

The Hindrances of Apprenticeship to Jesus

a sermon in the series

The Apprentice: An Analysis of What it Means to be a Disciple

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Luke 14:15-21

Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, “Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!” 16 Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ 18 But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ 19 And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ 20 Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ 21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’”

It has been over a month since I last spoke on this series. Therefore, a review is in order. We began stating that if you are a Christian you are a disciple of Jesus Christ. There is no distinction made between the word *Christian* and *disciple*. To be a Christian is to be a disciple and to be a disciple is to be a Christian. What is a disciple? A disciple is someone who is sacrificing his or her life to following Jesus in order to be like Him. One who does this is a person who has built their life on Christ by worshipping, obeying and submitting to Him. You haven't "accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior" just so you can go to heaven when you die. And if you have, then you're not a disciple. Jesus never told people to follow Him for that reason but rather to follow Him so they could be like Him. This is the ultimate destiny of God's children. The predetermined purpose for you according to Romans 8:29 is that before the foundation of the world God predestined you to be conformed to the image of His Son. One who does this is one who has built their life on Christ by worshipping, obeying, and submitting to Christ.

How do we do those three things?

Concerning worship, its definition is not what we often suppose. It is not doing what we've just done—worshipping and singing through praises and prayers. Worship includes that but it's so much more. We have defined worship according to the Scriptures, specifically Romans 12:1-2. To worship is to build your life on something or someone because you value them to be worth giving your life to. So worship is to say to someone or something, "You are a foundation massive enough to carry my life and to build my life on, so I will devote myself to you." That's what worship is.

We can sing here for an hour and feel something in our souls. We can feel happy or elated or joyful, but that's not worship if your life is not built on Christ. In that instance your "worship" is hypocrisy. There are many people within the four walls of churches that are building their lives not on Christ but worshipping something else. But a disciple has said no to everything else because he has found Christ to be that massive, beautiful and worthy to revolve his life around. Christ decides every facet of his life; Christ is in everything that this person does.

Did you know the earth is held in its gravitational pull and rotation around the sun because of the size and mass of the sun? If the sun was one degree smaller it wouldn't have the sufficient pull to keep us in orbit. Jesus Christ is sufficient to build your life on. But it's not just making a profession of faith; it's everything about your life revolving around Him because He's that massively beautiful.

What does it mean to obey Him? It simply means what He said to His disciples, "Come follow Me. Be with Me. Watch Me. Observe Me. And then do what I do." That's obedience. It's doing what Jesus said, the way He said; it is doing it like He did it. That's obedience.

Submitting to Christ simply means that you understand you can't do any of that without God and that you are truly in the end His workmanship and that He is making you His disciple. "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." We are His workmanship so we submit to Him.

Next, we demonstrated that one of the weaknesses of our churches today is that we have disciples but they are undisciplined. They have been converted but no one has invested their life in them to teach and model the life of Jesus and what He said and did. We had two people today testify there are people in their lives investing in them and showing them the ropes, if you please. "The ropes", in this case, is the life of Christ and how He lived His life on this earth. In that message we examined why the church has failed to disciple true converts. Our major problem is that we have lost sight of what the true church is and this traditional institutional type thing has replaced it. I fear that most of us to this day, including me, still carry baggage from what the world says the church ought to be and this is the way it looks and performs. For hundreds of years a system has been developed that has been handed down to us by tradition. We're born into it, we grow up into it and we assume that this is the way church is to function, be, and look. But if a church is failing to make disciples of the people that are converted—it is not a biblical church.

In the following message we shared how we can begin to disciple those who are already saved as well as those of you who are yet to be saved.

Here is what we established: first, **a church must change its priorities to make the Great Commission a priority.** We know the great commission but the problem is we don't do it. It's not the priority. Again, this institutional form of church has so swallowed up everything that we measure church by buildings and budgets and baptisms and everything other than making disciples. We need to begin to examine everything about this church and bring it under the microscope. We can't be afraid to do so and ask if *this* or *that* is promoting Jesus' command to make disciples? If not it's a distraction, a diversion, and we need to have the courage to do away with

it, no matter how much we cherish it. Our sole purpose for existence is to make disciples here and around the world and anything that hinders that must be removed.

