

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

70- Jesus Demonstrates His Absolute Authority- Part 8
The Demands of Salvation; and the Supremacy of the
Incarnate God- Part 2

Church September 17, 2023

Matthew 8:18-27

18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea.

19 Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

20 Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

21 Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."

22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."

23 When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.

24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep.

25 And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!"

26 He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.

27 The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Why does God leave us here on earth after we are born again; justified; and adopted into the Family of God? Why doesn't God take us to Heaven immediately after we have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth? This earth is cursed; there is Temptation everywhere; Many times, it seems that "Evil" is *triumphing*

over “Good”; and we will probably fail more times than we will succeed in resisting the Ways of satan; and walking faithfully with Jesus. We can’t get anymore “saved” than we already are- so, why leave us here?

What “Good” is accomplished by exposing us to the Trials and Temptations and Hardships and Persecutions that will come to us during the remainder of our Lives? The Answer to these Questions reveal how much we really understand Salvation- and how much we comprehend God’s Purpose in saving wicked Sinners by what He alone does for them. So, maybe a better Way to ask the Question is:

What is God’s Goal in Salvation?

Why did God go to all that Trouble to save “*creatures of the Dust*” like us? What does God Himself accomplish by saving souls? What does He receive out of us being saved? And why did God even create Salvation in the first Place? He surely didn’t *have* to. If God cast every single human on earth right now into the Lake of Fire- to burn in Hell forever- it would NOT detract one iota from His own Holiness or Glory. Yet God went to great Lengths- *amazing* Lengths- to save us. And I’m asking, “*Why?*”

There are some within the modern Church who would say, “*Well, God saved us because He was lonely and wanted a Family.*” But (and I’m really trying to be as generous as I can right now)- that is just Blasphemy! God has never *known* Loneliness. Before God created *anything*; and all there was- was God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit- the one, true, and living God- in His three Persons- God enjoyed *perfect* Harmony; *perfect* Love; *perfect* Wisdom; *perfect* Joy; *perfect* Power; and *perfect* Satisfaction. There was NO lack; NO vacancy; and the three Persons within the one God had NO Problems.

But even more important than that- when people say that God did all that He did to save us- because He loved us; or because He wanted a Family; or because God needed something that we supplied- we are putting Man at the Center of all that God does. And that is the definition of a “*Man-centered Theology*”.

But the Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly that God does ALL that He does for one over-arching Reason:

FOR MY GLORY!

... for the *Glory* of His Name; for the *Sake* of His Name; and so, they will know that there is no one like God! And that means that we MUST struggle to develop a “*God-centered Theology*” or an Understanding about God that has God at the very Center of all things- and NOT Man. Because a “*Man-centered Theology*”; an

Understanding about God that puts Man at the Center of all that God does- robs God of His Glory.

Yet far too many in the modern Church have developed and have fortified a “*Man-centered Theology*” that teaches about things like Human “Free-will” and Human “Self-determination”- things that always glorify Man- but which cannot be found anywhere in the Bible.

And so, they teach that Man can *initiate* his *own* Salvation by “doing” something: like walk an aisle; or raise a hand; or shake the Preacher’s hand; or be baptized; or speak in tongues; or take Communion; or attend the Mass; or fly airplanes through buildings.

But here is what we always MUST keep in mind- it is God alone Who saved us! It is God- in His Mercy- and to His Own Glory- Who rescued us from being spiritually dead; and Who alone- gave us new, spiritual Life! We did NOT take the first Step and God took all the rest. God took ALL the Steps!

Let me try to reason with you using this Logic:

- Whoever did the Work- gets the Glory
- Whoever had the Work done to/for/in them- gets the Benefit

Salvation is something that was done *to* us; and *in* us; and *for* us. But it is NOT something we did. It isn’t something we accomplished. Salvation is a wondrous Gift of God’s Grace to Sinners- who are NOT only “*Unworthy*”- but who are also entirely “*Wicked*” and completely *deserving* of eternal Damnation.

And in Salvation- God- in all three Persons of the Trinity- did what no one else could do: God the Father designed Salvation; He paid for it in Christ; He facilitated it; and then He “made it happen” by God the Holy Spirit. So, God did Salvation- ALL BY HIMSELF (Sovereignly)!

