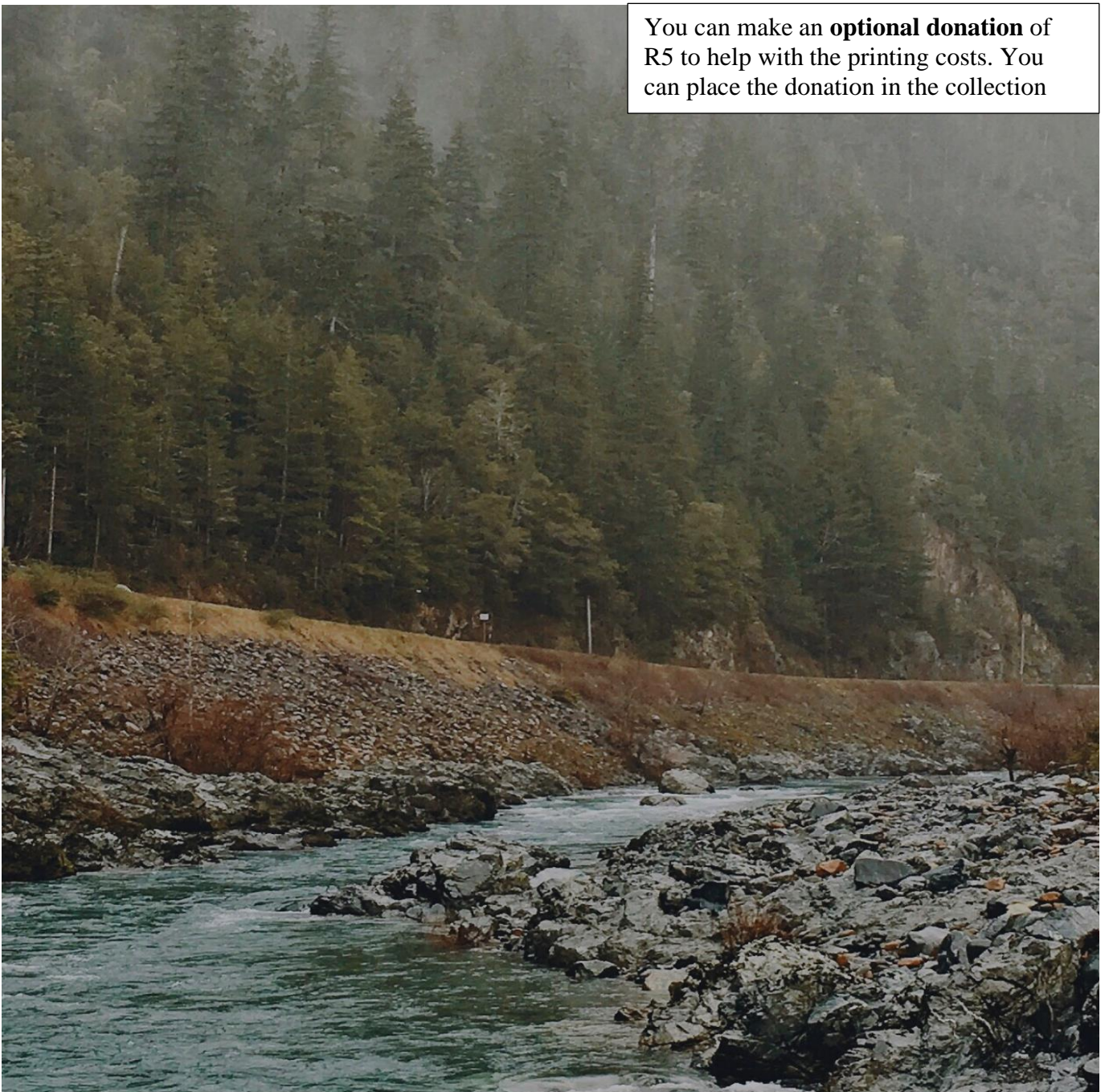


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ENCOUNTERING JESUS

Biblical Series

PRETORIA NORTH BAPTIST CHURCH

“It all STARTS with JESUS...!”

1 Tim 1:12-17

Introduction:

- In this **STUDY SERIES** we want to look at some of the **ENCOUNTERS** that Jesus had with **INDIVIDUALS** in the Gospels.
- This is a **WONDERFUL TRUTH** to meditate on namely that:
Jesus came to save SINNERS... PEOPLE... INDIVIDUALS... people with NAMES...!
- I am so amazed to look at the Gospels and see how Jesus came to **ENCOUNTER** a Pharisee... a Thirsty Woman... a Tax Collector... a Harlot... a Possessed Man... a Guy in a Tree... a Humbled and Hurting Disciple...
- **Joh 10:3, 11** – Jesus **KNOWS** His sheep **BY NAME** and He came to give His life for **HIS SHEEP...!**
- His **LIFE, DEATH, RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, REIGN, INTERCESSION** and **RETURN** is a **PERSONAL** matter...!
- He did it for **PEOPLE WITH NAMES...! HIS** people...!
- To **START** us off with, I just first want to **FOCUS** on this **REALITY** that being a **CHRISTIAN, STARTS** with an **ENCOUNTER** with **JESUS... It all STARTS with JESUS...!**
- Although we might cover some well-known ground in this study, please take the time to examine again your **OWN** testimony of being a **CHRISTIAN** in the light of thinking on this **QUESTION:**
Have YOU encountered JESUS...?

- And so, let's start again with this question: *What is a Christian?*
- At the most basic level, a Christian is someone who **KNOWS** and **FOLLOWS JESUS!**
- **CHRISTIANITY** is all about **CHRIST** – it is all about **JESUS**.
- Many people have a **CHRISTLESS** Christianity where they call themselves “**Christians**” but they have **NO KNOWLEDGE** about who **JESUS** is and what He **REQUIRES** of them...
- They have never **ENCOUNTERED** Jesus in a **SAVING** way...

Study Points:

- In this study we will explore **THREE POINTS** about being a **CHRISTIAN**, about **ENCOUNTERING JESUS**, that is actually part of one **BIG** point:

The BIG POINT:

CHRISTIANITY is all about JESUS...!
(KNOWING HIM and FOLLOWING HIM...)

1) Being a Christian STARTS with an ENCOUNTER with JESUS!

- This encounter comes through the preaching of the **GOSPEL!**
- It is in the **GOSPEL** that is about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that we encounter Jesus.
- What is the Gospel?
 - **GOD** is the **RIGHTEOUS CREATOR** who made us and everything else for **HIS GLORY!**
 - **MAN** is the **TERRIBLE SINNER** who **REBELLED** against God and **DESERVE** to go to hell.
 - **JESUS** is the **WONDERFUL SAVIOUR** who came to live the perfect life, die in our place to pay the penalty for our sins and rose from the dead to conquer death and free us from the bondage of sin.
 - We need to **TURN** from our sin and rebellion towards **JESUS**, repent, and place our **TRUST** in **HIM** to save us from our sin and hell – come to **FAITH** in Jesus.
- This **GOOD NEWS** about **JESUS** must be **RECEIVED** – there must be an **ENCOUNTER** with **JESUS!**
- **Joh 1:12; Col 2:6; Eph 4:20; 2 Cor 5:17**

2) It is an encounter that is based upon an UNDERSTANDING of WHO Jesus is...!

- The apostle Paul had a **ONE-OF-A-KIND** encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road as he was on his way to **PERSECUTE** people who believed in Jesus, because **HE DIDN'T!** (cf. **Acts 9:1-19**)
- That encounter **CHANGED** what he believed about Jesus, namely **WHO** Jesus is!
- When Paul writes to instruct Timothy about leading the church in Ephesus, this is what he then mentions about his encounter with Jesus: **1 Tim 1:12-14**
- He uses **THREE TITLES** in regard to Jesus:

- 1) **CHRIST** – He recognizes that He is the **MESSIAH** – the promised **ANOINTED ONE** that would reveal and declare to us the good news of God’s salvation;
 - 2) **JESUS** – “**THE LORD SAVES**”. He is the One who would save people from their sins, so not just announcing our salvation, but He IS our salvation...!
 - 3) **LORD** – to One who is **SUPREME** in authority, the **CONTROLLER!**
- Jesus is completely **MAN** and He is completely **GOD!**
 - **Joh 1:1, 14, 18; Col 1:15-17; Mark 4:35-41 – Verse 41 = NB!**
 - Thankfully, this encounter is **NOT** based upon who **WE** are, because then there would be **NO REASON** for Jesus to encounter us...!
 - Paul knew this!!
 - **1 Tim 1:13**
 - **EVERY SAVING ENCOUNTER** with Jesus is based on the reality that He is **MERCIFUL** and **GRACIOUS...!** (cf. **1 Tim 1:13b-14**)
 - **WITHHOLDING** what we **DESERVE** and **GIVING US** what we **DON’T DESERVE...** this because of **WHO HE IS...!**

3) It is an encounter that is further built upon an **EMBRACING** of **WHAT** Jesus came to do...!

