward Jerusalem where he knows that he will go to the cross.
 1. So, this morning, we are going to look at Jesus' journey to Jerusalem.



2. Next week, Palm Sunday, we'll study his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
 3. And the next week will be Easter.
- iii. And in this passage, we are going to get a snapshot of how Jesus' own disciples fundamentally misunderstood what it actually means to follow Jesus by making it about themselves.

IV. LUKE 9:51-56

a. Read Luke 9:51

- i. One of the things you have to understand is that for all of Jesus' life...the cross was looming.
 - Jesus knew that this was why he ultimately left heaven to become a man...to go to the cross.
 - So, Luke tells us that it was getting to be that time for Jesus to go to Jerusalem in order to go to the cross.
 - And so, Jesus, set his face to Jerusalem. He resolved to go to Jerusalem and nothing would stop him.
- ii. But, before we read on in our text, let me give you a little historical context.
 - Earlier in Jesus' ministry, he had announced that He himself was the Jewish Messiah.
 - The Jews were waiting for the Messiah to come and what the Messiah was going to do was assume the throne of King David and establish God's Kingdom on Earth.



- And the imagery that they had in their heads was that was going to be a powerful, militaristic, aggressive establishment of God's Kingdom.
 1. That the Messiah would come, defeat the enemies of the Jews, and claim his rightful throne.
- So, even though Jesus had been telling his disciples that he was **not** going to conquer his enemies but he would be delivered to his enemies to die....
 1. When Jesus sets his face to Jerusalem...there is something in the disciples that is saying...this is it.
 2. It's time to go to Jerusalem and take the city!
 3. It's time for the Kingdom of God to have its day!

b. **Read Luke 9:52-56** (w/ commentary)

- i. **V.52-53** – Now, you have to understand that there is religious and ethnic tension between the Samaritans and the Jews.
 - I don't have time to give you all of that history.
 - But one of the reasons why the Samaritans did not show Jesus and his traveling entourage any hospitality is because they were offended that Jesus was going to worship in Jerusalem.
 - The Samaritans believed that the proper place to worship God was not on the mountain in Jerusalem but their own Mount Gerizim, which was in their territory.
 - So, they did not allow Jesus and his followers to stay.
 - So, Jesus moves on.
- ii. **V.54-56** – James and John.



- In Mark 3:17 – Jesus gives these guys the nickname “The Sons of Thunder.”
 1. They were the hot-headed kind.
 2. Always ready to take care of business.
- But, could you imagine Jesus facial expression when he heard this suggestion from James and John?
 1. No! What are you thinking?
 2. And he rebukes them and moves on to the next village.

c. You see, we don’t have the actual words of Jesus’ rebuke to James and John....but I imagine it was like this...

- i. Do you even know why I am headed to Jerusalem?
 - Yes, I’m headed to Jerusalem to establish my Father’s Kingdom.
 1. Yes, I’m headed to Jerusalem to assume the throne of King David.
 2. But I’m not going to take the city by force, I’m going to die for the city.
 3. I’m not going to the city with a sword in my hand, I’m going to the cross.
 - I’m not here to rain down judgement down on sinners, yet, I am here to make available the mercy of God.
 1. No, you can’t call down fire from heaven, like you even have the authority to do that. Are you here to follow me or not...because you better take a minute to think about where I’m going.



2. Because I am not headed to Jerusalem so the Samaritans will be damned, I'm headed to Jerusalem that they might be saved.

d. See, can we just stop here and marvel at what just happened.

- i. I want you to understand, that we live in a time where the mercy of God is available and there will be time where it will not be.
 - The Samaritans straight up rejected Jesus and kicked him out of their village.
 1. It was James and John who wanted to get judgmental.
 2. But Jesus had his face set on making the mercy of God available.
- ii. We live in a time of the available mercy of God and we must make this known to the darkest corners of the earth!
 - Jesus Christ set his face to Jerusalem so he could give his life on the cross in the place of sinners.
 - He took God's judgement and God's wrath in our place as he died on the cross.
 - He was buried. And then he rose again from the dead having conquered death so those who trust in his grace and mercy can live forever in his Kingdom.
- iii. This mercy is available to every person on this planet.
 - And sometimes the church can be like James and John.... Quick to judge and condemn rather than proclaiming the available mercy of God in Christ.



