

The Gospel According to Jesus Luke 9:57~62, part 3

This morning, I'd like to conclude with the last part of a three part series, I have entitled "*The Gospel According to Jesus*." A series that has been aimed at exposing the perverted and adulterated gospel of our day. Beloved, if there's anything we must do as a church, especially it's leaders, is that we must do everything in our power to protect the purity of the gospel of Christ! We must keep it pure and unadulterated, at any cost! For it is through the pure gospel of Christ, that God has chosen to save the world! The gospel of Christ is the only thing in the world, that has the power to save men and women, who are dying in sin!

Paul was adamant in his day to keep the gospel pure... So adamant in fact, that in Galatians, two times, back to back, Paul declares that anyone preaches "*any other gospel*" (than what he had delivered to them), Paul says "*Let them be accursed!*" A better definition is "damned!" Paul says if anybody pervert the precious gospel of Christ, and alter it in any way... let that man be DAMNED! Speaking of "*his soul*." The point being, he'd much rather see one man, (who has perverted the gospel) be damned, meaning the annihilation of his soul... than for him to continue, resulting in thousands of souls being annihilated, as a result of not hearing the one true gospel of God, that is able to save men's souls!

*(Romans 1:16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for **IT is the power of God** unto salvation...* It is the POWER in the pure gospel of Christ, the message of the Cross... that is able to deliver the souls of men from sin and this world!

Well, that serves as a good analogy as to how men have "*diluted*" the gospel in our day, by "*watering it down*." Rather than call men to humble themselves, and taking up the cross of Christ, living sacrificial lives unto Him... The gospel of our day, allows a man to continue to live to "his life in this world," living to this world and the things of this world, with no real commitment or dedication to Christ, and yet, be considered Ok with God! Beloved, that is not the kind of gospel Jesus preached! His was demanding, He required a man to turn from this world, He required men to give Him their utter and complete loyalty! Stating that anything less wouldn't do! He called for sacrifice, for commitment, and such, that you never hear in our day. The gospel has been so watered down in our day, that it has lost it's power to deliver men from sin, and from this world. Men are yet living to this world, and the things of this world, and feel as though they are fine. But that is far from the gospel Jesus preached...

This morning, I want to look at the final man in this section... It appears that this man had been listening to the conversation between the previous two men and Jesus. And it becomes apparent, that not only did he hear what Jesus told the man, but clearly understood what Jesus meant by it. Remember the conversation Jesus had with that man, and what He had told him. We are told that Jesus had invited the man to "follow Him," to which the man insinuated that he would, but that before he did, he asked the Lord to allow him to go back home and take care of his father, until he died. That's what he means by "*Let me first go and bury my father*." The man was not saying that his father had already died, and that he need to go bury him first. But rather, he was saying that he couldn't follow him right now, because he needed to help take care of his father, and his business first. But that when he died, he would. To which Jesus responded...

(Vs 60) ⁶⁰ *Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*

The point here, is "*Loyalty*"... Basically, the response Jesus gave him, was that if he wanted to follow Him, it would require his complete loyalty to Him. He would have to be willing to lay everything and everyone aside, as to give Jesus and His will, the supreme place in his life! Again, the issue here is loyalty. "*Suffer me **first** to go and bury my father*. This man had put his father and his fathers business,

before that of Jesus'. To which Jesus responds by basically telling him, "*Not to concern himself with the futile matters of this world, but rather give himself to the matters of the Kingdom of God.*"

"Let those who are spiritually dead take care of the matters of the spiritually dead."

*"Let those who are **"of this world"** take care of **those of this world**...*

Your concerns must be to the things of God.

