

Christianity Is Not What You Think It Is

Welcome

Movie Night, National day of prayer, Business Meeting.

Introduction

- If you have your Bible....
- Who we are: Verse by verse, submitting ourselves to it, not over it. Original intent not personal intent. Not based on feelings but on historical context. The Bible, or a verse cannot mean what it did not mean to the original audiences.
- every book, every chapter, every verse, every word, every syllable, every letter is infallible, perfect, and sufficient for life and godliness.
- Review: the book of Luke, Last week “who is the greatest?”

Luke 9:51-62

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. 53 But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 And they went on to another village.

57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” 58 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” 59 To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” 60 And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” 61 Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” 62 Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Context/Story

Up until this point, Jesus’ entire ministry has been around the sea of Galilee, Jerusalem is altogether different. This is the big city. in that day, there were upwards of a hundred thousand people. Thousands of years ago, **Abraham almost sacrificed his son Isaac on Mount Moriah**. This is the same mountain that **King Solomon built the temple**. The City surrounding this mountain, this temple, is Jerusalem. **Jesus is going to the place where God provided a ram as a replacement sacrifice for Isaac**. The imagery here is immense.

It was said that in that region, God, himself, would provide. that ultimately Jesus would come, the Son of God, as Abraham had Isaac **carry his wood**, so the Father would have God the Son carry his own wood to the place where He would die. Where he would atone as a substitute for the sins of many.

I have titled this sermon, Christianity is not what you think it is. Because in both our day, and in biblical times, people had a deep misunderstanding on who Jesus is, and what He came to do.

I would like to warn you in advance, this passage is not a feel good passage... it digs deep into the challenges of being a disciple of Christ. But as we go through, I want to remind us, that *even with all the challenges of Christianity. Jesus is worth following.*

Review: Following Jesus means Hardship. Rejection. Sacrifice.

Following Jesus means Hardship (Vs 51)

1. Explain
 - a. To set His face towards Jerusalem meant something very different for Jesus than it did for the disciples. You can see the visions of greatness that danced in their heads in verse 46:
 - i. "An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest."
 - ii. For the disciples, Jerusalem and glory were just around the corner. O what it would mean when Jesus took the throne! But Jesus had another vision in his head. When Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem, he set his face to die.
 - b. Keep in mind here, life was good, Jesus was famous, He had all the status he could ever want. He could have lived the rest of his life in luxury, having gained notoriety for his healings, and his exorcisms. To turn his back on all this and set his face towards vicious whipping and beating and spitting and mocking and crucifixion was not easy. It was hard.
 - c. Jesus was not accidentally entangled in a web of injustice. The saving benefits of his death for sinners were not an afterthought. God planned it all out, God appointed the time. Jesus saw that the time had come and set his face to fulfill his mission: to die in Jerusalem for our sake.
2. Prove
 - a. John 10:15-18 - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."
3. Apply
 - a. Christianity is not for the fair weather fan.
 - b. If Christ set his face to go to Jerusalem, we ought to help one another week after week to set our faces like flint against the allurements of this world, and follow the King of kings on the Calvary road.
 - c. When God gives us a mission, a purpose, a calling, his desire for us is to set our faces toward our goal and battle with everything we have to get there. When God calls us to do a thing, we do not treat it as an optional thing. He is God, we are not, we bow to His will, He does not bow to ours. We follow Him in obedience.

- d. Some of us are here today, and we know what God desires of us, today is the day to follow the example of Jesus, and set our faces in the direction God has set for us.

