

Marsh Muller

Sermon for 9/4/16 at Bainbridge

“Must We Give Up Everything?”

What do you mean that I have to give up everything to follow Jesus? Well, I have news for you. I am not giving up everything unless I can take all my worldly possessions, it isn't happening! What was that, I have to hate my family and my own life to follow Jesus? Really? Oh, come on, I thought that God wants us to love others as we love ourselves. None of this makes any sense! I have to do all of that to become a disciple of Jesus? Well, what's in it for me if I decide to do that? It doesn't sound very fair to me!

So let us look more closely from Luke the reasons that he is telling them and us to hate our families and to leave everything behind. First of all, Jesus wants us to leave behind and let go of anything that hinders our relationship with him. He doesn't want us to hate our families but to love him first and put him first in our lives. In order to live there are certain things that we need to have such as a job, transportation, housing, food and so on, however we can't let these things come between us and Jesus. He wants an all or nothing relationship with us. He doesn't want us to be riding the fence or divided in how we feel about him.

If we go back and look at the verses that were read from Jeremiah 18:1-11, Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 and Deuteronomy 30: 15-20, we will find one central theme that runs through these verses. In Jeremiah at the Potter's house, the potter takes the clay and forms it but it was marred in his hands so the potter took it and reshaped it until it was better and more useful. Just like that clay, we are clay to our Potter, Jesus Christ. He formed us and he knows us. He knows our strengths and weaknesses. He also knows those areas that we need to improve upon. To follow him is like interviewing for a job. One might be somewhat qualified for the job but not completely. So Jesus is saying if you want the “job” to follow me then these are things you must do to be effective in my kingdom. Otherwise it isn't going to work out very well.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 also tells us what we must do. God is telling us in these verses that he is giving us a choice of life or death but he is also saying- make the

right choice and choose life and follow me. Vs. 16 states, "For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways and to keep his commands, decrees and laws, then you will live and increase and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess." In these 5 verses, he is spelling it out to us very plainly, it will go well for you if you do these things but not so great if you don't. Does that mean that we will be living a sheltered life and nothing is ever going to go wrong for us? Certainly not! Because we are human and we live in a fallen world full of sin. Not only have we all sinned but there are people who have made the wrong choice with their lives.

To go back to one of my questions in the beginning of this message, if I give up everything, what is in it for me to follow Christ? Let us take a closer look at that. We were formed and created by a loving God. He created the earth that sustains us; no one had any part in the creation process. He loved us enough to die for us, to be crucified, to be tortured, whipped, ridiculed, beaten, spat upon and nailed to a cross. Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior gave up everything to do that for us. He didn't have to because we are the ones that sinned and deserve punishment for those sins not him. We will have a loving relationship with Jesus, a closeness, someone that we can talk to, and lean on not only in times of distress but all the time. Yes, there is the argument that he died for everyone whether we decide to follow him or not which is certainly true. However, by choosing not to follow Jesus means that we will die both physically and spiritually and never know our Lord and Savior. We will "live" apart from him in eternal hell and apart from our Christian brothers and sisters. It sure doesn't sound very nice to me! Why would anyone even want that? To be separated from our Lord and Savior to me is much more painful than to give up everything and follow him and experience his love for us. It is a wonderful feeling to know him and experience his love for us. I have always wondered how anyone can't follow Jesus, life must be very lonely for those people! Yes, it is tough to follow Jesus, no doubt about that. I know when I watch the news, I sometimes wonder where God is in the midst of all the violence but believe me just because we don't see him, it doesn't mean that he isn't there!

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the best way, may not always be the easy way but it is the right way. So remember my friends, choose life, pick up your cross, leave

everything behind that hinders your progress and follow Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith because it is the only way to live a life worth living! Amen

Let us pray: Grant us, O Lord to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever more. Amen