

What It Takes To Be Radically Committed to Christ!
Luke 9:57-62

Intro: In our “*It’s all about me*” world commitment is something spoke of frequently by business leaders and church leaders alike. A great business leader once said:

“...the basic philosophy, spirit, and drive of an organization have far more to do with its relative achievements than do technological or economic resources, organizational structure, innovation, and timing. All these things weigh heavily in success. But they are, I think, transcended by how strongly the people in the organization believe in its basic precepts and how faithfully they carry them out.”
(from Thomas J. Watson, Jr., *A Business and its Beliefs - The ideas that helped build IBM*).

What was this business leader saying? The success of a business has more to do with the commitment of its employees than in any other thing.

One Church’s web site had this to say about commitment:

“...commitment/membership to a local church seems to be the most prudent way for accountability, shepherding, and the utilization of one’s spiritual giftedness to take place...The New Testament clearly demonstrates (every epistle was written to a local church) the importance of commitment to the church through its structure of elders, deacons, and members.”

The best and clearest statement of commitment for the Christian is found in Luke 9:23 when Jesus says, “***...If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.***” Jesus is talking about commitment,

commitment to His purpose. No one who isn’t committed to his cause would willingly lay down his life for the sins of someone else.

In the same chapter of Luke’s gospel, Jesus also tells us what has to be let lose of if we are going to be totally committed to His cause.

[Ready Luke 9:57-62/pray/dismiss Jr. Church]

That commitment is lacking in our day, few would argue. Consider that next week we will remember the 6th anniversary of the most horrific attack on our nation in history, and yet a year ago more than 1/3 of all American’s aren’t sure the war on Terror can be won and many believe we are losing the war. Today a growing minority of American’s are beginning to think that the war on terror isn’t really a war but simply a “policing action” and that we should pursue terrorist only when they commit and act directly against America and do it through the justice department not the Pentagon.

Imagine where we might be today if the band of patriots who had banded together to gain our freedom from British oppression had lost their commitment to that cause. If they had decided that freedom wasn’t worth the effort. Of course that didn’t happen and today we are a free nation. Imagine if the allies in the 1940 had lost their commitment to freeing Europe from the Nazi’s where would the world be today? One can only shudder and guess.

Those who are committed to a cause are always people who are the ones who sacrifice the most for that cause but in the end they are also the ones who are most happy, peaceful and joyful in their spirit.

If you search religions writings you will find that every poll and every study done in the past 15 years finds that when someone is committed to Christ and His church they are more happy, joyful and at peace with whatever life throws at them.

Marriages are falling apart, families are crumbling and churches are all struggling because of a real lack of commitment. Radical Commitment to Christ and His service is fast disappearing in our day and in an age when the world needs to see radically committed Christians and that's sad.

In our text for today we find three men, men who may have been following along with Jesus when he made the comment about "...*taking up his cross daily, and follow Him*". These men, two volunteer to follow and one is called. Jesus uses their individual situation to tell them and us what we need to breakaway from or lose if we are going to be **Radically Committed to Christ**.

What Does It Take to Be Radically Committed to Christ?

We have to Set Aside Our...

- I **Earthly Security In The Same Way Jesus Did His Heavenly Security** (Vv. 57-58)
 - A For a long time Jesus' response to this man made no sense to me until I studied the life of a scribe
 - B If you read Matthew's account of this same man's story you will find that he was a scribe.
 - 1 The Scribe was indispensable to the Jewish life
 - 2 His word was recognized as having authority
 - 3 He was teacher
 - 4 Functioned as a priest
 - 5 He was a man of wealth and renown
 - C A scribe of Jesus' day was someone of upper middle class status