And that means that us being Convicted; Repenting; Crying out to God; Praying; Trusting; Accepting; Acting; Agreeing; Embracing; Believing; and Loving God are NOT things that we “do” to be saved. That isn’t true- and the Bible doesn’t teach that.

All of these things (as well as Loving God; Loving Jesus; Loving the Truth; Praying; Reading and Studying the Bible; Understanding Divine Truth; Bearing Godly Fruit; and remaining Faithful; Fruitful; and Busy in the Work of the Lord) are merely human Responses to the sovereign Work of Grace that God has *already* done in that individual. And that allows for God to receive ALL of the Glory and for us to receive ALL of the Benefit!

So, we “*give God all the Glory*”- NOT because it makes us look noble- but precisely because He did ALL the Work! And we receive ALL of the Benefits-

precisely because God did ALL the Work! And Whoever does the Work- gets the Glory!

So, the ONLY Way that God has earned; or that He is entitled to; or that He deserves 100% of the Glory of Salvation- is if God did 100% of the Work! And that would mean that God is absolutely Sovereign- not only in Creation- but also in Salvation!

But if that is true- then WHY did God save us? What Benefit does God get out of our Salvation?

Some would say, “*Well, God saved me because He loved me!*” And I agree with that Statement. We can all be very thankful and grateful that an absolutely Sovereign God loves us. Where would we be- if God didn’t love us? But even though that Statement is true- that Statement is also INCOMPLETE! So, if we are to understand God and Salvation correctly and fully- we must complete it. And so, we *should* say,

**“God saved me because He loved me- so that by saving me-
I would love Him!”**

... and now we are getting to the Root of WHY God saved us and HOW our Obedience and Dedication to the Lord after we are saved- glorifies God.

You see, God saved us- NOT merely so that we would go to Heaven or that we could escape Hell. Now thank God- we ARE going to Heaven; and we will NEVER see Hell. But that is NOT the main reason WHY God saved us- because, once again- that is all about *us*. We have to find another Reason that is radically “God-centered”- or it can’t give God Glory.

So, let’s dig deeper. And when we do- we will see WHY Matthew gave us the Examples that we just read together.

Now the Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly that God saved us because, He “*set His Love upon us*” (**Deuteronomy 7:7**)! In other words, God CHOSE to save us. God made a “free-will Choice” to save us. God *determined* to save us. God *decided* to save us.

But WHEN did God “set His Love” on us? The Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly that God chose us “BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD” (**Ephesians 1:4**); that God “PREDESTINED” us for Salvation (**Ephesians 1:5**); and that He made that “free-Will Choice to save us “BEFORE WE WERE BORN: BEFORE WE DID ANYTHING GOOD OR BAD” (**Romans 9:11**). And WHY did God do all of this?

FOR MY GLORY!

... but HOW does “*setting His Love*” on people BEFORE they’re born bring God Glory? HOW does God’s “*free-Will Choice*” to save us BEFORE the Foundation of the World give God Glory? HOW does sovereign Predestination give God Glory? In other words- how does Salvation give God Glory?

Now when we talk about “*giving God Glory*”- we must understand that we are NOT making God to be “better”. We are NOT “improving” God. Likewise, when we sin- we do NOT “detract” from God’s Glory in the sense of making Him to be *less* than He already is.

God is already glorious! God is the Highest; and the Best; and the Strongest; and the Wisest; and the most Beautiful and Important Being in the Universe- without any help or cooperation from Man! And God has ALWAYS been glorious! God has never NOT been glorious! And His Glory derives from WHO He is and WHAT He alone does! And man CANNOT change that.

The God we worship is undivided and single in His Essence or in His Substance or Nature. But God has many Attributes or Characteristics that He has chosen to reveal to us on the pages of sacred Writ. And it is all of these magnificent Characteristics (and more) that make God to be “HOLY”! They’re what make God to be ALONE! SET APART! DISTINCT! DIFFERENT and BETTER than *anything* and *everything else*! So, God is truly a “*One-of-a-Kind*”! And that is WHY we worship Him!

