

FollowMe – Commitment

In 1996 I spent a whole summer in Memphis as an intern with the late Dr. Stephen Olford (study-leave)

He was recognized internationally as “The Preacher's Preacher”

He shared with me how, in his early life, he was into motorcycle racing. This so consumed him he drifted away from the Lord

Then, one winter, he slid on ice and was involved in a serious accident. He lay concussed for a long time, exposed to the freezing weather. He was taken to hospital and developed pneumonia. He was expected to die (at that time there was no cure)

His mother received a letter from his father (in Africa – he knew nothing of the accident). She read it to the young Stephen, reading about his father's excitement over miracles that were happening in the lives of the tribal people.

He wrote a note specifically to Stephen: "I have been burdened about you for some time and praying very much for you. I just want to share this with you: "Only one life - it will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last".

Weak and near to death, he prayed: "Lord, I give you my life unreservedly, I am yours. I'll go anywhere, do anything at whatever cost."

God restored him to health and gave him another 70 years, using him as an instrument in His Hand to minister to and change many lives.

Jesus calls for **total commitment** (“love the Lord w ...”)

His commitment! 9:22-24 “The Son of Man must suffer ... rejected ... killed...” THEN ... v25ff

3 x “cannot be my disciple”!

1. He calls for an unrivalled love

14:2 **"Large crowds** were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even their own life – such a person cannot be my disciple"

- **Love Him above family**

Hate = biblical expression – choosing one over another

(Mal 1:2-3 – God's will in choosing Jacob)

(will / not emotion!)

Love the Lord Jesus above

Love = that to which a person surrenders

When there is a choice between following Jesus and pleasing family

ENLARGED HEART!

(eg. when young men and women go to war...)

3 men in Ch 9:57-62 ...

"I will follow you wherever you go" (Foxes...)

"Lord, let me go and bury my father"

"...but first let me say farewell to those at my home"

- **Love Him above self**

Own Life (*martyrdom*) / reputation, acceptance, respect

"He cannot be my disciple"

Following Jesus is costly - but salvation is free

(*"Why ... Lord, Lord and do not do ...?"*)

Cost of getting a college degree at Harvard: \$60,000

2. He calls for an undeviating path

“And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple”

Jesus: COUNT THE COST! (He was not running for president)

He did not **mislead** them or **hide** the cost

“For which of you ... tower / or what king ... 10K ~ 20K”

*9:23-27 “Whoever wants to be my disciple must **deny** themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels”*

- **The cross of rejection**, derision, contempt

*Cross bearing was a powerful ancient image of **rejection***

Criminals bore ... execution

Align yourself with Him who was despised and rejected

*“Whoever is **ashamed** of me and my words”*

Aligning with one of the 2 pres. candidates – take upon yourself the attitudes and strong feelings of the other side towards the candidate

“O, you’re a Trump supporter?”

“O, you’re a Clinton supporter?”

W. Tozer *“In every Christian's heart there is a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross; if he refuses the cross, he remains on the throne. Perhaps this is at the bottom of the backsliding and worldliness among gospel believers today. We want to be saved, but we insist that Christ do*

all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying. We remain king within the little kingdom of the soul, and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar; but we doom ourselves to shadows and weakness and spiritual sterility"

Daily – not a weekend duty

- **The cross of suffering and death**

Example in Heb. 10:32-36 *"Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; You ... joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.*

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised"

3. He calls for an unreserved surrender

v. 33 "In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples"

money / possessions

Renounce your rights to all you have!

Christ has the RIGHT OF DISPOSAL

Disciples hold all "things" loosely.

Your life is no longer your life, it is now His life.

You time ...

Your possessions ...

Your future ...

“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.”

*Salt pictures the distinctive of following Jesus – cost
How does salt become unsalty?*

...deposits of impure salt – a mixture of various elements, and the sodium chloride in it leached out, leaving the residue as useless – with no taste or other properties – fit only to be thrown out.

That is Jesus’ view of a believer who is not committed – Rev 3 – “spew”!

Martin L King Jnr – pastor for 40 years – civil rights part of his ministry as a preacher (I have a dream – but in normal sermons)

... said things that were right but so unpopular in his day.

Had courage to stand up for the truth in his day

Sermon: Paul’s letter to America – Alabama in 1956

“There are many Christians in American who give their ultimate allegiance to man-made systems and customs. They are afraid to be different. Their great concern is to be accepted socially. They live by the principle ‘Everyone is doing it so it must be right’. For so many of you, morality is merely group consensus. And in your modern sociological lingo the mores are accepted as the right ways. You’ve unconsciously come to believe that right is by taking some sort of Gallop Poll of the majority opinion. How many are giving their ultimate allegiance to this way? Although you live in the colony of time, your ultimate allegiance is to the empire of eternity. You have a dual citizenry; you live both in time and eternity; both in heaven and earth. Therefore your ultimate allegiance is not to the government, not to the state, not to the nation, not to any man-made institution. The Christian owes

his/her ultimate allegiance to God, and if any earthly institution conflicts with God's will, it is your Christian duty to take a stand against it. You must never allow the transitory, evanescent demands of man-made institutions to take precedence over the eternal demands of the Almighty God."

If Jesus was committed to God as you are to Him ...?

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart; it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.