

It Costs to Follow Jesus!
Luke 9:57-62 It Costs to Follow Jesus

You may have heard the old expression: "It pays to follow Jesus!"

While there is truth in that expression,

our Lord's message in this passage is not that it *pays* to follow Jesus;

His message is that it *costs* to follow Jesus.

Many of Jesus' listeners don't realize the commitment and sacrifice required to identify with Him.

They want to follow Him, but aren't willing to pay the price.

ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF THEIR MESSIAH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ARE PRESENTED AS JESUS TRAVELS TOWARD JERUSALEM.

REJECTION OF THE SON OF MAN 9:51-19:27

Jesus has demonstrated that He is the Messiah.

He has come to fulfill the covenants as God had promised.

Luke describes Israel's rejection in detail.

At the same time, He's determined to go to Jerusalem to die **9:51**

The rejection begins in Samaria 9:51-56

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP 9:57-62

WHAT'S THE ISSUE THESE THREE DISCUSS WITH JESUS?

NOT . . . SALVATION

None of these speaks to the issue of salvation, or of obtaining eternal life.

To become a child of God, one does nothing.

It is a gift from God to those who stop trying to earn their way and trust Jesus.

BUT . . . In *all* three cases the issue is following Jesus.

Jesus said "*My yoke is easy and My burden is light*" but he never says it will be easy to follow Him! Or that He will make light demands on His disciples!

Many of those wishing to identify with Jesus do not realize the nature of the commitment required and what it might cost them personally.

Jesus wants us to realize that traveling with Him won't be an easy road to fame and glory.

Remember—He's on the way to Jerusalem to die.

However, it isn't just going to be hard because of this trip.

It's *always* costly to identify publicly with Jesus.

Jesus warns: "*If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*" (John 15:20)

Paul: "*All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*" (2 Tim. 3:12)

When people become aware of the cost of following Jesus, the majority choose to return to their old life.

It isn't a decision to reject Jesus.

They would take the life He came to offer.

BUT—they would leave this business of *following Him* to someone else:

"Let somebody younger do it!" "Let somebody more fanatical do it!"

Like Moses, they say, "Lord, let *anybody* else do it!!!"

What's your favorite excuse for not doing something?

(e.g., "The dog ate my homework!")

All of us are tempted to make excuses. One of my favorite lists of excuses is the list of excuses for traffic accidents offered to police officers (these are real!):

"An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car, and vanished."

"I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law, and headed over the embankment."

"The pedestrian had no idea which direction to go, so I ran over him."

"The guy was all over the road; I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him."

"Suddenly a tree was there, where no tree had been before."

Example of how we use excuses posed by farmer who asked a neighbor to borrow rope.

"Sorry," said the neighbor, "I'm using my rope to tie up my milk."

"Rope can't tie up milk."

"When a man doesn't want to do something, one excuse is as good as another."

Sometimes we even make excuses to God!—to avoid doing something we don't want to do

How does Jesus respond to excuses given by those presented the opportunity to follow Him?

What do His responses to each of them mean?

Three issues that each of us must consider, if we desire to follow Jesus:

[Three "costs" we must consider:]

#1 It will cost us the comforts of home 9:57-58

The person's desire:

First person comes saying: "Hey Jesus, I want to be part of your team."

This is obviously where it's at and I want a piece of the action."

He seems to think that following Jesus will be a glamorous life.

He wants to be involved with Jesus.

Robert Ard: difference between involvement and commitment: "Look at plate of ham and eggs: the chicken was involved. But the pig was committed."

Jesus' response:

Jesus corrects his impression, telling him discipleship is not easy.

It's a difficult life with no place to call home.

Jesus wouldn't have gone over real big with "prosperity gospel" preachers.

He didn't tell His followers, "Come along with me and I'll make you rich!"

It sounds like that is what this "would-be follower" expected.

Jesus warns him that it won't be like that.

Jesus had no material resources to reward His followers.

Those who want to follow Him must give up the comforts of home! *He had!*

Jesus places three requirements on his followers:

1) Deny yourself

2) Take up your cross daily

3) Follow Me

His promised compensation package:

Jesus is headed to Jerusalem to die.

—Not the time to go along for the ride, the glamour, or the fringe benefits.

Departure for Guatemala—Not a great salary,

"but the retirement plan is out of this world!"

Different than the way we ask people to get involved in God's work.

We say, *"Don't worry. It won't take much. Only a few hours a week."*

Jesus says, *"Count the cost!"*

No one can say Jesus induced them to follow Him under false pretenses.

Jesus paid men the compliment of pitching his demands high.

If we insisted on higher standards, we might have fewer volunteers,

but those that sign up would be committed to following Him.

Jesus says that following Him will **cost us the comforts of home!**

What might this demand mean for you?

#2 **It will cost us the accumulation of earthly treasure 9:59-60**

(maybe our inheritance)

The person's desire:

What's clear is that when the Lord says to him: "Follow me!"

This person responds: "Later! I am not ready right now."

We're tempted to defer doing what we know we should do
and to put it off for a more convenient time.

Another issue may be at stake here: – It's not likely the father had already died.

Likely the father was near (?) death and an inheritance was at stake.

Barclay: "An official in the East tells of a brilliant young Arab, offered a scholarship to Oxford or Cambridge. His answer: "I'll take it after I have buried my father." At the time his father was about forty years of age."

