

Come Follow Me

- In the first several weeks of our study in the Basics of Christianity, we've discovered some things from scripture
 - First, we found that Christianity begins when we turn from our sin to Christ
 - Second, we observed that everything we learn to do - to be obedient to Christ - must be done on the basis of our love for God and love for our neighbor
 - Third, we discovered that God sets us apart for His service by teaching us and preparing us through His word - the Bible
 - And fourth, we'll make the case today, there is no discipleship without total commitment to Christ
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- We find the basis for this assertion and the title to our lesson today in Luke 18
 - In this account, Jesus speaks to a certain ruler who is very rich
 - That ruler asks what he may do to inherit eternal life
 - After speaking about the commandments for a moment
 - And after he has assured Jesus he keeps the commandments, Jesus goes further...

Luke 18:22-23

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

- Our title and our key phrase today is "come, follow me"
 - What does Jesus mean by this and how do we go about it?
 - Why did this man have to sell all he had and distribute the money to the poor?
 - We'll see if two primary passages can answer these questions
 - And explore what Jesus said himself about becoming a disciple
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- Let's begin a little earlier in the gospel of Luke, when Jesus talks about discipleship
 - And what discipleship will mean for those who have expressed an interest in following Him
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- At this time, there are "great multitudes" following Him
 - No doubt, some are following out of curiosity, others to experience whatever good He may do for them, or still others to examine or test His authenticity
 - We don't know why all in this group followed, but the Bible often describes these "multitudes," saying some do not follow for the right reasons

- They do so to gain something, or to prove Him wrong, or for ... they know not what
- Here, Jesus makes clear the responsibilities and realities of true discipleship
- And they are contrary to many of the beliefs of that day, and many modern beliefs
- Here's what happened...

Luke 14:25-26

25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,
 26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

- This is an alarming statement
- Alarming for anyone that makes family the top priority
- Alarming for anyone that works their hardest to arrange and secure and improve their own life
- For He says the love that you have for family and your own life must resemble hate in comparison to your love for and commitment to Christ
- He does not intend literal hate, because this would be in contrary to His own directives
- Jesus is requiring no less than the whole heart
- Not a divided heart, where family and self occupy one portion and Jesus simply occupies another (somewhat larger) portion
- He is warning that any placement of those near and dear to us, including ourselves, before or above Him negates discipleship
- He requires all of us
- And when He has all of us, no doubt we will have time for family and our own lives, but never are they to come before Him
- Those that allow for any to come before Him cannot be His disciples
- Divisions between families sometimes happen when a person comes to Christ
- These divisions may happen more and more depending on the culture and worldview of the society in which we live
- And while this is never preferable, it is always understandable, as we are now fully His
- Praise God, many wonderful reunions also happen, when God changes and saves those we love
- When they become His and begin their journey as a disciple
- It is at that point when we enter a new relationship, one that Jesus himself referenced in Matthew 12, starting in verse 46...

"While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren

stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

- But Jesus goes on...

Luke 14:27

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

- The cross we bear is one of self denial
- As Matthew 16 tells us Jesus says...

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

- This is a "giving up" of life for Jesus
- A realization and confirmation through action that Jesus can do with us as He will
- It is full surrender
- No remaining control, for us, over our direction and actions
- He chooses
- Our lives, motivated by self-interest are gone, in favor of new life in Christ
- This is explained in more detail in Galatians 2:20...

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

- Or Colossians 3:2-3...

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

- This is the kind of discipleship which Jesus references
- And it is something that takes consideration
- As He goes on to explain...

Luke 14:28-33

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

- It is for everyone, that expresses a desire to follow Him, to consider the cost of discipleship
- To understand the demands of a life in Christ
- They are significant - worth everything - but significant
- And whoever, despite their claim to desire the life of a follower, fails to forsake all that they have, cannot be Jesus' disciple

- This is portrayed in an account we referenced at the beginning of our time together, a few chapters later, in Luke 18

- I told you about this rich ruler and His question for Jesus

- But let's read it...

Luke 18:18-22

18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

- This request from Jesus is not inconsistent with what we have already seen
- The last statement we read in Luke 14 makes it clear...

"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

- He already demands a commitment and love that is before family and self-love
- And indeed demands that we give up our entire life for Him
- How then, can it be seen as too much to simply give away money?
- Depending on the place money occupies in the life of a person, it can be seen - by them - as far too much
- A person's love of money can exceed their love for God
- And while they may have a certain kind of desire to follow God
- Their desire for money may be more
- But this is not suitable for the discipleship Christ demands...

Luke 18:23-25

23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

- No man can serve two masters
- And too many have made a god of money
- They are ruled by it
- Not just money, of course, many other things too
- But money seems to have a unique hold
- Because of what it can change in a man's life and circumstances
- And how he perceives that it makes him free from the need of God
- This is why the rich often find turning to Christ so difficult
- But praise God for the next two verses...

Luke 18:26-27

26 And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?

27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

- The god of money can be forsaken
 - The One True God can make it possible
 - For nothing is impossible with Him
- If those who mean to turn from sin and to Christ choose this life of discipleship and denial of self, how will they feel about it when they look back?

- Will there be regret?
- I have a feeling you have already heard many a testimony to the contrary, but observe Jesus' words as proof...

Luke 18:28-30

28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

- Very much more awaits those that give up what they have in this life
- Those who keep hold of their lives in this world will lose them
- But those who give their lives up for Him, will find real life, eternal life
- Life far beyond anything this world can provide
- No matter how much money we have

Christopher Harper, October 2021