Second, ***we as individuals need to renew our thinking so that we begin to think missionally.*** You are on mission. You have a task given to you by your Commander in Chief and you're always on task, always on duty. We should begin to view the world through this prism—I'm a disciple maker because I'm a disciple. That needs to be the way you think and you need to do individually what we're asking you to do as a church. You need to bring everything under the microscope and ask yourself, "Am I a disciple maker? Am I on mission?" Everybody in this room at some point should mature so they can start investing in others and discipling them. The definition of maturity is not that you have great knowledge of the Bible, but that you make disciples. Somebody told me yesterday, "I don't know much. I'm not a gifted teacher." The point is that you don't have to know a lot. All you have to know is a little bit more than the person you're trying to teach. You really don't need three points and a poem. You don't need a clever story, although they help. All you need is the Spirit of God and the courage to trust Him to give your life away to somebody.

Third, ***the mature must divest their lives of the non-essential in order to invest in the undisciplined.*** We must unload our boats so that now we can be on mission and start investing our lives in those who have yet to become spiritually mature, the other believers who haven't been disciplined. A fundamental mistake I have made is I've relied on teaching and instruction alone. We need much more than that. You need to see it as well as hear it. You need modeling. You need somebody who has gone through what you are now going through and see how they handled it. You need to hear from them because they know, they've been there, and as Christ led them they can now lead you. But to do that we need to say, "Everything in my life needs to be analyzed and if it's not helping me to invest my life in others then it is a hindrance and I need to remove it."

Fourth, ***the undisciplined must divest their lives of the non-essential in order to become like Jesus.*** Those of you who are still struggling spiritually, that's not altogether your fault, I get that, but if you are to mature you have to divest your life of things that are hindering your spiritual growth and maturity so you can begin to disciple someone else. So whatever is in your life keeping that from happening throw it overboard. You will not in the end miss it.

Fifth, ***the undisciplined must submit themselves to others who would invest in them.*** If you're going to be disciplined by somebody you have to really put yourself under his or her wing, which is very difficult in the American society. One of my favorite John Wayne movies is "Hondo." John Wayne who plays Hondo Lane is in the Arizona wilderness and comes upon this woman and her child's home. With his dog, Sam, as his companion, Hondo has been on foot in the desert ever since his horse was killed. The lady feeds him and at the meal she thinks about the dog and tries to feed him but Hondo says no.

"Oh, I understand," she said. "You want to be the only person to feed him."

“No, you don’t understand. Sam fend for himself. It’s better that way. Sam is independent, he doesn’t need anybody and that’s a good way of life.”

That might be good for the movies and it might have worked for John Wayne while he was in character but it didn’t really work in life. It never works that way in life. It’s not designed to. And it certainly doesn’t work that way in the church. The church was never designed for a group of independent people to go about doing what they want to do when they want to do it and how they want to do it. No, God designed the church for a fellow submission—“submit one to another”—there has to be this humbling of ourselves so that we are little in our own eyes and can submit to a brother or sister who is going to be our example. They can only be our example as long as they are following Christ. That’s the only qualification. You’re never to submit to somebody who is not following Christ. But if they are, you are to submit to them. That’s missing in our churches and it needs to be restored.

These conditions of discipleship are beyond human ability or possibility. That is the way God designed the Christian life. He intends that we become His disciples and stay His disciples by the power of His grace alone.

The truth is you can’t do what God requires of you. You need Jesus. And He’s given you that very power in Himself and He abides within you. God didn’t ask you to grow up on your own, He will grow you if you will submit. That does not mean you and I are to be passive in our discipleship. We are to follow, love, forsake all, and submit to His workmanship. We are to observe His way of life and imitate it and that requires activity not passivity. It requires initiation and for that reason there are things that can hinder you and I in following Jesus. Everyday you are confronted with these obstacles to following Him.

I want you to stop thinking about being a Christian as someone who came forward in a meeting. I want you to think of being a Christian as someone who follows Jesus in order to be like Him. Every single day there are numerous obstacles thrown at you—sometimes by your husband or wife, children, coworkers or bosses—but they are not insurmountable. You can overcome them. You can hurdle them. But you need to know what they are.

I. The Hindrance of Recognition

A. The Desire For Recognition.

This is something in every one of us, including me. I want to be significant in other peoples’ lives and so do you. You want people to think highly of you. You want to have some impression upon them to the good. You want to be recognized by people. That’s innate to us all. There is this strong desire for recognition in us all and we see it in verse 15.

“Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, ‘Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!’” (Luke 14:15)

The Pharisee was very uncomfortable about what Jesus said. What did Jesus say? He said do not seek people's approval. That is the negative way to say it. Everything in life is geared for your approval. If you play baseball you don't want to be the ninth batter. It's dishonorable to be the ninth batter or to play right field. You put the worst player in right field because most people bat right handed and most balls don't go there. Then there's the occasional guy who hits to right field and the whole team shudders when they see that ball flying toward the right fielder.

Everything in life is geared for us to earn the approval of others including educational grading systems, debate teams, drama, music clubs, and more. We want to ascend to a certain level of proficiency so we will be recognized. Even in church! Even among the people of God we have our heroes and those we consider mediocre and then the lesser approved, and that ought not be! James warned if you always show attention to the rich, to the preferred, and not to the weaker then you've broken the heart of God. But we want recognition; it's a part of life. But Jesus said don't seek people's approval!

Let me say it more positively. Be so content with God's approval that you don't need people's approval. Be so content with God's approval and pleasure in you that you don't need anybody else's. That's what Jesus said. Look at verse eight. Before we read let's be clear and set this up. Jesus has been invited to a Pharisee's home for a big supper. But not because His presence was wanted for His own sake but they wanted to entrap Him because they had also invited a sick person and they knew that Jesus would heal him even though it was a Sabbath. And when He did they could therefore accuse Him of being a lawbreaker, not a man of God and then prove He certainly couldn't be the Messiah. What did Jesus do? He healed Him, just like they knew He would. Then He told them the parable in our text.

Let me give you some background. If it was a great feast there was not a room in the house large enough to hold everyone. So how did they compensate for this? The main room is where the host was and then the party would go into the next room, maybe a bedroom where you set up a table. That's how it was for me when I was a kid at grandma's house for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We had this little card table and all the kids had to go sit in the bedroom at the card table. Do you remember that? I'll never forget when I was invited into the kitchen. That was an awesome feeling. The same thing was going on then.

The party was going on in many rooms and the farthest room was the least honorable or approved. For whatever reason they weren't as friendly with the host as those in the main room. So Jesus is saying when you're invited to a wedding feast, don't go to the dining room and sit right down where you know the host is going to sit. Rather, go to one of the far rooms, down at the end of the hall and sit at the end of table and let he who invited you come and say to you, "give place to this man, come up to the other room." But if you are in the main room and he says to you, "No, that seat is reserved for this guy," you now have to move to the embarrassing lower place.

Then Jesus said this, and it really bothered them:

Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just." (Luke 14:12-14)

Seek God's approval because God's approval is much better than people's approval because people's approval is changing at best. I've learned this over and over in the ministry. I've seen it many, many times. I don't get upset about it, I just know it's life and I know God is working in me and teaching me something by it, probably keeping me humble. Lord knows I need that. But there have been people over the years, you've led them to Christ, you disciple them, you help them, and they sing your praises. But the first time you have to disagree with them or have to rebuke or correct them, well, the praises aren't so strong and then eventually they abandon you. They're gone. I've seen this time and time again.

I've learned that God's approval is so much better than people's. He will always love me no matter what I do or say, even when I'm not so good and commendable. His love for me is unchanging. Don't seek people's approval. Get free of that. It's wondrously liberating to be free of that.

This desire of recognition, Jesus says, is a hindrance to you being a disciple. If you desire people's approval more than you desire God's approval, you won't be much of a disciple of Christ. In fact, you can't. If at the end of the day what your wife, your husband, your children, your parents, your coworkers, your neighbors think of you, even what your brothers and sisters in Christ think of you, is more important than what God thinks of you, I say you are not a disciple of Jesus. You're not following Him. And a disciple follows. A disciple doesn't follow perfectly, but they follow.

B. The Attitude of Superiority and Sufficiency.

That too is a hindrance. Thinking you're worthy of God's goodness and blessings is a major hindrance in your being a disciple of Jesus. Notice what the man says. He didn't like what Jesus had to say so he said,

"Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" (Luke 14:15)

What he really said was, "The favored ones are we Pharisees. We are righteous people and in the end we will be in the kingdom eating bread at the table of God. That's the only table you need to be worried about."

