

The Cost of Following Jesus

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[0 : 00] Let me say good morning to everyone this morning.! come as your oracle. We need you even more. Lord, this is a worthless, useless exercise if you don't speak through us this morning. Father, this is futile. If your Holy Spirit does not illuminate your word.

Lord, we ask that you would be gracious to us today and cause to be done what only you can do. Lord, let this be a productive time not only in this moment but for all those who will hear this message in the days, weeks, months and years to come in the name of Jesus we pray and all God's people say Amen.

The story is told about a an old Baptist preacher from Snug Corner Acklids And this Baptist preacher got up to preach and in a Baratoan voice that I am incapable of emulating He said to the congregation I want you to say Amen if you don't mind spending 90 minutes in the presence of the Lord and all the old women in the front that were white they all said Amen but the preacher was mindful that the majority of persons did not say

Amen because they had other things on their minds no doubt And so the preacher said but you know the truth is I'm going to need at least two hours to convince the rest of you that you need to enjoy being in the presence of the Lord and he said to them he said I need you to say help him Lord help him So the reality is that no matter where you are today we're going to spend some time with the Lord and I'm sure you're going to ask the Lord to help me today we are going to consider the words of

[3 : 48] Mark gospel writer found in Mark chapter 8 beginning at verse 31 Mark chapter 8 beginning at verse 31 Mark writes and he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again and he said this plainly

Peter and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him but turning and seeing his disciples he rebuked Peter and said get thee behind me Satan for you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of man and calling the crowd to him with his disciples he said to them if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul for what can a man give in exchange or in return for his soul for whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him will the son of man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father with the holy angels and he said to them truly I say to you there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power today we are going to consider the topic the cost of following

Jesus the cost of following Jesus and help us to organize and to frame our thoughts we are going to consider this topic under two broad headings the false cost of following Jesus the false cost of following Jesus and secondly the true cost of following Jesus I have got a question for you at the outset my question is how many of you or rather have you ever been a victim of false advertising have you ever been a victim of false advertising have you been ever been that's a question have you ever been a victim of false advertising yes or no you have been

I dare to say that every single person in this room has been a victim of false advertising retailers are masters of false advertising consider just a few examples promoting something as free when in fact it is not you know you buy you get a free telephone and and then perhaps some people would unwisely believe that there is no bill that will accompany it at the end of the month but sure enough there's a bill at the end of the month or what about this one buy one get one free right now if the other one was truly free you would not have had to buy the first one so it's truly not free what about this one going out of business sale

I remember there was a certain company and it took me I was a much younger person and I never understood this why it is that this company every single week was advertising going out of business

sale and they never managed to go out of business never managed but every week going out of business sale and then there are others who misuse terms like low fat or no fat you know I wish they had some no fat apple pie I'd enjoy that one but no fat high fiber or organic everything is organic these this misuse of terms what about this one bait and switch you know they advertise something Calvin I'm not talking about you Calvin looking like me listen

[10:14] I talk about Calvin Calvin doesn't do this you know you advertise something you say you know we've got I don't know let me I want to be careful what I say let's say we've got corned beef how's that how about Libby's corned beef on sale for 99 cents and everybody runs to the store expecting to see Libby's corned beef for 99 cents when you get there the the the cashier tells you guess what we order Libby's but we've got some devil and foyer for \$1.50 that's a that's a bait and switch tactic you know that's false advertising false advertising just to get you in the door just to get you in the door and then things switch on you but in the passage that we come to today we see Peter's attempt at false advertising and Jesus' sharp rebuke of him yes even

Christians can and do falsely advertise Christianity do it all the time all of you who've been with us for some time will know that we are on a one year journey through the book of Mark during the last message in this series we had an interesting encounter there was an interesting encounter that we saw with Peter and Jesus we saw Peter confessing that Jesus is the Christ and shortly after that just shortly moments after that he's being reprimanded by

Jesus the false cost of following Jesus let's consider that the false cost of following Jesus you'll be aware that the book of Mark is written primarily to Gentiles and Mark seeks in this book to demonstrate the power and the uniqueness of Jesus and Peter who in the verses that we read is the main character in this account was actually the eyewitness source for the book of Mark in other words Peter told Mark the story and Mark John Mark wrote it down but this Peter Peter is an interesting guy Peter really is quite an interesting person you know the Bible doesn't tell us what Peter looked like how tall he was doesn't tell us anything about his character but I think that based on some of the things that Peter was involved with we can kind of make a bit of a deduction about Peter I believe Peter was a tough dude I think he was a tough dude Peter was a fisherman I am not saying that all fishermen are tough dudes but you got to be strong to work in that hot sun I believe Peter was a man's man and

I get this impression about Peter because how many of you remember when Jesus was about to be betrayed Peter I mean Peter is I don't know either Peter is a tough dude or Peter was a crazy dude because there Peter was there were men with weapons coming to take Jesus away and Peter decides that he is going to take one of their swords and Peter starts swinging now I don't know whether Peter must have been swinging for the guy's hair because he got his hair now he can't be that good I can't imagine Peter saying I'm going to just cut his hair off right I believe Peter was trying to slice him down the middle Peter was a tough dude and he was doing this all by himself and then there's another account about Peter swearing so I believe Peter was this big dude!

