

**Victoria Ave/Emmanuel Baptist**  
**Sunday, August 23, 2020**  
**Luke 9:51-62: WHAT IS THE COST?**

**INTRO**

I love to vacation and to travel, and two of my favorite places to visit are Branson, MO and Myrtle Beach, SC. I lived in Branson for a year working. It was, at the time, seen as the next Nashville TN. It is a small town in the Ozark mountains near the Arkansas border. For some reason, in the late 80's, well known performers set up multi-million dollar theatres and had daily shows. When I lived there in 1995/96 there were stars like Tony Orlando, Andy Williams, Bobby Vinton, The Osmonds and many others. The main tourist attraction is called Silver Dollar City, which was used, in the 60's to film part of the Beverly Hillbillies television show.

Myrtle Beach was a place that that we started going as a family in the mid-80's. It is the Atlantic Ocean...that is all that has to be said about it. It is known for their beach which is called the Grand Strand and is a golfer's paradise as well.

One thing that both places have in common is the fact that you can barely turn around and you will find a booth or kiosk trying to entice you to buy a time-share. They offer free tickets, meal, money, and more if you would only sit through a presentation that usually includes touring a 5 star resort and seeing all that it has to offer you.

I have been through these presentation and I have stayed at different timeshares. They are incredible. The accommodations are full apartments with all the bells and whistles, they are luxurious...certainly nothing that I would usually afford on a vacation. It certainly isn't a Motel 6 in need of a renovation!

The presentation if hype, it is glamour and then you get down to the nitty gritty of the sales pitch. It is fast and furious and lots of pressure. The salespeople get a commission usually so they learn how to play on the emotions what you have just experienced and get you while the euphoria and dreaming is still in your brains.

The problem comes later. I have heard many stories of people who went into a timeshare promo, determined to be doing for the free stuff, only to come away having purchased one.

It was an emotional reaction and often one later filled with regret as the bills and payments come due. The purchaser did not stop to **count the cost!!!**

Today we continue on in our series on becoming and being a Christian. We have looked at what a Christian is, and what it means to be called as a Christian...then we must ask ourselves...**what will it COST me to be a Christian? Am I ready to pay the price?**

Let's go first to our scripture lesson. *Luke 9:51-62?*

**<sup>51</sup> As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. <sup>52</sup> He sent messengers ahead to a Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival. <sup>53</sup> But the people of the village did not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> When James and John saw this, they said to Jesus, "Lord, should we call down fire from heaven to burn them up?" <sup>55</sup> But Jesus turned and rebuked them. <sup>56</sup> So they went on to another village.**

### **The Cost of Following Jesus**

**<sup>57</sup> As they were walking along, someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go."<sup>58</sup> But Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head."**

**<sup>59</sup> He said to another person, "Come, follow me. "The man agreed, but he said, "Lord, first let me return home and bury my father."<sup>60</sup> But Jesus told him, "Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead! Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God."**

**<sup>61</sup> Another said, "Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-bye to my family."<sup>62</sup> But Jesus told him, "Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God."**

So you have made the decision to follow Christ or you are trying to make that decision! Good for you! As with all major decision that life throws at us – it is generally best to make life changing choices with more logic than emotion. Emotions are great for romantic comedies but can tend to lead us down the wrong path in reality.

Not only have you made the decision for Jesus or you are in process...but you want to make a GOOD decision that you can give your best to and do it right! Very few people go into these changes saying, “**eh...whatever.**”

So it might seem a bit odd that I now ask you if you have “considered the cost” of following Jesus as a disciple? I am not trying to discourage anyone, but rather, I am taking the lead from the Master himself, Jesus, who asked the very same question of those who might be on the verge of making an emotionally charged decision. Is being a disciple what you TRULLY want?

#### CONTEXT

Jesus is approaching “rock-star” status in Israel. The news of his preaching and message has spread throughout the area and people are flocking to catch a glimpse of this miracle worker and preacher. At this point in Luke, Jesus, we are told, has “resolutely” set his sights on Jerusalem. He is now on his final approach to the cross. As he is travelling, he encounters a possible disciple and he offers a place as a disciple to two others. It seems that Jesus is discouraging followers rather than embracing those who want to be with him. What Jesus is doing, what he has always done, is he is laying out the facts of what it means to be a follower.

