

*Grace and Peace from God our Father and Our Lord, Jesus Christ.*

**Do you ever wonder what would happen if people actually did what Jesus tells us to do?**

The question seems *especially provocative when Jesus says things like He does this morning.*

*"Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple."  
"Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."  
"None of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions."*

I can imagine, an earnest young college student coming home after his first semester at school. Sitting at the breakfast table while his father reads the morning paper, he says, *"Dad, I've got something I'd like to tell you."*

*"Sure son,"* he says without looking up from the paper. *"What is it?"*

*"Well, while I was at school I made some important decisions that I'd like to tell you about."* he announces.

*"What? Did you decide to change your major?"* he says over the rustling of the newspaper.

*"No dad. It's more important than that. I made friends with some guys at school who follow Jesus, and I've decided that I'm going to follow Jesus, too,"* he announces.

Still not looking up from his paper, the dad says, *"Well, junior that's real fine. I'm really proud of you."*

"I'm glad you feel that way," the young man says.

"You said 'I made some important decisions'," his father says.

**"What else did you decide?"**

"Well, Jesus says we should serve the poor. So I'm doing that."

**"That's a really noble thing to do, son"** his father says.

"So, you know **the car you and mom gave me** when I graduated? I really don't use it much, and **Jesus says we should give away our possessions.** So **I donated it** to a local homeless shelter to they can give people rides and do errands. They were really pleased."

**"What? What did you say?"** says dad.

**"It's what Jesus would want me to do.** And while we're on the possessions subject, **remember that trust fund grandpa left me? I want to help hungry people too;** so I gave the \$50,000 to Lutheran World Relief.

"Did you know that \$0.96 of every dollar donated to LWR goes directly to food relief? I think that's great. I did the calculation, and \$48,000 of that money will go directly to the food that will feed hungry people around the world. I think grandpa would be proud."

"And, **Jesus has a real soft spot for prostitutes and sinners.** So I'm going to be spending a lot of my time with them."

**"Jesus also says, proclaiming the Kingdom of God to people is the most important thing we can do;** so I'm going to do that, too," he says. **"I don't really need a degree to do that, so I quit school."**

*“Oh, one more thing.” “What I’d really like Dad is to borrow the car keys. See you later can I have them please?”*

All this may sound funny, or like a parental nightmare, but it’s a fairly apt portrayal of what Jesus says to the crowds this morning.

*Jesus addresses large crowds who have come out to see a spectacle, Him; as if it were the state fair.* This morning, *He intends to set them straight.* Following Jesus isn’t a hobby, or a distraction, or a good time with all your friends. *Following Jesus – if you truly want to be His disciple – costs us everything.*

*Jesus tells us this morning that if we follow Him our lives can no longer be about what we want, what we have, what we do for a living, how devoted we are to our families. And Jesus knows us well enough to understand that none of us by the strength of our own will or choice are able to give up everything.*

Yet *over the ages plenty of people have been so certain of their trust in Jesus that they gave away everything they owned.* Some *believed Jesus was about to return,* so they did exactly what the young man did; they weren’t going to need it. *Some are so absolute in their devotion to Jesus that they give up everything, enter monastic life, and take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.*

Because Jesus tells us to do it: *we forgive* people who have done terrible things to us; *change the course of our lives; say goodbye and leave our families and friends* to move across the country or the world.

All because we trust that Jesus is calling; *leave behind our familiar lives, we sell most or all our possessions, take out huge loans, and go to seminary or the mission field* to preach the gospel and care for God's people.

*We open and tend food banks to feed the hungry; we build hospitals to heal the sick; we build facilities to care for the aged and infirm; we take on huge debt to build houses of worship; we build gardens; provide health resources; protect children's heads with bicycle helmets; give children a good start for school; care for children who would have to tend for themselves before or after school. We do all of it because Jesus calls us to do these things.*

Now *most of us might well be inclined to pity such people, or at least question their sanity*, but *can you imagine having such trust that you not only know and say what Jesus wants, but actually do it?*

Pitiable as it may be, following Jesus in this way is nothing less than a gift from God – the Holy Spirit to be exact. It is the hope that comes from knowing that God has all things under control. It is the faith that Jesus and those who share God's vision for creation will bring that vision to fruition. It is the absolute trust that no matter what we may lose in this life –

*“were they to take our house, goods, honor child or spouse – though life be wrenched away, they cannot win the day; the kingdom's our forever.”*

**Can we imagine what it would be like if someone actually did what Jesus tells us to do?**

***We don't have to imagine it. We have seen it in the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. Holding nothing back of Himself, **Jesus gives everything He is and Has for the festering corruption humanity is, for the very people who would hang Him on that cross, because the Father tells Him it must be done to so that the world can have life again.*****

**Can we imagine what it would be like if people actually did what Jesus tells us to do?**

**In a word, it is a new and better life, and without a doubt we live in a far better world because of it.**

Even so, we say, “*Lord Jesus, Come quickly!*”

***Amen !!!***