Isaiah 46:9-11

**9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';
11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.**

So, how could we possibly add *anything* to that? How could puny Man make God to *look* more glorious or *be* more glorious than He already is? Good Question. Let’s dig deeper.

It is very difficult for us Mortals to even imagine how much God loves His Own Glory- or the “*Fame of His Name*”. But the Bible teaches that God really, *really* loves His Glory! He is “*White-hot*” in His Passion to “*see to it*” that He is Loved; and Adored; and Worshipped; and Glorified; and Honored; and Praised and Enjoyed and Obeyed- *above all things*!

And we talk about it all the Time. The Bible reveals it. We sing about it. But exactly WHAT is the “*Glory of God*”? God’s Glory is like the Beams of the Sun-

radiating out from it. So too, when one or more of God's Attributes or Characteristics are manifested; when they are revealed; or shown; or demonstrated or seen- that Demonstration is the Glory of God.

For example- when God created the Universe- at least two of His Divine Attributes: His omnipotent Power and His infinite Wisdom were revealed. They were shown; revealed; and they were put on Display. That was the "Glory" of God in that Situation. So, in Creation- God looked glorious. God looked Powerful; and Wise; and Magnificent; and Effectual. So, the "Glory of God" is one or more of God's Characteristics- *revealed* to Man. It is when God's Holiness (the Summation of Who God is)- is seen.

But even deeper- "God's Glory" is when God's Holiness is seen; and then there is a Response to having seen; or having understood that part of God's Holiness. And so, seeing God's Glory causes us to *appreciate* it. It causes us to *value* it as well as God Himself. And so, we honor God; we fear God; we love God; we adore God; and we treasure God. But the Reason we do all of these things- is because we are responding to having seen His Glory. So, God shines forth His Glory when He displays one or more of His pristine Attributes. And when we see that Display- we *respond* in a Way that magnifies God.

But the Bible also says that we humans "*give God Glory*" too. But how in the world could we "give" God Glory? God is *already* glorious- so, what could we possibly add to Who God already is?

We give God "glory" when we correctly *respond* to seeing His Glory- in a Way that reveals the high Esteem we have for Him. So, when we respond in a Way that *proves* that we really do see Jesus as the "Treasure of the Universe"- God is glorified! And that Response is called, "Worship".

But when we DON'T respond correctly; or when we don't respond at all to the Display of God's Glory- we insult God. Because as far as we are concerned- God's Glory is of little or no Concern to us. And that Response is called, "Sin". So, when what God loves the MOST is ignored or not esteemed at all- we incur the Wrath of God. So, Sin is NOT responding correctly to the Glory of God that God has displayed.

And that is the Sentiment that is behind the ancient Command found in **Deuteronomy 6:4&5** that says:

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

So, *ultimately* EVERYTHING God has said or done is to that one
End:

That God Alone will be Glorified!

... which God calls, “*Love*”!

So, wicked Sinners now *love* God- because they are responding to the Display of His Glory. And in **2Corinthians 4:1-6**- the Apostle Paul said that we respond to the Display of God’s Glory in Jesus Christ- because God has sovereignly “unveiled” our eyes and heart and mind.

And the Process of this- is that **FIRST**- God sovereignly unveils our eyes; heart; and mind-so we may “See” or “Behold” the Glory of God in the “Face”- or in the “Person” of Jesus Christ. And once we “see” or “behold” that Glory- we begin to **LOVE** what we see- which is Jesus in His Glory. And as we begin to love Jesus- we are changed into that same Image (**2Corinthians 3:18**)!

And this is what is called, “*Salvation*”. And so, God saving wicked Rebels- by what God alone does for them- glorifies God **MORE** than *anything else*! Sinners being changed by the sovereign Work of God- in all three Persons through Salvation- to such an extent- that they *genuinely* love God; and *value* God; and *treasure* God; and *enjoy* God; and that they truly *delight themselves* in God- **THAT** brings God **MORE** Glory than Him creating a Galaxy!

And so, when fallen people are so altered by God’s Grace that they find the Fullness of their *own* Joy- in God alone being glorified- that is the Height of what it means to glorify God and love Him!

