

Terms of Discipleship

E.T.S.: In these verses, separated by other events in the context, Jesus describes the terms of discipleship.

E.S.S.: As we study this together, we will identify the terms of discipleship presented by Jesus.

Christ Follower: Examine Jesus's terms of discipleship against your following.

Christ Seeker: Believe in Jesus, apart from works, to receive forgiveness of sins and salvation.

Introduction

Let's go to the ninth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke for the message.

Illustration

The phrase, *terms of surrender*, identifies the requirements the force being surrendered to place on the force surrendering. In some cases, the force being surrendered to will accept no surrender but unconditional surrender. This essentially means that the opposing force yields to any and all requirements set on them.

Introduction

I thought it ironic that our guest preacher, Andrew Johnson, reminded us at Homecoming that our greatest need as a church is to make disciples. If you were here, I am sure you were challenged by it. Then, knowing we were coming to this text in Luke today, this thought came to my mind:

I cannot effectively make disciples if I am not a committed disciple myself.

Yes, our greatest need is to make disciples, but doing that effectively is predicated on being committed disciples ourselves.

Tell me what being a committed disciple looks like.

What would you say?

It's not something we have to guess at or wonder about. Here, in Luke 9, Jesus told us what discipleship looks like. He provided us with the terms of discipleship.

Look with me at Luke 9:18-22. Here, we will discover the opening to the terms of discipleship.

Bible

(18) And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? (19) They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. (20) He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. (21) And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; (22) Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be

rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Luke 9:18-22 - KJV

Explanation

Jesus was praying alone when His disciples came and joined Him. Then, Jesus questioned them:

"Whom say the people that I am?"

Jesus wanted to know what the people He and the disciples were teaching and ministering to were saying about Him.

The disciples responded by telling Jesus that the people identified Him with John the Baptist, Elias (Elijah), or some other Old Testament prophet.

Then, Jesus asked them, "What about you? Who do you say I am?"

Peter responded, "You are the Christ (sent one, promised one, prophesied one, anointed one, Messiah) of God."

There's a lot packed in that statement. Among other things, it means:

- the seed of the woman who would destroy the serpent (Genesis 3:15)
- the seed of Abraham through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3)

- the fulfillment of the Law given to Moses (Matthew 5:17)
- the greater son of David who will reign forever (2 Samuel 7:16)
- God (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35), who is the servant of the Lord (Isaiah 42:1) who would give His life (Isaiah 53)

Pay attention to the clear difference. The disciples did not say that anyone out there called Jesus the Christ of God, but they did.

The first term of discipleship is...

1...Cognizance of the Lord (vv. 18-22)

Explanation

The crowd out there was willing to concede some nice things about Jesus.

- "He's a great teacher"
- "He's a good guy"
- "He's doing some amazing things"
- "He's got some good ideas"

Paying Jesus compliments does not equal discipleship. In fact, it sounds a lot like a lot of people today. There are a lot of people, denominations, and religions who are willing to say nice things about Jesus, but stop short of conceding who He really is.

Do you know who Jesus is?

Do you believe who Jesus is?

Then, it's more than just admitting who He is. That's the start. But there has to be more than a confession of the lips.

Jesus, as He preached the sermon on the plain recorded in Luke 6, questioned people who paid Him lip service, but did not produce fruit:

Bible

(46) And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Luke 6:46 - KJV

Explanation

Discipleship is not just confession; it's conduct. It's not just profession; it's practice. It's not just learning; it's living. It's not just an experience with Jesus; it's the expression of Jesus. It's not just being influenced by Jesus; it's influencing others for Jesus.

Illustration

Kyle Idelman is the pastor of a large church in Kentucky. He wrote a book with the title *Not a Fan* following a personal experience preparing for an Easter service at the church he pastors.

Listen to his testimony:

It was a Thursday afternoon, and I was sitting in our sanctuary where 30,000 people would soon be coming to one of our Easter services. I had no idea what I was going

to say to them. I could feel the pressure mounting. I sat there hoping that a sermon would come to mind. I looked around at the empty seats, hoping for some inspiration; instead, there was just more perspiration. I wiped the sweat off my brow and looked down. "This sermon needs to be good," I told myself. There are some people who only come to church on Christmas and Easter. I wanted to make sure they all came back. "What could I say to get their attention? How could I make my message more appealing? Is there something creative I could do that would be a big hit and get people talking?" Still nothing.

There was a Bible on the chair in front of me. I grabbed it, but I couldn't think of one passage that would "wow" them...Finally, a thought crossed my mind: "I wonder what Jesus taught whenever he had the big crowds." What...I found (is) that when Jesus had large crowds, he would often preach a message that would be more likely to drive listeners away rather than encourage them to return for next week's message.