The longer we serve the Lord the more we understand how gracious God is. It's amazing to think I am here today. It really is. I don't take this privilege lightly. It's amazing to think that God would be gracious to me and let me be here today. I'm not talking about preaching, I'm talking about being here as one of you, sons and daughters of the Lord. There are times when I am stunned that God would love me. I am amazed at amazing grace. It is not those who are well equipped that

are the disciples of Christ, it is those who are lame and poor and maimed. Do you see whom He calls upon here? Do you see whom He highlights? He calls upon those who are poor in spirit who knows if God doesn't do it for them it will never happen. Those are the disciples of Christ and that is why they follow Him—He has what they want and need.

II. THE HINDRANCE OF THE BUSYNESS OF LIFE

Jesus told another parable in verses 16 and following about the hindrances of the busyness of life. Getting busy will hinder you from being a disciple. The parable consists of a man who planned a great banquet—a feast that would be talked about for months, maybe even years. This was, as He said, a great supper. This wasn't just having some friends over, this was a grand feast.

In the days of Christ an event like this had a certain. First, you would invite your guests twice. The first invitation was to notify those who you wanted to attend that you were going to have a party and the general time when the event would take place. "My master is going to have a great feast, we're not for sure on the time but it will be somewhere around such and such a time and he wants you to attend." The invited would let the servant know if he or she intended to come.

Because of the custom of the society you would rarely say no. In the day of Christ and still yet today in the Middle East it's a shame/honor culture. It would be a *shameful* thing to dishonor a man if he invited you over for a meal. It would be an *honorable* thing to say yes, so most often they would say yes. This is the way it is to this day in the Middle East. I've never been there but I've heard people who have and they tell me that even if you ask someone where a public restroom is and they don't know where it is, they're going to tell you, "Well, you go down here and you go over there," because it would be so shameful not to help you. They would rather lie than appear dishonorable.

So if you're having a feast, the master would send out the servant and he would invite the ones on the guest list and ask if they could come. "Oh yes, tell your master I would have the honor to attend such a great banquet and thank you for inviting me." Then he would calculate how many said yes, and based upon that he would know how big a spread he would have to prepare. It might take weeks with the purchasing of the produce, the preparation of the decorations. But on the day of the feast, if there were a great list of people coming, as it was for the event in our text, a lamb wouldn't be sufficient to feed everyone so they would kill the fatted calf. And within an hour or so of that meat being prepared they would send out the servant again to all those invited and say, "Come! It's time! Put on your best robes and come, we're going to have a feast. We're going to party."

Look at verse 16 and see if you don't recognize the two invitations here:

"Then He said to him, 'A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'" (Luke 14:16-17)

It's time. The second invitation has come but surprisingly Jesus takes a turn in the story and tells about three people who say no. They originally said yes but now they say no.

The first fellow is preoccupied with finances. At least that's the way it appears. The second guy was preoccupied with work. He was a workaholic. The last guy was preoccupied with his new bride, with relationships.

I want to say right now that all of these excuses are flimsy at best and probably nothing more than lies and they certainly dishonor the master of the feast. Let's look at it more in depth.

A. Preoccupation With Finances.

Let me show you why this is an utterly ridiculous answer and not an excuse at all.

"But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'" (Luke 14:18)

Who buys a piece of land and never looks at it?! That would never happen, especially if you lived in this time. You lived in the area, you knew the farms, because you grew up there. The Jews are a people that have a great stock in the land, as you would well think. When a man goes to purchase a piece of property he walks all over it with the owner and the owner would explain, "You see that tree over there? My great-great grandpappy planted that..." and explain all the details.

To put this in perspective it would be like if I called you up today and said, "Karen and I want to have you over for supper this week, can you come on Tuesday?" And you said, "Oh, Brother Michael, thank you for the invitation, but my wife and I bought a house and we haven't looked at it yet. We need to go look at it." You wouldn't do that. You see the holes in this man's excuse? I will give him one thing though. He was polite. "I ask you to have me excused."

B. Preoccupation With Work.

"And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'" (Luke 14:19)

Let me tell you more about the times of Jesus. This is not the way you buy ox or any animal. If you were to buy or sell oxen there were two ways in which you did it. The most predominant way of selling oxen was to announce that on a certain day you were going to get your oxen out with a plow and you were going to demonstrate how strong they were, how straight they could plow, how manageable they were, and those who were interested could come to the demonstration. Or the man who was selling the ox would say, "Here they are, here's a plow, anytime you want to come by you let me know and you can try them out yourself." This is the way you did it.