- **1 Tim 1:15-16**
- **Joh 3:16-18** – Jesus was sent by God not to **JUDGE** or **CONDEMN**, but to **SAVE!**
- **Luk 5:31-32** – Jesus came for those who are **SICK** because of their **SINS, SPIRITUAL SICKNESS**, He came to call them to **REPENTANCE**.
- **Luk 19:10** – Jesus came to **SEEK** those who are lost – **ESTRANGED** from God because of their **SIN** and under His **WRATH**.
- **Matt 20:28** – He came to save sinners by **GIVING HIMSELF** as a ransom for them.
- **1 John 4:9-10** – He came to **MANIFEST** the love of God towards us and to **DIE** in our place...
- **Rev 5:9** – He came to save people from **ALL** tribes and tongues...!
- Paul puts Himself as an or rather **THE** example of what can happen when someone truly **ENCOUNTERS JESUS!**
- It is an **ENCOUNTER** that **RESULTS** in embracing Jesus through **FAITH** – trusting in **HIM** for your **FORGIVENESS** and **SALVATION...**
- It is an **ENCOUNTER** that brings about **REPENTANCE** – turning away from **SIN...** having a **CHANGE OF MIND** over **SIN** and choosing **CHRIST** above **SIN...**
- **Acts 26:18**
- An encounter with Jesus based on an understanding of **WHO** He is and embracing **WHAT** He came to do results in someone becoming a **CHRISTIAN** and being **CHANGED FOR LIFE!** (cf. **2 Cor 5:17**)

Conclusion:

- Our focus in the rest of the studies will then be to study some of the encounters Jesus had with people in the Gospels as to get a better **UNDERSTANDING** of **WHO** Jesus is and more complete **EMBRACING** of **WHAT** He came to do...
- Meditate on and answer these questions:

*Have YOU ENCOUNTERED JESUS...?
Do you UNDERSTAND WHO He IS...?
Have you EMBRACED WHAT He has DONE...?*

“Jesus & Nicodemus”
Teaching the Teacher about Regeneration

Joh 3:1-15

Introduction:

Q: *Have you ever been **INTRIGUED** or **INTERESTED** to meet a specific person?*

- You saw or heard or know something **ABOUT** them, but you have never **MET** them... and you would like to – you are **CURIOUS** about them, **INTERESTED** in them...
- I wonder if there are any **BIBLE CHARACTERS** that you would be interested in meeting?
- **Few examples:**
 - 1) **Noah** regarding the ark and the animals;
 - 2) **Moses** regarding the burning bush, red sea, ten commandments, etc.
 - 3) **Jonah** in the whale;
 - 4) **David** regarding Goliath;
 - 5) **Elijah** regarding the challenge of the Baal prophets on Mount Carmel...
- In this study we will meet a man who was **CURIOUS** and **INTERESTED** about meeting another man that caught his attention, because this other man stepped in to the temple of Jerusalem and chased out all the people who were using the temple as a place to make money for themselves – he upset the majority of the Jews!
- This **PHARISEE**, called **NICODEMUS**, was interested in this man, **JESUS**, and he decided he needed to meet this man...!
- We read about the *Encounter that Nicodemus had with Jesus* in **Joh 3:1-15**...

Study Points:

- **Nicodemus came to Jesus by NIGHT** – there may be a few reasons for this namely: he was **AFRAID** what the other Pharisees might think; he and Jesus were **VERY BUSY** men and he was looking for some **UNINTERRUPTED** time with Jesus; it illustrates to us his **SPIRITUAL CONDITION** namely that he was still in **SPIRITUAL DARKNESS** (John uses “**night**” in other places as a spiritual symbolism...)
- He comes with a humble statement about Jesus and maybe wants to talk about religion and laws and teaching skills... but Jesus then teaches him a lesson on **REGENERATION** – being **BORN AGAIN!**
- **We will note the THREE MAIN TEACHING POINTS on this lesson about REGENERATION:**

1) The ABSOLUTE NECESSITY of being BORN AGAIN! (v3)

- Being **BORN AGAIN, BORN FROM ABOVE, REBORN FROM ABOVE** carries the idea of getting a **NEW** start, starting a **NEW** life.
- It is not just to **TRY HARDER** or **TRY AGAIN**, not just turning over a **NEW LEAF**, but starting a **NEW BOOK** altogether!
- This would have been a **RADICAL, CURVE BALL** statement for Nicodemus!
- Most probably because of who Nicodemus was:
 1. **Nicodemus Was a Rich Man** – Tradition tells us that Nicodemus was one of the three riches men in Jerusalem. He had more money than he knew what to do with! *What we have does not change what we are!* Your money can buy you many things here in this world, but it can buy you nothing in Heaven!
 2. **Nicodemus Was a Respectable Man** – He was a **RULER** of the Jews and he was **THE TEACHER** of Israel. When he walked down the streets, people knew who he was and they pointed him out to their children. He was held in great esteem by all who knew him and saw him. *Still, what we achieve does not change what we are!* It is good to be respected and to have a good name among men, but that will not provide you a place in Heaven
 3. **Nicodemus Was a Religious Man** – He was a **PHARISEE!** He kept the Law. He was morally pure to a degree that you and I cannot imagine! He paid his tithes, did everything the Law said to do; he kept the written Law and the traditions of the elders. He never touched a woman; he probably avoided looking at them when possible. He would not come into contact with a sinner. He was a **holy** man! *Still, what we do does not change who we are!* In spite of the outward attempts at righteousness, Nicodemus was a religious man in need of a Redeemer! It is good to live clean and moral, but that will not save your soul! Your religious activities will not do the job either!

“In one sentence Jesus sweeps away all that Nicodemus stood for, and demands that he be re-made by the power of God.”

- **Rom 8:6-8** explain to us **WHY** it is absolutely necessary to be born again – **WE NEED A NEW NATURE!!**
- **Ps 51:7; Rom 2:23; Eph 2:1-3**
- **CORRUPTION** has spread to every part of our being and there is nothing in us that is **NOT** sinful. Therefore, our **WHOLE NATURE** needs the **NEW BIRTH!**
- We are **SINNERS** and it is only by being **BORN AGAIN** that we can be **CHANGED** from a **SINNER** to a **SAINT!**
- Only **CHANGED PEOPLE** can see the kingdom of God.
- *“Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people”* – for a people who are **ENABLED** to possess it and enjoy it!
- You will never see a dog driving a car... a pig flying... a bird swimming laps, under water... **WHY?** It is **AGAINST** their **NATURE...**!
- You will never see a **NATURAL BORN SINNER** in **HEAVEN** because it is against their nature! They **CANNOT** possess it and **HAVE NO ABILITY** to enjoy it...!
- Steven Cole: *“The point that Jesus wanted to hammer home to Nicodemus is, “You don’t need further instruction in religion. You need to be born again! You need to see yourself as a sinner who needs more than moral or religious improvement. You need nothing less than new life from God!”*

2) The MYSTERY of being BORN AGAIN! (v4-8)

- Nicodemus is **BAFFLED** by what Jesus is saying... He is thinking **LITERALLY** but also **AVOIDING** what he is understanding Jesus to actually mean.
- How is this possible namely that the **NATURE** of a man can be **CHANGED?** (cf. **Jer 13:23; Gen 6:5**)
- Being born again **IS** a mysterious thing – Jesus explains some of the most important things here for us, but even someone who has been born again cannot completely explain **HOW** this came to be – it is a **MYSTERY!**
- Jesus compares being born again to **TWO THINGS: BIRTH** and **WIND...**

✓ **Birth:**

- ↳ **Birth provides LIFE** – being born again brings **SPIRITUAL LIFE**.
- ↳ **Birth happens only ONCE** – being born again is a **ONE TIME** for **ALL TIME** experience.
- ↳ **Birth happens at the SUFFERING of another** – being born again is only possible because of the **SUFFERINGS** of **JESUS** on the **CROSS!**
- ↳ **Birth brings about a NEW START** – being born again results in a **BRAND NEW START**, the past is **GONE!**

✓ **Wind:**

- ↳ A wind can be **FELT**, it can be **MEASURED** and the **EFFECTS** can be seen, but where it comes from and where it is going remains a **MYSTERY!**
- ↳ Being born again is the same way – you cannot **SEE** the work of God in the heart of a man, but you can see the **EFFECTS** of that work! (cf. **2 Cor 5:17-18a**)
- ↳ We cannot **CONTROL** the wind. In the same way we cannot control **GOD’S SOVEREIGN WORK** in bringing about the regeneration of people... (cf. **Joh 1:12-13**)

*Q: What is this **WORK** of God that He then brings about when someone is **BORN AGAIN?** What does it mean to be born of **WATER** and **SPIRIT?***

- Scripture must interpret Scripture – **Tit 3:4-5; Ezek 36:25-27**
 - **Water:** The **WASHING** away of our **SIN** – being **FORGIVEN** by God!
 - **Spirit:** Being **RENEWED** by the Holy Spirit – being **CHANGED** and receiving a **NEW NATURE** with **NEW PASSIONS** and **DESIRES** and the **ABILITY** to **OBEY** God!
- Someone who has been born again will **NEVER BE THE SAME!!**

3) The POSSIBILITY and PRICE of being BORN AGAIN! (v9-15)

- To be born from above is **POSSIBLE** because **JESUS** is the One who came from above, who came into the world and who came to **DO** what is necessary so that we can be born again.
- What He had to do was that He had to **PAY** the **PRICE** that our **SIN** deserved and in so doing **BUY US BACK** from the penalty we deserved – **REDEEM** us!
- Jesus reminds Nicodemus of a time when Israel rebelled against God and He sent **SNAKES** among them to **BITE** them resulting in many people dying...! (cf. **Num 21:4-9**) God then instructed Moses to make a

BRONZE SNAKE and put it on a **POLE** – Jesus said to Nicodemus that in the same way, He must be **lifted up** referring to His **DEATH** on the **CROSS** where He would **PAY** the price for **ALL** the sins that His people have committed against God!