- 1 As a group the scribes hated Jesus because He had totally rejected their false traditions
- 2 It then appears that this scribe was prepared to give up a great deal to be a follower of Jesus
- D But Jesus saw beyond this mans willingness to be rejected by his peers – and looked into his heart
 - 1 As someone of upper middle class status this scribe was safe and secure in his belongings
 - 2 He would have had a nice home
 - 3 He wore nice clothes
 - 4 He and his family would have been afforded the best seats in public places
- E When Jesus says, "**...Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; ...**" this man knew Jesus was talking about the security of his earthly belongings
 - 1 Unlike the "**Son of man**" who had no place to lay His head
 - 2 This man not only had a place but it was likely a good, warm and safe place.
 - 3 Jesus was saying that "*If you follow me don't expect luxury or even a warm welcome*"
 - 4 While most of God's creatures have warm places in which to live and to sleep, *the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.*
- F **III/App:** To be Jesus' disciple, a person must willingly put aside worldly security. To follow Jesus *wherever* he would go (as this scribe said) would mean a willingness to give up home and security, to follow him meant to be constantly on the move, bringing his message to people in many places..
- G **Is that to much of Jesus to ask?**
 - 1 **He Set Aside His Heavenly Security for you!**
 - 2 Listen to these verses:

- (a) ***“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him...we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*** (1 John 4:9-14)
- (b) Jesus said, ***“...this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”*** (John 6:39-40).
- (c) Talk about **Setting Aside Security**, Jesus set aside His Heavenly Security to come to earth for a purpose and He was committed to that purpose unto His death
- (d) Look at V. 51, it says that, ***“...when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem”***
- (e) Now that’s commitment – Jesus was so committed to what His father had sent Him to do that nothing would deter Him

If we plan to be Radically Committed to following Christ then we Must Set Aside Our Earthly Security In The Same Way Jesus Did His Heavenly Security; Secondly, We Must Set Aside Our...

II Earthly Ties In The Same Way Jesus Did His Heavenly Ties (Vv. 59-60)

- A Notice that these last two men both have something **First they must do** isn’t that always the case – we always have something first we must do?

- B At first glance one might think that Jesus’ statement is a little harsh; not even being willing to let the man go to his father’s funeral.
 - 1 The truth is, however, that if his father waiting to be buried the man wouldn’t have been out in public where Jesus could have called him to follow Him – he would have been at home with the other mourners
 - 2 It is more likely that his dad was sick and maybe near death.
 - (a) This man may have been the oldest son who had the traditional responsibility to bury his dad when he did die
 - (b) Not to mention that he would have received the largest part of his father inheritance.
- C When we consider these facts then Jesus’ response to the man’s request to *‘let me first go bury my father...’* makes more sense
 - 1 Again, for those who what to follow Christ there is a cost involved
 - 2 We have to set aside any conditions we might have for serving before we begin to serve
- D In the first case the cost was losing **Earthly Security** in this case it is losing **Earthly Ties**.
 - 1 This man, whether for financial gain or family responsibility, wanted to wait for awhile before he began to follow Christ
 - 2 “The dead” in Aramaic can also mean “the dying.”
 - (a) So Jesus may have been saying, *“Let the dying bury the dead.”*
 - (b) In other words, let those who are spiritually dying (those who have not responded to the call of Christ) stay home and handle the responsibilities such as burying the dead

- (c) He was using his aged father as an excuse for not giving Christ active service
- E Jesus makes it very clear in Matthew 10:34-39 that earthly ties might have to be broken for his sake, ***“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. ³⁶And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. ³⁷He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. ³⁹He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”***
- F **III:** Luke does not give the reason why this man said no to Jesus. But Jesus used the response to teach an important lesson. True discipleship requires instant action; the responsibilities of the kingdom cannot be put off until a “better time.” Jesus did not teach people to forsake responsibilities to family, but he often gave commands to people in light of their real motives. Maybe this man wanted to delay following Christ and used his father as an excuse. There is a cost to following Jesus, and each follower must be ready to serve, even when it requires sacrifice. Don’t wait for a better time to follow Christ as your savior – he is calling you now. Don’t wait for a better time to follow and serve Jesus—he is calling you now. There will never be a better time for either than now.
- G We are asked to ***Set Aside our Earthly Ties*** just as Jesus willingly ***Set Aside His Heavenly Ties***, ***“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me”*** (John 6:38), for you

- H Isn’t it the least we can do for Him?
- 1 He willingly left His Father’s presence, laid aside all the use of all the powers and privileges of being his Son
 - 2 He did that to come here and pay the price for your sins
 - 3 Is He asking too much from us to ***Set Aside our Earthly ties for Him?***

To be Radically Committed To Following Christ We have to Set Aside our Earthly Ties as well as our Earthly Security In The Same Way Jesus Did His Heavenly Ties and Security, Finally we need to Set Aside our...

