

The Gospel According to Jesus

Luke 9:57~62, part 1

This morning I want to begin with part one, of what looks to be a three part series of messages, which I have entitled, "***The Gospel According to Jesus***." I say that in the sense, that my intent is to clarify in the truest sense of what Christianity is all about. What it means to follow Jesus Christ. Three times in this passage, is the matter of "*Following Jesus*" is mentioned. Two of the three times it is used, it was the declared intent of two different men, who declared they would follow Him. The other is that of Jesus inviting a man to "*Follow Him*." So we see, that in this passage, there is three men, with three declarations of "*Following Jesus*," and then three different responses of the men, with three different responses from Jesus Christ Himself. It is the "*responses of Jesus*" to these three men that I want us to consider. For it is only when you consider, what Jesus tells these three men, about "*Following Him*," that you are truly able to appreciate and understand what the gospel of Christ is all about.

In this series of messages, we will look to the conditions and requirements that Jesus Himself lays down, that a man must conform to, in order to be one of His followers. ***It is the gospel according to Jesus...***

I'm stressing that, because my aim with this series of messages, is to confront and expose the perverted and adulterated gospel that is being proclaimed from many pulpits today! Beloved, I submit to you, that the "Majority" of what is being proclaimed from pulpits, radio, TV and other means today, is largely in part a mixture of superficial study of scripture, mixed with the ignorance & ideologies of men! When you combine that with the false teachers that have arisen among the church world, the result is, a very, very small declaration of the True Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, I know...that this must needs be. By that I mean that I know that what we are seeing, was prophesied of, and that this is how it would be in the last days. In his letters to the church, Paul mentions this "*falling away*" that is to come. Referring to the fact, that in the *last days*, leading up to the return of Christ, there will be a *slow, methodical drifting away* from the fundamentals and doctrines of the "*faith*," to the point, that it will have all but lost it's meaning.

We have a good example of what Paul is saying is going to happen to the church, when we look at our country. Were we stand today as a country, is far from what our founding fathers established the nation on. Much of our nation was built on Christian values and biblical principles, and we see that slowly fading away.

When Paul speaks of a "*Falling away*" in the last days, he's referring to the fact that the much of the church will cease to be the church... Many will move away from the doctrines and principles of Christ.

Listen to how he describes what will be in the last days...

(2Ti. 3) ¹*This know also, that in the last days **perilous times shall come**.* ²*For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,* ³*Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,* ⁴*Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;* ⁵***Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.***

One would never think that Paul is talking about the condition of the Church, or the religious world...but he is. The people that Paul is describing here, are religious folks. Notice in verse 5, they have a "***Form of godliness***"...there's just no content. The picture here is that of "*Unchanged Men*"... I'm convinced that it's a picture of the fact that religion will abound...but that true believers, true followers of Christ will become less and less.

(Vs14~15) ***In response to the coming apostasy***, Paul calls on Timothy to stand firm in the scriptures...reminding him of the fact that ***“THEY”*** are the source of salvation, for mankind. Emphasizing, that the souls of men hang in the balance, and they need to hear this word. (Vs 16~17) Paul then reaffirms the *inspiration* of the scriptures, declaring them to be the very words of God, and declares they are to be used to shape men’s lives!

(4:1~2) Then Paul charges Timothy before God, (declaring him accountable to God), on how he handles this word. Paul reminds Timothy of the Judgment of God that is coming...and charges him, that he is to constantly and consistently ***“Preach this word.”*** The point being, he must be steadfast, and unmovable in the word, and relentlessly preach the Truth of God, no matter what! For the souls of men and women hang in the balance. Paul then warns Timothy, that it’s going to get tough...that as time goes on, more and more the truth will be rejected!

(2Ti. 4) ³*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;* ⁴*And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

Paul warns Timothy, that in the last days, it will get harder and harder to find people who will listen to the truth. He warns that in response to the rejection of truth, that many will adulterate the gospel, watering it down, to make it ***“palatable”*** for men. Telling them what they want to hear. (Tickling the ears...) He says they won’t endure sound doctrine, meaning they won’t listen to sound biblical truths! We see this all around us beloved, those ignoring the clear teachings of scripture, to do what they want to do. Basically, rather than being a place where the truth of God is sought, and declared, basically the church will become a ***“Social club,”*** where many will come seeking to be *entertained*.