Q: What did the people have to do when they were bitten by the snakes?

- They had only to **LOOK** to the bronze snake on the pole...! They had to **LOOK** and **LIVE!!**
- Those who would simply **LOOK** upon Jesus and believe in Him – trusting in Him and **FULLY RELYING** on what He did on the cross – they are the ones who has been **BORN AGAIN** by God!!
- Being born again is **POSSIBLE** because of the **PRICE** that Jesus Christ payed on the cross and we simply have to **LOOK, BELIEVE, TRUST** in Him!!

Conclusion:

Q: Have YOU been born again?

- There is **NOTHING** left for you to do! Just look upon Jesus and **TRUST** that He has done **EVERYTHING** needed to **SAVE** you from the penalty of sin that you deserve!
- **TRUST** Him and **REPENT** of your sin, that **YOU MAY LIVE!**

Q: Did Nicodemus remain the same after his encounter with Jesus?

- We believe that he was born again – in **Joh 7:50-51** we find him standing up for Jesus and in **Joh 19:39** we find that he is the one helping Joseph of Arimathea in burying Jesus.

*He put his **WELLBEING** and his **WALLET** on the line for Jesus – the effects of the **WIND** of **REGENERATION** that started blowing on him one dark night on which the rising of the morning sun of a **NEW LIFE** was just a few moments away...!*

**“Jesus & The Woman at the Well “
True Satisfaction for a Thirsty Soul...**

Joh 4:1-30

Introduction:

Q: Have you ever been REALLY thirsty?

- Being thirsty flows from a **NEED** that your body has, namely that of **LIQUID**, more specifically – **WATER!**
- Just some interesting facts:
 - You can survive **3 WEEKS** without food...
 - You can survive **3 to 4 DAYS** without water, **MAYBE** a week under cool conditions...!
 - You need to take in about **2 LITRES** of **WATER** a day to maintain your fluid balance.
- Just as your **BODY** thirsts for something to drink and so satisfy your need of **WATER**, in the same way your soul thirsts to have its needs satisfied.

Q: What are some of the NEEDS that our SOULS thirsts for?

- **Love; Acceptance; Meaning in life; Joy; Peace; Fellowship (Friendship & Companionship); Rest...**
- We seek to satisfy our souls!
- These **NEEDS** of our souls are the **DRIVING FORCE** behind **MOST** of our **PURSUITS** in this life!
- We seek to find satisfaction for these **NEEDS**, but many times we seek it in the wrong **THINGS, PLACES** and **PEOPLE...**
- In this study we will meet a woman who tried to satisfy her thirsty soul by **PURSUING** a **SINFUL LIFE** but then found **SATISFACTION** for her soul when she met the **MESSIAH!**
- We will look at **Jesus' Encounter with the Woman at the Well** under the theme: *True Satisfaction for a Thirsty Soul...!*
- Please read **Joh 4:1-30**

Study Points:

- **I want to show you the 7 STEPS of this ENCOUNTER with JESUS that lead to this woman finding TRUE SATISFACTION for her THIRSTY SOUL:**

STEP 1: A DIVINE APPOINTMENT (v1-6)

- **Verse 4:** There were other roads that led to Samaria. Many of the Jews would **NOT** travel through Samaria because they viewed the Samaritans as an impure, half-bred people who intermarried with the Assyrians.
- So when John says Jesus “**had to**” travel through Samaria, it is because it was the will of His Father that He would do so in order to fulfil the **MISSION** that He has been given – there was a divine appointment set before the foundation of the world that Jesus **HAD TO** keep.
- There was an **ENCOUNTER** that was planned for that day, an encounter that would take place at a **WELL** in **SAMARIA** at **NOON...**!

JESUS doesn't miss ANY of His appointments...!

- Every encounter that there would be between Him and a sinner in need of salvation, **WILL TAKE PLACE...**! He will lose **NONE** of those that the Father gave Him!
- There was a thirsty soul and Jesus was on his way to bring true satisfaction to this soul.

*Q: Who was this very important person that Jesus **HAD TO** go and meet?*

STEP 2: A Very UNIMPORTANT PERSON or UNLIKELY CANDIDATE! (v7-9)

- This is one of the things that is so astonishing about this encounter.
- **Verse 7!!**
- A **WOMAN** – Jewish men would not speak to woman in public – not even their own wives!
- A **SAMARITAN** – there was some bad blood between the Jews and the Samaritans because of the intermarriage that happened between them and the Assyrians – they looked at them as half breeds. There were also some differences concerning their religion – they worshipped at different places...
- For **JESUS** then to **SPEAK** to a **SAMARITAN WOMAN** in **PUBLIC** – He crossed **ALL** the cultural barriers!
- But there is more for us to understand regarding the **CHARACTER** of this woman...

- Think about this: *What time would be the **BEST** time to go and fetch water at a well...?*
- Early in the morning or maybe late afternoon when it is a bit **COOLER**...
- This woman came at **NOON** – she was **AVOIDING** other people; she was an **OUTCAST**; her **SINS** has brought great **SHAME** on her... she was **ISOLATED** and other people most probably preferred it that way.
- But **JESUS** had compassion on her...!
- Jesus loves saving people who are **UNLIKELY** candidates, even those whom the world has written of and pushed aside...
- **YOU** and **I** are not out of reach of **JESUS**!
- **NOTHING** can stop Him from saving those whom His Father has given Him!
- Not their **PAST**, nor their **CULTURAL BAGGAGE**... **NOTHING!!**

STEP 3: Her NEED Revealed (v10-15)

- Jesus initiates the conversation by asking her for water – revealing a **PHYSICAL NEED** of **THIRST** (note that Jesus was **FULLY** man – he got tired, hungry and thirsty...)
- Jesus would then turn the tables on her and use “**water**” as a **METAPHOR** for what **HE** was actually offering this woman.
- She misunderstood Him and thought he was talking about **PHYSICAL** water...
- He was offering this woman “**LIVING water**” namely that which would satisfy her soul...the **SALVATION** of her soul in its complete sense – the **FORGIVENESS** of her **SINS** and the **ABILITY** to **OBEY** God.
- She was **CONFUSED** and **IGNORANT** about who Jesus is and what He was actually offering her...
- Yet there is the **UNDERTONE** that in the reply of the woman in **verse 15** – whether she was sarcastic or not – that she had a **DEEP THIRST** in her **SOUL** that wasn’t **SATISFIED** by all her **SINFUL PURSUITS**...
- All those who come to Jesus come because they realize how **SPIRITUALLY BANKRUPT** they are – that they have **NOTHING** in themselves that can **SATISFY** them and because they realize that there is **NOTHING** in this **WORLD** that can **SATISFY** them... **EVERYTHING** that this **WORLD** can offer you will leave you “**thirsty again**” – it brings **TEMPORARY** satisfaction.
- **Matt 5:3** needs to be the **ATTITUDE** of **ALL** who come to Jesus!
- Jesus gets this woman’s attention... and he then presses on to **EXPOSE** the true state of her soul...

STEP 4: Her SIN Exposed (v16-19)

- Jesus helps this woman to see that her **NEED** is much more than just being temporarily satisfied.
- She **NEEDS** the water that He is offering, because she needs to be **CLEANSED, FORGIVEN** of all her sins.
- Jesus asks her about her husband (**verse 16**) and she gives the technical correct answer – any other person would have come to the conclusion very simply that she was a **SINGLE** woman...
- But that was not the case and **JESUS** knew **ALL** about her sinful past...

*You **CANNOT HIDE** your sin from Jesus...!*

- The **REALITY** was: She was married five times and got divorced five times most probably because she was **UNFAITHFUL** to her husbands, and now she was living with a man who was not her husband but maybe even someone else’s husband...
- Jesus **EXPOSED** her sins... and she doesn’t argue about it!
- She doesn’t **DENY** it but **AFFIRMS** that everything that Jesus said about her was true...calling Him a Prophet.
- To come to Jesus you have to **STOP** trying to explain away your sin and you have to **OPENLY CONFESS** and **ADMIT** to your **SINFULNESS**.
- **Matt 5:4** needs to be your **ATTITUDE** concerning your **SIN** when you come to Jesus!

STEP 5: TRUE Salvation Explained (v20-24)

- An interesting twist then happens in the conversation – she starts to talk about **WHERE** is the right place to **WORSHIP** – this has been **ONE** of the things that caused enmity between the Jews and Samaritans.
- Q: **WHY** does she start talking about **THIS**...?*
- Maybe she wanted to **CHANGE THE TOPIC** because she was getting **UNCOMFORTABLE** with all this conviction of sin happening...
- Maybe because she now **PROGRESSED** in her thinking about Jesus namely that He was a **PROPHET** and He could **SORT OUT** this dispute...

- But even deeper maybe was her motivation that she **REALIZED** how sinful she was and she **WANTED** to get right with God but was **CONFUSED** about **WHERE** to go and do it...
- For **ALL** of the Old Testament, **SACRIFICES** had to be made to be right with God and maybe she wanted to make sure she was supposed to go...
- But then Jesus makes a **WONDERFUL REVELATION** about **TRUE SALVATION**...!
- **Verse 21-24**
- **TRUE SALVATION** is **NOT** about an **EXTERNAL** and **EMPTY RELIGION**, but about an **INWARD** and **ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP**!
- To worship in “**SPIRIT**” – it is about being **SINCERE** in your service towards God, about a **HEART** that is fixed on God and in **LOVE** with God; a **HEART** that has been **CLEANSED** and **CHANGED**
- To worship in “**TRUTH**” – is to serve God for **WHO HE IS** and not who we want Him to be; to worship Him as He **REVEALED** Himself and in the **MANNER** that he wants to be worshipped.
- God is not confined to a **PLACE** and **JESUS** came to open up the **NEW WAY** by which **ALL** people **EVERYWHERE** can draw near to God **THROUGH HIM**...!

