

Live with a Selfless Heart

Introduction

Welcome to this edition of My Thoughts and the second of our eight-week series on **“The Cost of Discipleship.”** In this week’s segment, **“Live with a Selfless Heart,”** we will see an example of how Jesus’ selflessness created a way of salvation and how we must live selflessly as Jesus did here on earth. We will be using two passages from the Gospel of John. Open your Bible and turn to the Gospel of John 12:24-36 and 44-48.

Most of us are familiar with the social media tool, Twitter. It gives anyone the ability to follow anyone and discuss their topics. There is also a feature within Twitter that allows anyone to unfollow the person. Let’s relate this to following Jesus. As long as circumstances played in their favor, they followed Christ, but once the tide of public opinion turned against Jesus, many unfollowed.

Do Not Confuse SelfISHness with SelfLESSness

Our culture is of selfishness that justifies and promotes vanity. Some of the most popular reality shows are where participants are notoriously self-indulgent. No genuine follower of Jesus can ever include selfish words, thoughts, or actions. Following Jesus consists of the demand that believers die to self, focus their lives, and service on God’s will.

Selfishness is a rebellion against God. The selfish choice of Adam to disobey God’s command in the Garden of Eden brought a legacy of sin and death to humanity. Jesus came as a selfless servant and to lay down His life in payment for our sins. In John 12:24-36, 44-48, Jesus teaches us to live with a selfless heart.

Passage Text - John 12:24-36, 44-48

²⁴ “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

²⁵ “He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”

²⁶ “If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.”

²⁷ “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour?’ But for this purpose, I came to this hour.”

²⁸ “Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

²⁹ Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.”

³⁰ Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me but for your sake.”

³¹ “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

³² “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”

³³ This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

³⁴ The people answered Him, “We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up?’ Who is this Son of Man?”

³⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.”

³⁶ “While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

⁴⁴ Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent me.”

⁴⁵ “And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.”

⁴⁶ “I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.”

⁴⁷ “And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.”

⁴⁸ “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”

Introduction of His Disciples

After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead on the outskirts of Jerusalem, the Pharisees decided they could no longer afford to let Jesus continue to teach and heal. So, they began plotting to kill Him (John 11:53). Jesus entered the city with His disciples in the days leading up to the Passover.

Jesus sought to prepare His disciples for these events. He explained the necessity of His death on the cross. He also instructed us to continue the work following His resurrection and return to the Father.

Becoming Unselfish in Your Heart

In verse 24, Jesus referred Himself to a kernel of wheat, planted in the ground if it is to become a new, reproducing plant. Jesus would unselfishly give His life on the cross so that a great harvest of repentant souls would achieve salvation. New life for believers came at the expense of our Savior's sacrificial death. The sacrifice of Christ was unique in its power to save, yet it was also an example in verse 25 of Jesus' self-giving, which disciples are to follow.

Jesus contrasted two views of human life:

- The first view is to love living in this world. This person lives selfishly and makes decisions for personal benefit.
- The second view is to hate living in this world. This person lives selflessly and makes decisions, which benefit others more than themselves.

The indwelling Holy Spirit empowers Christ's followers to live this way and to follow Christ's unselfish example.

Consider the Cost of Living Selflessly

In verses 27-33, Jesus considered the cost of living selflessly and dying on the cross for our sins as the most challenging decision in human history. The suffering that was involved cannot be adequately measured or described.

He confessed that He was troubled (v. 27), similar to what He felt in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:38; Mk 14:34; Lk 22:44). Jesus would not ask the Father to save Him. He had come to this hour for the very purpose of giving Himself as the Sacrifice for sinners.

He prayed for God the Father to glorify His name through selfless life and sacrificial death. In this context, Jesus declared His humility and willingness to suffer for our sins. In doing so, Jesus revealed the Father's love and mercy in sending Him as our Lord and Savior. When we obey the Lord and accomplish His will for our lives, we glorify His name.

Spiritual Light and Darkness

In verses 35-36, they realized the urgency when Jesus used the example of physical light and darkness extensively in His teaching. Jesus converts this into spiritual light and darkness when He says He is "**the true Light**" (John 1:9). Only Jesus can lead the lost out of spiritual darkness into the spiritual light. People moving into spiritual light can see clearly and do not fall into unseen dangers.

In the spiritual darkness, however, they stumble, fall, or collide into unseen dangers. It is a physical picture of the spiritual urgency of unbelievers needing Jesus in their lives. Only those who believe in Jesus are saved from spiritual darkness.

Jesus Foretold of their Unbelief

In verses 37-43, John described the persistent unbelief of many Jewish leaders who had seen Jesus perform miracles. He identified their unbelief as a fulfillment of prophecies in Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:10, respectively.

Beginning in verse 44, John provides a summary of the necessity of believing in Jesus and following Him. The term “cried” in verse 44, is not a reference to weeping but instead to Jesus’ sounding forth a necessary declaration publicly and with intensity. Jesus emphasized that believing in Him is the same as believing in the Father who sent Him.

Conclusion

Jesus’ coming in human flesh was to reveal the eternal Father (John 1:18). When Philip asked to see the Father, Jesus rebuked him and explained to see Him was to see the Father (John 14:9). Jesus was not referring to physical features, but the holy nature and exact purposes shared by the entire Trinity.

Jesus blessed those who believe in Him without having seen Him in the flesh (John 20:29). Following God requires dying to self to live for Him, counting the cost of discipleship, knowing the urgency of selflessly sharing and living His message, and confidently walking in His Light with full assurance of your salvation, Amen!

I am Dale Van De Bogart and I fully agree on God’s Word!

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