Christ requires our complete loyalty and devotion to Him. There is *nothing* or *no one* who is to take precedence over Him...*not even our family!*

Understood properly, Jesus was simply seeking the place He deserves in our lives... "*First place*". Speaking of Him being the "*Lord*" of our lives. In order to be "*Lord*," He and His will must have precedence over all things, and everyone...even our families! There's nothing wrong with honoring our "*earthly fathers*," taking care of our "*earthly fathers*," but that is not to take precedence over our "*Heavenly Father!*" And the will of the Heavenly Father is, that men/women yield themselves under the "*Lordship of His Son!*"

Placing Him above everything and everyone...even our families! Which brings us to this third man here in our passage. It appears that this man "*got it*"...it seems that he understood what Jesus was saying to the man about "*Letting the dead bury the dead...*" because immediately he comes up to Jesus, and declares that "*he is willing to leave his family*"...but only ask, that he be allowed to go tell them bye first...

(Vs 61)⁶¹ *And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; **but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.***

Notice...this third man, like the first man, expressed his desire to follow Jesus... But, also like the first man, he too had something he wanted to do **FIRST**... The issue once again, is *loyalty*...

The man says, "*Lord, I'm willing to do that...I'm willing to put you before my family...*" "*But will you let me **first** go home, and tell them bye?*"

A reasonable request...right? He simply wants to go home one more time, and see his family, and tell them goodbye. That seems like a reasonable request, right?

But...according to what Jesus said in response, this too was too much to ask.

(Vs 62)⁶² *No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

"*Proverbially speaking*"...Jesus basically tells this man, he too, is not ready to be *one of His followers*.

We may be like, "*Come on*"...the guy just wants to go tell his family bye! We may read what is written hear, and think, "*that's a little harsh...right?*" What's wrong with allowing the man to go home and tell his family bye?

Well, the problem with this man goes beyond what his request to go back home and tell his family bye... It goes "*much deeper*" than that. By that, I'm referring to the fact, that we are only told what the man "*said*" in regards to his willingness to follow him. All we have to consider is, the "*words*" spoken from this man's lips... But, it is what we "*do not have*" here, (*that Jesus did*), that explains why Jesus said what He did. Listen, the response that Jesus gave here, *was not simply in response to what this man said*, but in accordance to what was in "*his heart*."

When you understand the proverbial expression that Jesus used, you understand that He's referring to "*Double-Mindedness...or Half-Heartedness*." Basically, in spite of the man's apparent willingness to leave his family to follow Him, Jesus knew differently! He looked past the claims of the man...to the heart of the man! And listen, if Jesus says he's *half-hearted* and unfit for the kingdom of God...then he's

half-hearted, and unfit for the kingdom of God. For Jesus looks past the “*professions of the lips*,” to the “*desires of a man’s heart*” ...right?

(John 2) ²³Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. ²⁴But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, ²⁵And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

To put that in its simplest terms... Jesus knew this was not “*Genuine Faith*”... Jesus was well aware of why they “*believed*” on Him, was for the fact they had seen the miracles He’d performed! They had not come to Him, in recognition of their “*Sinful condition*,” and in the awareness of Him being the Lord and Savior of mankind. Beloved, Jesus is not just a miracle worker, or a healer, or a great teacher... He is the Lord of Heaven and earth, and the Savior of all mankind... He came to save us from our sins! Knowing why this men came to Him, Jesus keep His distance...

Back here in Luke, in our passage this morning, we see the same thing, in that Jesus tells this man he is not ready to be His disciple. What is it that Jesus requires based on His use of the analogy? **Total dedication...not half-hearted commitment.**

(Vs 62) ⁶² *No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

To put one’s hand to a plow is a proverbial expression to signify undertaking any business. In order that a plowman may accomplish his work, it is necessary to look onward, to look forward, (and not be looking back) in order to be “*faithful*” to his work. Here Jesus uses that “*Proverbial expression*” to establish what is required to follow Him. Jesus makes it clear, that desires to follow Him, must do it with his whole heart! He that comes still loving the world, still looking with regret on its pleasures, its wealth, and its honors, and have not “*wholly*” forsaken them as his portion, cannot be a Christian, and is not fit for the kingdom of God. The “*Call of Christ*” is a call for total commitment...not **half-heartedness**. Jesus will not share a man’s heart with this world!