Beloved, you may think I’m crazy, you may think I’ve lost it, but I’m telling you, we are smack dab in the middle of the day Paul was warning about here. When you look closely at the ***“Gospel”*** that Jesus proclaimed, alongside the one being declared today, you’ll realize, there nothing alike. Thus, my study, ***the gospel according to Jesus...***

It tears my heart out to say this, but the ***“Christianity”*** of our day, has all but lost it’s meaning... For someone to say ***“they believe in God”*** in our day, means absolutely nothing! For the simple reason, it’s nothing more than a God they have concocted in their own darkened imaginations, it is a God formed out of their own depraved mind! Which ***“conveniently”*** conforms to their will and desires, their lifestyles. They believe in God all right...it’s just not the God of the bible, the one true living God! And the fact that someone professes to be a *Christian*, means nothing anymore. Many in our day consider themselves to be ***“Christian”*** simply based on the fact they attend church occasionally, they participate in church events, they affirm the moral teachings of Christ, been baptized, joined a church...whatever.

Beloved, in scripture, Christianity is described as a lifestyle... A lifestyle of self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-humiliation...in order to ***“live their lives”*** here on this earth, to the will and desires of God. It requires a man to turn from this world, in the sense of living his life to it, living to its pleasures, seeking it’s things...so that he may live his life unto God! Listen, religion won’t help you...the fact you attend church, the fact you are a good moral man/woman, won’t help you. It is of absolutely no benefit. But yet tragically, many, and I mean many...have the false security that they are ok with God, on the basis they are morally good, that they really don’t do anything morally wrong... But yet, that is not Christianity.

Christianity describes a lifestyle...it describes one who has turned from this world, and the things of this world, separating themselves from this world, to live out their day to day lives, unto Jesus Christ as Lord.

The ***“Call of Christ”*** is to turn from ***“your own life”***... our own ambitions, our own will and desires to follow Him... Many see that as ***“fanatical,”*** as too much...yet, that is exactly what God requires and expects of every man. Nothing short of complete repentance and total surrender will do.

Don't take my words for it... take the words of Christ Himself. For that is exactly what Jesus Christ Himself, makes crystal clear in this passage. The subject matter here in this section of scripture, is that of *"Following Jesus."* Here, we find the conditions and requirements, that Jesus Himself lays down, that a man must conform to, in order to be one of His followers. And when you realize what he demands, you'll realize that it is a complete abandonment from this world, and total submission and loyalty to Him. And the fact, that nothing short of that will do... When you understand what He calls for, you soon realize, that it is a complete and total surrender of your life to Him...which many, find very difficult, if not impossible to do. (*That's a lot to give up...right? Your life...*) Yet, Jesus makes it clear, that is what He requires. As we study this, and see His requirements, we'll soon realize, that very, very few will actually do this. But keep in mind, Jesus just wants to be clear...because He doesn't want anyone *"thinking"* that they can continue to live to themselves, and to this world, and yet be ok. For most, the demands and requirements that Jesus lays out here is just too high, and is a price they are simply not willing to pay. **But nevertheless, it is the cost.** And the point being, any man or woman who does not yield their *"lives"* unto Jesus Christ...will perish! *It is the gospel according to Jesus...*

(Vs 57~58) **This morning, I want to deal solely with the first man...**⁵⁷ *And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou go.* ⁵⁸ *And Jesus said unto him, **Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.***

We are told that as they were walking along, there was a man who came up to Jesus, and declared that he would follow Him, *"wherever"* He went. No doubt, he said this in light of the event that just took place, of Jesus being rejected by the Samaritan village, because of the fact, He was headed to Jerusalem. Jesus and His disciples were headed for Jerusalem, and wanted to stop for the night in Samaria, but the people there rejected them, wanting nothing to do with them, for the simple fact they were headed to Jerusalem. The Samaritans and the Jews were bitter enemies, and when they found out where they were headed, they turned their face away from them.

It is in light of that rejection, that this man comes up to Jesus, and says basically, *"I don't care where you are going...I'll go with you."* To which Jesus replied...