So, because God values His Glory like that- **EVERYTHING** that God *says*; and **EVERYTHING** that God *does*- is designed to elicit that kind of Response from His Creatures. And when that happens- God is glorified- and He is pleased.

But when that **DOESN’T** happen- God’s Fury burns with such intensity that **NOTHING** can withstand it! Because you see, **NOTHING** angers God more than for Himself or His Glory to be marginalized or minimized or ignored or insulted or belittled. And the Bible calls the insulting or the ignoring of God’s Glory- “*Sin*”. And as God the Holy Spirit “moved” on him- the Apostle Paul infallibly wrote this in **Romans 3:23**:

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Have you ever wondered **WHY** Paul connected our Sin with “**falling short**” of God’s Glory? Why didn’t he say that we had “**fallen short**” of God’s *Commandments* or “**falling short**” of God’s *Righteousness*? Why connect our Sin to “**falling short**” of God’s *Glory*? And what does “**falling short**” mean? Does it mean for us to almost hit the mark but not quite? No, it doesn’t.

In ancient Greek Literature- that phrase, to “**fall short**” has to do with us “*trampling something under foot with Disgust*”. So, when we sin- when we rebel against God; when we disobey the Scriptures- we are *trampling God’s Glory under our feet with Disgust!* So, we are insulting and minimizing the Importance of the one thing that God loves and treasures the MOST! And THAT is *why* our Sin angers God so.

Now there are three main Ways in which the “absolute Sovereignty” of God is manifested or displayed or seen in the Earth:

1. Through the ongoing Governing; Ordering; Maintenance; and Management of all that He created (Providence)
2. Through the Imposition of God’s eternal Standard of Morality on all Mankind (the 10 Commandments)
3. Through the Distribution of His Mercy

But there are two Aspects of God’s Nature or Substance that God *desires* to display; and that God desires to produce a correct Response in us- that CANNOT be Displayed; and that CANNOT be appreciated- at all- when all that exists is God in His three Persons:

1. The Glory of His Grace in saving unworthy Rebels
2. The Glory of His Justice on unrepentant Sinners

And the Reason that these two Aspects of God’s Essence CANNOT be Displayed nor responded to correctly when only God exists- is because neither the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Spirit NEED Grace. They are all three- perfect and intact and complete- in and of themselves- so they do not NEED Grace (unmerited Favor).

But none of the three Persons of the Godhead will ever taste of God’s Justice either. Because God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are ALWAYS Righteous and always Holy and always Sinless.

So, for those two Aspects of the Godhead to be seen and valued and appreciated- God HAD to create the Universe. And in that Universe- at just the right distance from the sun- God created Earth. And on that Earth- God created Man. And God “allowed” for Man to be tempted and to sin and to fall- NOT because He didn’t have the Power to stop it- and NOT because He didn’t know about it- but so that the Glory of His Grace in redeeming fallen Man could be Displayed and responded to-correctly! And THAT is WHY God saves Sinners.

You see, it is NOT God's Will to eliminate Evil from the earth- yet. It is God's Will that He sovereignly CAUSES both "Evil" and "Good" to "work together"- so that four amazing things will happen:

1. God's Will is accomplished in the Earth in the same Way; and with the same Urgency as His Will is accomplished in Heaven
2. The Glory of God's Grace will be displayed; and responded to- correctly
3. God alone will be glorified
4. The Joy of His people will be made full

And so, God has sovereignly *allowed* many things throughout History- that we call, "*Evil*" to exist and even, seemingly, to thrive. And God has sovereignly caused many things throughout History that we call, "*Good*" to exist. And God is very busy- sovereignly CAUSING both what we call, "*Evil*"; and what we call, "*Good*" to wondrously "**work together**" in such a Way- that it produces the *ultimate* "Good"- which is that God alone is glorified; and that our Joy is made complete- in Him alone being glorified!

So, THAT is what Salvation is and what it does to Sinners. That is WHY God created Salvation; and WHY He continues to work in it today. Because when wicked Rebels have their mind and eyes and heart "Unveiled"; and they are allowed to "**behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ**"- they change (**2Corinthians 4:1-6**). And that Change sovereignly CAUSES them to love what they see- the Glory of God in Jesus. And as they *continue* to gaze at Jesus in His Glory- they are progressively changed into what they see- from one realm of Glory to the next (**2Corinthians 3:18**)!

