

>>>>>> Matthew – Lesson 22 <<<<<<<

1) Picking up where we left off last time ...

Matthew 8:18–22 (ESV)

The Cost of Following Jesus

¹⁸ Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. ¹⁹ And a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” ²⁰ And Jesus said to him, “**Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.**” ²¹ Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” ²² And Jesus said to him, “**Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.**”

- 2) One assumes here that these two conversations take place as Jesus is proceeding to the boat to go over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.
- 3) The first man to approach Jesus in this passage is a scribe – a teacher of the Law.
 - a) Remember the closing statement of chapter 7, scribes are the ones who taught without the amount of authority that Jesus did.
 - b) But, in this case, he has become or is becoming a disciple.
 - i) We know this because he is willing to follow Jesus “wherever you go.”
 - ii) And, also Matthew describes the next person to speak as ‘another’ disciple.
- 4) Is the response to the first question, Jesus feeling sorry for Himself?
 - a) No, of course not! – I think He is simply explaining to the scribe exactly what he, as a follower, can expect.
- 5) The second man to approach Jesus was described as a disciple – he was by that, already a follower.
- 6) So, in the answer to the second question, is Jesus being harsh and unfeeling?
 - a) No again – Jesus is simply stating a matter of priorities.
 - b) Following Jesus is a commitment which requires giving up things that are of this world.
 - c) I think Jesus perhaps knew that in the man’s heart, this was more important than following Him so he lends perspective with His answer.
 - i) In that regard, perhaps if the man felt his desire to be with Jesus was more important in his heart than that of burying of his father Jesus’ answer would have been different.
 - ii) We can have desires and things in this world that are important that we want or need to accomplish, but in our hearts, we must always be more than willing to set them aside if we know our responsibilities and work for the Lord requires them.
 - d) So, here’s a true or false statement for you ...

In that time and place, the requirements to become a disciple of Christ were more fixed and stringent than they are in our day and time.

True / False? With explanation?

- e) This next question may sound obvious or even silly but, again, true, or false

When we become a disciple today, we are free from all those stringent requirements.

True / False? With explanation?

- 7) Not really!
- a) We must be willing to do what God asks us to do.
 - b) We do not get to pick and choose the difficulty of the task or the things that the task may require us to give up.
 - c) I think too often, we look at our lives and say to ourselves, **“I wonder if God is really using me. I am not being required to give up much?”**

However, I believe that if we examine what we do and how we live we do give up a lot. Agree / Disagree?

- d) The big difference is we are more than willing to do just that – give up whatever God requests of us as long as it brings glory and honor to him.
- i) This willingness makes it seem like it is not so much.

One other question, if we are speaking to someone about following Jesus or our commitment to him, how do we handle this tough question?

“You mean I have to give up xxx?? Whatever xxx is?”

- 1) As we read this next passage, I want you to put yourself in the place of one of the disciples on the boat with Jesus – not just being there but being them. i.e. you are a fisherman, you have been on this lake for years and you know about these storms.
- 2) Having said that, when we finish reading the passage, we will play devil’s advocate for a moment or two.

Matthew 8:23–27 (ESV)

Jesus Calms a Storm

²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵ And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.” ²⁶ And he said to them, **“Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?”** Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷ And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”

- 3) Let’s consider a side of this you may not have thought about before.
- 4) At this point, there are only 4 known named disciples (for sure) Peter, James, John, and Andrew.
 - a) They are all fisherman and sailors on the Sea of Galilee.
- 5) Now, there were other disciples “followers” if you will but they were not the ones Jesus has called at this point.
 - a) Some of these may be on this boat as well but we must assume that the four were for sure.

So, hypothetically: You have just met a preacher, obviously a smart guy and very religious. In fact, you have actually heard him preach a few times and are really impressed – he even performed some miraculous healings in your presence. In fact, you are so impressed that when he asked, you have decided to follow him as a disciple. Now, you have been a sailor all your life making a living on the Sea of Galilee and you and he and the rest of your sailor buddies set sail. A storm arises, and it is a really rough one but nothing you haven't seen before, then things get even worse.

OK, at what point would you turn to this preacher to save you or, would your thought never turn to him at all except perhaps how you might need to save him?

- 6) If one thinks about it, this is pretty much the situation we are dealing with here.
 - a) One would imagine that the storm must have gotten seriously worse to have them turn to Jesus as they did.
 - b) It also indicates that perhaps they had some amount of faith otherwise they would not have changed from the self-preservation mode to waking him saying “Save us Lord.”
- 7) Jesus says to them; **“Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?”**

So, what's going on here?

Jesus accuses them of having “little faith” but was it not faith that they exhibited in asking him to save them?

- 8) In truth, it was probably not faith they exhibited as much as it was fear!
 - a) They turned to Jesus to save themselves, not out of faith but out of fear – a last resort if you will.
 - b) They were terrified of dying along with Jesus and he was their last hope!
 - c) This is why I think Jesus asked the question; **“Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?”**

Let's bring this into our own lives.

Do we ever turn to the Lord for help when we are terrified?

Then, the really important question is, did we turn to him as a last resort or did we turn to him immediately because of our faith?

- 9) Before we move on, there is another thing of interest here, that is the difference between Matthew's wording and that of Mark.
 - a) In the Markan version, the disciples ask Jesus a question:

Mark 4:38-41 (ESV)

- ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, **“Peace! Be still!”** And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, **“Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”** ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

- b) I do not recall whether we discussed this or not when we did our study of Mark but, here we go.
 - i) In the Greek, there is a way to ask a question where you expect specifically a YES or a NO answer.
 - ii) The way Mark wrote this question the disciples are expecting a YES answer but it is very difficult to translate it that way.
 - iii) In other words, what the disciples are saying is; “Teacher, we know that you do but, do you not care that we are perishing?”
 - iv) This is important to understand what Jesus means as He answers.
 - (1) His response is not a chastisement of their belief in Him wanting to save them but rather in their disbelief in His ability to do so.
 - (2) This is born out in their comment in the close of the passage; “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”