

What Does It Mean To Be a Christ-Follower?

Luke 14:25-35 - December 16, 2007

Upcoming Messages

- Dec. 23 – “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” (Luke 2:1-20)
- Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Services in the Worship Center
 - 11:00 a.m. – Children’s Christmas Eve Service
 - 5:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
 - 7:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
- Dec. 30 – “Weird and Wonderful Women of the Bible” (Paul Helbig)
- Jan. 6 – Start “Parenting” sermon series

NEW YEAR’S SERMON SERIES ON PARENTING		
Date	Title	Subject Matter
Jan 6	Building Your Child’s Self-Esteem	Having Fun with Your Kids
Jan 13	Building Your Child’s Character	Discipline, Consequences, and Responsibility
Jan 20	Building Your Child’s Morality	Talking to Your Child about Sex
Jan 27	Building Your Child’s Adulthood	The Power of Rites of Passage
Feb 3	Building Your Child’s Identity	The Impact of Your Marriage on Your Kids
Feb 10	Building Your Child’s Faith	The Ultimate Goal of Parenting

Today’s Question:

- What does it mean to be a Christ-follower ?
- One of Jesus’ answers is found in Luke 14:25-35

Jesus Attendance Tactic (v.25)

- Jesus is trying to thin out the crowd!!!!
- I’ve noticed in the Gospels that, when Jesus noticed that the crowds were getting larger, He would up the ante, raise the bar, and tell people “like it is” so that people could make a well-informed decision as to whether to keep following Him.
- Example: John 6
- *John 6:66-69 - From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him. 67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."*
- If you want “easy street”... if you want “church-lite”....
- Another way of saying all of this is: Count the cost of being a Christ-follower (vv.28-32)

What Does It Cost To Be a Christ-follower? (Luke 14:25-35)

1. It will cost you your greatest affections (v.26)
 - The #1 love of your life can no longer be your wife or your children or your parents or yourself.
 - To be a Christ-follower means to make God the #1 love of your life (Mark 12:30-31)
 - Rick Warren: “Love is spelled T.I.M.E.”
 - Application #1 – Will I spend T.I.M.E. with God? Will I set aside regular time to spend with God to talk to Him and listen to Him and worship Him?
2. It will cost you your greatest aspirations (v.27)
 - The cross is an instrument of execution (putting to death).
 - Jesus is calling us to “put to death” our aspirations and our ambitions and our plans for ourselves and, instead, to follow His aspirations, ambitions, and plans for us.
 - What are Jesus’ aspirations, ambitions, and plans for us?
 - Jesus wants us to...
 - Serve the poor (Galatians 2:10; Matthew 25:31-46)
 - Serve each other (Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 4:10)
 - Tell others about Him (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)
 - Application #2 – Will I follow Jesus by serving the poor, serving other people, and telling other people about Him?
 - My serving the poor application: _____
 - Church Under the Bridge: www.1000hills.org
 - Bicycle Program: www.elvesandmore.org
 - My serving others application: _____
 - My sharing my faith application: _____
3. It will cost you everything (v.33)
 - *John 6:66-69 - From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him. 67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."*
 - Application #3 – Will I surrender *everything* in my life to God?

A New Grace Fellowship Tradition: Holding Each Other Accountable to Being Christ-Followers (See message on C.O.M.P.A.S.S. from 8-19-07)

- C** – Compassion – Helping the less fortunate
- O** – Outreach – Developing relationships with the unchurched and sharing our faith
- M** – Make disciples – Seeking to grow in being a follower of Christ by grouping together with others in a small group of some kind to pursue this goal of Christ-following
- P** – Plug into the Vine – Seeking to daily plug into Jesus Christ by daily reading His Word and praying
- A** – Assimilation – Serving others through the church

Idea: Once per year in the month of December, let's stop and evaluate how we are doing at being Christ-followers and let's strategize ways to grow and pursue this more and more. (The C.O.M.P.A. Anonymous Progress Report)

How to Have a Quiet Time: Seven Helpful Things to Pursuing "P"

1. A **Bible**
2. A pen
3. A journal (everybody gets a free journal today)
4. A Bible **reading plan**
5. My calendar/planner
6. A prayer list
7. **Time** (30 minutes)

A Simple Plan for Reading and Praying the Bible

1. Ask God to speak to you
2. Read today's Bible chapters from the Bible reading plan
3. Choose one verse from all those chapters. Choose one verse that you believe God's Spirit is especially speaking to you about.
4. Journal about that one verse using S.O.A.P. (limit to one page)

S – **Scripture** – Write out the one verse. Writing it out reinforces it and allows God to speak to you very specifically from it.

O – **Observation** – Write a two or three sentence observation about that verse. Something you notice. What does it mean?

A – **Application** – What is the application of that verse to your life? What is something you need to believe, receive, do, or stop doing because of that verse?

P – **Prayer** – Write out a two or three sentence prayer in response to that verse. Ask for God's help and power to live your application.

5. Put down the journal and speak relationally to God as you would to a friend. Worship Him. Confess to Him. Thank Him. Ask Him for the concerns on your prayer list.

What It Looks Like

Example of Jim's S.O.A.P. Journal from November 10, 2007
Read: Psalm 122; 1 Corinthians 7-11

11/10/07 "Totally Accepted" Page 37

S – 1 Corinthians 8:8 (NLT) – It's true that we can't win God's approval by what we eat. We don't lose anything if we don't eat it, and we don't gain anything if we do.

O – Nothing I can say or do will cause God to love or accept me more than He already does in Christ Jesus. I am fully accepted by God!!!

A – Jim, quit trying to earn God's approval.

P – Lord, thank You for accepting me! I invite You into me, Lisa, Smith, Grace, John-David, this day, Grace Fellowship, and everything. I love You!

Y – Yes, I will be different today b/c of what I just read.

Questions to Discuss with My Family, Friends, and Small Group

1. What was God saying to you from this message? What was one thing that impacted you most?
2. Another great Bible passage on "What Does It Mean To Be a Christ-follower?" is Acts 2:42-47. Read this passage aloud and study it together. What were the practices of the early Christians? What are the applications for your life?
3. What do you think about the S.O.A.P. journaling idea? Has anyone here tried it before? What was it like? What do you think about doing this together?
4. Pray for each other as Christ-followers.