Luke 9:57-62 is the fundamentals of the commitment needed to be a disciple.

The commitment has not changed from Jesus’ day...it is the same. To be a disciple, you must be willing to develop your relationship to God. **WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?**

Are you prepared to put Jesus first above all others? Jesus must be your priority...and people have a hard time with that. You mean that I must love Jesus more than my husband or wife? YES! Do you mean that I must love Jesus more than my parents or children...YES! And even more, if your spouse, children, and parents understand what it means to have a true, committed, growing

relationship with Jesus...they would want to be second! WHY? Because putting Jesus first makes you a better spouse, parent, child! You will be growing in what is AGAPE sacrificial love that will put everything in the order that it is meant to be.

Discipleship is not a casual affair to Jesus.

The first encounter is an enthusiastic volunteer. He probably is imagining what it is like to follow such a well-known rabbi. The only problem is, Jesus is not just a rabbi, but he is a prophet. A prophet's life was vastly different than a regular educator. They travelled from place to place turning people's attention to the reality of the presence and arrival of God's kingdom. It required total dedication and going without many of the comforts of homelife. Even the animals have more than a prophet. Jesus was reminding the volunteer of the realities.

The second case was a person Jesus issued an invitation to follow. You might argue that the request to bury a family member was legitimate and proper, especially in Jesus' culture. ***"Let the dead bury their own dead."*** Inconceivable, outrageous!!! Many scholars draw attention to the fact that the burial rituals of the day meant a week or more of activity. It wasn't just a one-day affair. Many have suggested that the man's father wasn't even dead yet – rather it was an offer to follow after the "important" things in life were taken care of. Jesus is reminding us that ministering to the dead takes a second seat to proclaiming the Kingdom to the living. We are called to offer the words of life to those able to choose Jesus. We can learn from the past, and we should...but we should not memorialize the past. The disciple of Jesus moves forward to the future.

The third encounter had Jesus offering a man a place as a disciple. The man wants to say goodbye to his family...what is wrong with that? Why is Jesus, once again, so harsh? ***"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."***

Looking back and longing for the past can be detrimental to life and ministry. The Children of Israel had a bad habit of longing for the slavery of Egypt when life got too real in the wilderness. Lot's wife longed for her life in Sodom and turned to salt. Those who cling to life on earth as it is are not ready for the reformation that salvation brings.

Our culture encourages the idea of having a foot on each side of the proverbial fence. False teachers tell people they don't have to change. Live your truth...forgetting that we are created to live God's truth. Jesus saves us not just to have a place in heaven but for the reality of life in the here and now. We are meant to be transformed and separated from the world. That separation is not intended to be commune living where we don't interact with the "unsaved." Rather we are to be transformed people, working in the world, influencing the world for Jesus while not participating in worldly activities and ideas. The task that Jesus gives us as his representatives means we need to focus on what lays ahead of us. To look back means we risk being knocked off course.

### **SO WHERE ARE YOU AT TODAY?**

Pro's and cons!

Cons! To follow Jesus may mean persecution in all shapes and forms. It might mean being mocked (even in gest) by friends, families, and co-workers. In marriages? What choices do you make if you want to serve Jesus and your spouse doesn't want to personally or they don't like your commitment outside the home. Friends? Do you have to give up your friends? NO! But your friends might give you up? Struggles? You are committing yourselves to following in the steps of the Saviour as he tells you to "take up your cross and follow Him!"

PRO's

Forgiveness for the guilt and penalty of sin. In the classic hymn "It is well with my soul" the verse states, "***my sin – oh, the bliss of this glorious thought! – my sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!***"

Sin can weigh you down and damage you spiritually and physically. To know with repentance your burdens are removed and taken away.

ADOPTION INTO GOD'S FOREVER FAMILY. You become a child of God with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities.

A PURPOSE AND A PERSPECTIVE. Have you ever struggled with why you are on this planet? What is your purpose? As a disciple of Jesus, you have purpose and meaning. First, we were created to worship God and then we given the task to go

and make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them all they need to know. Daily we have the task of doing our part to introduce seekers to Jesus.

**THE CHOICE IS YOURS!** It is literally the choice between life and death. The promise of peace and joy even during struggle. The promise that you are never alone. Jesus will never abandon you. Will you count the cost today! Choose to be a follower.

Let's pray....