



WEEK SEVEN: DON'T LOOK BACK

The call to the Kingdom of God is a call to radical obedience, commitment and sacrifice. Jesus models this obedience for us, but also calls his followers to it.

TEXT: LUKE 9:57-62

1. THE CALL TO FOLLOW JESUS IS A CALL TO COMMITMENT AND SACRIFICE

Jesus said that in order to follow him, he has to have 100% of our hearts. The early church was sold out to Christ, despite genuine persecution and hardship. Jesus never promised that following him would make our lives easier, but he did promise us himself. Sadly, due to the decline in the church, the western church has more glamorously packaged Christianity, and in some ways sold society a false gospel, without meaning to. Many of us have unwittingly bought in to this version of Christianity because it seems reasonable and less costly than the gospel of the first century.

Obstacles we face today in being sold out Christians:

- Cultural Christianity - most of us attend church once a week and we do not allow the church to make any demands on our lives. We come to consume a message, feel good and then leave without it transforming our lives.
- Self-Deceit - we believe that our cultural Christianity is the real thing, but Jesus said it is not. We are either all or we are not.
- Double Mindedness - many of us have good intentions, but we lack the faith to believe that God's ways and expectations of us are best. And so we get confused and torn by what we hear in the world, and we end up living compromised lives.
- Love of the World - many of us are just unwilling to give things up to follow Christ, which shows where our affections really lie.

Areas for our attention

- Read Romans 12:2 & Philippians 4:8
 - Time - as believers we need to be urgently thoughtful towards the things of God, knowing that Kingdom work needs to come first.
 - Talent - God has given every one of us some abilities for the flourishing and building of the church and we need to be using them.
 - Treasure - our bank accounts should reflect lives submitted to and committed to Christ.
 - Thinking - our thoughts govern our behavior. As Christians, we are to meditate on the truth of God's word, and allow it to transform our worldly thinking patterns into gospel-centered ones. Our thinking tells us a lot about the true nature of our faith.
- ❖ Q: What obstacles mentioned above, do you most strongly identify with that are keeping you from living a life sold-out to Christ?
- ❖ Q: In which of the areas mentioned above (time, talent, treasure & thinking) is your devotion to Christ *most well* reflected? Explain.
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10 THINGS JESUS I WISH NEVER SAID

- ❖ Q: In which of the areas mentioned above (time, talent, treasure & thinking) reveals your lack of commitment to Christ? Explain.
- ❖ Q: In light of the fact that Jesus rebuked the church, in Revelation 3, for being luke-warm (passive/half-hearted), what do you think he would say to the version of Christianity you have been living over the past six months?
- ❖ Q: For those of us who realise that our hearts are cold towards God, which is evidenced by our priorities and commitments, what kind of response does the gospel call us to, and how does God's grace apply to us in this situation? (Let's consider together what repentance and faith looks like for a cold heart.)

2. JESUS GIVES US THE MOTIVATION AND THE MODEL FOR FOLLOWING

- Read Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 16:25-26, John 10:10

Most of us get really discouraged when we hear a message like this, because it feels like we are so hopeless, and we expect that the call to live Christ's way will be awful. But this perception is wrong. Jesus provides us with the motivation and model for our lives:

- Motivation – Read Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 16:25-26, John 10:10

When Jesus calls us to live our lives for him, he is in fact calling us to a better way, the way that we were always designed to live. He promises that his way will bring rest for our souls. Though the call comes at a high cost, there is nothing that compares to the fulfilment that life in him brings.

- Model – Read John 6:38, John 4:34 & John 5:30

Jesus lived this life perfectly, and so he has the right to call us to live the same life. He knows the cost involved, as well as the temptation and suffering that will come along the way. But he did not do it on his own, and neither do we. He was empowered by the Spirit and was led by God in all he did.

- ❖ Q: Why do we need Jesus to be both the motivation and the model for the life we are to live?

3. OUR GOAL SHOULD BE TO PLOW LINES THAT ARE LONG AND STRAIGHT

Jesus warned that there will be so many things that will seek to take our eyes off the prize, and cause us to doubt what we are leaving behind to follow him. This double mindedness removes our effectiveness, and it robs us from the joy and freedom that Jesus came to offer when we follow wholeheartedly after him. We need to ask ourselves who/what we are following in life, and if Christ really is the goal.

- ❖ Q: Why is it that when we look back, or focus on other things, we lose our effectiveness and joy?
- ❖ Q: What specific things/people keep taking your focus off following Christ? Explain why this happens.

Personal Reflection Q: If I am not fully following Christ, what now?