And Matthew understood this. And so, when he gives us these Illustrations in **Matthew 8**- on the heels of the greatest Sermon ever preached (**Matthew 5-7**)- he is NOT promoting Human "Will-power" or humanly engineered Discipline. That would ONLY give Man Glory. No, Matthew is showing us the IMPOSSIBILITY of Salvation- by revealing the true COST of it!

So, in verses 19&20- what is it that can cause a Sinner- who is, by Nature- interested in "*Self-preservation*"- what could possibly cause him to not care about Comforts and Security in this Life? There are ONLY two Options:

1. His own Self-determination
2. A sovereign Work of Grace

... and one exalts Man while the other exalts God.

If a human being simply "puts forth enough Will-power"; if he just

“*makes his mind up*”- a person can do all kinds of noble and honorable things- even under intense Hardship. And every single Religion in the world has numerous Examples of this. Buddhists and Hindus and Jews and Muslims and even Atheists do amazing things. They go through unspeakable Hardships; and accomplish breathtaking things- all because they “*put their nose to the grindstone*” and cared nothing about the Cost in their Unbelief and Paganism. And those people are honored to this day all over the world; and their names are spoken with great Admiration. And that is true with every Religion- except Christianity.

Because in Christianity NOTHING is done through humanly engineered Discipline. NOTHING is accomplished by “*making our minds up*” or by “*putting our noses to the grindstone*”. You see, in Christianity- EVERYTHING is done to God’s Glory and NOT to the Glory of Man. And so, here- we do what we do- BY God’s Grace. And what that means is that in order to obey what God has told us to do- we fail in our own human efforts- unless God would be merciful to graciously *empower* us to obey. 17 Centuries ago, a Church Leader in northern Africa named, Augustine, wrote down a very simple Prayer. And it goes like this:

“Grant what Thou commandest and command what Thou dost desire”¹

... and the *second* part is easy- *everybody* agrees with it. Because God is Sovereign- He has the Right to command *whatever* He wants. Simple.

But the 1st Part is not so well received; nor is it well understood. You see, we don’t simply need God to tell us *what* to do- we also need God to empower us to obey what He told us to do- so that when we do what He tells us to do- God alone will be glorified!

In other words- in order for us to obey God- we have to *borrow* more Grace from God- or we will steal Glory *from* God. In order for us to obey what God has commanded- in a Way that God alone is glorified- we MUST have Jesus serve *us*! We MUST have Jesus; and the Father; and the Holy Spirit give to us- *what we lack*- things like Steadfastness; and Faithfulness; and Strength.

But we need those things- *in such a way*- and *to such a degree*- that when we actually *accomplish* God’s Command- and we ARE Steadfast; and we ARE Faithful; and we ARE Strong in the Lord- we won’t rob God of His Glory. And that is truly a Miracle!

So, we need a dead and risen Savior to become the kind of people who do not see God’s Commandments as being Burdensome. But we also need a dead and risen Savior to empower us to obey God’s Commandments- in such a Way- that we don’t *frustrate* the Grace of God- by robbing God of His Glory!

¹ Augustine; *Confessions*; (*Da quod iubes, et iube quod vis. Imperas nobis ... continentiam*); Book 10 page 29; 400AD

But how would we obey God's Commandments by robbing God of His Glory? I thought obeying God was the Goal. It is HALF the Goal. The other Half of obeying God is in HOW we obey God. So, by striving to obey God's Commandment by using the Means; and the Techniques; and the Methods; and the Tools; of the lost, pagan World- we *guarantee* that Man and NOT God- is glorified.

The Bible says we can do NOTHING without Him. And that doesn't mean we can do *some* small things but just not the great things. It means what it says- we can do NOTHING that brings God Glory- without Him. And THAT is what Matthew is teaching us here.

