



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	Staying Fit for The Kingdom of God	SPEAKER	Ps Low Kok Guan
THEME	Living the Christ Life (Luke 9:57-62)	DATE	20 & 21 March 2021

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In this sermon, Ps Low looked at the dialogues Jesus had with three different people to draw out lessons on how to stay fit for the kingdom of God. He also shared that it is essential for us to know how to follow Jesus through service rendered to Him and a life of discipleship.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS?

1. There is a price to pay (Luke 9:57-58)

The first dialogue was with a scribe who wanted to follow Jesus because he had seen the many miracles of Jesus. His request was not rejected but redefined. This was done so that he could have a clearer idea on what it means to truly follow Christ which is to be constantly on the move with no place to lay one's head. This highlights the need for us as disciples to count the cost of following Christ. It signifies a life where we may have to give up control, convenience and comfort in our attempts to be more Christ-like in our service to God.

2. There is a priority to set (Luke 9:59-60)

The second conversation which Jesus had with another man dealt with the issue of prioritization. In this conversation, Jesus asked the man to follow him but the man sought permission to bury his father first. The most probable interpretation is that the man was asking permission to wait for the eventual death of his father before embarking on following Jesus (which meant an indefinite delay). Ps Kok Guan emphasized that it is our obligation to care for our loved ones especially the burial of the deceased. In fact, in the Jewish context, this obligation is so important that it takes precedence over the study of the Word of God, temple worship, the Passover sacrifice and circumcision. Jesus was therefore really trying to communicate the principle of priority and elicit the things of importance which the man was holding on to. As disciples, we need to choose wisely between the temporal and the eternal. This can be seen in the way we plan our calendar and prioritize our activities. We must remember to let God take priority in the way we spend our time.

3. There is a posture to take (Luke 9:61-62)

In the third dialogue, a man expressed his desire to follow Jesus but asked to quickly bid farewell to his family first with a possible reference to Elijah's calling of Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21). Jesus turned down his request and said, "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God (v62)." The phrase "looks back" has the specific meaning of looking backwards to focus on an issue or object which is holding the person back from following Jesus wholeheartedly. As disciples, we may face circumstances and difficulties in our service to God that may cause us to look back to the material comforts and earthly conveniences of our life before knowing Christ or answering our call to serve God. Hence, we are encouraged to stop looking back and focus on our decision to follow Jesus instead.

4. It is a privilege to serve the King

It may not seem easy to follow Christ until we realise that the foundation of these three principles is that it is a privilege to serve the King. Without recognising this principle, it would feel like the price to pay is too costly, the priority to set does not make sense and the posture to take is too unreasonable. Oswald Chambers once said that it does not cost to follow Jesus. This is because when we are madly in love with Jesus, talking about cost would be an insult. It is a privilege to serve the King because Jesus already paid the price on the cross - God set this as His priority right from the start in Genesis - and all we are to do is follow Him. Jesus focused on the cross and never once looked back because His heart was and is for the dying world and He did this with a posture that was pleasing to the Father. Just as we are to serve like Christ did, we are called to pray for the Father to send out more laborers to the plentiful harvest (Luke 10:2). We should never ask what is there for ourselves but focus on what God wants us to do for the Church.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we should reflect on the four principles of following Christ. The foundation of being willing to pay the price, setting it as a priority to serve the King and having the right posture to follow Christ is that it is a privilege to serve the King. Considering this honour to serve our loving heavenly Father and King will enable us to follow Christ wholeheartedly. This is because when we are madly in love with Jesus as His disciples, whatever we do for Him will not feel like a cost. To talk about cost when we are in love with Jesus would be an insult.

QUESTIONS

1. We are told to count the cost when following Jesus. What are some costs that a Christian would encounter when following Christ?

2. We are reminded that priority is measured by quantity and quality and that our planned calendar reflects our priorities. Reflecting upon your life in this season, share about one priority you would like to set/reset?

3. While it is a privilege to serve Christ, our human nature may sometimes cause us to feel like serving is more of a pain than a privilege.
A. Share about the issues you face that sometimes make you feel that serving Him is a pain.
B. How can we overcome times like this to move back into a posture of gratitude and joy to serve the Lord?