When Easter weekend came, I was so convicted that I stood up and began my sermon with an apology, "I'm sorry for sometimes selling Jesus cheap and watering down the gospel in hopes that more of you would fill these seats." I followed up with a sermon entitled, "Not a Fan." We went word-for-word though Luke 9:23--Jesus' invitation to follow him--and honestly asked ourselves, "Am I a fan or a follower of Jesus?" The dictionary defines fans as "enthusiastic admirers. Jesus was never interested in enthusiastic admirers; he wanted completely committed followers. He wants more from us than a hand raised or a prayer repeated at the end the service.

He is looking for more than a prayer before a meal and a Jesus fish on the back of the car. He wants more than fans; he wants followers who take up a cross and die to themselves.

Application

Tell me: Fan or follower?

Discipleship necessitates cognizance of the Lord that understands...

A...who He is

- the Christ of God
- the Son of man

B...what He did

- He suffered (see the prophecy in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53)
- He was rejected (see the prophecy of Psalm 118:22-23)
- He was slain (see His purpose before the world came to be in Revelation 13:8)
- He was raised to life

When you know who He is and what He's done, when that means something to you, following Him is the natural response. I don't mean that it just happens, but it is the appropriate response of someone who has come to recognize who Jesus is and what He has done.

Then, that leads to...

2...Commitment of your Life (vv. 23-27)

Explanation

Let's read verses 23-27.

Bible

(23) And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. (24) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. (25) For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? (26) For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. (27) But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

Luke 9:23-27 - KJV

Explanation

Tell me what stands out about this portion of the text.

The open invitation that Jesus gave stands out to me. Every person has the potential to be a disciple, a fully committed follower of Jesus.

The reality that He blazed the way stands out to me. He goes before the disciples, just as truly

as He goes with the disciple.

The totality of the commitment stands out to me. Think about this. Discipleship demands:

- desire (*will*)
- deference daily (*come after me daily*)
- denial (*deny himself*)
- death (*take up his cross*)

If I can borrow from Pastor Kyle, tell me if you are a fan or a follower.

What distinguishes the two?

Discipleship. Commitment of life. Being fully committed to following Jesus.

In verses 24-27, Jesus identified three errors people make that hinder them from being fully committed followers. These verses are found in all four Gospel books, multiple times in two of them. They represent a theme Jesus taught regularly.

A...self-preservation (v. 24)

Explanation

Verse 24 describes someone who has more concern for this life than the next.

B...self-satisfaction (v. 25)

Explanation

Verse 25 describes someone who has more concern for the things of this life than the things of eternity.

C...self-remorse (v. 26)

Explanation

Verse 26 describes someone who is more concerned with what others think of them than what God thinks of them.

This isn't a matter of lack of intention, potential, ability, etc. These errors are an approach to life that falls short of the terms of discipleship.

Do you fall short?

3...Crossing the Line (vv. 57-62)

Explanation

Later in the context, Jesus returned to the theme of discipleship because of what took place around Him. Let's read the verses together:

Bible

(57) And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (58) And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay

his head. (59) And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (60) Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. (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. (62) And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Luke 9:57-62 - KJV

Explanation

In the text, three out of three had the potential of discipleship.

One came unprompted without asking for anything before making his commitment.

One was exhorted by Jesus to follow Him, but he had a request.

Another made an unprompted commitment with a reasonable condition.

Yet, none of them followed through.

Why?

A...some are too shallow

Explanation

Jesus revealed that His ministry necessitated sacrifice. He did not have a permanent home and, when they traveled, they may go somewhere without a reservation. Complete dependence

on the Father was needed.

B...some are too slow

Explanation

The man's father wasn't dead; he was still living. He asked Jesus to put off his discipleship until later. If I can say it this way, the man wasn't ready to follow Jesus in the stage of life he was in. Stage of life certainly varies but I have found that it can become a crutch that hinders people from ever making specific decisions. This man would likely have another excuse by the time his father was dead and buried.

C...some are too swayed

Explanation

This man's request seems very legitimate and Jesus' denial seems very harsh. More than likely, Jesus knew this man's pull to home was too strong. He would never thrive in discipleship because he would be too swayed by this pull.

Is it possible that we stop short of being a fully committed follower of Jesus for reasons such as these?

Illustration

Jesus calls us to cross the line.

His terms of discipleship are clear.

How will you respond?

Conclusion

Christ Follower: Examine Jesus's terms of discipleship against your following.

Christ Seeker: Believe in Jesus, apart from works, to receive forgiveness of sins and salvation.