III Earthly Distractions (Vv. 61-62)

- A All this man wanted to do was go tell his family farewell.
- 1 In 1 Kings 19:19-21 we see a similar request when Elijah called Elisha to take his place.
 - 2 Elisha was called to be a prophet right in the middle of plowing a field—and he never looked back. In fact, he slaughtered the oxen so that they would not even be a temptation to return. Elisha then moved wholeheartedly into the ministry to which he had been called.
 - 3 He was allowed to go tell his family farewell first
 - 4 This man wasn’t
- B The only explanation I found was that Jesus must have sensed reluctance and an unfortunate willingness to put something else ahead of following Jesus in this man
- 1 Who knows what might occur on his trek back to his family that would deter him from the task at hand.
 - 2 Who knows what this attitude might mean in the years to come if a precedent were set that service for the kingdom can be put off in pursuit of other matters.
 - 3 “No,” Jesus answered, for this was not the type of follower he needed.

- C III: Rev. L. B. Williams, in his book on "Holiness Illustrations," relates the following: "A young man who was desperately in love with a young lady, wrote her that he would be willing to endure the cold of the frigid zone, or cross the burning sands of the desert, or climb the highest mountains, or swim the ocean, just to be in her charming presence." Then he closed his letter by saying, "And I will see you Wednesday night if it does not rain!"
- D Every farmer understands what Jesus means when He says, "**no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**"
- 1 Anything that distracts us from serving Him causes us to stray off course
 - 2 If you *look back* to a worldly life again and have a longing after that, if you *look back* as Lot's wife did to Sodom then you are not fit for the kingdom
 - 3 What does Jesus want from his followers?
 - (a) Total dedication, not halfhearted commitment.
 - (b) His followers must accept the cross along with the crown, judgment as well as mercy.
 - (c) They must count the cost and be willing to abandon everything else that has given them security.
 - (d) Nothing should distract them from service for the kingdom.
 - 4 How many people love the Lord devotedly, and will be in Sunday school Sunday morning, stay around for the morning worship service, come back for the evening service and even make prayer and Bible Study on Wednesday so long as it is convenient or doesn't interfere with their personal priorities and family get together?
- E We all have things that distract us.
- F It all boils down to priorities – what is important to us?

- 1 Family
 - 2 Fortune
 - 3 Fame
 - 4 Frills of life
 - 5 Can all be distractions
- G Jesus isn't telling us to neglect our family time – just make serving Him as high a priority.
- H **Unlike us, Jesus didn't have distractions**, in fact nothing would distract Jesus from His duty, His purpose
- 1 Again, look at V. 51, He '**steadfastly set His face...**'
 - 2 That is what we would call, '*Dogged determination*'
 - 3 He fixed His eyes on the Cross and absolutely nothing would turn His eyes, mind or heart from it...and He did it for you

Is He asking to much of you to **Set Aside your Earthly Distractions?**

Conclusion: We can make all the excuses in the world as to why we can't follow Christ, **we can use the excuse the security we find in trusting in our worldly possessions; or we can use our family ties as the excuse for not following Christ or we can simply be easily distracted and use that as an excuse.**

Today, if you are here and you have never trusted Christ as your savior then the challenge to you is this: Come today and receive Christ as your savior don't let your **Earthly Security** hold you back, don't let your **Earthly Ties** keep you from coming and don't let **Earthly Distractions** cause you to delay.

For the rest of you, what is that keeps you from being **Radically Committed to Christ?**