

Luke 9:46-62

Hard lessons of following Christ.

1. Sometimes we may think of the outward trials and tests as the hard lessons of following Jesus
  - a. Physical suffering
  - b. Physical persecution
2. But, some of the hardest lessons of following Christ, especially for us in the west, are found in the internal changes that must take place...hard changes that the flesh resists with great power.
3. There are 5 found in this text...5 hard lessons that must be learned by the Christ follower.

### 1. Humility

*46 An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.*

Arguments...have you noticed that most arguments are like this argument? Not really worth having?

1. This is like a bunch of 7 year old boys on the playground.
  - a. I am bigger and better and faster and stronger than you!
  - b. Oh no you are not! Oh yes I am!
2. We laugh and scratch our head at how they could get into an argument over something so silly.
3. And I wonder if they would ask the same thing about most of our FB pages?
4. They are arguing over who is the greatest!

*47 But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."*

1. If you are going to receive me...and come after me...you are going to need to humble yourself like a child.
2. Mark 10:15 *Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all*

Followers of Christ must be characterized by humility...

1. Luke 22:25-27 *And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' 26 But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. 27 For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.*

2. Matthew 23:11-12 *But the greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.*

## 2. Grace

*49 John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us." 50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you."*

1. So the disciples stumble upon someone casting out demons in Jesus' name, but they did not know him
  - a. He apparently wasn't one of them...he didn't follow along with them
  - b. So they tried to stop him.
  - c. Jesus rebukes them and said don't hinder him...if he is not against you, he is for you!
  
2. As a pastor I can tell you we most often want to focus on our disagreements rather than our agreements.
  - a. I can't work with that pastor or church because they don't believe this...
  - b. I can't work with that missionary or indigenous pastor because they do believe this...
  - c. And some of that is necessary and legitimate! But a lot of it is not.
  
3. In the midst of all of our doctrinal and theological learning, we need to learn grace.

- a. That is what Jesus was teaching the disciples that day
  - b. Be gracious to this one who is laboring in my name...even though you don't know him or recognize him
  - c. At least have the grace to celebrate that my name is being magnified
  - d. Philippians 1:12-20 *Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, 13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, 14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. 15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; 16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; 17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, 19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.*

4. Be gracious

## 3. Mercy

*51 When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; 52 and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him.*

1. Already we have a stretch for most, if not all, of the disciples: a village of Samaritans.
  - a. There is a reason that we Jews go around Samaria in order to get to Jerusalem.
  - b. Here we are making arrangements for Jesus to stop here among the Samaritans
  
2. It was a case of first century racism...not a new problem, or even a skin problem...just a sin problem with only one solution then and now: the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*53 But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem.*

1. There is a reason those Jews go around Samaria to get to Jerusalem!
2. *Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship*
3. And here they are stopping here in Samaria trying to sell us a Jewish man's religion...
4. It was a case of reverse racism...not a new problem or even a skin problem...just a sin problem with only one solution then and now: the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*54 When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"*

1. Isn't this a unique response?
  - a. I have animosity in my heart toward you.
  - b. You, the one I have animosity toward, shows animosity to me...the audacity!
  - c. Let's do whatever is necessary to destroy them and their dignity!
  - d. Just look at how they are acting Jesus: they aren't worthy of Your message
2. Actually, this is not such a unique response after all is it?
3. But look at what Jesus says...

*55 But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; 56 for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."]* And they went on to another village.

1. The spirit that says, show no mercy. Destroy. Annihilate. Take vengeance is not the spirit of Christ!
2. Christ came to save, not to destroy.
3. To show mercy...

Be humble, gracious, and merciful.

#### **4. Sacrifice**

*57 As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*

1. Following Christ demands sacrifice...sometimes the sacrifice of houses and lands!
2. The Son of Man often has nowhere to lay His head.

*59 And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." 60 But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God."*

1. On one hand...be willing to give up necessary possessions.
2. On the other hand...be willing to give up necessary people.
3. This should be no surprise to anyone who has listened much to Jesus.

Matthew 19:27-30 *Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?" 28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or*

*father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.*

## **5. Perseverance**

*61 Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

True believers persevere in the faith!

1. They put their hand to the plow and do not look back! There is no turning back
2. 1 Kings 19:19-21 *So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him. 20 He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother; then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" 21 So he returned from following him, and took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen, and gave it to the people and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and ministered to him.*

It is true that no one can pluck us from His hand...there is security for the believer!

1. But it is equally true that we must persevere in the faith
2. And the two come together because those who are secure will persevere.
3. 1 John 2:19 *They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.*

These are some of the hard things...internal things...that happen in the hearts of believers. These things can't really be accomplished in and of ourselves...we need to be changed.

1. Ezekiel 36:24-27 *For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.*
2. This is why Jesus told Nicodemus, as religious as he was, that he must be "born again."
3. 2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*
4. Like...
  - a. Humility
  - b. Grace
  - c. Mercy
  - d. Sacrifice
  - e. Perseverance

Have you experienced this change? GOSPEL/COMMUNION