

THREE PERILS OF DISCIPLESHIP

TEXT:

Luke 9:57-62:

57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.

59 And He said unto another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow Thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.

Suddenly three men appear. And just as suddenly they are gone. They are never heard of again. They stay only long enough to show the peril of superficial.



PERIL!

Peril begins when you start with Christ but do not come all the way clean. The natural man cannot follow Christ. He might as well try to catch sunbeams with fish hooks as to try following Christ without denying self.

Matthew 8:19: And a certain scribe came, and said unto Him, Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.

Jesus' disciples were of lowly occupations, but if they had an eye for earthly advantages, they would have lost no time in going back to their trade.

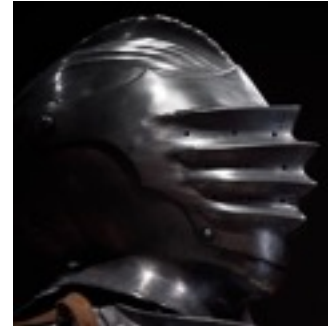
Jesus saw the tragic weakness in the three men of this text. They were not willing to give Jesus the 'right-a-way' across their plans, pleasures, friends, or business.

There are many Christians (or, rather, church members) who make good soldiers on dress parade when flags are waving and bugles are blowing. But when the battle waxes hot for Christ and they must deny themselves, they take to the bushes.

There is plenty of sentiment, but no sacrifice; cushions have supplanted crosses, but salvation is not a night cap; it's a helmet.

The first man was too eager; the next two were not eager enough.

The second man is ready to follow if all the "if's" and reservations have been attended to. Friendship of the world and comforts of home are some of the 'dead' things satan brings up that he wants you to attend to.



"I will follow Thee, but ..."

You need to know how to answer satan when he would delay you, or throw obstacles before you by some "innocent" excuse. The worst enemy of the church is not the infidel, but the sedate, smug, lukewarm ones who shrug their shoulders and advise not to be overmuch righteous or too zealous for Christ. They do not oppose the church, but do their damage by their coldness — the zero temperature of their presence. Are you holy for Christ?

Many want good 'feelings' and the Holy Ghost Baptism, but don't want to deal with death to their flesh. Do you have a pattern of self-denial? How few even talk it – or recommend it – or are pleased with those who do. Many a God-sent preacher have been accused of going back under the law, trying to discolor God's Word. But the Word must be preached just as it is, even though we are heckled and ridiculed.

What is self-denial? It is when the Will of God is supreme in every Christian as the inviolable [never to be broken] rule of life. You are not your own:

1 Corinthians 6:20: For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Anything contrary to His Will, done by our own will, is deliberately breaking this commandment. The true nature of self-denial is that it refuses to allow us to follow our own will. Rather, self-denial considers and seeks to find out *His Will* in everything.

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The reason for this commandment rises from the condition mankind has been in since the Fall. Shaped in iniquity, we go astray as soon as we are born. Our nature is corrupt, and it is natural to willfully indulge in corrupt living.

On the other hand, it is God's command that we refuse and reject fleshly lusts which war against the soul. These will separate us from Christ, and this is the greater reason for self-denial. Follow Christ. He will lead us to Heaven. He alone is the Way, and He alone knows the way. His sheep follow Him; they deny self, engage in fasting, rise early to pray.

We cannot walk two ways at once, nor serve two masters, nor please God and self. This makes for hypocrites — for lukewarm carnal Christianity and spiritual weakness. We, therefore, must deny our will — however pleasing it might be — when it crosses the Will of God.

1 Thessalonians 4:3: For this is the Will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

Ephesians 4:17-19:

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

What does it mean to take up our cross? The cross contradicts the flesh and separates us from foolish desires and inordinate affection; it smashes selfish desires and covetousness.

When Jesus said, as recorded in ***Mark 10:21***, ***“Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor”***, it caused the rich young ruler to leave sorrowfully, for he would not take this cross. When we bear His cross, we take His reproach and do not avoid it. Do we shut our mouths, lest we cause “self” any undue embarrassment or criticism?



To deny self is to sever all corrupt, putrefying unsoundness from our life — like the surgeon who operates to save a life. But it seems that, instead, we fight to hold and do that which is harmful and poisonous, leading to a spiritual death. Our lack of spiritual growth lies here. Any failure to grow spiritually will shipwreck faith, cause departure from the faith, and will give headway to evil spirits and the doctrine of devils.

Therefore,

Hebrews 12:1b: let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.



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