[15:42] commanding presence tough dude! as I said earlier in the verses prior to verse 31 that we read Jesus had just complimented Peter just recognized that Peter got it right when Peter said that Jesus was the Christ now I want you to see this amazing encounter as we consider this deception of Peter take a look at it verse 31 31 through 33 of Mark chapter 8 Mark writes and Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again then

Mark says and he said this plainly Jesus is here telling his disciples in plain language for the very first time of what his fate will be he's telling them of really why he came of who he is he is the Messiah he is the Christ Jesus says to them those who are head of the religious establishment they're going to reject me indeed they're going to do much more than that they're going to kill me that's what Jesus is saying that's what I came for that's what I'm here for he said I'm going to suffer here it is the leader of the disciples is talking this way and in verse 32 as we continue it says and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him now I want you to get an image of this take a just consider this for a moment here it is

Jesus is preaching and in the middle of Jesus speaking Peter pulls him and takes him aside you know what that's like that's like if pastors preaching one of these days preaching imagine this for a moment pastors preaching and then David jumps up and walks up here and says come let me take him there and tells him that now listen now you know that's not right that's not right he rebukes him sharply that's what this Peter did this big bad dude he pulls Jesus aside and the Bible says he

rebuked him now when you read the scriptures and you see this word rebuke you know Jesus rebuked the demons he rebuked the waves you know this word rebuke is a strong word Peter was saying to

Jesus how dare you how dare you you are the leader of this movement you are the leader of this movement how dare you talk to us this way how dare you do this you see Peter was aware that if this was Jesus faith then what would be his faith and the faith of the other disciples I want you to see a few things here the first thing that I want you to see is how one can be so passionate about something because Peter must have been after all he gave up his livelihood he gave up his job and he was with Jesus he stayed with him he spent time with him one can be passionate about something and be passionately wrong

Peter was with Jesus and that's why you've got people who are Christians and some who say that they are but are not they are passionate about their beliefs but they are passionately wrong and that should also cause us to be humble because we do to be passionate in our beliefs be passionately wrong there Peter was pulling the master aside and telling him you are wrong to do this believing it with all of his heart you can be you can attend church every Sunday you can be with Jesus as Peter was see we don't have that we don't have the privilege that

[21 : 42] Peter did Peter was with Jesus he heard the word directly from Jesus but he got it wrong and so that tells you again that's a warning to you and me it ought to cause us to approach one another with humility you know it's okay to get into an argument it's okay to get into a discussion but just know that sometimes we can be wrong we gotta get one thing right what was this thing what was going on in Peter's mind why did Peter not want Jesus to speak this way Mark doesn't tell us he doesn't tell us but you know the truth is you and

I are not much unlike Peter we are all practically the same quite frankly and I believe that we can consider this and as we think it through I believe that we can come to some reasons perhaps why Peter had a difficulty with what Jesus was doing at that moment Jesus was seeking to present the gospel as it ought to be he was seeking to present to his disciples what true discipleship was Peter had a problem with it I believe that Peter had an issue perhaps with this whole thing of power I think Peter believed that Jesus was going to rule as king as an earthly!

King Peter having heard these words probably thought to himself Jesus lacks ambition what's with this I can't believe this I cannot believe we've spent two years with this man and listen what he is saying all of this time going down the drain it's a waste of time was Jesus was he in this moment diminishing the movement that he started that we labored and worked so hard all this time for here is this man who calmed the seas who fed five thousand and he is talking about these people these weaklings they are going to kill him take his life what's with him has he lost it perhaps

Peter was afraid what would it mean for him if Jesus were killed after all everyone knew that he was a part of this movement but I bet you I wouldn't be surprised if Peter simply thought about those comments of Jesus that they were simply not very strategic you see Peter probably thought listen if you are trying to motivate a group of people you don't demotivate to inspire you don't tell people bad news and expect them to follow you that's not the way to lead a movement you don't tell people listen you gotta die or that I'm going to die I'm your leader and this is what's going to happen to me you don't do that no you tell them that listen victory is yours and victory is mine that's what you do perhaps

Peter thought that Jesus was contradicting! himself after all Jesus had said about himself that I am I've come to give life I am the bread of life well how is it if you've come to give life and you are the bread of life now you say that you are going to die this this doesn't make sense Jesus you're destroying the movement eternal life is in you you're destroying!