- e. And in this episode with Jesus, the disciples are confronted with what it really means to follow Jesus.
- i. Because Jesus was headed to the cross.
 - ii. The disciples seemed to be preoccupied with how their association with Jesus would make them impressive to others.
 - We see that just 10 verses earlier in Luke 9.
 1. Read Luke 9:46.
 2. They had some ungodly swagger because they were Jesus' boys.
 3. They were ready for the glory of the resurrection but would be blindsided by the suffering of the cross.
 - iii. To follow Jesus means we follow him to the cross.
 - Jesus said in Mark 10:45 – “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
 - Jesus said earlier in Luke 9:23
 - iv. To follow Jesus means to follow Him to the cross and the disciples in this moment had a choice to make.
 - Did they just associate with Jesus in order to impress others or were they going to follow Jesus?
 1. This is a question that we need to ask ourselves.
 2. Do we just associate with Jesus to impress others or do we follow Jesus?



V. LUKE 9:57-62

- a. Because in v.57-62, Jesus is going to make it very clear what it means to follow Him and not only is it a challenge to his disciples, but it is also a challenge to us today.
 - i. Because the reason why our hearts crave other people being impressed with us and the reason we have the tendency to make things that are not about us, about us...
 - Is because everything in us tells us that our joy, our contentment, our happiness is found in the creation and not in our creator.
 - This is the lie of the fall.

We live in a fallen sinful world and the lie of the fall is that our joy is found in what we make of our lives here apart from God.
 - ii. And Jesus is going to say, hey, in order to follow me, you have to walk away from that lie.
 - Read [Luke 9:24-25](#).
 - We have to be convinced that being a redeemed child of God is better than any comfort and any significance that is found in this world.
 - And Jesus is saying:
 1. I am on a mission. I have come to serve, not to be served, and to give my life for others.



2. And, it seems backwards in this world but your joy, your contentment, your fulfillment is found in joining me in my mission, following me to the cross, forsaking your life here so you may have life everlasting in my Father's Kingdom.
- iii. Following Jesus is not about living an impressive life here, it is about giving up your life.
 - And so, Jesus is going to get really practical on what this means.
 - He is going to force us to answer the question: Do we just associate with Jesus or do we follow Jesus?

b. Read Luke 9:57-62

- i. Now, notice in all three of these encounters, Jesus is not saying that having a place to lay your head or having an affection for your family is bad...but he is talking about priority. He is talking about rank.
 - I believe Jesus is pressing on two of our most closely held loves in this world (our comfort and our relationships) and he is forcing us to ask ourselves if following him is more important or not?
 - Because it's when we are forced to evaluate how tightly we hold on to these things...that we are confronted with if we just associate with Jesus or do we follow Jesus?
- ii. And in these three encounters, I have two challenging questions I want us to consider in evaluating our own lives when it comes to following Jesus.



c. Encounter #1 – v.57-58

- i. So, here, we see someone with zeal and passion proclaim to Jesus that he will follow Jesus wherever.
 - But, Jesus wanted to make sure that this person understood exactly what he was saying because Jesus was headed for the cross.
- ii. These two verses here might be the most challenging verses in the Bible for American Christianity.
 - We are the most prosperous nation in the world and represent some of the most prosperous generations in history.
 1. No matter where you fall on the social-economic scale here in Northern Virginia, all of us are in the top percentage of wealth on the planet.
 2. We don't just have comforts, we have luxurious comforts.
- iii. Now, this verse shouldn't make us feel guilty for having homes, having beds, and having comforts in our lives.
 - But, when we say to Jesus...I will follow you wherever you will go...one of the things that we must understand in our economic context is that means that we have more in our grasp that we must hold loosely.
 1. And here, Jesus is not saying that following him means you hold 10% of your comforts loosely and the other 90% is yours, he is saying you must put all of it on the table.



- iv. If you have a good job at a nice company...God very well may be calling you to be a faithful follower of Jesus in that job.
- But, you are a follower of Jesus before you are an employee of that company.
 - And faithfully following Jesus in that company might mean you need to hold employment there loosely.
 - The lie of the fall says the more you advance in that company the better your life will be.
 1. But Jesus says, if you want to find your life, you have to lose it.
- v. If you have money in your bank account...there is nothing wrong with that...praise God for that!
- But you are not just a regular person with money in your bank account, you're a follower of Jesus with money in your bank account.
 - The lie of the fall will say that the more you have in savings, the more you have in retirement, the better and more secure your life will be.
 1. But Jesus says, if you want to find your life, you have to lose it.
 2. Hold it loosely. Generosity is not something God wants from you, it's something he wants for you.
- vi. If you have a home with multiple rooms, beds, a heater, a kitchen table with food on it...praise God...what a blessing. Don't feel guilty about that.
- But you are not just a regular person with a home...you are a follower of Jesus with a home.



