

2019 Spiritual Progress...I am going to share with you how we make spiritual progress...Losing Jesus. Finding Jesus. Re-thinking Jesus. This is how we make spiritual progress. This is the *only way* we make spiritual progress!

We all think we know Jesus ...we found him...We all think we've got Jesus figured out to some degree.... We think we know the crowd where Jesus can be found. We think we know how God will act, we think He is reasonable all the time maybe even predictable.... Then in one day we lose him..... he is not reasonable... nor predictable, he seems to have abandoned us, he's not there! And we have to go searching for him. "Seek and you shall find." But when we find Jesus after losing him, we find he is different than we thought... That's when the rethinking (repenting) starts. and then we become different... It's the only way we make spiritual progress.

Losing the Jesus we thought we knew and finding the Jesus who is....This is how we grow. Without these difficult experiences, we simply stay the same, not even realizing that Jesus is no longer traveling in our company as we thought he was.... But if we can have enough spiritual sensitivity to notice when we've lost Jesus, we can seek him anew, find him again, and in the process be transformed...

Paul wrote later in his life to the church in Corinth something that he truly experienced...

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) 17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

- *Life should progressively look different for all of us who are in Christ...He changes us and reshapes us and redirects us!...we realize our lives have been planned by God with a purpose in our generation...and it will fit us!!
- **We gain understanding in who we are in Jesus... and that we are his Poema...masterpieces of God ...created to do good worthwhile things on this planet...**

EPH 2: 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- **when we grasp this something changes in our lives...we begin to live carefully...we begin to have a hunger to know God...to know ourselves ...we start to get wise!**
- **The master has a plan for the masterpiece on this earth.....which the masterpiece has been formed to fit...**
- **yet only the master gets to call the shots...**

following Jesus gets real...really quick... the first thing they are confronted with is the cost

It is no different with Jesus and his disciples....In today's passage, Jesus' goal is to wave off those who would follow but be unwilling to pay the cost of doing so. He isn't being harsh – he is being real...

And that is what we will examine today...courage to step out and into where Jesus is leading you in 2019...And doing that will take lots of courage...

Jesus asked people to follow him...I cannot think of a greater honor or show of love or expression of acceptance than for God in the flesh to ask a person to follow him.

The fact that he would bid anyone to come be with him is quite astonishing. The only thing more astonishing than Jesus great estimation of a person's worth and his desire to include them is their low esteem of him to procrastinate or reject the offer...amazing.

LK 9:57 As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

This man proclaimed a decision to follow Jesus *I will follow you anywhere ... but Jesus knew his heart...and spoke loving truth to him... if you follow me...your security is in me...period*

- (there and I dealt with this...letter to God)
- Jesus tells him the only security you have is in Him...not not in what you possess or don't possess....
- **When we want to follow Jesus, we must first decide to commit our future security problem to God's hand...and then for the rest of our lives keep forcing ourselves to leave it there...**

you want to fully participate? write a letter to God...entrusting him with your service for His Security...

We pick up on verse 59 of Luke Chapter 9 ...Jesus asked people to follow him...

LK 9:59 He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

I cannot think of a greater honor or show of love or expression of acceptance than for God in the flesh to ask a person to follow him, the fact that he would bid anyone to come be with him is quite astonishing.

- A person would feel significant in His presence. The only thing more astonishing than Jesus great estimation of a person's worth and his desire to include them is their low esteem of him to procrastinate or reject the offer...amazing.

Jesus tells this man to follow him...he replies I will... then adds a "But First" ... I want to follow you but there is a FIRST before you! ...

- **He had an image of Jesus in his mind...that did not fit the real Jesus...**
- **apparently he thought Jesus was reasonable and predictable!**
- **He possessed a false image of Jesus...and I think we all do...He thought he could follow Jesus but dictate the timing of His obedience to follow, I do not have time to follow you...yet...I really want to...but not right now...**
- Let me wait until my father dies at some future time, take care of his business and then meet up with you
- This man's father is not dead...Now if the man's father has just died, the man would not be hanging around Jesus? He should be home making funeral arrangements! I
- t's obvious that **his father isn't dead** -- yet. Most likely not even seriously ill, **or the man would be asking Jesus for healing.**
- What the man is saying is this: I have responsibilities to my father as long as he lives. I'm not free to follow you right now. But when my dad dies -- and he is getting on in years -- then I'll follow you right away. I just can't follow now.
- **Jesus found him and He had Jesus ...But He was about to lose Jesus**

Jesus responds... *LK 9:60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."*

- **He now has to rethink Jesus....Jesus was not concerned with what he was concerned about... ..but was concerned with what he wanted him to do...and in no-uncertain terms, even stating that what he wanted to do was dead...that its time was expired.....**
- **He was to move on into Kingdom work...**
- **The dead put family, business, social, and other responsibilities BEFORE their responsibilities to Jesus.**
- **But the spiritually alive are to follow -- NOW!**
- **On the human level...Speaking the truth to his family that he was changing professions was a scary thing to this man and like many of us we put it off...surely Jesus understood the magnitude...**

- You aren't to choose when you are to follow. Today is the day. **Following Jesus is a NOW thing. It is immediate.**
- His other commitments keep him from doing Jesus' immediate will for his life. Commitment to Jesus must come first...
- Jesus does not want this man to miss the opportunity of his life time... They are no longer able to be recaptured....
- They are gone, and they are dead; but they are not buried, and we continue to be plagued by regret and doubt.