It’s quite possible, that by using the analogy of the “*Putting one’s hand to the plow and looking back*,” that Jesus was thinking of Elijah’s call of Elisha. I say that for two reasons, first of all, the disciples had just referenced Elijah’s calling down fire from heaven, in their request to deal with the Samaritans rejection of Jesus. Secondly, in 1Kings 19, we learn that Elisha was called to be a prophet (by Elijah)...when he was right in the act of plowing a field. Elisha was right in the middle of plowing a field, when Elijah came by and called him to be a prophet. And according to the account, he stopped what he immediately stopped what he was doing, and never looked back. Matter of fact, he slaughtered the oxen so that they would not be a temptation to return!

Elisha’s response to the call of God, revealed a “*single-minded devotion*”... It revealed a “*whole-hearted commitment*” to this new work that God had called him to! By killing the oxen, this ensured there was nothing to go back too! The only thing left for Elisha, was forward!

Jesus saw that this man’s heart was not wholly with Him... Therefore Jesus simply is straight up with this man, and tells him his heart’s not right, and declares, given his current condition, he’s not ready to follow him! Jesus knew that he would be plowing and looking back the whole time.

Jesus requires “*whole-heartedness*” and “*Single-mindedness*”...and not “*Half-heartedness*” and “*Double-mindedness*,” as portrayed here in the man laying hold of the plow and looking back! According to Christ Himself, such a man is not fit for the kingdom of God!

I’d like to wrap up this series, on “*The gospel according to Jesus*,” by stating as simply and clearly as I can, the three requirements that Jesus Himself lays down here, that is required of a man or woman, in order to follow Him...

(Vs 57~58) Anyone wanting to follow Christ, must be willing to “*give up their life in this world.*” To follow Christ, requires us to leave this world in the sense of “*Living here any longer.*” This world is no longer “*Our home,*” for our home is in heaven! We are just pilgrims passing through. If you like it here in this neighborhood, and desire to fit in and live here...you can’t follow Christ!

(Vs 59~60) To follow Christ, one must be willing to put Him above everything and everyone! Jesus Christ is the Son of God...He is the Lord of Heaven and Earth...and requires that men honor Him as such. He will take second place, third place, fourth place...to no one, not even our families! Our Highest loyalty and devotion must be to Him and Him alone! He must be Lord of our Life!

(Vs 61~62) Lastly, to follow Christ, demands “*Whole-heartedness*” and “*Single-Mindedness!*” The Lord will not *share our hearts* with the world... According to Jesus Himself, no “*half-hearted*” man is fit for the kingdom of God. Any man who “*looks back*” to the world, reveals yet a love “*for this world.*” And again, the Lord will not share our hearts with this world.

When you consider these, it doesn’t take long to realize, that these are very “*High Standards.*” For the “*natural*” man, these are too much, the price is too high, a price that he is not willing to pay! But to the man who’s eyes have been “*opened*” by the gospel of Jesus Christ, these are not high at all! But on the contrary, these things that we are not only willing to do, but it is our whole heart! It’s what we desire more than anything else!

Let me explain... The truth revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, has the power to change the hearts and minds of sinful, worldly men! The message of the cross speaks to “*our depravity*”...“*our hopeless condition,*” it sheds light on this world, and the God of this world! We learn through the gospel of Christ, that we are sinners living in a fallen world, that has Satan as it’s god! And the fact that the one true living God, the Father of the Lord Jesus, sent His Son into the world, to die for sinners. Listen, Jesus died to win your heart! He died on the cross to win your love and affection. And that all who believe His message, and trust in His sacrificial offering up of His life for our sins...and “*Follow Him*”...will be spared from the wrath of God that is coming on this world!

Knowing who this current world we’re living in, belongs to...I want no part in it...
What I’ve learned about Christ, there is none I love more!
What I’ve learned about this world, I want nothing to do with it!

Based on this passage, I want to ask you three questions, that speak to the requirements and conditions that Jesus himself lays down...

- 1) Where is your home? (Here or Heaven)
- 2) Where is your loyalty? (Is Jesus Lord of YOUR LIFE?)
- 3) Where is your heart? (Do you yet have love for this world?)