

Count the Cost - March 2, 2022

Our youth pastor, Ben, shared a message that we should think deeply about. One of the first things that he said really struck home with me, and should resonate in all our hearts, "Sometimes things are not great, and you have to get through it."

All of us are carrying personal burdens and navigating difficult circumstances right now, either spiritually, physically, emotionally, or financially. Maybe all of the above! Corporately, as a church, we are in the midst of transition. The transition itself is not bad but it can be painful. Pastor Ben opened with his personal story of climbing a fire tower on top of a mountain. He and his hiking buddy were not watching the weather when they made it to the top of the tower. Suddenly, they saw dark clouds surrounding them. The wind picked up and thunder clapped. The thunderstorm was on top of them! Had he and his friend remained in that tower during the storm, they may not have made it. They had no choice but to run treacherous terrain to make it safely to the shelter of the truck. They considered the cost.

Likewise, we must run, individually and as His church (all believers) into the shelter of the Most High. Read all of Psalm 91. Here are verses 14-16 in the Message version:

"If you'll hold on to me for dear life," says God, "I'll get you out of any trouble. I'll give you the best of care if you'll only get to know and trust me. Call me and I'll answer, be at your side in bad times; I'll rescue you, then throw you a party. I'll give you a long life, give you a long drink of salvation!"

In the passage Pastor Ben gave us, Luke 9:57-62, three individuals talked with Jesus. Two of them asked Jesus if they could follow Him, while one was invited by the Master to join Him. We do not know the outcome of the encounters, but these three facts still hold true today:

1. Following Jesus is not easy.
2. The first priority in our lives must be obedience to the Lord, not our own agenda.
3. We must be whole-hearted in our decision to follow Jesus. No regrets. No turning back.

Jesus wants us to consider the cost of following Him. For the three men in this passage, it meant giving up comfort, family, and business. Do you think that they knew what they would receive for walking with Jesus?

When we hold on to Him for dear life, get to know Him, and trust Him, His Presence radiates through us. Heaven meets earth!

Remember, as believers in Jesus we are:
... the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
... living stones. (1 Peter 2:5)
... vessels fit for the Master's use. (2 Timothy 2: 20-21)

It will be difficult. There will be internal and external conflicts. But in the Presence of God there is fullness of joy! Nothing else can satisfy our souls but Jesus. We were made to fellowship with and be led by Him. Both now and forever. Loving the Lord and living for Him is worth every challenge that arises. He is worth everything that we are and all that we have.

Remember, we are not alone! Not only are we given the Holy Spirit and the Word, but He has placed us in the body of Christ. We have a family of brothers and sisters with whom we can pray, cry, and laugh. Let us encourage each other to walk closer to Him every day. You and I are a part of His plan.

So, move forward with open eyes!
Count the cost.
Living for Jesus and following His leadership is worth **everything**.

May God bless and keep you safely under His Wing.

Your
sister in Jesus,
Liz