Following Jesus means Rejection (Vs 52-56)

1. Explain

- a. Samaritan villages Jesus is passing through want nothing to do with him because he is not a part of their tribe.
- i. Who were the samaritans.
 1. Jews who had **intermarried and intermingled with pagans**. They had **created their own religion, own priests, own temples, and own identity, separate from israel**. Like Mormons.
 2. Nobody knew what to do with them. They were largely avoided because people didn't know what to do with them.
 3. Jesus didn't go around Utah as was a common practice in that day, he went through Utah. And was rejected.
 4. **Jesus Before Tribe**. (ethnic group, nationality, homeschool group, bowling league, political affiliation, socio-economic class) Who is your tribe? And does your tribe come before Jesus?
 - b. Jesus' journey is our journey
 - c. **Following Jesus means that this world will not receive you**. You will be Rejected time and again for your faith. You will be looked down on, disparaged, attacked.
 - i. It shouldn't surprise us that our culture is increasingly persecuting and attacking christians! We act like it is absolutely unacceptable. And we behave like James and John when they say, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"
 1. Jesus rebukes them for a reason.
 - a. Being a christian does not mean deploying God's missiles against the enemy in righteous indignation. Being a christian means following him on the Calvary road which leads to suffering and death. - John Piper
 2. He was rejected in His hometown. He was rejected by the religion which claimed to worship him. He was rejected by Israel, his own people. He was rejected.
 3. **Having our rights and our freedoms stripped of us, means that we are walking in His footsteps**. The gospel comes before personal rights, **We must put Jesus before Freedom**.
 - ii. What James and John had to learn, what we all must learn, is that **Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is our journey**, and if he set his face to go there and die, we must set our face to die with him.

2. Prove

- a. John 15:18-20 - If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.
3. Apply
- a. Were James and John wrong for their actions? Calling down condemnation on those who reject Jesus? Turn or burn? Yes and no.
- Jesus himself says that rejection of him brings condemnation, but now is not the time for wrath.
 - Jesus is patient** with them as he's patient with you, as he's patient with me, and as he's patient with his own disciples, James and John. He's really patient with us. It doesn't mean we should be lazy or not have a sense of urgency. But it does mean that as long as we're breathing, it's not yet the time of condemnation.
- b. Next comes 3 examples of People who want to follow Jesus. And Jesus Tells them very hard things to hear.

Following Jesus means Sacrifice (Vs 57-62)

1. Explain
- Let's be honest, this is not what we would expect for Jesus to do. It is almost like Jesus is trying to talk this guy out of following Him. He is basically saying, if you follow me, you will have a hard life. If you are going to follow me, you must walk where I walk, and I am walking to the cross. You don't really understand what it means to follow me...
 - Ill go wherever you go
 - You sure about that? Before you sign up to follow me, let's make it clear that it's not going to be easy. I'm a homeless guy who's flat broke, gonna get crucified. You ready to sign up to follow me wherever I go? You okay with that?
 - Lord let me bury my father
 - Let the dead bury their own dead
 - There is an obligation that supersedes every other obligation in life.
 - Jesus desires to be our first priority. "Jesus, I want follow you, but first, let me do this." What they're saying is, "Jesus, I want following you to be my second priority. My first priority is something else, Is that okay?" no its not okay.
 - But even so, this is one of the toughest sayings in the whole Bible.
 - Let me bury my dad, NO!
 - Funerals in the old testament were big.
 - I don't believe His dad is dead yet...

4. I totally want to follow you, Jesus, but if I don't see them through to their death and do everything right, I'm not going to get my inheritance. My inheritance is big." This is how it worked, you take care of your family, and then they give you a big inheritance.
5. So I think what he's telling Jesus is this, "Someday, some year in the future, I'm gonna follow you. Remember my face, I'll be back later. In ten, fifteen, twenty years when my dad dies, and I get this big fat inheritance check, then I'm gonna be a Christian. I'm gonna tithe off the top, and I'm gonna follow you, and I'm gonna preach and go into ministry, and it's gonna be great, someday, but not today."
6. Let me live how I want to live a bit more, then I will follow you God.
7. Jesus is telling Him, Live with a sense of urgency
- d. Let me say farewell to those in my home.
 - i. Noone who puts his hands to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.
 1. Jesus knows that if he goes back, he may never return to work in the ministry
 2. He may get back to the comfort zone that he has, and begin to think, "ya know, I can follow Jesus from here" I don't need to leave...
 3. Elijah and Elisha had this conversation. Elisha burned his plow.
 - a. No looking back
 - b. Soldiers land on a beach and burn the boats.
 4. Looking back while plowing.
 - e. We preach a message of death.
2. Prove
 - a. Romans 6:6-11- We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
 - b. Colossians 3:5 - Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
3. Apply
 - a. We must be careful when witnessing that we do not trick people into becoming Christians. Evangelism is not about closing a sale, or sealing a deal. We are here to proclaim the full gospel. That means we cannot sugarcoat christianity.
 - b. **what happens sometimes in Christianity is in an effort to get people to pray to receive Jesus, we lie to them.**