- The lie of the fall says that your home is your domain. It's for you to rest. It's for you to escape.
 - Your life will be better if you have your own home all to yourself.
 1. But Jesus says, if you want to find your life, you have to lose it.
 2. Hold it loosely. Open it up to those who don't have a place to lay their head.
- vii. Here is the question...and it's a hard one...that we all have to wrestle with: **WHAT COMFORTS IN THIS WORLD ARE WE UNWILLING TO GIVE UP TO FOLLOW JESUS?**
- Or, let me ask it this way:
 1. What comforts must come first before we pursue joy?
 2. One of the hardest areas of growth for us as followers of Jesus is the forsaking the lie of the fall...that our joy is found in this world.

d. Encounters #2-3 – v.59-62

- i. Now, this challenge from Jesus seems to be even more difficult.
- What in the world is wrong with burying your father and saying goodbye to your family?
 - Again, we have to understand that Jesus is not saying those things are bad, but he is challenging the priority.
 - And in the immediate context of these verses, Jesus was headed to Jerusalem.



1. Passover was coming and this time, it was Jesus who was going to be the Passover lamb...the last one.
 2. He was on a mission and this mission to the cross was urgent.
- The challenge that we have here is not with the value of our loved ones but the urgency of the mission.
 1. And the question this makes me want to challenge us with is: What commitments and obligations in our lives take precedent over following Jesus?
 2. What is more urgent in our lives than following Jesus and the mission that he has invited us to join to declare the available mercy of God to the world?
 3. Because again, listen, the mercy of God is available to all who trust in Christ.
 4. But there will be a day where Christ returns and it the God's mercy will have been dispensed and he will judge all who do not know Christ!
 5. So, what is more urgent? What takes precedence over following Jesus to the cross?
 - ii. When I examine my own heart...what other people think of me tends to take precedent. Sometimes, what is more urgent to me is avoiding an awkward encounter with someone.
 - I am sometimes more committed to the social norms of our culture that says that it is weird to talk about faith and salvation.



- In that fear of sharing our faith with others, we are giving into the lie of the fall that says that your life will be better if you're the normal one.
 1. But Jesus says if you want to find your life, you have to lose it.
 2. We are called to follow him to the cross and forsake all that would prevent us from doing so.
 - We have an Easter service coming up in two weeks!
 1. This is a time where so many people who do not trust Christ decide to come to church.
 2. It is low hanging fruit.
 3. And we are hoping to do a fun, family-friendly outdoor Easter service on the Herndon Town Green where they do their summer concert series.
 4. And we all need to invite people. We need to invite our neighbors. We need to invite our co-workers, our friends.
 5. This is a simple opportunity to forsake our social commitments and fears that prevent us from reaching out and follow Jesus in this way.
- iii. But, you know what's interesting...when we talk about the comforts that we need to hold loosely to follow Jesus, our economic context means that we have more in our hands to hold loosely than maybe others around the world.
- But when we talk about commitments and obligations that we need to hold loosely to follow Jesus, our political context means that we have less to lose than many around the world when it comes to following Jesus.



- I'll never forget when I was a college minister at George Mason University, a Pakistani college student who grew up as a Muslim came to faith in Christ and was baptized.
 1. And this literally meant being disowned by her family.
 2. We even had to think through how to protect her from potential violence.
 - Sure, we may be seeing an up-tick in political persecution for our faith, but we are blessed in that we do not have to forsake much to follow Jesus compared to our brothers and sisters around the world.
- iv. So, let me ask: What obligations and commitments in our life take precedence over following Jesus?
- Another way to ask it: What obligations and commitments must come first before we pursue joy?

VI. CONCLUSION

- a. Our joy is found in following Jesus to the cross.
- i. And it is so easy for us as followers of Jesus to be like the disciples...ready for the glory of the resurrection but blindsided by the suffering of the cross.
 - ii. We follow Jesus to the cross and into his resurrection.



- b. The mercy of God is available. It is available to those who have not trusted in Christ and it is available to people like us who seek to follow Jesus...even if we do so in a clumsy, inconsistent way.
 - i. But we must become a church that consistently reminds one another that the lie of the fall is always seeking to deceive us into trading in our joy for broken cisterns that hold no water.
- c. Let me conclude with the words of the Apostle Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:50-58.**

VII. PRAY