*Salvation doesn't come through **DOING** something, it comes through **KNOWING** someone...!*

STEP 6: The SAVIOUR Revealed! (v25-26)

- This woman reveals something then about her understanding of that the **MESSIAH** must come and although she is still a little bit confused, she **TRUSTS** and **HOPES** that all would make sense then...
- An then we find the **CLIMAX** of this encounter when Jesus reveals Himself for the first time, to a **SAMARITAN WOMAN** as the Messiah, the **CHRIST**!
- You could just **IMAGINE** the shock on her face and the **REALIZATION** and even maybe **CLARITY** that comes to her in that moment...!
- Jesus opens her eyes and reveals Himself to her...!

THIS IS AMAZING GRACE...!

• **Matt 11:27-28**

STEP 7: SALVATION HAS COME! (v27-30)

- I love **verse 28**...!
- She forgets all about her temporary pursuit to satisfy her need and she is **CONSUMED** with that thought that **SHE HAS MET THE MESSIAH**!
- What does she do?
- She goes back in to town and start **WITNESSING** – telling everyone about the man she met...
- She has experienced what **Matt 5:6** talks about...

Conclusion:

- Where do **YOU** stand?
- Are you still trying to **SATISFY** your needs with the **THINGS OF THIS WORLD**? They **WON'T** satisfy...
- Maybe you have come to **REALIZE** that it doesn't and you are feeling so **GUILTY** because of everything that you have done – you are **ASHAMED** and just don't **FEEL** like getting up and going on...
- Then be **ENCOURAGED** by this encounter that happened between Jesus and this woman!

THERE IS HOPE and HIS name is JESUS!

- There are **THREE NON-NEGOTIABLE** things that needs to happen for you to come to **TRUE SALVATION**:

- 1) *Realize you **NEED** spiritual life and there is nothing you can do to get it...*
- 2) ***REPENT** of your sins and seek the **FORGIVES** that only Jesus can give...*
- 3) ***EMBRACE JESUS** as the **ONLY ONE** who can save you from your sin...!*

- If you **DO KNOW JESUS**, let us **IMITATE** Him in our **EFFORTS** to **REACH** the **OUTCASTS** and those who are **OVERWHELMED** by their **GUILT** with the **GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST**!

“Jesus & Matthew”
A Super Sinner Saved...!
Matt 9:9-13

Introduction:

- In this study we will look at **Matt 9:9-13** where we find Jesus calling a man called **MATTHEW** to follow him...
- What is interesting about this man is that he had another name that he was known by as well... **LEVI**...(cf. **Luk 5:27**)
- That makes us think of **JEANS**... and you thought jeans was a **MODERN** thing...!
- When I grew up, jeans was still nice and whole... later it became trendy to buy brand new jeans that looked like the dog got hold of them...!
- If you would wear these torn jeans, the older people would look funny at you... they would think that you are some or other **CRIMINAL** and **REBEL**... you would be **SHAMED**...!
- In general, when people think about followers of Jesus, those people that Jesus encounters, they think that mostly **GOOD** people *may* or *can* follow Him... surely someone who wears these “messed up jeans” **CANNOT** be a follower of Jesus...!
- Surely the **GOOD** kids in school *may* or *can* follow Jesus, the good employees, the good bosses... the “good” guys... but surely **NOT** those **BAD** kids, employees, or bosses... **RIGHT**?
- As we look at **Matt 9:9-13**, we will find that this man called *Matthew*, also known as *Levi*, he **WASN’T** a **GOOD** guy... as a matter of fact, we could classify him as a **CRIMINAL** and a **TRAITOR**... a **BAD** guy... even as a **SUPER SINNER**...!
- And **JESUS** will **ENCOUNTER** and **CALL** this **SUPER SINNER** to **FOLLOW HIM**...!
- And so, in **Matt 9:9-13**, we find **A SUPER SINNER SAVED**...

Study Points:

- Let’s look at **FOUR THINGS** in this **ENCOUNTER** about **FOLLOWING JESUS**:

1. The CALL...

Jesus calls Matthew, a very bad man, to follow Him and be His friend!

- Matthew was a **TAX COLLECTOR**...
- You need to understand how the other **JEWS** felt about tax collectors and what was **TRUE** about these tax collectors...
- They worked for the **ROMAN** empire and so they were viewed by their own people as **TRAITORS**...
- They sat in these booths all over Rome and could then **TAX** people on **EVERYTHING**... fish, amount of wheels and axles on their wagons, open their personal belongings, etc. There was really **NO LIMIT** on what they could tax the people.
- They would then have to give a fixed amount to Rome, but whatever was **EXTRA** were theirs, and so they would be know to **OVER** tax people for the sake of making **MONEY**... they were nothing less than **THIEVES**...!
- They were seen as the **SCUM** of society... the worst of the worst... they were **SUPER SINNERS**...! And in general they were **FILTHY RICH**...!
- But then, **JESUS SAW** him... he didn’t see Jesus... he wasn’t **LOOKING** for Jesus or to **FOLLOW** Jesus...

He was not the FIRST to SEEK Jesus, but JESUS was the one who FIRST SOUGHT HIM...!

- We can be sure that when Jesus **SAW** him, He saw **ALL** of him and knew **EXACTLY** who he was concerning his **REPUTATION** and his **CHARACTER**.
- And then Jesus did the **UNLIKELY** and even **UNTHINKABLE** thing... **HE CALLED MATTHEW TO FOLLOW HIM**...!

2. The RESPONSE...

Matthew leaves everything for good to be Jesus’ follower and friend!

- What would this **SUPER** (and **WEALTHY**) **SINNER** do...?
- Matthew most probably knew **SOMETHING** about Jesus – Jesus already did a few miracles in his town and he maybe even **HEARD** Jesus teach...
- How would he **RESPOND** to this **CALL**, this **COMMAND** of Jesus...?

• **Matt 9:9** says very simply – “*And he rose and followed him...*” Nothing **DRAMATIC** or **SPECTACULAR**...

• You need to understand that this Matthew is the same Matthew who **WROTE** this Gospel... Matthew is basically writing his own **TESTIMONY**...!

• And we need to see something of how **HUMBLE** this man became – he doesn’t place any **UNNECESSARY ATTENTION** on himself...!

• And so when we turn to the gospel of **Luke 5:28**, we find an **IMPORTANT DETAIL** that Matthew in his humility left out... **HE LEFT EVERYTHING**...!

• His **WEALTH** and his **POSITION**... he left it for **GOOD**... there was **NO WAY** he could **GO BACK** to having the position and job that he had... when he **GOT UP** and **FOLLOWED JESUS**, he walked away from **EVERYTHING**...!

*We can **DEDUCE** from this that all of his **SECURITY, POWER** and **POSITION** he considered as **WORTHLESS** in **COMPARISON** with the **JOY** and **PRIVILEGE** of **FOLLOWING** and **KNOWING JESUS!***

• This **HAS** to help you see something of how **PRECIOUS JESUS** is...! (cf. **Matt 13:44; Phil 3:7-8**)

• And what happens **NEXT** even further highlights how **RADICAL** Matthew’s life was changed...

3. The RESULT...

Matthew wants all of his friends to get to know Jesus!

• **Luk 5:29** helps us again to have a **BETTER PICTURE** of what happened...

• Matthew threw one **HUGE PARTY** for all of his tax buddies because **HE WANTED THEM TO GET TO MEET JESUS**...!

• This shows us just how **EXCITED** he was about Jesus and how much **JOY** Jesus brought to Matthew that he just wanted to **SHARE** Jesus with all his friends...!

• People who get to **MEET JESUS** just can’t keep them to themselves...! If they can, they don’t understand **WHOM** they have met... and maybe they haven’t met Him at all...!

*Whenever we see people getting to **KNOW** Jesus in the Bible, they **WANT** to **MAKE HIM KNOWN** as well...!*

• When you experience the **MERCY** and **GRACE** of **JESUS**, you **DESIRE OTHERS** to experience it as well!

• Someone who is following Jesus wants other people to follow Jesus as well... they are **NOT ASHAMED** of Jesus...!

4. The DECLARATION...

Jesus makes it clear that He came to save bad people, not good people!

• The **PHARISEES** didn’t like this **AT ALL**...!

• They just couldn’t accept the **REALITY** that Jesus was being friendly to these **SUPER SINNERS**...!

• They were so **PROUD** in what they were **DOING** and they thought that it made them **BETTER** than these **BAD PEOPLE**.

• It is interesting to see that they said this to **JESUS’ DISCIPLES** and not to Jesus Himself... they were maybe trying to give Jesus a **BAD REPUTATION** with His disciples...

• But then Jesus answers with a **LOGICAL ANALOGY**...

• Who need a **PHYSICIAN**, a **DOCTOR** – **HEALTHY** people or **SICK** people...? Obviously **SICK** people...!

• Who needs a **SAVIOR** – **GOOD** people or **BAD** people...? **BAD** people!

• These **PHARISEES THOUGHT** they were **GOOD** but didn’t **REALIZE** that they were **BAD** – that is why they **REJECTED** Jesus!

