

## **The Cost is High**

Luke 9:57-62

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May 5, 2019

Currently in Oasis we are teaching about the narrow way, from Matthew 7:13-14. We learned that following Jesus is often more difficult than following the world. We have to make so many decisions in life, and some decisions are black and white, where the consequences are obvious. If you leave food out when camping, your risk bears stealing your food. If you reverse on tire spikes, you will get tire damage. Others, however, are less clear, for example the choice of college, major, and career, or the right time to get married or have children. But in all our decisions we must be focused on Jesus and seek His wisdom.

Biblical wisdom is not easy because it is often opposed by the world's wisdom. But the wide path leads to destruction. The narrow path that leads to blessing requires us to leave behind the ways of the world. In today's passage, Jesus is just about to send out the 72 to spread the gospel to the towns of Judea. He tries to find faithful followers to send, because the task is difficult. Jesus knows they will be rejected. So beforehand, He warns prospective disciples about the cost of following Him.

The first man comes to Jesus eagerly, but Jesus asks if he would really be willing to follow Him if it meant being basically homeless. Following Jesus means giving up any expectation of comfort, security, or a home. These are things that are difficult to give up because the world tells us to focus our lives on pursuing these things. But Jesus is worth more than these. The second man wants to follow Jesus, but asks to bury his father first. It is unclear whether or not the father was actually dead yet, but either way this man was asking to take care of family business before following Jesus. This seems like an honorable thing to ask for. Our culture promotes the idea that children should take care of their parents when they are old. But Jesus says that He is more important than family. The third man asks to say goodbye to his family before following Jesus. But Jesus tells him that a man cannot plow a field while looking backwards. When people plow, they must focus on a fixed point in the distance and move towards it in order to make the furrow straight. The temptation is to look back and check how straight or crooked the furrow is, but that causes the plow to wander. Likewise if disciples don't focus on Jesus they will lose their way. You can't truly follow Jesus if your gaze is set on the amassed things of the world you left behind or all your past accomplishments. We like to rest on

our laurels and on all the fruit of our labor, but the kingdom is about the end goal, not about what we have accomplished. Set your eyes on Jesus and move forward without looking back.

This is all easier said than done. We were raised to chase after comfort, family, and accomplishments. We all want a nice house, a family, and a successful career. But Jesus says we must give it up to follow Him. It seems like a fee for entry into the kingdom of heaven, but we all know that entry is free. All we have to do is accept God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. However, Jesus warns us that although we may enter the kingdom for free, true citizens of the kingdom of heaven keep their eyes on the things of heaven, not on the things of the world. Jesus changes our perspective on the things of the world, just like Jesus changed the perspective by which we see the Law in the Sermon on the Mount. He revealed that God, who gave the Law, cared not only about actions but about the heart behind the actions. It's not just about the physical, but more importantly it's about the spiritual. Likewise followers of Jesus should have a spiritual eternal perspective, not focusing on the physical temporal things of this world.

So what should our perspective be? When it comes to comfort, Matthew 6:33-34 tells us that we should seek God's kingdom first, and He will provide us with what we need. We need not worry that by pursuing Jesus we will starve, for He will provide. But this doesn't mean we will get whatever we want. There is much we want but do not need. Don't strive for these things, but pursue Jesus. When it comes to family, Jesus redefines family in Matthew 12:46-50. The bond between brothers and sisters in the body of Christ is stronger than blood. In Luke 9:60 Jesus is saying let the spiritually dead take care of the issues of the spiritually dead. But those who were made alive should be focused on bringing the spiritually dead into the family of the One who gives life, and on encouraging each other to remain in that life. Finally, regarding accomplishments Philippians 3:12 tells us not to look back but to press onwards towards the goal. All the accomplishments of our past are rubbish compared to our hope in Christ. So let us change our perspective from the earth to heaven. Think like citizens of heaven, and be committed followers of Jesus Christ.