And the *first* Example in verses 19&20 is of a scribe who said he was more than willing to follow Jesus. Yet he never did. So, what turned this man off? Many teach that it was the Hardships that Jesus promised him along with the absence of Comforts and Security. And that when this scribe saw what the Cost would be- he just walked away. But that Logic only works with a 21st Century, American, Western individual- who has more of this world's Goods than most people. And so, when *we* read what Jesus said in verse 20- we begin to think about how terrible it must be to live like that- so we insert *our own* thinking into the Bible- which we are warned NOT to do.

The Reality is that most EVERYBOY who was following Jesus was in the SAME shape that Jesus was in. MOST Jews of the 1st Century didn't have a home; nor an animal to ride on; nor any guarantee of food for the next meal. So, being Poor; or living in Hardship; or NOT having earthly Possessions was "normal" for those people.

So, why did the scribe not follow Jesus? What turned him away? Well, we don't know for sure- because Matthew didn't tell us- but we can surmise that it sure wasn't the Fact that Jesus didn't have a Home; nor any earthly Possessions- because this scribe probably didn't have anything either. Okay, so, what turned him off?

Instead of a Path of Hardships and no Comforts and no Security- I would suggest to you that it was the Fact that Jesus was not glorious in this man's eyes that offended him. In other words, why would I follow somebody who isn't any better off than I am? We usually don't go to beggars to help us. We help them. And we usually don't go to people who sleep under bridges to save us. We rescue them. About 600 years before Jesus was born the Prophet was "moved" by God the Holy Spirit to write this down concerning Jesus in **Isaiah 53: 2-4:**

2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

Look carefully at this. God Almighty, through the Prophet said there was NOTHING about Jesus- as He walked the earth- that would attract *anyone*- UNLESS God had “unveiled” their eyes and hearts and minds- *First*. Isaiah said Jesus was NOT “stately”. He was NOT “majestic”. His “Appearance” would NOT attract anybody. Jesus was *rejected*- NOT adored. He had the Appearance of being “*forsaken of men*”. He was a “*Man of Sorrows*”; and was very well acquainted with intense Grief. He was the kind of Man- that people “*hid their faces from*” (out of Embarrassment and Shame). And Jesus was *despised*- NOT worshipped. God had sent Jesus to this earth to *die*- to be brutally *murdered*- NOT to be loved and admired.

And Isaiah said that we did NOT “esteem” Him. What does that mean? It means that we saw NO personal Benefit in attaching our Lives to Jesus- because saw NO Worth; NO Importance; and NO Value in this Man.

So, what does a Man like that have to give to this scribe? NOTHING- in the Natural- yet EVERYTHING in the spiritual! Because while Jesus had little or nothing in this Life- what He was offering this scribe was eternal Forgiveness and Salvation! But this man’s eyes and heart and mind were veiled. Satan had blinded his mind so that he could NOT see the Glory of God in the Person (Face) of Jesus (**2Corinthians 4:4&6**)!

So, when this scribe sized up Jesus- he judged Him to be completely *incapable* of “*making MUCH of him*”. He didn’t see that his earthly Status was going to improve one iota- by being associated with Him. And it probably wouldn’t. So, when Jesus told this man that He didn’t own anything- this man walked away and missed his “*Day of Visitation*.”

So, the Sin here- is NOT that he wanted Safety and Comfort. Who doesn’t want that? The Sin was in this man NOT seeing the Glory of God in Jesus. The Sin was in wanting Jesus to make something great of him. In other words, “*As long as Jesus might do something wonderful for me- I’ll be happy to follow Him*.” But Jesus didn’t have anything in the Natural to give to him. And this man saw NO glory in a Man like that. And that kind of Response doesn’t come from a heart that has been transformed and that seeks God alone to be glorified. That kind of heart seeks to do God’s Work- but ONLY in a Way that will glorify *himself*. And Jesus will have NOTHING to do with that. So, after Jesus said,

The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

... this man said, "*I didn't sign up for that*"- and we never hear anymore about him.

Now the 2nd Example of what this God-centered Cost of Salvation looks like is found in **Matthew 8:21&22** that says:

21 Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."

22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."