This would be like you saying, “I can’t come to dinner because I bought 10 used cars and I haven’t seen them yet.” You don’t buy used cars that way, nor does anyone buy a tractor that way today. This is again a shameful, dishonorable thing he’s done. Again, he’s somewhat polite, “I ask you to have me excused.”

C. Preoccupation With Relationships.

The last guy isn’t so polite. He doesn’t ask to be excused; he doesn’t say *I’m sorry I can’t make it*, he simply says, “I’m married and I want time with my new wife.”

“Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’” (Luke 14:20)

Most people think this is the most reasonable excuse, they think so because the Old Testament allowed newly married men one year off for the first year of marriage. In that year they’re excused from military service and all other things. I think that’s what we ought to do today. Wouldn’t that be a great way to get marriages started? They did it then and so people who read this verse say, “Well, he’s in that one year time period.” He might be but that’s not the problem. This is the most ridiculous of all excuses because you tell me what woman wouldn’t like to dress up in her fanciest attire, put on her finest jewels, and go socialize with other women to enjoy a wonderful meal she didn’t have to prepare. See? This is the worst of all the reasons and it doesn’t hold water.

For whatever reason, these men were preoccupied with their lives and they didn’t care about the Master of Ceremonies.

Jesus’ point is that you can be invited by Christ into the kingdom and even say yes, but not be a disciple or in the kingdom.

These Pharisees thought they were already in the kingdom but when it came to honoring the Master of Ceremonies, they were too busy.

I don’t want to press this too much but maybe I ought to because of the way we live today. Some will say that the culture mandates we live busy schedules and that if you’re going to survive in this society you have to be on the go all the time, well, to some degree there is truth to that. You might live in one county and work in another so you might have a 30-minute to an hour drive everyday, one way. That can happen. And it does seem that today there are more situations where both spouses are working. Then there are the kids and all the extracurricular activities they have from baseball, soccer, basketball, flutes, violins, drums and guitars to all the other things they are involved in. Then you add the church. *You know, you all want us to be here three times a week. It’s just too much for my plate.*

I understand we all live very busy lives. What I think Jesus is trying to say to His children this morning is, “I’ve invited you and you’ve said yes, but are you honoring Me with your life? You honored Me when you said, ‘Yes, I’ll be a part of your kingdom, I’ll come.’ But now you’re dishonoring Me by the way you live.”

When you read this parable you might think He's talking about the marriage supper of the Lamb. I don't think He is. I think He's talking about the kingdom itself. He illustrates the kingdom as the banquet. That means when you say yes to Jesus, He sets up a table before you and starts blessing you and providing for you. All you have to do is say yes and come. There are many in the kingdom today who have not realized that they have allowed life to take and direct them rather than they direct their lives.

How many of us are so busy and involved with just living that there is no time to invest in your own spiritual condition, much less someone else? Be careful because Jesus says that dishonors the Master of Ceremonies. He spread a table for you and He wants you to be where He's directing. He doesn't want you to be guided by life but He wants to guide your life. He will direct your paths if you will let Him. If you'll say yes.

I don't think some of you quite understand so let me go to the Old Testament real quickly. Psalm 23:5. It's a blessed verse.

"He prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over."

Listen to David, he's not talking about heaven, he's talking about right now. There is a table spread before everyone who says yes to Jesus, but He doesn't force feed you. He doesn't make you sit at that table. He invites you to come, "I've got something for you. Follow Me. I'll lead you where it's best for you." But we say, "Oh no, I'm too busy today."

III. THE HINDRANCES OF PERSONAL GAIN

A. Personal Comfort.

Or we're like those fellows we talked about a few weeks ago.

"Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, 'Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.'⁵⁸ 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.'" (Luke 9:57-58)

Jesus knew that man would follow Him as long as it wasn't inconvenient. But the moment personal comfort was threatened he would not stay with Him. How many have said yes to Jesus but then say, *It's too inconvenient to be spiritual. It's inconvenient to invest my life in others. It's inconvenient. I don't feel comfortable. I'm not qualified. It's out of my comfort zone.*

Jesus says, "The only thing I ask you is to follow Me. Stay with Me. Yes, I'm going to lead you out of your comfort zones, I'm going to put you in places that's very uncomfortable. But it's the test of whether you're building your life upon Me, whether you're worshipping Me or not." The loss of personal comfort is nothing compared to the joys of His presence.