(Vs 58)⁵⁸ *And Jesus said unto him, **Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.***

Somewhat of a strange reply, don't you think... What does He mean by that? Well, first of all, knowing the manner in which He often taught, first of all I'm convinced, that He mentions these two things for the simple fact, they were there. I'm convinced, that as He was saying this, He was pointing to a *"Fox hole"* and then to a *"Birds nest"* as they were walking. I can see Jesus looking to the man, and saying, *"You say you want to follow me...well, before you say that, there's something you need to know..."* Pointing to the hole, *Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

What's the point? Simply this... *"If you're thinking about following me, there's something you need to understand..."* *"This world is not my home..."* *"I have no place in this world."* To follow me means, that you must be willing to *"give this up."* The *Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* When you consider what He's saying, and given the comparison, it an expression of deep humility. Even the animals have a place in this world...but the Son of God doesn't. He created the world, yet there is no room for Him, no place for Him. Even the lowest of the living creatures have a place...but not Him.

To really get the fullness of this, we must keep in mind that He was just rejected by the Samaritan village. Had He done anything to them, to have them treat Him that way? No, but they turned Him away. He couldn't stay there, thus He moves on. *Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

The point Jesus is trying to relay to this young man, is that he needs to seriously consider what that means. It's one thing to say, "*I'll follow you wherever you go...*" but do you really understand what they means? *Do you know where I'm going?* I know, that the thought of going to Jerusalem doesn't bother you, and you are more than willing to go with me there. But you need to understand something; ***I won't be accepted there either.*** They will reject me there as well...

The point Jesus is making to this young man, by the analogy of the foxes and birds, is that *He has no place in this world...* Before you decide that you want to follow me, you need to understand this. This world is going to "*Reject me*"...and if you follow me...***it will reject you too!*** Jesus is saying, "*If you love this world, and want to continue to live your life "in this world," than, you can't follow me...* You must choose between the two... Jesus is making it clear, of the "*High Cost of following Him.*" Just as He is rejected by the world, *so will all who follow Him.*

Given the common expectation of Israel of the Messiah, it makes me wonder if this man was asserting that he believed Jesus was the Messiah, but he had the wrong idea as well. There would be no Palace...there would be no "*Kingdom*" with royal subjects. Matter of fact, there would be nothing like that, but rather they would be rejected and cast out! Their lives would be that of suffering and persecution, rather than comfort and luxury.

Jesus is simply trying to make it clear to this zealous young man, of what it means to follow Him... Jesus explains to this man, "I'm not accepted in this world, this world wants nothing to do with me. My life is one of suffering and rejection at the hands of this world. And the same will be true for those who identify with me, and walk with me. Knowing that, are you sure you want to walk with me?"

T: Coming to Christ will cost you *your LIFE* in this world!

That is an undeniable truth...that men know to be true. You can't live to God and this world at the same time. Every man, every woman must make a choice. Many in our day have "*watered down*" the gospel, telling people "*what they want to hear*" (ear tickling)...preaching a gospel that allows men to live in this world, and yet have a home in heaven. Beloved, that is not the gospel of Jesus Christ! Men who proclaim such a gospel is damning the souls of men...*because "Salvation" is a result of repenting from this world, to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.*... There is no other way. Just because you're here this morning...means nothing, just because you participate in church activities, means nothing. Just because you give to the church, means nothing. The real matter is, are you living your day to day live unto Jesus Christ as Lord?

You may not like what I've said this morning, and you may even get mad at me...and that's fine, I'm not hear to "*tickle your ears.*" I've come to declare unto you the "*Truth of God*". I've come to call you to repent, by turning from this world, to follow Christ! And in doing so, I don't want to give you the wrong idea, I don't want to mislead you into thinking it's something it's not. Following Christ is a hard, tough life. One that involves suffering and rejection. BUT...it is the way to the Father, and it is the only way. And I will add, it is worth every thing I will suffer in this life... If you're here this morning, and you know, you are living in the world, (even though you go to church), and you realize what I'm saying is true, but you are struggling with the cost. It's too high, you're not sure about giving up your LIFE... Let me just say this, so you know, "If you choose to cling to this world, and continue to live your life in this world...YOU will be judged and will suffer the wrath of God, right along with the world..."

Jesus was straight up with this man, because He didn't want this man to make this commitment, only later, to have him turn away, and follow Him no more. Just as I am trying to do this morning... And don't you allow anyone to tell you anything different... For if they do, you know that it's not the true gospel, for what I am telling you right now, is ***the gospel according to Jesus Christ Himself!***