[26 : 44] the movement perhaps see Peter saw this as a loss of social status the list of persons who Jesus mentioned Jesus said in this list Jesus said that he was going to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes these were the people at the top of the hierarchy and Peter said listen don't say that oh lord what a mistake you say that these people are there that they're going to reject you and you expect us to follow you that's not what you're supposed to say you're supposed to say that we're going to walk with kings we're going to dine with queens on this earth we don't want to be seen as no rebel rousers Peter wanted to paint what Jesus to paint a picture of what it meant to be a disciple that was contrary to what

Jesus had in mind perhaps Peter was simply embarrassed I could just imagine embarrassed that having spent all of this time having invested all of this time with Jesus to come to this point now

where he says listen I'm going to die they're going to kill me whatever the reason whatever Peter's reason this ought to be a warning to us Jesus helps us to get into the mind of Peter quite significantly when Jesus said to Peter you're not setting your mind on the things of God but rather you're setting your mind on the things of man that was essentially

Peter's problem Peter had a problem with perspective Peter had a problem with outlook Peter was more concerned about the things of man than the things of God so this disciple just moments ago Jesus had acknowledged understood who he was Jesus said to him Jesus rebuked him rebuked him and said to him get thee behind me Satan imagine that get thee behind me Satan Jesus referred to

Peter that way for you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of man can I tell you that that's a problem that we all have from time to time and it can overwhelm us we we try to be a part of this world as disciples of Christ as followers of Christ we try to please the world we use the world's standards to judge what we ought to do we are ashamed sometimes to go against the crowd the crowd says this is the way to go well we got to do it that way because it seems logical it seems reasonable but unlike

Peter Jesus does not falsely advertise sugarcoat what it means to follow him let's now consider the true cost of following Jesus Jesus says in these words in verse 34 and calling the crowd to him with his disciples Jesus said to them if anyone if anyone would come after me let him do what let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me that's what Jesus says you see Jesus could have said follow me and you'll never get sick again in your life he could have said that he could have advertised that in fact there are people who promote that he could have said follow me and you will own all the money and things that you want there are people who say that too but he didn't say that he could have said follow me and you'll never have a day of disappointment in your life he could have had the mind of man

[32 : 31] Jesus didn't do that you know let's be honest let's be honest very often times we wish Jesus had said those things we wish he had said you know follow me and you'll never get sick you'll have all that you want the truth is the vast majority of people who profess to follow him would swear that that's exactly what he said but according to Mark's account contrary to Peter's expectations Jesus said says that the cost of following him is huge it's everything in the remaining verses of chapter 8 Jesus tells us the true cost of following him and then he gives four reasons why that cost is so high

I'm going to ask those who are going to project those words for us to do so now let me say that pause and say to you that every time I have the an opportunity to preach God's word I contend with an amazing dilemma a two edged sword if you will!

on the one hand as I immerse myself into God's word I see always my own inadequacy and I must tell you that it makes me miserable but on the other hand I never fail to come to face to face with a merciful God who helps me to walk through that and who helps me to see that his grace is sufficient and as we consider these words today and as you hear these words today I pray that he helps you in the same way that though you and I might be inadequate to different degrees that he's going to help us calling the disciples to him

Jesus said to them if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me I like the simplicity with which Daniel Akin explains verse 34 in his book Christ centered exposition exalting Jesus and Mark and we projected it on the screen for you this is what he writes being Jesus disciple requires three essentials first deny yourself deny yourself give up the right to self determination live as

Christ directs treasure and value Jesus more than yourself your comforts and your aspirations put to death the idol of I say no to you and yes to Jesus my goodness if you Jesus says faintly!