• They didn’t think that they **NEEDED JESUS**... like **MANY** if not **MOST** people today...!

• What is **WORSE** is that these **PHARISEES** made a **RIGHT DIAGNOSES** of these **TAX COLLECTORS** – that they are **SUPER SINNERS**. and **YET** they didn’t want to **DO** anything about that...!

• That is why Jesus **EXHORTS** them with **Hos 6:6** – an Old Testament passage which explains that we should **NOT** be so focused on **DOING** right things if our **HEARTS** aren’t right before God... all of our “**GOOD SERVICE**” that we are doing means **NOTHING** if we don’t have **MERCY** and **COMPASSION**

for other people... if our **HEARTS** aren't filled with **COMPASSION** and **MERCY** for people who **DON'T** know Jesus, we don't have the **HEART** of **GOD**...!

- And then Jesus makes this **WONDERFUL, HOPEFUL DECLARATION** – He came for **SINNERS**... for **BAD** people...
- **ALL** of us are **BAD PEOPLE**... **ALL** of us are **SINNERS**... **SUPER SINNERS**...
- **ALL** of us are **SPIRITUALLY BANKRUPT** before God and we **NEED** a **SAVIOUR**...
- The **BAD** news is the you are **BAD** and that you can do **NOTHING** about it from yourself...

*The **GOOD** news is that **JESUS** came for **BAD PEOPLE**, for **SINNERS** and **HE CAN DO EVERYTHING** to save you... he **DID** do everything to save **SINNERS**...!*

- **THAT** is the **GREATEST MIRACLE** there is – when Jesus takes a **SUPER SINNER** and makes him a **SAINT**...!

Conclusion:

- What do you need to **BE** to qualify to become a **FOLLOWER** of Jesus? **A SINNER**...!
- The question is: Will you **ANSWER** the call of Jesus to **FOLLOW HIM**...?

***ONLY HE CAN TRANSFORM** you to be His follower and so, if He encounters and calls you, **GET UP** and **FOLLOW HIM**!*

“Jesus & The Adulterous Woman”
How JESUS deals with CONDEMNED CRIMINALS...!
Joh 8:1-11

Introduction:

Q: *How you ever been CAUGHT IN THE ACT while doing something really wrong?*

- In this study we will look at the encounter between **JESUS** and a **WOMAN** who was caught in the **ACT OF ADULTERY...!**
- We will see ***How JESUS deals with CONDEMNED CRIMINALS!***
- There are actually **THREE PARTIES** involved in this encounter namely the **FAKE**, the **FAULTY** and the **FORGIVER...**
- Please read **Joh 8:1-11...**

Study Points:

- We will consider what we can learn from these **THREE PARTIES** involved in this encounter:

1. The FAKE: Pharisees...

- They most probably set a **TRAP** for this woman because they wanted to trap Jesus.
- The man most probably was in it with them and they let him “**get away...**”

1.1) Their HARDNESS...

- They had absolutely **NO** compassion or love or concern for this **WOMAN**.
- She was just simply a **TOOL** for them to get at **JESUS...!**
- They **HUMILIATED** her in front of everyone.

1.2) Their HAUGHTINESS...

- We become **JUDGEMENTAL** when we start to think that our sin is **LESS SERIOUS** than someone else’s sin.
- When we think to **HIGHLY** of ourselves and our “**spirituality**”, we tend to **INFLATE** the sins of others and start to become **CRITICAL** on them.
- **Luk 18:9-14**

1.3) Their HYPOCRISY...

- They **FAILED** to apply **Matt 7:5** to themselves.
- It is always **EASIER** to see the **SINS** and **FAULTS** of another **AND** it makes you feel **BETTER** about yourself.
- Jesus exposed them clearly in **Matt 23:25-28** – looking good on the **OUTSIDE** but being rotten on the **INSIDE**.
- Jesus called them out in **John 8:7...!**

1.4) Their HUMILIATION...

- **Jam 4:6** becomes true of them.
- They were exposed by Jesus as **FAKES**.
- They came to make an **EXAMPLE** of this woman and to **TRAP** and **DISCREDIT** Jesus, but **THEY** are the ones who are made an **EXAMPLE** of and who is **CAUGHT** in their own trap and humiliated...!

2. The FAULTY: The Woman...

2.1) Her GUILT...

- This woman was **GUILTY** and she **DESERVED** to be put to death... **Exo 20:14; Lev 20:10**
- She committed a **TERRIBLE** sin against the **HOLY GOD** and so she was **DESERVING** of whatever punishment God did prescribe in His law.
- She did not **DESERVE ANYTHING GOOD**, nor to be part of the kingdom of God...!
- **1 Cor 6:9-10**
- The Pharisees and Scribes were **FAKE**, but they were **RIGHT** concerning what this woman deserved...!

2.2) Her GIFT...

- **YET**, although she was **DESERVING** of **DEATH**, she was pardoned!

• She would have had **NO HOPE** when these scribes and Pharisees brought her to Jesus, yet she walked away a **FREE** and **FORGIVEN** woman...!

• **Rom 6:23**

3. The FORGIVER: Jesus...!!

• This story illustrates **Joh 1:1, 14, 17-18**...

3.1) His FOCUS... (Truth)

• **Joh 18:2** – Jesus is **TEACHING** the people.

• He knew how **SINFUL** they were, but He came **NOT** to condemn but to **SEEK** and **SAVE** the **LOST**...

• It comes through making known the **TRUTH** – the **GOSPEL**!

• **Rom 10:17**

3.2) His KNOWLEDGE and WISDOM...

• Jesus knows **EVERYTHING** about **EVERYONE**...!

• **Joh 2:23-25**

• You can **HIDE** your sin from your family and friends and other Christians, but you **CANNOT HIDE** your sins from **GOD**.

• You can look **GOOD** on the **OUTSIDE**, but Jesus **KNOWS** whether or not you are **ROTTEN** on the **INSIDE**...!

• **Heb 4:13; Prov 5:21; Jer 16:17**

• God sees the **DEPTH** of your heart and He **KNOWS** how **SINFUL** you are...!

3.3) His COMPASSION... (Mercy)

• Jesus didn't **ENTERTAIN** their accusing of this woman in public as they did – **HE IGNORED** them...!

• He started writing in the sand... **WHAT?**

• **WE DON'T** know...!

• Maybe – the **TEN COMMANDMENTS**; maybe their **NAMES**; maybe their **SINS**...! We don't know...

• But He showed **COMPASSION** to this woman by drawing the **ATTENTION** away from her to Him and eventually to everyone else...

• Jesus had **COMPASSION** on this woman, by showing her **MERCY** – withholding that which she deserves...

3.4) His FORGIVENESS... (Grace)

• Instead He extended His **GRACE** in the form of **FORGIVENESS**!

• Jesus came to **SAVE** sinners, not to condemn. He came in **GRACE** and truth...

• **1 Cor 6:11** became **TRUE** for this woman!

• What **GREAT JOY** and **AMAZEMENT** she would have had!

• What great **GIFT** is the gift of **FORGIVENESS** – that God would **CLEAR** our record of **ALL** our sins and not **COUNT THEM AGAINST US**!

***JESUS would be the ONE who would bore the PENALTY this woman's sin deserved!
THIS WAS NO CHEAP VERDICT OF JESUS...!***

3.5) His HOLINESS...

• His command to this woman and all other whom He forgave is very **CLEAR** – go and sin **NO MORE**!

• **NOTE** the **ORDER** – **FIRST** forgiveness that is **COMPLETELY** unmerited and **THEN** obedience...!

• Her **PARDON** was **NOT** dependent on her **BEHAVIOUR**.

• Her pardon was however the **MOTIVATION** for her to **CHANGE** her behaviour!

• **CHANGE** is not a **REQUIREMENT** for **GRACE**, but **CHANGE** stands as the **RESULT** of **GRACE**!

• **Rom 12:1**

• His **FREE GRACE** becomes the motive for living a **HOLY LIFE**, a life that **PLEASES** Him and is **STRIVING** for **HOLINESS** as **HE IS HOLY**! (cf. **Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:15-16**)

Conclusion:

• You may be one of the **FAKE**...

• You may be one of the **FAULTY**...

• **BOTH ARE LOST** and in **NEED** of **JESUS' GRACE**!!

• His grace is still available – don't stand as a **CONDEMNED CRIMINAL** anymore, but throw yourself upon Jesus and His **GRACE** and receive His pardon which He made possible by **DYING** on the **CROSS**!

• I pray and hope that you are part of the **FORGIVEN**!

“Jesus & Zacchaeus”
Jesus SEEK and SAVES the LOST...!
Luk 19:1-10

Introduction:

- *Q: Have you ever felt UNNOTICED... or UNIMPORTANT... or even UNWANTED...?*
- I think all of us have experienced situations in our lives where we felt that nobody **NOTICES** us and that nobody really **CARES** about us... where people just **PASS YOU BY** and **IGNORES** you...
- We sometimes do it with other people too... we **IGNORE** them and don't really give them our **UNDIVIDED ATTENTION**... they tell us their **NAMES**, but we soon forget it... we don't **REALLY** care...
- This is the **WONDERFUL THING** to see in the **GOSPELS** namely how **JESUS** cared about **INDIVIDUALS**.
- We are looking at the **GOSPELS** where we find some of these **ONE-ON-ONE ENCOUNTERS** that **JESUS** had with people... people with **NAMES** and a **HISTORY**... and **NEEDS**...!
- Jesus **NOTICES** and **CARES** for **INDIVIDUALS**...!
- In this study we look at the encounter that Jesus had with Zacchaeus – a **VERY SMALL** and **UNPOPULAR LITTLE MAN** that wasn't **LIKED** by many people...!
- We read about this encounter in **Luk 19:1-10**...