I spoke with a man this week who is undergoing great pain. Great pain. He said, “I want to share that I’ve learned something in my pain right now. I’ve read all of my life where saints suffered and sang while being martyred. I’ve always thought, ‘Wow, how could they do that?’ But I now understand. His presence is so real sometimes that I don’t feel the pain.” It’s a true physical story that illustrates a spiritual truth. When you’re in the center of God’s will, following Jesus where He takes you, you will always have joy. “If you’re following Me and where I am, you’ll experience My joy and My peace.” But when you stay in your comfort zone, what happens? When you fight for your own personal comfort and gain you lose it every time.

B. Personal Wealth.

“Then He said to another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’”⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.’” (Luke 9:59-60)

His father wasn’t even sick. It was all about his inheritance. His father was fine and healthy. The man knew it would be a while before his father died, but when he died he would stand to inherit a great sum. Because he probably was the oldest son, he was the executor of the estate—he would get two thirds of the inheritance and the rest of the brothers would have to split the one third. He was thinking, “I can’t go right now, I’ve got to take care of my father, I’ve got to be there with him because I don’t want to be disinherited. Therefore, Jesus, if you’ll wait for me, when dad dies and I get two thirds of the inheritance, then I can really be used in the kingdom. Boy, what I could do. What I could give to missions...” What did Jesus say? “Let the dead bury the dead. Don’t let wealth be a hindrance. Don’t let security be a hindrance.”

Where can you go when you’re in the center of God’s will and be alone?

C. Personal Relationships.

“And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’” (Luke 9:61-62)

Well that was really rude of Jesus, wasn’t it? He wanted to tell his family goodbye.

No, that wasn’t the problem. Jesus knew that man’s heart and He knew that when he told his family his plans that they would beg him, they’d weep, and he wouldn’t have the heart to tell them goodbye. Sometimes our relationships are so strong that we’re not willing to turn and say, “Jesus, You’re more valuable.” And we wonder why our loved ones are not saved.

They see the betrayal and the hypocrisy. I know you don’t think so, but I’m here to assure you that they see how you’re living, they see what’s important and they see the hindrances that you come up to and won’t go beyond. Beware, Jesus said, disciples will not let anything hinder them in following Him.

III. THE END OF THOSE UNWILLING TO BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS

Anything that takes priority over Jesus and being like Him is a hindrance in your life. But those who say yes to Jesus and overcome hindrances are truly the salt of the earth. They are the true disciples of Jesus Christ. Look at the last two verses of this chapter.

“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. ³⁴ Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? ³⁵ It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Luke 14:33-35)

We all know what salt does. It's a preservative, a disinfectant, and it promotes healing and it is a zest to life. Can you imagine eating without salt? Salt is a great thing. We are the salt of the earth, but if you lose what it means to be a disciple, you've lost your salt and then what are you good for? Jesus said you're not even good enough to throw on a manure pile. One of the ways they would use salt was by throwing it on the manure pile to help the manure compost. “You can't even help a manure pile,” that's what Jesus is saying, “You're no good to manure, all you're good for is to be trodden under the feet of men.”

As I bring this message to a conclusion, remember the Bible says God has prepared a table before you in the presence of your enemies. He has anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over. The blessings of God's very manifested presence are for those who follow Him in worship, obedience and submission, and who overcome all hindrances.

God has spoken to some of you this morning. You've seen the hindrance of your life. Some of you are too involved with work, some are too involved in relationships and some are too involved in security, your stocks and bonds, some of you are hindered for other reasons, but the Spirit of God has shown you today what is the hindrance that is saying in your soul, “I can't go all the way. I want to be saved, I want Jesus' blessings, and to be what He's calling me to be, yes.” But you hear yourself saying no.

Let me tell you there is no perfect time. Never will the conditions be perfect. Never will you have enough preparation; you'll always need more. But when Jesus says, “Come, now,” learn to say yes and trust Him and you will be valuable to those around you in the kingdom.

Oak Grove this is our challenge today. Do we believe God enough to overcome the hindrances that have presently blocked our way from being disciples? Amen.