Now Jesus' Reply to this man who wanted to go and bury his Father in verse 22 seems very harsh and even cruel to many people in the modern Church. And I'll be honest- Jesus' Reply stumped me for many years, too. But what will help us is to remember that there was a lot going on here. Matthew included this in his Gospel Record to make the Point about "*God-centered Dedication*" versus a Dedication that *anybody* can make- saved or not- as long as they "*put their mind to it*" and as long as obeying God doesn't interfere with their already made out Plans.

So, to uncover exactly what was going on here- we need to ask the Question, "*What could possibly be wrong about wanting to go Home and bury your own Father?*" Are we to think that Jesus was *against* Funerals? Is burying your Father- sinful?

No, this is an Example of how going back to the Culture and The Language of the 1st Century Jew comes in handy. But this also illustrates that we must NEVER try to understand the Bible with a 21st Century, American, Western mentality. We have to strive to find out what the writer- *in this case Matthew*- had in mind when he wrote his Book. Nothing else matters.

So, first of all, the phrase, "**permit me first to go and bury my father.**" had NOTHING to do with a Funeral. Back in the 1st Century- *especially* with the Jews- this phrase was a fairly common Statement about a man who had left his Family in pursuit of his own Life. So, he had left his Father's home; and was working; and probably had gotten married; and now maybe had children; and a job- probably his own Business.

And people would use this Jewish phrase to mean that, for some Reason- this young man wanted to *leave* his Job or Business; *return* to his Family (that he had left); and be *re-united* with his Family. So, this young man would probably move back in with his Parents; provide for his Wife and Children to become

acclimated to his Parents; and then usually *re-join* his Father- in whatever Business or Craft his Father was in.

Now as you can imagine- there might be several Reasons for doing this. But there would also be many emotional, personal, and even spiritual Obstacles that they would all have to overcome in order for this to be a Good thing. And then, *after many years*, and things among the two Families were all ironed out- his Father died. But this young man would then *continue* to live among his people; take care of his Mother; and take over the family Business. *That* is what the phrase, “*bury my Father*” meant to the 1st Century Jew. And *that* is what this man is saying to Jesus.

So, this phrase had nothing to do with Jesus giving this man permission to go back home and bury his Father and then come back and faithfully follow Jesus after a few days. This man was actually telling the Lord- that by him meeting Jesus and by Jesus calling this man to Salvation by telling him, “*follow Me*”- that this man genuinely thought he was “*In the Wrong Place at the Wrong Time.*”

This man obviously already had Plans to return home to his Parents and take over the family Business. Yet right on the Eve of him returning home- Jesus has now come into contact with this man. And Jesus has now done what Jesus ALWAYS does- He has called this man out of Sin and into Salvation. And by doing that- Jesus has unapologetically *imposed* Himself into this man’s Life; He is now going to change ALL his Plans; and this young man will become a “bought-and-paid-for” Bond-slave to the Master. And, from this day forward- he will live his Life with complete abandon- so that God alone may be glorified- in all that he does and says.

Now stop and think about this for a moment. The ONLY reason this man has come into contact with the incarnate God; the ONLY reason he has been offered Eternal Life- and the forgiveness of ALL his Sins- is because, at some point in the Past- he left his Family and came to wherever this Event took place. So, *providentially*- this man was in the “*Right Place at the Right Time!*” So, being *away* from his Family was what had *facilitated* him coming into contact with Jesus. And since he was in contact with Jesus- he was also in contact with Salvation and the forgiveness of his Sins!

So, for him to want to leave now and return to his Family- would have put him at a distance from Jesus. And it was saying that he considered this Meeting with Jesus and the Opportunity to be forgiven and saved- was him being in the “*Wrong Place at the Wrong Time*”!

In other words, by him using this Phrase (that all the Jews understood) with Jesus at the very Time that the Son of God said, “*Follow Me!*”- meant that this man considered this Meeting with Jesus to be a real serious Problem and NOT a

Blessing at all. All this man saw was that Jesus was *interfering* with his already made out Plans- and he simply wasn't interested in that level of Devotion- even if it was saving his sinful Soul.