[37 : 11] if you if anyone would come after me let him deny himself let him deny himself that's the command to us we are called to deny ourselves about these words John Piper writes we must deny ourselves daily because we are so liable to find our pleasures elsewhere!

outside of Jesus it is easy we will find our pleasures elsewhere it's easy for us where would you and I be without self denial I want you to think about it for a moment where would you and I be without self denial without denying ourselves as I was considering this I was reminded of what Robert Machini 19th century Scottish preacher said he said the seed seeds of every man's sin is in my heart can you imagine that imagine what you and

I must deny what you and I confront on a daily basis we must live as Christ directs we must give up self determination so Peter had it wrong Peter's concept of following Jesus was all wrong he had it wrong then Daniel Daniel Aiken continues with the quote he says second being Jesus Jesus' disciples requires prayers that we take up that you take up your cross say die Luke 9 and 23 adds the word daily because that is what we must do this is not a normal or this is not normal or natural but it is necessary to be Christ's disciple and it is a slow and painful death see the truth is that sometimes you and I might see self-denial as something we do something that we do and taking up the cross as something we do in response to what the world does to us Jesus says that to follow him one had to take up one's cross to fully grasp the weight of this requirement of taking up the cross one needs to bear in mind that in Jesus' day death by crucifixion was common it was common so they had an understanding of it they didn't have to imagine what it meant to take up one's cross they were eyewitnesses to the excruciating pain the embarrassment the humiliation carrying the cross that's what Jesus is telling us Jesus is saying to us that sometimes very often and it is increasingly so increasingly so that you and I will suffer we got to suffer as disciples and he's saying to us that we got to be prepared to suffer unto death the cross represented shame and sorrow and betrayal death and then finally [42 : 28] Daniel Akin says Jesus being Jesus' disciple Christ following him are we willing to believe and obey Jesus it will be radical not comfortable because it involves a death to the self centered life I'm going to need some time it is actually 20 okay all right thank you so we've got some time we are radical not comfortable because it involves a death to self centered life I believe that we get a better sense of what

Jesus meant if we consider Colossians I want us to turn to Colossians let's take a look at Colossians chapter 3 Colossians chapter 3 beginning in verse 1 remember now we're talking about the cost following Jesus the cost of following Jesus Paul writes beginning in verse 1 if then you have been raised with Christ seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God set your mind set your minds on things that are above not on things that are on earth you see this ties right back into what Jesus said to Peter Peter's problem was setting his mind on the things of man rather than on the things of

God and Paul tells us if then we have been raised with Christ we are to set our minds on the things above not on the things of earth then he says in verse 3 for you have died as a disciple of Christ for you have died brothers and sisters we've died we've died you and I our lives are hidden in Christ in God when Christ who is your life appears then you also will appear with him in glory and now Paul goes further take a look what he says he says therefore put to death what is earthly in you sexual immorality impurity passion evil desire and covetousness which is idolatry on account of all these the wrath of God is coming in these you too once walked when you were living in them but now now that you are a disciple you must put them all away he says put them all away anger wrath malice slander an obscene talk from your mouth do not lie to one another saying that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator and in verse 12

Paul says put on then as God's chosen ones holy and beloved compassionate hearts kindness humility meekness and patience bearing with one another and if one has a complaint against another forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you so you must also forgive and above all above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful let the word of Christ dwell in you richly then in verse 17 of chapter 3

Paul writes whatever you do word or deed do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the father through him the Bible is very clear about what it means to be a disciple what it means to follow Jesus you see we don't choose our path Jesus says very plainly Jesus says listen if you want to follow me then you got to deny yourself you got to take him your cross then you got to follow me and if we say that we follow Christ and we are going in the opposite direction we are either lying on him or we are trying to deceive ourselves you see one thing that is clear from what you and I have considered this morning that Jesus Christ was not minded to build monuments on earth his focus was not earthly it was heavenly what

[49 : 10] Jesus was talking about and what Paul wrote about was the surrender life it was a surrendered life and often songs capture the essence of scripture so well and they help us often to appreciate it and recall its meaning and I believe that this song the song I surrender all does that in

this context just listen to some of the words of the song all to Jesus I surrender all to him I freely give I will ever love and trust in his presence daily live all to Jesus I surrender!

Humbly at his feet I bow! Worldly pleasures All forsaken Take me Jesus! Take me now!
All to Jesus I surrender! Make me Savior! Holy Thine! Jesus having Jesus having spoken plainly about what it means to be a true disciple what it means to follow him the remaining verses Mark chapter 8 tells his disciples why it's necessary why it's important he makes a case Jesus makes a case for why they should deny themselves and take up the cross and follow him the first thing he says he says do it for whoever would save his life will lose it see that but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it

Jesus makes plain that he knows the way that he is the way that he is the only way Jesus says you try to save your life says you got to lose it try to save your life apart from me you are going to lose it it can't happen your life will expire and then Jesus says next reason why you need to do this he says for what does it profit a man gave the whole world and to lose his own soul for what can a man give in exchange for his soul yet Jesus is saying Jesus places he makes an argument really he makes a point against which there is no compelling argument