Study Points:

- I want to make **THREE OBSERVATIONS**:

1. The SINNER... (v1-4)

- **THREE THINGS** about Zacchaeus:
 - a) *He was a TAX COLLECTOR* – working for **ROME** and would collect **TAXES**. they were known for **OVERCHARGING** people and so they were **HATED** by many.
 - b) *He was RICH* – the obvious **RESULT** of being **CROOKED**.
 - c) *He was a SINNER* – He **WASN'T** a good man, but rather a **THIEF** and a **LIAR**...
- He wanted to **SEE JESUS**... we don't know exactly **WHY**... **MAYBE** he was curious... heard what Jesus did... Jesus called **ANOTHER TAX COLLECTOR** to follow Him (*Matthew*)... he was maybe hoping that Jesus could do something for him... maybe it was that despite all the **RICHES** that he had, he **WASN'T HAPPY**... he **WASN'T SATISFIED**... he was looking for **SOMETHING MORE**...
- And so he makes a **PLAN**... he climbs in a **TREE**... and he waits...!
- He simply wanted to **SEE** Jesus, but **SO MUCH MORE** were going to happen...!
- Whatever his **MOTIVES** may have been, we know from the rest of the story and from the rest of the Bible, that God the Father was busy “**drawing**” him to Jesus...! (cf. **Joh 6:44**)

2. The SAVIOUR of sinners... (v5)

- **IMAGINE** you were Zacchaeus... you wait and here comes Jesus... closer and closer... and then He **STOPS** right underneath your tree... and then Jesus **LOOKS UP** into your eyes...
- Jesus **CALLED** Zacchaeus... **BY NAME**...!

*Zacchaeus DIDN'T KNOW Jesus and only wanted to SEE Him,
but Jesus already knew EVERYTHING about ZACCHAEUS...!*

- Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but he had no prior clue that Jesus actually wanted to **SEE HIM**...!
- Long before Zacchaeus was looking for Jesus, Jesus was looking for **HIM**! It was **NO ACCIDENT** that Zacchaeus was in that Sycamore tree that day...!
- “**MUST**” – there was a **DIVINE APPOINTMENT** that needed to happen between **JESUS** and **ZACCHAEUS**.
- Jesus wanted **MUCH MORE** than just having a quick coffee with Zacchaeus... He wanted to **GET INTO** his life so as to **SAVE** him and become **PART** of his life...!

*Jesus is not just a QUICK FIX, but He is a PERSON who is CALLING SINNERS
into a RELATIONSHIP with Him.*

- Many people still just want to “see” Jesus on the WhatsApp groups, in listening to the sermon, by reading a Bible Study now and again... they are **CURIOUS** about Jesus and they maybe even realize they **NEED** something from Him...
- But when **JESUS** calls someone and **SAVES** someone, He goes **HOME** with them...!
- Jesus made this **PERSONAL, PLAIN** and **PROMISING CALL** to Zacchaeus... that is how Jesus always saves people – He **CALLS** them to Himself... He calls them to **FOLLOW HIM**...!
- Jesus was **CALLING** Zacchaeus **PERSONALLY** into a **REALTIONSHIP** with Him.
- *What was he going to do...?*

3. SALVATION has come... (v6-10)

- Zacchaeus responded... **IMMEDIATELY!**
- He **OBEYED** Jesus – he got down...
- He **RECEIVED** Jesus **JOYFULLY** – **NOT** just into his home, but into his **LIFE**... to answer the **CALL** of Jesus requires that you put your **TRUST** in Jesus and that you **COMMIT** your life to Him. That is **IMPLIED** in this “receiving” of Jesus...
- He **REPENTED** – when someone **RECEIVES** Jesus and **TRUSTS** in Him, it is revealed by a **CHANGED LIFE!**
- This tax collector who **CHEATED** people, now realized that all his **MONEY** could not bring him the joy he now found in **JESUS**, and so he started giving away that which he didn’t need anymore!
- **ALSO**, he shows how **SINCERE** his repentance was by being willing to **GIVE BACK** that which he has stolen... to bring about **RESTORATION**... when you are **REALLY SORRY** about what you have done wrong, you will do what is **NEEDED** to make it **RIGHT**.
- He was therefore **FORGIVEN** of his sins and **ADOPTED** as a child of God! (cf. **Joh 1:12-13**)

Closing Thoughts:

- **THIS** is why Jesus has come – to **SEEK** and **SAVE** the **LOST**...!

*Many people think that it is **THEY** who **FOUND** Jesus...
when **ACTUALLY** it is **JESUS** who **FOUND THEM**...!*

- Jesus was **NEVER LOST**... **WE** are the ones who are **LOST**...
- The issue is that people don’t **REALIZE** that they are **LOST**... that they are **SINNERS**...
- Jesus only came to save **SINNERS** and **LOST** people... not **GOOD** people or **FOUND** people...
- If you don’t know Jesus and haven’t been **SAVED** yet, you need to **REALIZE** that you are **LOST** and a **SINNER** – **THAT** is where **SALVATION** begins...!
- And when Jesus then **CALLS** you, you need to **RESPOND** by **RECEIVING** Him and **REPENTING** from your sins...! You need to **OBEY** His call...!
- That is what our **Acts 17:30-31** also teaches...
- When someone **DO** that, **SALVATION** has come...!
- If you are saved, **SEE** and **UNDERSTAND** how **PERSONAL** your salvation is...!

***UNDERSTAND** that it wasn’t **YOU** who found Jesus,
but God who **DREW** you to Jesus and **JESUS** who actually **FOUND YOU**...!*

“Jesus & The Demon Possessed Man”

The Worth of a Soul to Jesus!

Luk 8:26-39

Introduction:

Q: What do you see when you look at other people? What do you notice about them?

- Their clothes or shoes or jewellery or stuff; whether they are rich or poor; if they are beautiful or maybe not so beautiful; maybe you look at whether they are happy or sad; wearing a ring while they are driving...
- Maybe you see people as an inconvenience... burdensome... an irritation... or, just as people...
- One thing that we need to remember is that **EVERY PERSON** who ever lived has an **ETERNAL SOUL!**
- Every person is made by God and that gives them **WORTH** and will **SPEND ETERNITY SOMEWHERE** – either in **HEAVEN** or in **HELL...**

Q: What does JESUS see when He looks at people? What is a SOUL worth to Him?

- In this study we will look at an encounter that Jesus had with a very **WILD** man! A very **TROUBLED SOUL...**!
- We will look at the encounter of **Jesus & The Demon Possessed Man** under the theme: ***The Worth of a Soul to Jesus!***
- Please read **Luk 8:26-39**

Study Points:

- We will look at **THREE TRUTHS** concerning Jesus' dealings with **LOST SOULS:**

1. Jesus is PASSIONATE about lost souls!

1.1) The CIRCUMSTANCES involved in reaching this soul...

- Jesus and the disciples had to weather a storm – it was not an **EASY THING** to get to him!
- In crossing the sea and going through the storm Jesus performed a miracle showing that He has power over **NATURE** and His disciples were already in **AWE** and **FEAR...** (cf. **Luk 8:25**)
- Were they in for a **SURPRISE...**!
- They would learn that not only does he have power over **NATURE**, but He has power over the **SUPERNATURAL** as well.

*Not only can He tame the **WILD SEA**, He can tame a **WILD MAN**; not only can He bring **PEACE** to the **STORM**, but He can also bring **PEACE** to a **SOUL...**!*

- The moment they set foot on shore, either in the night or early morning, they are met by a **NAKED MAN** running towards them who had **UNCUT HAIR** and an **UNTRIMMED BEARD!** His body covered in **SORES** and **BLOOD...**!
- This would have been a **TERRIFYING** sight! Very **UNCOMFORTABLE** circumstances indeed...!
- When Jesus asks the name of the man he gives the answer of “**LEGION**” because he was filled with **MANY DEMONS!**
- This is for many **NOT** the kind of person they would have a conversation with, yet Jesus goes **OUT OF HIS WAY** to a **GENTILE LAND**, crosses the **SEA** through a **STORM** to teach His disciples and us that:

NO SINNER is beyond the GRACE of GOD and that He is PASSIONATE about showing LOST SOULS His GRACE!

1.2) The COST of reaching this lost soul...

Q: How do we know that Jesus is in a GENTILE, non-Jewish land?

- There is a herd of **PIGS** – about 2000 of them! (cf. **Mark 5:13**)
- The demons **IMMEDIATELY** knew who Jesus was – it is not only **CHRISTIANS** who know who Jesus is...
- Take note: **KNOWING who Jesus is doesn't AUTOMATICALLY make you a Christian...**!
- They **BEGGED** Him not to send them to the abyss and Jesus **GRANTED** them their request – we don't know exactly why – but maybe it is because the **FINAL JUDGEMENT** of Satan and his forces is a future event.
- Here Jesus **CLEARLY** shows that He has **DOMINION** over the Devil and all his minions. But that they are not cast in hell yet... our enemy is still **ALIVE** and **ACTIVE...**!

