

Matthew 8:18-22: Now when Jesus saw a great crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side.
¹⁹ And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."
²⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."
²¹ Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."
²² And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

Intro: Following Jesus is more important than your own personal comfort: Jesus takes priority over all of your comforts in this life. Following Jesus is more important than your greatest loves and allegiances in this life: Jesus takes priority over the people (and everything else!) most dear to you in this life.

The disciples of Jesus knew this truth very well: all were killed for their faithfulness to Jesus Christ, except John!

Paul: - 2 Corinthians 11:23-27: with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

- **Philippians 3:7-8:** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

Abraham knew God and God's commands come before family: Genesis 22:12: He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." (Muslims who convert to Christ know this reality; Do you know this reality? You do!)

1. We See Great Crowds And Hear Hard Sayings

Matthew 8:18: Now when Jesus saw a great crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side.

J. C. Ryle: Nothing has done more harm to Christianity than the practice of filling the ranks of Christ's army with every volunteer who is willing to make a little profession, and talk fluently of experience.

Luke 14:25-33: Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

2. We See An Eager Follower Of Jesus

Matthew 8:19: And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

a. A scribe: Article: Scribes in ancient Israel were learned men whose business was to study the Law, transcribe it, and write commentaries on it. They were also hired on occasions when the need for a written document arose or when an interpretation of a legal point was needed. Ezra, "a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses," was a scribe (Ezra 7:6). The scribes took their job of preserving Scripture very seriously; they would copy and recopy the Bible meticulously, even counting letters and spaces to ensure each copy was correct. We can thank the Jewish scribes for preserving the Old Testament portion of our Bibles . . . The scribes' original aim was in earnest—to know and

preserve the Law and encourage others to keep it. But things turned horribly wrong when man-made traditions overshadowed God's Word and a pretense of holiness replaced a life of true godliness. The scribes, whose stated goal was to preserve the Word, actually nullified it by the traditions they handed down (Mark 7:13).

b. This scribe makes a great confession: "I will follow you wherever you go."

c. This confession could be an arrogant, proud confession: Matthew 26:33-35: Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the disciples said the same.

James 4:13-16: Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" - yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

Did he really understand the demands of following Jesus (Hendriksen): self-denial, sacrifice, service, & suffering!

3. We See The Cost Of Following Jesus: It's Uncomfortable

Matthew 8:20: And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

a. Jesus lived an uncomfortable life: Illustrations of wild animals who have a place to stay – a place to call home.

Jesus stayed in other people's homes, but He had no home of His own – He had nowhere to lay His head!

Someone: "The greatest of Kings born in the lowest of places!" He was born in a borrowed animal shelter; He was laid in a borrowed manger; He sailed in a borrowed boat; He stayed in borrowed homes; He rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey; and He was buried in a borrowed tomb! So that we might own everything!

Jesus was rejected: Hendriksen: As the story develops, Judea rejects him, Galilee casts him out, Gadara begs him to leave its district, Samaria refuses him lodging, earth will not have him, & finally even heaven forsakes him.

Little, insignificant, wild animals (foxes and birds) have more comforts and ease than the King of glory! Jesus had no home here! He did not come here to rest and relax and build an empire – He came on a mission!

b. Those who follow Jesus will also give up comforts in order to follow Jesus: Matthew 6:19-20: Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth & rust destroy & where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys & where thieves do not break in & steal.

Hymn: This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through; My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue; The angels beckon me from heaven's open door; And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.
O Lord, you know I have no friend like you; If heaven's not my home, then Lord what will I do?
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door; And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

- **Philippians 3:20:** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ

- **Hebrews 13:13-14:** Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. **(Are there ways you are too comfortable in this life?)**

4. We See Jesus Refer To Himself As The Son Of Man

Matthew 8:20: the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

a. The term “Son of Man” is used throughout Scripture to make a contrast between weak, lowly, changeable, mortal man and the powerful, glorious, unchanging, everlasting God: Numbers 23:19: God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind.

