

A COMMITTED DISCIPLE WINS THE DAY

Luke 9:57(NIV) As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." 59 He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." 61 Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." 62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

If you are joining us for the first time, you will find us in the middle of a series titled **HIS COMMISSION OUR MISSION PRT 23**. The theme has been a call for every disciple of Jesus to refocus their energy and attention on prioritising the Great Commission. Our calling is to make disciples of all nations. Allow me to ask you a number of questions: since you became a Christian, how many people have you led to the Lord, and how many have you discipled? What level of excellence have you achieved in your area of calling? What difference have you made in your community?

- These questions must be at the centre of everything we do – we must become uncomfortable with just being called a disciple of Jesus but not producing the fruit of a disciple.
- Over the years and in the recent past, I have been asking the Lord why it is that very few of us are fruitful in the things of this life and in spiritual matters.
- It is as if we have been relegated to a second-level type of fruit; whether it is at college, at work or even in the sports field. I believe that a true disciple of Jesus has what it takes to operate at a high level of excellence. We must believe that we have what it takes to perform at the highest levels.
- Now, this is a complex issue, and I don't claim to have answers to it, but this morning, I have some nuggets and insights that the Lord has impressed upon my heart, which I want to share with you.
- This morning, I want to talk to you on a subject titled **A COMMITTED DISCIPLE WINS THE DAY**.
- You are called to win as a disciple of Jesus – whether you are in the valley or on the mountain top, yours is a call to win. You are more than a conqueror!
- However, to be victorious, there is a character trait you must develop as a disciple of Jesus. It is a character trait called commitment.
- In the absence of commitment, we will become mediocre in all we do. Commitment is something that Jesus expected from His disciples.
- It is a trait that He is looking for in you and me today. Say to after me, "I am a committed disciple".

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- To commit means to be dedicated, devoted, and willing to give your time, energy, and effort to something.
- Anything worthwhile in this life will cost you something – you need commitment.
- Your commitment is tested in difficult times, your commitment is tested when no one seems to appreciate you, and Jesus expects you to be committed through and through.
- Look at these scriptures about commitment:

*2 Timothy 2:15 **Do your best** to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

*1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, **stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully** to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

*1 Timothy 4:13 Until I come, **devote yourself** to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.*

- Where we read, we see Jesus dealing with potential disciples, and it is from that interaction that we are to draw out what commitment looks like.
- As Jesus was on His last trip to Jerusalem, He came across a number of potential disciples, and let's look at the details carefully:

Luke 9:57 As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

- This was an awesome start because the interaction began with someone volunteering to join Jesus on the mission field.
- This person must have heard a lot about Jesus, and he was determined to become part of this great movement.
- Commitment begins with a choice to get involved in a worthwhile cause.
- In other words, commitment is a choice, friends. This man did not wait to be asked by Jesus to become a disciple; he jumped into it of his own volition.
- When was the last time you volunteered to serve or to do something worthwhile for the kingdom of God?
- This man was determined to follow Christ wherever He would go. This was a beautiful statement because he didn't come with his own agenda but came ready to take instructions.
- As a disciple of Jesus, choose to follow the Lamb, wherever He goes and wherever He leads you.

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- Nothing is better and greater than following Jesus – if you are not a follower of Jesus, please consider doing that before leaving today.
- This sounded too good to be true for Jesus, and He decided to spell out what this man was signing up for clearly.
- Commitment requires you to count the cost before you make the decision. Many people commit without assessing what it will take.

Luke 9: 58 Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

- Jesus cautioned this man not to expect worldly benefits when following Him but to be ready to face challenges and mountains, even as the son of man had not much to His name.
- A disciple of Jesus is committed even in the face of scarcity, contempt, personal loss and significant discomfort.
- Being a disciple of Jesus was never meant to be a walk in the park; serving God was never meant to be easy. Anyone who is not ready for this can never be a committed disciple.
- The first man volunteered to be a disciple of Jesus, but Jesus chose the second one to follow Him.

Luke 9: 59 He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

- This was a special moment because Jesus walks to a man and invited him to follow Him.
- Many people have the call of God upon them but they don't understand its value and meaning in life.
- Each one of us here has a purpose which Jesus placed upon us. He is waiting to see what response you will give to the call.
- Jesus called you into his marvelous light, but if you are not careful, you can take it for granted.

2 Corinthians 6:1 (AMP) Working together with Him, we strongly urge you not to receive God's grace in vain [by turning away from sound doctrine and His merciful kindness].

- Many people have despised God's calling over their lives like Esau did. Esau despised his birthright, and as a result, he missed out on the firstborn's blessing.
- God loved you enough to give you a gift, and God is counting on you to commit your life to living out the gift.
- Commitment is only possible when you comprehend the value of God's call over your life.
- This man heard the call, but internal and personal affairs clouded God's call on his life.
- Serving God will come at a cost, which is why many people are hesitant to commit to following Christ.

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- He requested Jesus for some time to go and deal with his ailing father. It's not that his father was dead, but that he was aged and would not live long. He wanted to spend the last days with his father.
- His request was legitimate, but he was in danger of placing personal matters above being a disciple of Jesus.
- The temptation is real to procrastinate on doing the things of God to attend to our businesses, our children, our studies and so forth.
- This is when our commitment to following Jesus is tested, when it seems to stand in the way of our personal lives.
- What does the Bible say about those moments:

Matthew 10:37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life shall lose it. And he who loses his life for My sake shall find it.

- Christ is pro-family and will never require you to disregard them, but what He is saying is that since He is infinitely above all creatures, he is to be loved above the nearest and dearest relations and friends.
- It means that we cannot disobey Christ to please our parents, nor can we disobey Christ to please our children.
- Let Jesus be above all; Jesus first before work, Jesus first before personal comfort.
- A person who places anything above Jesus is called unworthy or unfit to be a disciple of Jesus. In other words, that person is not appropriate to be considered a follower of Jesus.
- Any thriving church is built on the shoulders of committed disciples.
- Jesus needed committed disciples to run alongside Him, that is why He called them to forsake all to follow Him. Jesus needed John, Jesus needed a Judas, Jesus needed an Andrew.
- Commitment goes beyond words – it touches your walk, it touches your pocket, it touches your hands. Let's not love by words alone, but let's live out our love for Jesus and His Church.
- Unless you are committed to changing some behavior, you will never walk free of certain things. Unless you are committed to the journey of weight loss, you will never lose the weight.
- The last potential disciple liked Jesus and His ministry, but struggled with another type of problem:

Luke 9:61 Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." 62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

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- This disciple liked what Jesus was doing; he wanted to be part of the miracles, but he had people whose opinion mattered to him a lot.
- He asked to go back home and bid his family farewell. Going back home would expose him to the opinions of people who don't know who Jesus was.
- Commitment is a personal matter, requiring personal conviction and not public approval.
- Never underestimate the power of people's opinions. When it comes to following Jesus, it is a personal matter that requires decisiveness.
- Jesus equated this disciple to a person who puts his hands on a plough and looks back.
- A plough requires focus and forward direction to cut straight rows in the soil.
- If the farmer looks back, the plough goes crooked, the rows are uneven, and the field is ruined.
- You physically can't control the plough properly while looking backwards — your attention and energy are divided.
- We have a lot of unfinished business because someone started but looked back in the process.
- We have poor service in the house of God because we have people with divided attention. You agreed to serve on a team, but you have never actually shown up to serve.
- A person who looks back is not fit for service in God's kingdom. Our God is a great King and deserves our undivided attention.