

LifeGroups 2.7—Compelled by Love Luke 9:10-17, 12:22-34

Introduction

- [Slide #1] If you've ever wondered where monasticism comes from it comes from people trying to take seriously the passages we talked about last week. *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple." In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.*
- Taken to its extreme you get people like [John Cassian](#), a 5th century monk, one of the Desert Fathers who gave up everything and fled to the dessert to pursue severe forms of spiritual disciplines. You get guys like [David the Dendrite](#), also known as David the tree-dweller, who some time in the 6th century lived on top of an almond tree for three years.
- I'm sorry. That's not what Jesus had in mind. That's not the mission. That's not being compelled by love. Being on the mission Jesus launched isn't about seeing who can suffer the most. Being on the mission Jesus launched means being so compelled by the love God has for us that we'd gladly, willingly give up all we have to show others that same love.
- I realize how difficult it was to hear Jesus' words last week. If you've been agonizing all week about the cost of following Jesus this morning is the balance. If know you of someone who was hear last week but not this week make sure they hear what we're going to talk about today. Yes, following Jesus is costly. Yes, you can expect hardship and sacrifice. But...[Slide #2]

Proposition

- **Being on the mission Jesus launched also means trusting in God's ability to provide**
- The cost, what we give up to be on the mission, is more than matched by God's watchful generosity. Turn to [Luke 12:22-34](#) if you haven't already done so.

Organizational Sentence

- **Jesus gives some major encouragement to those who are worried about the cost of being on the mission**

Transition

[Slide #3] God knows the cost. Don't worry. He will take care of you. Listen.

Main Points

- *Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23 Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable*

you are than birds! 25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

- *27 "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!*
- If you're on or want to be on the mission don't for a second worry about the basic necessities. Don't worry. Don't be anxious. *Consider the ravens, verse 24.* In Jesus' day [ravens](#) were considered the [least valuable](#) of all birds. Jesus says we're more valuable than the even the most despicable of birds. *And how much more valuable you are than birds!* If God takes care of the birds he'll take care of you when you're on the mission. Don't worry.
- Still not convinced? Try the flowers. [Verse 27.](#) *Consider the lilies.* If God cares for the run of the mill wildflower, if he clothes them with more splendor than the splendor of [King Solomon](#), then how much more will he do for you and me? *If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!*
- If you're anxious or worried about being on the mission, if the cost of following Jesus scares you, then ask God to grow your faith. He won't let you down. Trust in his ability to provide.
- Every year in May people from around the world fling themselves down [Cooper's Hill](#) near [Gloucester, England](#) to catch an 8-pound wheel of cheese. Cheese Rolling. Have you seen this? [[Slide #4](#)] The hill is two football fields long. And it is steep. [[Slide #5](#)] By the time the cheese reaches the bottom it's rolling 70 miles an hour. [[Slide #6](#)] The contestants roll and flip and careen down the hill and after the cheese almost as fast. [[Slide #7](#)]
- Listen to me. The only difference between those on the mission Jesus launched and everybody else is the object of pursuit. One group flings themselves after food and drink and clothing and basic provisions and totally misses the mission. And the other group flings themselves after the Kingdom and onto the mission to find God has met their every need.
- [[Slide #8](#)] Do you now how foolish it is for followers of Jesus to run after the things God wants to provide them? [Verse 29.](#) *And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.*
- *"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*
- The only question is do you believe what Jesus says? Do you really believe that God is trustworthy enough to do what Jesus says we are to do?

- Where are the mission seekers, the kingdom seekers? Where are the people who will put the kingdom, the mission ahead of everything else in life? Ahead of school activities? Ahead of work demands? Ahead of hobbies? Where are they? Life will suck you off the mission. Where are the followers of Jesus who are so compelled by the love God has for us that they are willing to take Jesus seriously?
- Again, where do the resources for the mission come from? God has already provided everything we need for the mission. You or your LifeGroup already have in your possession, right now, all that's needed to live out the mission. The resources come from your own storehouses. Yes, there is a tremendous cost to following Jesus, to being on the mission. But don't worry; trust God to provide.