- **Psalm 8:4:** what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?
- **Psalm 146:3:** Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.
- **Isaiah 51:12:** I, I am he who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass

b. The term “Son of Man” is also used for the divine, God-Man Messiah: Daniel 7:13-14: In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like **a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven**. He approached the **Ancient of Days and was led into his presence**.¹⁴ He was **given authority, glory and sovereign power**; all peoples, nations and men of every language **worshiped him**. His dominion is **an everlasting dominion that will not pass away**, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Jesus says that Son of Man in Daniel 7 is Him! - Matthew 26:64: (Jesus to high priest) from now on you will see **the Son of Man** seated at the right hand of **Power** and coming on **the clouds of heaven**.

D. A. Carson: Only when under oath and when it no longer mattered whether his enemies heard his clear claim to messiahship did Jesus reveal without any ambiguity at all that he, the Son of Man, was the messianic figure of Daniel 7:13-14; and then his opponents did not realize that an essential part of his messiahship was suffering and death. In Jesus’ ministry, “Son of Man” both reveals and conceals.

Jesus is the son of man (human, weak, & lowly) & He’s the SON OF MAN (God, all powerful, Who receives worship!): **Boice:** In Matthew alone he uses “Son of Man” to affirm his full deity, to teach that he has authority on earth to forgive sin, that he would ransom his people from their sins, that he would die on the cross and rise from the dead on the third day, and that he will return one day in judgment.

Yet He was crucified in weakness, as a man, & died, bearing the wrath of God! But then rose up with all power! Son of Man preserves both of these truths! He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah & the Lamb slain for sinners!

Jonathan Edwards (Diverse Excellencies in Jesus; Lion/Lamb-Rev. 5):

1. There do meet in Jesus Christ infinite highness and infinite condescension.
2. There meet in Jesus Christ, infinite justice and infinite grace.
3. In the person of Christ do meet together infinite glory and lowest humility.
4. In the person of Christ do meet together infinite majesty and transcendent meekness.
5. There meet in the person of Christ the deepest reverence towards God and equality with God.
6. There are conjoined in Jesus Christ infinite worthiness of good, & the greatest patience under sufferings of evil.
7. In Jesus Christ are conjoined an exceeding spirit of obedience, with supreme dominion over heaven & earth
8. In the person of Christ are conjoined absolute sovereignty and perfect resignation.
9. In Christ do meet together self-sufficiency, and an entire trust and reliance on God
10. [On the cross] . . . was Christ in the greatest degree of his humiliation, and yet by that, above all other things, his divine glory appears.
11. [On the cross] . . . He never in any act gave so great a manifestation of love to God, and yet never so manifested his love to those that were enemies to God, as in that act.
12. [On the cross] . . . Christ never so eminently appeared for divine justice, and yet never suffered so much from divine Justice, as when he offered up himself a sacrifice for our sins.
13. [On the cross] . . . Christ’s holiness never so illustriously shone forth as it did in his last sufferings, and yet he never was to such a degree treated as guilty.
14. [On the cross] . . . He never was so dealt with, as unworthy, as in his last sufferings, and yet it is chiefly on account of them that he is accounted worthy.

15. Christ in his last sufferings suffered most extremely from those towards whom he was then manifesting his greatest act of love.

16. It was in Christ's last sufferings, above all, that he was delivered up to the power of his enemies; and yet by these, above all, he obtained victory over his enemies.

5. We See The Cost Of Following Jesus: He Must Be Your First Love

Matthew 8:21-22: Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ²² And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

a. We should honor our parents: 5th Commandment; Jesus affirms this; Jesus did this!

b. Jesus makes what seems to be a very harsh statement?: What Jesus says seems harsh to a lot of people. It seems Jesus is saying to a man, called a disciple, who has just lost his father: "Burying your father is not a priority right now. I'm the priority. Following me is the priority. Let those who are spiritually dead bury their own dead."