- But we **DO** see that Jesus drives out these demons from this man into a herd of pigs – **ABOUT 2000** – and they all run over the cliff and into the sea!!
- This would have been a **HUGE** financial loss for their owners and we do see that they are cross with Jesus for doing this.
- But learn and understand this: **ONE SOUL IS WORTH MORE TO JESUS THAN 2,000 PIGS!**
- Now someone might say that it was easy for Jesus to “**PAY THE PRICE**” to free this man from his demons because it wasn’t His pigs... you’re right it wasn’t, but it **WAS** His **LIFE** and His **BLOOD** that He **GAVE** in order to **SAVE SINNERS** from the **PUNISHMENT** they do **DESERVE!**

*Jesus is the **LOVER OF SOULS** and He proved His love for lost souls by **DYING** for them!*

- But many people **DON’T GET IT...** and the people in this story didn’t get it either... **THEY CHASED JESUS AWAY...!**
- This was the **SHORTEST SHORT TERM-OUTREACH** in the ministry of Jesus and He did it all to show us how **PASSIONATE** He is about lost souls!

2. Jesus has the POWER to TRANSFORM lost souls!

2.1) MAN’S EFFORTS at transformation falls short...

- **Luk 8:29**
- Trying to **CHANGE** yourself by trying to change your behaviour and your attitude and your speech is like putting a **LION** on a **LEISH** – you may **THINK** you are in control, but you’re not!
- To try and change your **BEHAVIOUR** is like **APPLE NAILING** – it may work for a little while but it won’t **LAST!**
- The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the **POWER** of God unto salvation!

*If **JESUS** doesn’t change your **HEART**, there is no lasting change!*

2.2 All those who need transformation are in Satan’s domain...

- It is very clear that “**legion**” was under the domain of Satan – he was **POSSESSED** by demons – they were in **CONTROL** of him...
- You get people like that who are **OPENLY** associating themselves with Satan...!
- But he wasn’t the only one under the domain of Satan – there was **ANOTHER** group of people involved here – the **HERDSMEN** and the **PEOPLE** (cf. **Luk 8:34-35**) who came out to see what Jesus had done to this demon possessed man... They were **JUST AS MUCH** under the dominion of Satan – they even asked Him to **DEPART** from them...!
- Even very religious people like the **PHARISEES** are under the domain of Satan – **Joh 8:44...**
- This is what Jesus’ **GLORIOUS RESCUE MISSION** is all about!
- Listen to **Col 1:13-14**

*Every person without Jesus is in Satan’s domain and needs His **MIGHTY POWER** to **DELIVER** them!*

2.3 NONE are too difficult for Jesus to transform...

- This encounter makes it clear that even a man with an **ARMY** of demons in him is **NO MATCH** for Jesus!
- But we must realize that it takes the **SAME AMOUNT OF POWER** to rescue a “**good sinner**” and that it is very often the “**good sinners**” that are **MORE DIFFICULT** to **REACH**, humanly speaking, because they don’t think they **NEED** Jesus...!
- They think they are “**ok**” because they never did anything **REALLY** bad, they even go to church now and again and they even do their homework, sometimes, and don’t steal from their jobs... that much...
- Jesus can save even the **MOST SELF-RIGHTEOUS** person there is...! Look at the apostle Paul!
- **Phil 3:7-9**
- **NOTE** the **COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION** that Jesus brought about in this man – from **BEGGING** Jesus to leave him alone and not torment him (**v28**), to where he sits at Jesus’ feet, being **TAUGHT** by Jesus! (**v35**)
- During the time it took these men to run back to town and report what happened and for the people to get there, Jesus was busy **TEACHING** this man, **DISCIPLINING** him.
- Steven Cole: “*Salvation must be followed by sound doctrine so that the new convert can be transformed through the renewing of his mind.*”

3. Jesus **COMMANDS** those whom He transformed to **PROCLAIM** what He has done for them!

- When this man asked Jesus if he can come with Him, Jesus says **NO** and commands him to go back to his home and tell **EVERYONE** what **JESUS** had done for him,
- Many Christian **STRUGGLE** with this – **I DO!**

Q: How can we do it?

- Two very normal things:

3.1) Live or exhibit a transformed life.

- Live out the **CHANGE** that Jesus has brought about in you.
- It was **VERY OBVIOUS** that this man was **NOT** the same anymore – **HE HAD CLOTHES ON!**
- For many it may not be that they were so “**radically**” lost and therefore the change at first won’t be so **OBVIOUS**, but here is where we should **EXHIBIT** the change Jesus has made in us:
 - In our **ATTITUDES** – having a **CHEERFUL** and **THANKFUL** heart in **ALL** circumstances...
 - In our **WORDS** – **ENCOURAGING** and **BUILDING UP** other people and not using **FOUL** language...
 - In our **BEHAVIOUR** – being a **SERVANT** and living according to **GOD’S** values, not the worlds...

*If you **WALK** in reality with Jesus as your Lord **EVERY DAY**, your **LIFE** will be a witness.*

3.2) Return home and tell what Jesus had done for you.

- *How do you go?* In **OBEDIENCE** and with **ZEAL...**
 - This man wanted to follow Jesus, but he then submitted himself under Jesus’ command...
 - He went throughout the **WHOLE CITY** to tell what Jesus did...
- *To whom do you go?* **To your HOME and the people you ALREADY KNOW...**
 - You go to your **CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE** – family and friends – those who knew you before you became a Christian...
 - Go and **LIVE** your new life before them and when they ask you why you are so different, then you **TELL** them!
- *What do you say?* **Tell them YOUR STORY and the GOSPEL of GOD’S GRACE...**
 - Tell them your **PERSONAL TESTIMONY** – you should **NEVER** underestimate the **IMPORTANCE** of your **PERSONAL TESTIMONY!**
 - **EXPLAIN** the **GOSPEL** to them.
 - Emphasize **GOD’S GRACE!** Grace means the God **FREELY** gives His salvation to those who **DESERVE HIS JUDGEMENT** apart from **ANY MERIT** of their own...! *He saves people **JUST AS THEY ARE!***

Conclusion:

- Here are **THREE QUESTIONS** that you need to think about:
 1. *To what extent are you **EXPERIENCING** the **TRANSFORMING POWER** of **JESUS?***
 2. *To what extent are you **PROCLAIMING** the **TRANSFORMING POWER** of **JESUS?***
 3. *Do you see **PEOPLE** as **JESUS** sees them and to you **REALIZE** the **WHAT A SOUL IS WORTH?***

“Jesus & Peter”

FOLLOW ME...!

Joh 21:15-22

Introduction:

- At the beginning of this study series, we started with the question: *What is a Christian?*
- The answer to this question being – Most basically, a **CHRISTIAN** is someone who **KNOWS** and **FOLLOWS** Jesus...
- **CHRISTIANITY** truly is all about **JESUS... KNOWING HIM** and **FOLLOWING HIM**.
- In all of our studies, we have looked at people who **ENCOUNTERED** Jesus and how their lives were completely **CHANGED** by Him.
- As we come to the end of this series, it leaves you with just **ONE QUESTION**:

What are YOU going to do with Jesus?

- There are just **TWO** basic reactions: Either you **REJECT** Him or you **FOLLOW** Him...
- To call yourself a **CHRISTIAN** means to be a **FOLLOWER** of Jesus – that is you **WANT** to **BECOME JUST LIKE HIM**.
- It is nothing less than being a **DISCIPLE** of Jesus – a **STUDENT** of Jesus to **LEARN** from Him how to live **AND** then to go and live like that!
- In the Bible, there is no difference between a **CHRISTIAN** and a **DISCIPLE** – to be a Christian means that you **ARE** a disciple of Jesus and that you are **FOLLOWING HIM!**
- One preacher comments on the reality that many people today realize that to be “**church**” doesn’t just mean that to get together in a building once a week, but rather that we should be **FOLLOWERS** of Jesus.
- He then makes the following remark: *“Where it gets weird is that nowadays there are millions of people on this earth who call themselves followers of Jesus, but their lives look nothing like His, and they’re not obeying the things that He called them to do...”*
- To end of this series, we will then answer just one last question tonight:

What does it MEAN to FOLLOW JESUS?

- To answer this question, we will look at one last encounter with Jesus, right at the end of the Gospel according to John... the encounter between **JESUS** and **PETER!**
- The *context of this* encounter is that after Jesus has risen from the dead and has appeared first to the ten disciples, without Thomas, and then again later to the eleven when Thomas was present, we find Peter and six of the other disciples... went **FISHING...!**
- We can only **SPECULATE** what Peter was thinking and feeling at this stage...
- He has **DENIED** Jesus **THREE TIMES** just a few nights ago, just before Jesus was crucified...
- Then Jesus **ROSE** from the dead!
- The angel told the women who first discovered that Jesus has **RISEN** that they must tell the disciples, and Peter, that He is going ahead of them to Galilee, and that they will **SEE** Him there. (cf **Mark 16:7**)
- Peter has seen Jesus at least two times already after He has risen, yet there was **NO SIGNIFICANT CONVERSATION** that is recorded for us between him and Jesus.
- His **DENIAL** of Jesus maybe still **FRESH** in his head, he may have felt like a **FAILURE** as a disciple, so he decides to go fishing – returning to what he was before he started following Jesus.
- But even here he is met with an even **GREATER** frustration – **THEY CATCH NOTHING...!**
- He is now even a **FAILURE** at this as well!
- That morning **JESUS** arrives on the shore and tell them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat – *they catch 153 fish just there and then!*
- John realizes it is Jesus and tells Peter who can’t wait and swim all the way back to shore...
- There is an **ECHO** of Peter’s initial calling in **Luk 5:4-11** in this encounter.
- There it ended with Jesus **CALLING** Peter to **FOLLOW HIM** and here in **Joh 21**, Jesus ends this encounter by **RESTORING** Peter to his **INITIAL CALLING** namely: **FOLLOW ME!**
- Please read **Joh 21:15-22...**