- i. Oh, you're sick, come to Jesus, he'll make you healthy.
 - ii. Oh, you're poor, come to Jesus, he'll make you rich.
 - iii. Oh, you're sad, come to Jesus, he'll make ya happy.
 - iv. People come to Jesus and say, "You know what? It didn't work. I'm more broke than I was. I was sad, now I'm really sad,
 - v. I didn't get healed, I got cancer. This isn't working. My circumstances haven't changed. I'm disappointed with God.
 - vi. **Let me tell you this right upfront, following Jesus is the best life, but it's certainly not the easiest.**
- c. In some places in the world, many of the consequences Jesus is talking about are a reality. Many have to give up their families, their inheritance, their future, their comfort, their friends, to follow Jesus.
- i. If there comes a point in your life where you are faced with a choice—Jesus or the comforts of this life—which will you choose?
- d. So I tell you this up front. I want you all to become Christians, and I know this isn't much of a sales pitch, right? This isn't much of a sales pitch...
- e. But the truth is, we're not selling anything. We're offering God as the gift, not what he gives, who he is. God is the gift. God is the treasure. God is the joy, his name is Jesus. And I don't want to sell you Jesus in a way like a marketer or an advertiser or a salesman.
- i. **Are you coming to God because you love, adore, cherish, and worship Him? Or are you coming to God to use Him to get to something you desire more?**

Conclusion

Jesus is our example... He is setting His face toward Jerusalem and setting his hand to the plow. He is not getting distracted with comfort, or security. He isn't looking back. He is plowing a straight row. He has a task to accomplish. He is going to the cross to pay for the sins of you and I. He goes to death, so that we might live. This is what it means to be a Christian. To follow this Jesus above everything else. Regardless of the suffering, the rejection, the hardship. Following Jesus is worth it all.

Matthew 13:44 - The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

You know that in the end you are not really giving away anything at all. Instead you are gaining. Yes, you are abandoning everything you have, but you are also gaining more than you could have in any other way. So with joy— with joy!—you sell it all, you abandon it all. Why? Because you have found something worth losing everything else for.

This is the picture of Jesus in the gospel. He is something, someone, worth losing everything for. And if we walk away from the Jesus of the gospel, we walk away from eternal riches.

Invitation

Pray



LUKE 9:51-62 Christianity Is Not What You Think It Is

INTRODUCTION Jesus sets off toward Jerusalem. On the way, he is rejected by the Samaritans, and he challenges three people who want to follow Him by saying that there is a cost to being a disciple of Jesus.

DISCUSSION

- What has it cost you to follow Jesus?

EXPLANATION

- Why was Jesus not received in Samaria? (v. 53)
- What does the response of the disciples reveal about their hearts? (v. 54)
- Why does Jesus rebuke them? (v. 55)

APPLICATION

- How do you generally respond to opposition?
- How does Jesus' responses to the three potential followers surprise you?
- What has God called you to that you need to set your face toward?
- What do you need to leave to be a faithful disciple of Jesus?

THE 5 W's (broken up into gendered groups)

- Word (How have you gotten into the word this week?)
- Wife/Husband/Family (How are you doing with your spouse/family?)
- Wellness (What are you doing to take care of yourself?)
- Work (How are you handling the work God has given you?)
- Witness (Who have you witnessed to, or prayed for this week?)