Others say Jesus can't be saying this! It's too harsh. Rather, this disciple is caring for his elderly father who will die in the coming months, and Jesus is again saying: "Taking care of your elderly father is not a priority right now. I'm the priority. Following me is the priority. Let those who are spiritually dead take care of those who are dying."

c. Jesus must be first, even before family: Matthew 10:37: Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

God's command to Ezekiel: Ezekiel 24:16: Son of man, behold, I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you at a stroke; yet you shall not mourn or weep, nor shall your tears run down.

Psalms 73:25: Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

d. Only God talks this way: Boice: Jesus' statements also challenge us by his unique authority. Who would dare say such things unless he possessed unique authority? Who but God could make such demands? . . . If Jesus is God, then the demands of his kingdom become even more radical than we have imagined. When we hear Jesus saying that we must hate our fathers and mothers, wives and children, in order to be his disciples, it seems shockingly extreme. But if he is God, it is not extreme at all. If he is God, nothing he could possibly demand is outrageous. If he is God, we owe him total obedience and total self-surrender. On the other hand, the fact that Jesus is God makes our total surrender all right. He is not an arbitrary god who has no concern for us and, so we might imagine, has a passion only for his own self-aggrandizement and glory. God made us. He has given us life and families and homes and a reasonable portion of this world's goods to enjoy. These things are good precisely because they are made by God and are God's gifts. It follows that if God requires us to give up one or more of these things in a specific situation—as a pioneer missionary might have to do to take the gospel to some remote area of the world—it is because the demand, difficult as it may appear, is nevertheless good in that particular situation.

e. Some applications: Parents; Children; Singles; Jobs; **GOSPEL!**

John Piper: God did not ordain the cross of Christ or create the lake of fire in order to communicate the insignificance of belittling his glory. The death of the Son of God and the damnation of unrepentant human beings are the loudest shouts under heaven that God is infinitely holy, and sin is infinitely offensive, and wrath is infinitely just, and grace is infinitely precious, and our brief life — and the life of every person in your church and in your community — leads to everlasting joy or everlasting suffering. If our preaching does not carry the weight of these things to our people, what will? Veggie Tales? . . .

Oh, that the rising generations would see that the world is not overrun with a sense of seriousness about God. There is no surplus in the church of a sense of God's glory. There is no excess of earnestness in the church about

heaven and hell and sin and salvation. And therefore, the joy of many Christians is paper thin. By the millions, people are amusing themselves to death with DVDs, and 107-inch TV screens, and games on their cell phones, and slapstick worship, while the spokesmen of a massive world religion write letters to the West in major publications saying, “The first thing we are calling you to is Islam . . . It is the religion of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil with the hand, tongue and heart. It is the religion of jihad in the way of Allah so that Allah’s Word and religion reign Supreme.” And then these spokesmen publicly bless suicide bombers who blow up children in front of Falafel shops and call it the way to paradise. This is the world in which we preach.

And yet incomprehensibly, in this Christ-diminishing, soul-destroying age, books and seminars and divinity schools and church growth specialists are bent on saying to young pastors, “Lighten up.” “Get funny.” “Do something amusing.” To this I ask, Where is the spirit of Jesus?

“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 will find it” (Matthew 16:24–25). “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell” (Matthew 5:29). “Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead” (Matthew 8:22). “Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all” (Mark 10:44). “Fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). “Some of you they will put to death . . . [don’t be afraid] not a hair of your head will perish [on that block]. Where is Christ!

Mark 10:28-30: Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.”

Christ Jesus Poor And Lowly Came
No Place To Lay His Head Or Claim
Through Him You’ll Never Be The Same
He Took God’s Wrath And Bore Our Blame
He Died Enduring Sin And Shame
Then Rose For Sinners To Reclaim
So Follow Him It’s Our Great Aim

And Suffer All For His Great Name
Since He’s Our Greatest Love Exclaim
Our Hearts For Him His Love Inflamm
His Movement None Shall Stop Or Tame
We Pray And Speak And Spread His Fame
For He’s Our All We Shall Proclaim!