Study Points:

- *To FOLLOW Jesus means:*

1. That you LOVE Him more than anything or anyone else! (v 15-17)

- We see that Jesus asked Peter the same question **THREE TIMES** namely: “...do you love me...?”
- The **PURPOSE** of this question was to help Peter discern if he is **TRULY SAVED**.
- Just recently he has denied Jesus **THREE TIMES** and sinned **GREATLY** by doing this, and now he is confronted with this question **THREE TIMES**, “...do you love me...?”, to finally determine if Peter, in light of this tremendous **FAILURE**, can truly still **BELIEVE** he is **SAVED**...
- You see, **THIS QUESTION** brings out the reality whether we truly **BELIEVE** in Jesus or not, because our **LOVE** for Jesus stands as the proof of our **FAITH** in Jesus.
- Love for Jesus stands as the **FRUIT** of someone who has truly been born again, because it is a characteristic that someone who has **NOT** been born again **CANNOT HAVE** and that **WILL** be present in **EVERYONE** who has been **SAVED**!
- **Gal 5:22; 1 Joh 4:7-8**
- This is a **SIMPLE** question that requires a **YES** or **NO** answer – **THERE IS NO INBETWEEN!**
- With the answer to this question, you cannot **LIE** to **JESUS**, for He knows your **HEART!**
- Peter’s answer testifies of **COMPLETE SINCERITY** and a **CLEAN CONSCIENCE** in giving the same answer **THREE TIMES** – “Yes Lord, you know that I love you...” and Jesus, who knows Peter’s heart, doesn’t question his answer, but each time gives him a **COMMAND** to **CARE** for His **FLOCK**.

*It is this **SINCERE ANSWER** of Peter that gives him **ASSURANCE** of his salvation, for the reality that there is **ANY LOVE** at all in his heart for Jesus, shows that he has received **GRACE**...!*

• Phil Newton: “At the heart of it all is that glorious truth that we are saved by grace, that Christ loved us before we ever loved Him, that His love for us is not rooted in our performance. So often when someone struggles with assurance of salvation, they will cast themselves into a frenzy of service and good deeds, hoping that such efforts will merit the love of Christ and gain divine approval. Peter had nothing to offer Jesus Christ after his fall. He was empty and bankrupt of any merit. He could only search the depths of his heart to see if any lingering evidence of grace remained. There it was! The love of Christ born into his heart by the Holy Spirit was still there, so that Peter could say in all honesty, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." Peter was reminded that his acceptance with Jesus Christ was not on his performance but upon the merits of Him who died in his place, who bore his sin in His own body on the cross. He needed the fresh confession of love for Christ to rekindle within him a new sense of assurance of belonging to Christ and being in fellowship with Him.”

• **1 Joh 4:19**

- But we need to note the **CHARACTER** of this **LOVE**, because Jesus’ first question was: “...Simon, son of John, do you love me **MORE THAN THESE**...?”
- Not primarily in the sense of loving Him more than the others love Him, (how would he be able to judge that...), although this might be a question about the **INTENSITY** of his love, but rather in the sense of loving **JESUS** more than he loves **THESE**, either these **MEN** or these **THINGS**... it is a question about the **PRIORITY** of his love... (cf. **Rev 2:4**)
- To follow Jesus means that you must love **HIM MORE** than you love **ANYONE** or **ANYTHING ELSE!**
- **Mark 12:30; Luk 14:26**...
- To **FOLLOW** Jesus means that there would be no other love in your heart that would be able to **CONQUER** or **DETHRONE** your love for Jesus!
- Your love for **ALL** other people will be **INFERIOR** to your **LOVE FOR JESUS**...! **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

2. That you will remain FAITHFUL to Him, no matter what the cost! (v 18-19)

- Jesus was **VERY HONEST** with Peter and He is very honest with you too – to follow Him **WILL COST YOU!**
- Jesus is revealing to Peter in which way he would die if he were to follow Him. Jesus didn’t **DECEIVE** or make any **FALSE PROMISES** towards Peter...!
- There is something important to remember in following Jesus – to follow Jesus is a **CALCULATED RISK!**
- **Luk 14:27+33**... it may cost you your **LIFE** and on the way there, it will cost you your desires, dreams and ambitions...!
- Your **HOBBIES, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORT, COMFORT, REPUTATION, FRIENDS** – it may cost you **ALL** of these things to follow Jesus, but if you are **TRULY** a follower of Jesus, you will remain faithful to Him through all of these things.

Q: WHY...?

- **Joh 6:66-69** – Jesus **ALONE** has the words of eternal life – **WHO ELSE** are you going to follow...?

- **Heb 10:32-39** – you **KNOW** what you have in Him and that those who persevere to the end will be saved...!
- **1 Cor 6:19-20** – you **BELONG** to Him! He has bought you with a price so that you may do whatever will glorify **HIM** by **FOLLOWING** Him wherever He may lead! (cf **Rom 14:7-8; Joh 21:19a**)
- **Phil 1:19-21** – your **DESIRE** is to glorify Him in **EVERYTHING** – whether in **LIFE** or in **DEATH**...!
- **Joh 14:15** – you will live out your **LOVE** for Him by **OBEYING** Him and **SUBMITTING** under His loving leadership – not because you are scared of His punishment, but because you want to **PLEASE** Him and **PROOF** your love for Him...!

3. That **YOU** will follow Him with a **SINGLE-MINDED** devotion! (v **20-22**)

- When you follow **JESUS**, you will note and consider other Christians – their **EXAMPLES** and where they can **BUILD** you up and where **YOU** can **BUILD THEM UP**, but you will **FOLLOW JESUS ALONE** – **HE** will be your focus!
- **Heb 10:24; 12:1-2**
- There is always the danger that we want to **MEASURE** ourselves against other Christians...
- Sometimes we even get **JEALOUS** over the spiritual success that someone else has... (cf. **Rom 12:3, 6**)
- Other times we stand guilty of trying to **JUDGE** each other in everything...
- At other times we may even cross the line and start **MEDDLING** in each other's lives... sticking our fingers in someone else's pie where our fingers are not supposed to be...
- Here are some Scriptures to remember concerning these **SINFUL ACTIONS**: **Gal 6:4-5; Rom 14:1-4, 10-12; Jam 4:11-12 1 Pet 4:15**
- There is a **DANGER** that you become so **FASCINATED** and **FOCUSED** with other Christians around you in an un-Biblical manner that **YOU DO NOT OBEY THE LORD** in what **HE** has given **YOU** to do!
- Peter immediately was concerned with what would happen to John – what would Jesus have **HIM** do...
- Jesus' answer is meant to stop Peter with being focused on sorting out John and rather **FOCUS ON OBEYING HIM!**
- Some people are so set on “*sorting out*” other Christians, they forget that they need to follow Jesus as well.
- You need to be **CONTENT** in what the Lord in His sovereignty has given you to do. Stop looking around all the time at what God has given other Christians to do and **DO** what he has given you to do. (cf. **Ecc 9:10**)
- Be a **WITNESS** where you are; **OBEY** your **PARENTS**; do your **SCHOOL WORK** and **STUDIES** and **JOB** to glorify Him; read your Bible and spent time in prayer as much as possible – **FOLLOW JESUS!**
- There is a further thought here that we need to take note of concerning following Jesus with a single minded devotion – to really follow Jesus means that you will do it even if you have to do it **ALONE!**
- As Christians we need to have fellowship with one another – we are **INTERDEPENDENT** on one another, **BUT** we are **DEPENDENT** on **JESUS** and therefore **WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO STAND ON OUR OWN IF THAT IS WHAT JESUS WOULD REQUIRE OF US!** (cf. **2 Tim 4:16-18**)
- We **CANNOT** become **DEPENDENT** upon one another for our relationship with Jesus, because then we are not following **JESUS** with a single minded devotion anymore...

*Your **OBEDIENCE** to Jesus cannot and may not be on condition of what **OTHER** people say and think.*

- What you **UNDERSTAND** His **REVEALED WILL** to be – which we find in the Bible – you must **DO** that, no matter what your friends may say or think about it!
- We should have the same attitude as Paul had - **Acts 20:22-24; 21:10-14** and **2 Tim 4:7-8**

Conclusion:

- So, I close with the same question I started with: *What are **YOU** going to do with Jesus?*
 - *If you call yourself a **CHRISTIAN**, are you busy **LOVING** Jesus more than you love anything or anyone else?*
 - *If you call yourself a **DISCIPLE** of Jesus, are you bust being **FAITHFUL** to Jesus, no matter what the cost?*
 - *If you call yourself a **FOLLOWER** of Jesus are **YOU** busy **FOLLOWING** Him with a **SINGLE MINDED DEVOTION**?*
- If you **DON'T** consider yourself a Christian, or disciple or follower of Jesus, know this: **JESUS DIED** for our sins on the cross so that He can bring about our forgiveness and grant us a **NEW LIFE** in Him! Don't be **FOOLISH** and **HARD HEADED** any longer – come to Jesus so that He may **SAVE** you from your sin and the penalty you deserve!
- Jesus' invitation and command is very simple and clear: **“FOLLOW ME...!”**