

The Happiness of Pursuit **By Randy Henson**

The joy of chasing after God

Luke 14:25-27

A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, “If you want to be my disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.”

Jesus message here was very clear

“You either love me the most or you don’t REALLY love me at all”

“Is He my Lord?”

“If you don’t carry your cross and follow me you cannot be my disciple.”

To drag that cross was disgraceful, difficult, painful and uncomfortable

Jesus is saying when you follow me, you have to endure disgraceful, difficult, painful and uncomfortable situations because that is the path I am taking you on

When you follow me, you are not choosing a life of comfort you are choosing a life that you are not ruling supreme... I AM!

Luke 14:34-35

“Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown away. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!”

Salt is a great preservative... we are “The salt of the earth”

We could lose that ability but not by accident...

Has this pursuit of Jesus lost its flavor to you?

It can be a joy again... but it ain’t easy

Someone that loves themselves over Jesus is not so willing to put themselves at risk in any way

"Am I willing to let His plans unfold at the cost of my own plans unraveling?"

Matthew 19:16-24

Someone came to Jesus with this question: “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” “Why ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. But to answer your question—if you want to receive eternal life, keep the commandments.” “Which ones?” the man asked. And Jesus replied: “You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.”

“I’ve obeyed all these commandments,” the young man replied. “What else must I do?”

Move from the thought that God is out there and I am going to live in such a way that I am fulfilling expectations

God is in here and I live my life the way I do because I love Him

Jesus told him, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Here it is! Again He says “If you want to be my disciple everything else comes second!”

But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Nothing else will satisfy

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. I’ll say it again—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!”

This is not so much about money (though it is) it is about anything that opposes Jesus for your heart, affection, and ability to follow Him

“Come and die, give away everything”

The happiness of pursuit

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

He was risking being laughed at...he didn’t care

He had a sense that something of great importance was happening

When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.” Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. (Happiness of pursuit?)

But the people were displeased.

This is mostly not coming from nonbelievers...it is other Christians!!!

We are in for a rough ride going forward

We can either decide that cultural Christianity is enough because we are getting in and that is good enough for me

We can keep coming and dying

We can keep finding happiness in the pursuit

“He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner,” they grumbled. Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!”

This isn't the language of a cultural Christian

This is in stark opposition to the way the rich young ruler spoke

What was most important to Zacchaeus was Jesus, the mission of restoration

Him following Jesus meant that he was in the business that Jesus was in, the restoration business

That mission was of the utmost importance

Jesus responded, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”

Until that day, we have to keep coming and dying

There is joy in the pursuit