His dad wouldn't be likely to live forever. After he's gone and the property is divided, THEN there will always be time to follow Jesus with what's left over!

He just had *one more little thing to do first!*

Jesus' response:

"Let the dead bury their dead"—the spiritually dead devote themselves to such matters.

It's understandable that protecting an inheritance would be top priority for the world.

BUT, those who would follow him, are after a different priority.

God has a different priority for His followers.

There's no more important goal to pursue in life

– No more important business to be about, than God's business.

The disciple is called to be a minister, and must not *"entangle himself with the affairs of this world"* (2 Tim. 2:4).

What excuses will we offer against a present obedience to the call of Christ?

Jesus asks, *"Am I more important to you than your inheritance?"*

Jesus says that following Him:

May cost us the comforts of home.

It may also cost us the accumulation of earthly treasure

What might this demand mean for you?

Third thing Jesus indicates it may cost us to follow Him:

#3 **It may cost us friend and family relationships. 9:61-62**

The person's desire:

"I will follow Thee, *BUT . . .*"

We won't be able to place the same high priority on "that old gang of ours."

Following them and fulfilling all their expectations.

Following Him will bring us into conflict with some of the gang's expectations

Elijah allowed Elisha to do this when he was out plowing (1 Ki. 19:19-20)

What does this mean? – Cf. Elisha–1 Kings 19:19-21; Jephthah's daughter

– Judges 11:36-40; Isaac's bride (Rebekah) Gen. 24:50-56;

Jesus' response:

He underlines the fact that His message of the kingdom of God is more important than anything else—even family members.

Messiah and His Message cannot wait!

Jesus' message is urgent; it demands total allegiance.

Cf. the disciples when Jesus calls them to follow Him— they leave their nets

They don't tie up the boats, arrange their business affairs, or anything.

They leave it all and follow Him.

That seems to be what he asks of this one also.

Leave everything else behind and follow me.

Jesus' servants should not have divided interests.

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem to die; it's now or never for this one to decide to follow Him.

He can't follow Jesus because he's looking back, rather than ahead.

His heart is not wholly with Him; he'd be plowing and looking back all the time (Lot's wife—Gen. 19:17, 26; Phil. 3:13-14; James 1:6-7)

"FIT for the Kingdom of God" => [NIV] "fit for service in the kingdom of God"

Entry isn't the issue; **service** is the issue!

M.R. Vincent: "Good work requires the entire committal of the worker."

Barclay: "No ploughman ever ploughed a straight furrow looking back over his shoulder."

M. R. DeHaan: "Jesus uses the figure of plowing to make a straight furrow. I remember well my uncle, many years ago, teaching me how to plow straight. I watched him start the field. He would first plow a "back furrow" in the middle of the field. If this back furrow were straight, all the other furrows would be the same. And then came the time for me to try. I had seen him make a furrow as straight as an arrow. He told me the secret: "Don't look at the furrow you're plowing. Keep your head up. Never look back to see how you are doing—look straight ahead." Then, when he put the plow point in at one end of the field, he gave me the reins and said, "I'll stand at the other end. You keep your eye on me and plow straight toward me. Don't look down. Don't look back—just keep your eyes on me."

Jesus warned those who wanted to follow Him that **it might cost them friends or family relationships.**

What might this demand mean for you?

Newsweek magazine reported on "the new wave of mountain men." Some sixty thousand serious mountain climbers in the U.S. In the upper echelon of serious climbers is a small elite group known as "hard men." Climbing mountains and scaling sheer rock faces is their life. They're totally committed to it! Their ultimate experience is "free soloing"—climbing with no equipment and no safety ropes.

John Baker is considered the best of the hard men. He has "free-soloed" some of the most difficult rock faces in the United States. His skill has been acquired through commitment and training. His wife says she can't believe his dedication. When John isn't climbing, he's often found at home hanging by his fingertips to strengthen his arms and hands.

Where are "hard people" for Jesus? Those who use all their energy for Christ?

When F. B. Meyer was 17, he felt the Lord call him into ministry. When he told his mother, she reminded him that such a decision would involve sacrifice and difficult moments. She hinted that if he later regretted it, he could always leave the ministry. He looked her straight in the eye, and said, "Never, Mother! That would be putting my hand to the plow and looking back." F.B. Meyer never retreated nor slackened his pace for God. God used him to do a marvelous work on the mission field. One

biographer traces his success to that commitment he made at 17, when he told his mother that having put his hand to the plow, he would never look back!
We need people willing to make that kind of commitment to follow Jesus!

**These people want to follow Him, but haven't counted the cost.
Jesus' response FORCES each of them– TO MAKE A CHOICE!**

Will they follow Him or not? Will they pay the price He exacts?

Luke never records the outcome for any of the three!

(Implication they turned back??)

We don't know about them.

It's as if we're left to respond for them! What's *our* answer going to be?

What they decided ultimately is none of our business.

Luke causes *us* to focus on the issues. Now we must answer it for ourselves.

It's an open ended story! You fill in the ending!

How will your story end?

What's the highest cost following Jesus might mean for us?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, executed by Nazis because of his testimony, said: "When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die." To follow Jesus no matter what the cost--that's the way of the cross.

Jim Elliot, encouraged others to serve when he said: **"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."**

What do you think these three people did about it?

What are you going to do about it?

If Jesus were to say today, "Follow Me!" How would we respond?

Are we ready to follow Him?

Are we prepared to pay whatever it may cost?

"I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS"