

**CAPITAL BIBLE CHURCH
SERMON NOTES**

**July 29, 2018
PASTOR AJ Miller**

Uncompromising Jesus

Luke 9:57-62 - Pray

It's no secret that Jesus says some radical things throughout the Bible. Everywhere he went, as he spoke, the crowds were amazed, and the Pharisees hatred towards him grew more and more. Look at:

Luke 9:23 "And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Matthew 7:21-23 "21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

Luke 6:22 "22 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!"

Whoa!! This stuff is radical, uncompromising and adamant. Jesus didn't mince words or sugar coat what He was saying. And this morning will be no different. The passage that we will be diving into is an uncompromising passage. There is no grey area, its direct and to the point. Jesus, throughout this passage has a tone about his voice that is exhorting, uncompromising and stern to his listeners then and now. We need to ask ourselves in the quiet of our hearts, am I going to embrace Jesus? And if so, am I going to obey Jesus? What must I sacrifice in order to follow Jesus?

You might want to wait until the end to answer those questions.

Let's look at the first person that talks with Jesus.

Following Jesus challenges personal comfort. Verses 57-58.

Here we see an eager and enthusiastic follower tell Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." Did you hear that, "I will follow you wherever you go." "I will do whatever you tell me to do Jesus." "I'm your guy." Good words, good intentions. I'm sure many of us have said those exact words in our lives, including myself. But before we say those words, have we asked ourselves, "will I really follow Jesus wherever that path takes me?" Do I really mean this, or are some things of limits? Jesus didn't say "Oh yeah? Are you sure? Really? Don't be hasty now." Listen to what Jesus tells the man. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." When the fox is tired, he retreats back to his hole to sleep and regain his strength before he leaves again to go out on the prey. Look at the birds of the air, who soars on the wind, when they get tired, they fly back to their nest to sleep and regain his strength.

But the Son of Man, has no where to lay his head. He doesn't have a nest, he doesn't have a den, he doesn't even have a house. At the next town, there will not be any plush reservations or accommodations. Are you sure that you want that lifestyle? There is not a lot of glamour following after Jesus. He tells the man if you truly want to be my disciple, there is no guarantee that you will have a roof over your head or a bed to sleep on at night. Can you do that? Jesus warned this would-be disciple to count the cost before committing to follow Him. After all, even Christ had no place to call home. To follow Christ is to loosen your grip on the things that normally provide physical and emotional security.

Matthew 6:26-34 says “26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34 “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Can you operate without being anxious about tomorrow? Jesus says, do not be anxious about tomorrow. You are not guaranteed tomorrow. You are not guaranteed the essentials of life as a follower of Jesus. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that when you become a Christian, all your earthly needs will be met, and you will have a comfortable life. It says quite the opposite. God knows what you need, leave it to him, stop worrying about things. That principle is for both the individual and the church. Jesus tells us, focus on today. And did you notice verse 33. If you seek after clothes, food, and shelter, you might not get them. But if you seek after God, you will be taken care of. Its like that saying goes, if you focus on earth, you get neither heaven nor earth. If you seek after heaven, you get earth thrown in. It won't be perfect and you won't be a millionaire, but that's not the point. The point is to rest in Jesus, trust in Jesus and rest in his provision for each day. We see this illustrated in Mark 10.

Mark 10:17-22 “17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” 20 And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” 21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have

treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Being rich is not a sin, but what is a sin is putting your comforts above the call of Jesus in your life. Putting food, clothing, what car you drive, your house, your bed, all of this “stuff” above what Jesus has called you to do, is a sin. None of those things are a sin, in and of themselves, but if your comforts take a higher priority in your life than Jesus, now we have a problem. The man’s wealth was not the problem, it was his heart. And if I piggyback off of what Bill said last week, your comforts extend to church as well. The plush chairs, the music we sing, what you want in a church, how you want things to be done, wanting these things is not a sin however, if all of that comfort and your opinion on the way you want church to be done is more important than following Jesus and seeing Jesus proclaimed to as many people as possible, then we have a problem.

Deitrich Bonhoeffer wrote a book called “the cost of discipleship”. Bonhoeffer was a pastor in Nazi Germany in the 1940’s and was killed because of his faith in Jesus. This particular book, which I think every Christian should read, can be summed up in one sentence. “When Jesus calls a man, he bids him come and die.” Listen to this paragraph from the book:

The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death – we give our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise Godfearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow him, or it may be a death like Luther’s, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time – death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call. Jesus’ summons to the rich young man was calling him to die, because only the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ.”

You want to follow Christ, Jesus bids you come and die. You will only be a follower of Christ when you submit your will to the will of God. God has called you somewhere to do his will. You cannot follow Jesus when you try to put him inside your will. You must forsake your will and the way you want things to be done and have the mindset of, “Jesus, whatever you want, I will do.” The will of Jesus is all that matters.

And that is only part one.

The second person that talks with Jesus. Verse 59-60

Following Jesus challenges personal responsibility

Here we see Jesus initiating the call to follow him. Jesus is reaching out his hand and saying to this man, “Follow me”. John 6:44 says “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.” This goes along with what I preached 2

weeks ago. You understand Jesus only because God has given you that knowledge. You are saved only because God has saved you. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit all have a role to play in your salvation and according to Jesus, the Trinity is the cause and your faith is the effect.

But let's look at the man's response to Jesus' call. "But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." Here we see a man who must be going through much emotion. His answer to Jesus is relational and emotional. Now, it is doubtful that this man's father had already died. If he had, the man would have been involved in the burial rites instead of being able to talk to Jesus face to face. Therefore, this man's words were an excuse to delay, possibly years, his responsibility to follow Jesus and proclaim the kingdom of God. In Jewish custom, the death of a close relative was of the utmost importance and it was one of the few reasons a person could be excused from religious obligations. In essence, this man was telling Jesus, "I can't start today. My service to you needs to be postponed." I have more pressing issues to take care of than to follow you. There are important matters I must attend to before I can follow you. Any of us ever say that before?

But now for Jesus' response.

"And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Whoa Jesus, you can't be serious? I mean, come on Jesus, I'm about to lose my dad and you don't want me to bury him? Remember, you have to put yourself in the context of the time. What would this have meant to a Jewish man in 30 AD? Clearly, we know that the burial of a close family member in Jewish custom was extremely important. Jesus isn't saying, don't go bury your father; what Jesus is saying or rather showing is that allegiance and service to Jesus Christ is more important than any responsibility you have in life. Let me say that again, allegiance and service to Jesus Christ is more important than any responsibility you have in life. Jesus' command in verse 60 is a command to forsake and follow. Look at Luke 14:26-35:

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

34 "Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 35 It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

In Luke 14:26, Jesus made it clear that He must be the top priority in a disciple's life, even above one's family. Jesus isn't saying that you must hate your father and mother because one of the ten commandments is to honor your father and mother. What Jesus is saying is that you must love

me more than anyone else in this world, including yourself. Jesus tells us, we have to count the cost of following him before we make the commitment. Jesus uses the example of a tower and of a king and his army to show us that before we claim allegiance to Jesus and before we say “I will follow you Lord”, we need to count the cost of what following Jesus will truly entail. Jesus isn’t talking about a project or a program, he is talking about discipleship. You want to follow Jesus, count that cost.

Then Jesus says that salt is good but if the salt has lost its taste, how can it be salty again? We are to be salt and light to this earth. Make the world taste better, shine our light, the light of Jesus throughout the world, but if we have lost our saltiness or effectiveness, are we doing any good? Joe Thorn in his book on the life of the church says “Jesus said that the church is the salt of the earth and the light of the world - easily identifiable and value-adding in their environment. Our saltiness and brightness are seen in our good works in the world. If these qualities are not true of the church, then the church has become useless.” If we are not engaging with the world, where they are, to shine the light of Jesus with them, then what are we doing here? If we are not making people, both Christian and non-Christian, lives better, even at the expense of our comforts, what are we doing here? We must go to them, on their home turf and build relationships with people. We can’t sit here and say “they must come to us and be like us in order to come here”. That is the most backwards Christianity I have ever heard. Jesus says “be in the world, not of the world.” Get out there, meet people that are nothing like you, build a relationship, love on people, and watch what God can do.

Now the third person. Verse 61-62

Following Jesus challenges personal commitment.

You think the first two were hard to swallow, buckle up.

Again, we see an eager follower, and if he saw what happened to the first two guys, he might have bit his tongue but in any case, he tells Jesus “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” Here, like before, we see a person giving Jesus an emotional and relational answer. But what he is really telling Jesus is “someday, not now, I will follow you Jesus, but I have other things to do first, that are more important. I have other priorities.” Let me be clear with you this morning, there is nothing in this world more important than Jesus. Jesus has the power to save you eternally, nobody else has that power. I love my wife, but she can’t save my soul, Jesus can. My wife loves me, but I cannot save her soul, only Jesus can. Jesus was not this man’s first love and in Revelation, when Jesus is speaking to the church at Ephesus, Jesus says “but I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.” At the beginning of the church in Ephesus, they loved the Lord before anything else, but at this moment, they do not love Jesus as their number one priority. And Jesus will say the same thing to us if we ever make something more important than Jesus in our lives.

But Jesus’ response to this man is unwavering and uncompromising. “Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” There is power in that sentence. The whole authority of God is behind this sentence. Jesus just gave us an uncompromising command. The metaphor illustrates a person looking over their shoulder while plowing, making it impossible to plow a straight furrow. What does that mean to us? Christians cannot follow Christ by looking back. We must focus on serving Him as we move ahead, as we

move forward, at His command. When we serve God in any capacity or are currently doing work, plowing the field for God and we look back, if we focus on the past and try to relive the glory days of yesteryear, say things like “we’ve always done it that way”, Jesus says, you are not fit for the kingdom of God. I didn’t say this, don’t shoot the messenger. Jesus said it. And because Jesus said it, I believe it wholeheartedly. To drive it home even more, the original word used here for “fit” is the Greek word “Euthetos”. “Euthetos” means useful, fit, suitable. Jesus is saying, if you are working for God but look back to see how you are doing, to see if your furrow is straight, then you are not useful, fit or suitable for the kingdom of God. If that doesn’t rattle all of us to our very core, nothing will. We must always be looking ahead, just as Christ did. Because if you turn back to look and focus on the past, you might end up like Lot’s wife, a pillar of salt.

And you ask, where did Christ keep his face forward? Where do we see Jesus doing this?

Look at Luke 9:51-56, the paragraph directly before our passage this morning. It says “51 When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. 53 But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 And they went on to another village.”

Where did they accept Jesus? He was thrown out of Galilee, they wouldn’t accept in Judea, the Samaritans rejected him, everywhere Jesus went, people rejected him. He was treated as being unwelcome. But when James and John saw this rejection, they said, can we ask for fire to rain down from heaven and consume them. Have you ever asked God to rain down fire on someone who has mistreated you? Isn’t that our nature as sinful humans? Even as Christians, we flee from God’s wrath for ourselves but push our neighbor into the direct path of it. But Jesus turned and rebuked them. In the KJV, it actually has what Jesus said “You do not know who you are. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy people’s lives, but to save them.” Jesus knew where he was going. Jesus knew the task at hand. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, with his death looming. And he set his face, and charged forward. He knew what needed to be done and he didn’t look behind him to see who was following him or to reminisce about past victories. He kept moving forward.

I asked you earlier a few questions. Am I going to embrace Jesus? And if so, am I going to obey Jesus? What must I sacrifice in order to follow Jesus? According to Jesus, self-sacrifice is of the utmost importance. To die to one’s self and live wholly for Jesus. We must look ahead to the future and live day by day, accomplishing our task at hand each day for the kingdom. Jonathan Edwards puts it this way, “The seeking after the kingdom of God, is the chief business of the Christian life.” You have no greater comfort, responsibility and commitment than to our Lord Jesus Christ. He is your chief business here on earth. But before you step out and say, “I will follow you Lord”, be sure you count the cost. A relationship to Jesus requires total, superior and exclusive devotion to his commands and his will.

If we are to follow Jesus, we are to abandon everything.