Bottom line...

Jesus did not say follow me or return to a horrible way of life...he says lukewarm service or half hearted following ...(I want to follow but can't make up my mind when) is no service at all.

Willingness to do what Jesus asks... without doing it..is the same as not doing it... not doing it.

Jesus said I want you to go and proclaim good news to people...not hang out with that which is dead in your life...

Coaching football...trying to catch the ball...is not catching the ball

What this man did not know at the time was Jesus is about to send Seventy two of his followers to go from village to village to carry the message of the Kingdom (10:1-24).

- Jesus needs this man ready and committed to be in a certain place at a certain time, even though Jesus hasn't announced the mission yet. But the man can't be counted on.

LK 9:61 Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family." LK 9:62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

- This appears to be a harsh response, All the man wanted to do was go home and say good-bye. That's all.
- What's so wrong with that?
- In light of the immediate mission ahead -- the sending out of the Seventy two to the villages of Judea -- for the man to go home will mean that he will miss out, though his request seems reasonable enough.
- This man said, "I will follow you Jesus, but..." There are many people who say I will follow Jesus but...

- This man wanted to have a farewell ceremony with his family. Then he wanted to watch his favorite TV show one more time, and go shopping at his favorite store, and so on.
- It refers to a life with a divided heart.

Jesus challenged his motives....Jesus has the ability to challenge with kindness...

LK 9:62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

- The Greek verb **To "put your hand to the plow" means to begin the task of plowing.** tenses underline the point. Literally, "No man, having put (Aorist tense, past complete action) his hand to the plough, and looking back (Present tense, continuous action), is fit for the kingdom of God" (9:62, KJV).
- The key word here is Service....
- whether your plow is pulled by a mule or work horses or a diesel tractor there is one no-no:
- You never try to plow while looking over your shoulder. If you do, your rows are crooked and your field is difficult to work.
- **If you try to plow while looking back, you're not fit to be in the field. You'd be fired in a hurry by the farmer.** Plowing crooked lines is being a detriment to the job...you lose lines the field will not produce as much as it could...
- Rather, plowmen fix their eyes on a point at the far end of the field and move steadily toward it, not veering to the right side or to the left.
- Jesus isn't saying you can't glance back. But he is saying you can't continue to look back once you've begun to plow. If you do, you're not "fit," suitable, usable, convenient for something."
- In other words, you've made a total mess of the field. A person who plows has to keep his eyes straight ahead or he'll botch the job.
- **The point here is that if you have already thought it through and you know the right thing to do because it is obvious, but you continue to agonize over it, the opportunity will pass and you will have many regrets.**
- You should think things out carefully, and you should not make rash decisions you might regret later on. However, as soon as you have thought it out and have decided for the Kingdom of God, you have put your hand on the plow. Do not second-guess yourself into paralysis. If you look back, you'll just mess the whole thing up.
- **The thing to do is the right thing and the time to do it is now." Second-guessing yourself when the path is clear only defeats you.**

My question to us... **What are you possibly doing that could be more important right now than doing immediately that the Lord has been asking you to do????**

Look at what happens next!!!

LK 10:1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

Normally, we speak about following in the footsteps of Jesus. Immediately the roles are reversed...The 72 disciples are sent out ahead of Jesus to prepare His way.

He wants their destinations to be set by their on dreams, goals, passions, and inner stirrings.

Peter and Andrew were fishermen so maybe they would head for the fish markets and coastal communities. Matthew was a tax collector for the Romans so perhaps he might head for the Roman communities and military postings. In any case they were going where God was showing their dreams and aspirations for the Kingdom of God here on earth.

More importantly Jesus was telling them to go! 20 years from now I would hate for any of us to say with regret.....‘Why didn’t I go?’”

Don’t miss the boat! Don’t recognize the call to move in upon your calling, your dreams, your hopes for a better future, a better you and not act upon it! Listen closely to that inner voice and when Jesus says go, then go!

This is what following Jesus is all about... you will embark upon an incredible journey...their task of entering every city and place where Jesus desires to come. We have the same call

Jesus follows in our footsteps, too. Many of the people we encounter along life's path may never get to meet Jesus, if they are not first attracted by our example. Our lifestyle, values and beliefs must be in accord with Jesus' message.

What is God calling you to approach with the spirit of a lamb...when surrounded by wolves...I will tell you this...

If you go God will show a new world to you....If you go God will build great character in you.

If you go God will show changed lives because of you....If you go God will produce miracles to sustain you.

You will be crushed like a rose whose fragrance fills the air you will know a God who won't be an image of your own making...But you will experience the Real God, you will know the real Jesus you will give the real Jesus...and that Is attractive to a world in need of the real God! End

