

KNOWING WITH CERTAINTY

Tough Stuff – Great Stuff

Luke 13-18

INTRODUCTION: We read in the first verses of the Gospel of Luke, that God through Luke wants us to know things about His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, with certainty.

In the chapters we read this week, 13-18, God tells us some pretty tough stuff.

In two passages of our reading, God shows us

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

Luke 14:25–27 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them,

“If anyone comes to Me

and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also,

he cannot be My disciple.

And whoever does not

bear his cross and

come after Me

cannot be My disciple.

What is Jesus saying?

Jesus is saying that He has to be Lord for you to be a disciple.

- Daddy can't be Lord
- Momma can't be Lord
- Your spouse can't be Lord
- Your children can't be Lord
- Your siblings can't be Lord

Jesus is Lord!

Only Jesus is Lord.

Luke 16:13 “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. ...

Jesus is not using the word “hate” in the same way we use it. He is using it in a very Jewish way, the same way it is sometimes used in the Old Testament. When it says “Jacob I loved but Esau I hated. Or it says that Jacob loved Rachel but hated Leah.

What it means is that God chose Jacob over Esau.

It means Jacob chose Rachel over Leah.

Jesus is saying, to follow Me, you must choose Me over anyone. To follow Me, you must choose Me over anything.

Romans 10:9 that if you **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus** and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

- **Jesus is not an advisor.**
- **Jesus is not a consultant.**
- **He is Master.**
- **He is Lord!**

I. THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS IS EVERYTHING. – Tough Stuff

That is the tough message of what Jesus said to the rich young ruler.

Luke 18:22 ... “Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

People reacted to this and said, “Who can do this and be saved?”

Jesus tells them, “With God, all things are possible.”

Peter pipes up and says, “We did that! We left everything we had and followed Jesus.”

And then Jesus said,

Luke 18:29–30 ... “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

Folks, what Jesus says about the cost of discipleship is tough stuff.

But Jesus accompanies it with great stuff!

Great Stuff – JESUS GIVES FAR MORE TO HIS FOLLOWERS THAN THEY GIVE UP FOR HIM.

Some of you may be thinking, but Bro. Mike, I thought salvation was a free gift. And yes, of course you are right.

Ephesians 2:8–9 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Jesus offers the gift of eternal life to everyone... To everyone!

But each person must choose to receive it. How do you receive it?

Romans 10:9 that if you **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus** and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Let me try to explain it this way.

Jesus	Man
Do you want to follow Me as I travel though this world of yours and then follow Me on to My world where you can live forever with Me?	What's that gonna cost?
I've already paid for the whole trip. I give the whole trip to you as a gift. Do you want to follow Me?	How do I do that?
Trust in Me and make Me the master of your life.	Then I can follow You? You'll lead me through this world and on to the world of eternal life?
Yep!	OK, I do. I believe in You. You are my master.
Let's go.	OK.
Ditch the plastic bag.	No, it's got my stuff in it.

You don't need it. I've got everything we need in My bag, everything for this world and the next.	But I have a snack in there in case I get hungry.
Don't worry. I have everything you need. Ditch the plastic bag. It will be in the way.	I've got some spare change in there, just in case.
You don't need it. I'm wealthy beyond your greatest imagination. Trust Me. I have what we need.	But I want to keep my bag.
Why? I know what's in your bag, and believe Me, Mine is better. I have everything we need.	Yeh, but I can't see in Your bag. And even if I could, I don't know if You will give me everything I want out of Your bag.
Maybe not. You might want something that's bad for you in the bag. I know you have things in that bag that are bad for you.	Nobody's perfect. Do I have to get perfect to follow You?
No. But if you follow Me, by the time we get to My world of eternal life, I will have made you perfect, just the way the Father planned for you to be.	OK. Let's go.
Ditch the bag.	Why should I?
You said you were making Me master, that you were trusting Me. Trust Me. I have everything you will ever need in My bag for you.	I want to keep my bag.
Friend, trust Me. Get rid of your bag. You will have treasure with Me. Come and follow Me.	And when the man heard this, he was very sorrowful, because he really loved the stuff in his old plastic bag.

Do you see what the Father wants us to understand?

Salvation is a free gift, because Jesus fully paid for it on the cross.

To receive the gift of salvation we must surrender control of our lives by making Jesus Lord.

As we follow Jesus, He gives the commands

- **Ditch the bag**
- **Sell your stuff**
- **Go here**
- **Go there**
- **Carry this cross**
- **Do that**

If He is indeed our Lord, we obey.

The struggle with obeying our Lord as we journey with Him as disciples does not end until He takes us out of this world and makes us perfectly in His likeness.

We still struggle at times with wanting to go our own way or using what's in our own bag.

My greatest struggle like this came a couple of years before we came to be your pastor. After I became a pastor in answer to God's calling in my life, I never wanted to be anything else. Some of my friends left the pastorate and went in denominational leadership positions, but I was never interested.

Until several years after the Lord had helped me understand the Acts 1:8 Strategy and implement it in my church. Without going into inappropriate detail, let me just say that I was contacted by a Search Team chairman for a major denominational entity and asked if I would submit my resume to be considered. Karen and I prayed, and we thought God was leading us to say yes, and we did.

The longer the process went, the more excited we became at the prospect. I believed that God was going to give me that platform for the propagation of the Acts 1:8 Strategy in local churches. We continued in the process, and it came down to two candidates: me and a friend of mine in another state. Karen and I, however, remained convinced that this was God's plan for us. That He had led me to understand and use the Acts 1:8 Strategy not just in our church, but in a much broader area. We went to the final interview with great excitement.

My friend was chosen for the position. To say we felt devastated is not an overstatement. We were confused. We had prayed so much and sensed God's confirmation that we were supposed to be involved in spreading the Acts 1:8 Strategy.

We renewed our prayers, this time confessing we did not understand what was going on.

You see, God had put the Acts 1:8 Strategy in our bag, so to speak. We had learned how to do it, how to use it, not only as individual believers but as a church. We couldn't understand why God wouldn't let us use something that was good, that He designed, and that He had put in our bag.

But one thing we did know. Jesus is Lord! He is our Lord, individually and together. We are His followers, and we are committed to obey Him, understanding or not. So we just continued doing the Acts 1:8 Strategy in the church where I was pastoring and Karen was doing children's ministry.

About 18 months later, Danny Pate called me on behalf of the Search Team at SABC. After we met with the team and prayed, the Lord began to excite us at the prospects of coming here.

Then Katrina happened. We were really starting to question our spiritual ability to discern the calling of the Lord! But this time, God was in it, and St. Andrew waited until we could complete the disaster relief and rebuilding that had to be done where we were, and God brought us here.

We were excited to come and implement the Acts 1:8 Strategy in a new church, but without any thought, really, of it going beyond right here. But folks, as God opened the doors for me to teach and train pastors and leaders in both Brazil and West Africa, God has given me the opportunity to teach the Acts 1:8 Strategy to hundreds of pastors and leaders in West Africa and Brazil.

Once again, as always, our Lord knows best.

And you know what else? I stay slightly in touch with what is happening with my friend in the position where he won out over me. And every time I do, I thank God with all my heart that I am here and not there!

When we surrender our will to His, in things big and little, we always find out His way is best. What He has in His bag is better than what we have in ours. No matter what we may be called to give up, He replaces it with better many times over.