So, that is why Jesus was so direct and to the point with this man- even to the degree of being insulting. What this man was doing was to hear Jesus offer to save his wretched soul and replay by saying, “*No thank you- I've already made other Plans for my Life*”. So, not only is this the very height of Arrogance- it is, perhaps, the most *stupid* thing anyone has ever said to Jesus.

The Apostle Matthew included this Event in his Gospel Record to say to his Jewish brethren that in eternal Salvation- God will absolutely *impose* Himself into their Lives. He will absolutely change ALL of their Plans. God will require things of us that most are NOT willing to do; and God will expect not only Obedience- but *joyful* Obedience- to *whatever* Jesus demands.

And boy do we need to hear that today! Because so many in the modern Church have fabricated a “jesus” in their minds- who loves them to the utmost; but who would NEVER impose Himself into their Lives. They believe in a “lord” who would NEVER change their Plans; who would NEVER make them uncomfortable by making Demands on their Life; and who would NEVER expect that kind of joyful Obedience.

Their Man-made, invented “jesus” is nothing more than a cosmic “sugar-daddy- who gives them *whatever* their Flesh lusts for; he NEVER corrects them; he NEVER expects them to Follow wherever he leads. But that kind of “jesus” simply doesn't exist.

Now Matthew tells us in verse 21 that this man was part of the group called, “**Disciples**”. And that English word came from a Greek word (*matheetes*; Strong's # 3101) that means: *a Learner; a Student; and a Pupil*. Now there were four *kinds* of Disciples:

1. Those who were genuinely Saved
2. Those who were genuinely Lost
3. Those who were on their way to being saved
4. Those who were offended at Jesus and who were on their way to leave Him

... so, this man was a part of that large crowd of people that numbered anywhere from 10- 25,000 people that followed Jesus everywhere He went.

And it was that Group that saw Jesus perform Miracles; heal the Sick; raise the Dead; and cast out demons. This is also the Group that heard Jesus teach. And after all that they saw and heard- *some* were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah; Immanuel; the 2nd Moses; and God Almighty in human Flesh. And they also

became convinced of the *weakness* of the Old Covenant- and they fully embraced Jesus and the radical Truth He brought- and they were wondrously saved.

But others, who heard and saw the very *same* things- became offended at things that Jesus said and did. And so, in spite of the Miracles and the Healings; in spite of hearing perfect Teaching; and in spite of being around the ONLY man who NEVER sinned- they became disgusted with Jesus and just walked away and left the Lord- standing in the middle of the road! (**John 6:60-66**)

This man was in that Group. So, he had already seen things that *should have* convinced him. He had already heard things that *should have* convinced him. So, he had NO excuse! But the Bible teaches that NOBODY is convicted of Sins and born again through seeing Miracles. NOBODY is justified by experiencing physical Healing. And NOBODY is adopted into the Family of God by observing the casting out of demons.

If God does not sovereignly and graciously open a person's Heart; if God does not sovereignly unveil his eyes and heart and mind- people will NOT be convicted of Sin; they will NOT repent; and they will NOT experience the Miracle of the New Birth! This man saw Jesus perform breathtaking Miracles. This man heard perfect Teaching. This man witnessed the absolute Authority that Jesus had over fallen Angels.

But when Jesus said, "**Follow Me!**" this man replied- "*But I've already made Plans!*"

And so, by using that familiar Phrase- this man was proving beyond any Doubt that he had NOT experienced the Miracle of the New Birth. And because he did NOT see any Glory in Jesus- this proved that his mind was still "veiled" by satan. And because he saw no Value or worth or Glory in Jesus- he didn't love Jesus. And that means this man was NOT saved.

Now I can't say this with absolute Certainty- but I know that it is true with many of those who had followed behind Jesus for 3-1/2 years. So, it is very possible that this man was among those who, later on, asked for Barabbas to be released to them and for the Romans to crucify the incarnate God! And that should frighten us.

So, let us cry to God, my dear friends. And let us call on God to change us- that we may see and behold the Glory of God in Jesus Christ. And let us be among those who not only see; who not only hear; who not only believe; and who not only obey- but let us desire to be among those who seek to obey God in a Way that gives Glory to God alone. And let us be the kind of people who also experience the fullness of our own Joy- in God alone being glorified!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