Jesus says listen if you were able to do what is absolutely impossible that is if you got all the wealth and all the wisdom and all the influence in the whole world all of it all of it he said still does not pay for your soul Jesus speaking not about our physical bodies speaking about our souls see there are people in this world who go after wealth and who go after fame who go after influence but the record will show that they have all they're now dust and if they ain't dust today they could be dust in a few years you can't buy your way into this thing

[53 : 29] Jesus says you gotta deny there is only one way he says that way is through self denial and taking up your cross and following me that's it there's no other way and Jesus said this is a big deal he said what will you give in exchange for your soul is there anything that you will give is there a momentary pleasure that you will give in exchange for your soul is there influence is there wealth what will you give and then Jesus says for whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him will the son of man also be ashamed perhaps there was something that

Peter said to him that caused him to say this very specifically perhaps Peter was ashamed of what Jesus was saying Jesus was saying and he says to us that we ought not be ashamed we ought to wear the label of disciple so that the world can see it this account as we conclude this account in scripture it demonstrates how easy it is for us to lose perspective to be like Peter to lose perspective it reminds us that we are naturally disposed to be earthly minded like Peter naturally disposed that's the way we are the way we have been made we are naturally disposed in this fallen world to be earthly minded perhaps you're here today and you're saying

I'm just like Peter I'm more aware of the things of man than the things of God I often don't look at things from God's perspective perhaps that's what you're saying today I believe many of us can say the same thing I often do not look at things from God's perspective in fact you might say there is little evidence in my life that I am a follower of Jesus it could be that you've traded you've even traded obedience to Christ for worldly pleasures!

But I want to say to you today that next week as we continue our series in this book of Mark we'll see that Jesus didn't give up on Peter he didn't give up on Peter Peter remained a part of his inner circle he didn't give up on him Peter didn't stop being human the truth is we can only follow Jesus in increasing ways through the grace that he grants to us and that is why we we ought to appeal to him for grace that's the message if you're a believer today Lord

I pray that you would extend that you would extend your grace to me so that I might in increasing ways be your disciple that I might follow you that I might more demonstrably deny myself and take of my cross but perhaps you hear today and you say I don't believe any of that stuff perhaps you say that I can have the life all by myself I'll make as much money as I can and I'm going to enjoy life I'll prove Jesus wrong really that's what you're saying ultimately I'm going to prove Jesus wrong those words describe you today know that those are not original thoughts that's the first thing those are just not original thoughts so sorry

[58 : 47] I gotta tell you first your bubble they are thoughts of men and women who have come and gone gone not one has figured out how to cause how to make his or her fortune give him or her eternal life not one not one not one has been able to enjoy the things accumulated after their inevitable death Jesus is right there is nothing more valuable than your soul nothing more valuable

than your soul you get this wrong you've got everything wrong Jesus said your soul is valuable he says what shall it profit you gain the whole world he says and you lose the only thing that matters nothing matters he said what will you give in exchange for your soul what are you going to give number one athlete is that it popular with the girls is that it what are you going to give what is your soul really worth is the question yes we talked about the cost of everything today we talked about cost today talked about cost but you know

I'm an accountant and we can't just look at one side of the ledger to you who are not following Jesus Christ especially please know that while there is a cost there is also a reward there is also a reward a soul that lives forever yes there is a cost of following Jesus but the reward is a soul that lives eternally with him and there is a reward even here today our reward is knowing that we have a sovereign God who walks in the midst of plenty and of little when there is a hurricane and when the sun shines and though often there is physical pain we can pray to him and ask him

Lord help us to see through the dark clouds God grant us grace to see through it and so he can give us joy that's that's the that's the peace that we have that's the benefit that we have of serving the Lord today Father we just thank you for choosing us Lord what a what a delight what a joy what a privilege Lord you have condescended you have you have done this marvelous thing you have sent a savior to die for us oh Lord we cannot imagine Lord the cost that you pay we cannot imagine the cost that you pay

Lord you you called us father you've called us to to do this you've called us to follow Christ to deny ourselves our wicked selves oh Lord it's all for our good it's all for our good help us to see that Lord help us to see through the darkness Lord grant us grace to embrace this truth of self denial and help us Lord to take up our cross daily help us to live for you help us not to be ashamed of you help us to have the mind of Christ Lord grant to us grace grant to us humility Father we ask that you would we ask that you would keep us as your word declares until the

Lord returns Lord we pray also for those who hear these words and who are not convicted by them we pray Lord that you will do a work in their hearts that you would be pleased to do a work in their hearts that only you can do in the name of Jesus we pray and all God's people say Amen