Transition

Just for a minute I want you to turn to **Luke 9:10-17**, a passage that graphically illustrates the foolishness of forgetting how God provides when we're on the mission.

- **Verse 10.** *When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Jesus and his disciples are on the mission. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, 11 but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.*
- *Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here."*
- *Jesus replied, "You give them something to eat." They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish--unless we go and buy food for all this crowd." 14 (About five thousand men were there.)*
- In other words, in order for the mission to continue people need to eat. How? The disciples haven't a clue. Initially they tell Jesus to send the crowds away. He says no, feed 'em. What Jesus asks them to do is ridiculously costly. The mission is costly. Feed a crowd of five thousand, not including women and children? Mark's gospel and John's gospel tell us it would take about **8 months wages** to feed everyone.
- The disciples don't have that kind of cash. Where in the world does that kind of provision come from? Do they pack it in, call it a day and send the crowd home hungry? Does the mission stop?
- When you're on the mission never ever forget who you are with.
- *But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." I love this. They trusted him. Verse 15. The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. 16 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. 17 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.*
- For those with the guts to trust him God abundantly provides for the mission.

Conclusion

– Dear Friends and Partners in Ministry,

We have a wonderful story of God's love and provision to share with you. Let this encourage your heart...

Two days ago, I (Don) took a team of medical personnel to the village of Mize, about a 20 minute drive from the Iris base in Pemba, [Mozambique]. As you know from our reports, I've been doing this every week for the past 4-5 months. The Mize church is headed by Pastor Juma, a joyful brother who has planted and oversees about 30 churches in the area. Our makeshift "clinic" was a slightly shaded area alongside the Iris church building. As has become usual, dozens of adults and 70 or more children gathered—many seeking medical attention, others socializing...and children playing on the recently constructed playground in the attached picture.

After a couple of hours in the heat and dust, I gave Pastor Juma some money to send an older boy to the market to buy some biscuits and juice powder as a rare treat for these impoverished and malnourished children. When the drink was prepared, Juma instructed the children in their Makua tongue to form two lines to receive their biscuits and then proceed toward the playground to receive a cup of juice. He then began to pray in exuberant thanksgiving for this gift, and the children joined in loudly and enthusiastically.

The two bags of biscuits were dumped into a clear plastic bag and Pastor Juma was about to begin distributing them. He asked me whether we should give two or three biscuits to each child. I looked at the bag and then at the two long lines and imagined how disappointing it would be if the biscuits ran out before the children at the end had received any. "Two," I said; and Juma nodded in agreement.

I was only a few feet away, observing the various medical stations and answering questions, and watching the kids scamper happily toward the playground clutching their two biscuits. Then I noticed the bag of biscuits was still very full. Juma noticed my look, raised his hands in a gesture of surprise and began giving three biscuits to each child. A few minutes later, I looked again. The bag was still full and we both began to grin. Our God was doing something marvelous before our very eyes! The kids who had quietly taken their place at the back of the line and waited their turn were rewarded with handfuls of biscuits. And still the bag was full. Juma gave more biscuits to every child in sight and then went around to the several dozen adults and gave them large handfuls of biscuits. And when we couldn't find anyone else to give biscuits to, Juma held up the bag, which was still as full as at the beginning; and we both praised God for His miraculous provision and love for "the least of these...."

Continued love and blessing,
Don and Elizabeth Kantel, 2007¹

¹ <http://chickenandfries.blogspot.com/2007/01/amazing-story-of-gods-provision.html>

- True story. Why are we surprised? Because we never even put ourselves in the kinds of positions where stuff like this can happen. Don't you want the kind of life with Christ where things like this are commonplace? Are you going to settle? You never settle for anything less than the best in every other area of your life? Why settle for a mediocre, ho-hum life with Christ?
- The kind of Christian life we all dream of requires us to be on the mission Jesus launched. Seek his kingdom first. No matter the cost. Put the mission, the kingdom above all else. Organize your life around the mission. It is the big rock that must come first. Trust God to provide despite the cost. And things like this become routine. Let's pray.