"Excuses, Excuses, Excuses"

Luke 9:57-62

10/10/04

Introduction: No excuses on Judgment day (Mt 22:12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.)

The man who "hid his Lord's Money" (Matt. 25:18)

Lot's Wife - Genesis 19

15 ¶ And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.
16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.
17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; **look not behind thee**, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

24 ¶ Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;
25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.
26 ¶ But **his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt**.

Why did Lot's wife look back?

--Curiosity?

*Love for the world

--She would miss her earthly possessions
(house, career, money)

--She would miss her earthly relationships
(family - "sons in law"; friends)

v.57

"A Certain man" - Specifically a scribe (Matthew 8:19)
This Scribe (copier and teacher of the O.T. Law) was intellectually impressed by Christ's teachings and at this time was momentarily inspired to follow the Lord.

"I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest" - This man, with stars in his eyes and visions of earthly glory in his mind, prematurely utters a pious promise to follow Jesus no matter where Jesus would lead.

Many today make shallow commitments to following Christ, but without counting the cost. (See: Luke 14:28-32)

"Jesus knew that a strong profession does not necessarily reflect strong commitment" (MacArthur, Matthew Commentary p. 22)

"Many people are attracted to Him by excitement, glamour, or the hope of personal benefit. . . such a person sees the soldiers on parade, the fine uniforms, and the glittering arms and is eager to join, forgetting the exhausting marches, the bloody battles, the graves" etc. (Lenski, cited by MacArthur, p. 23).

EX: those soldiers who enlisted in the U.S. military for education benefits who ended up in Arabia for "Desert Storm"

Christ's concluding summary to the excuses people make from following Him: **V. 62**

Everyone who is saved has **"Put his hand to the plough"** We are automatically enlisted in the work of the Lord! You are a missionary!

"Fit" - Suitable, useful; you are of no benefit to God's Kingdom if you are walking in on direction but your head is cocked back and your focus is fixed on something else.

To plow a field with your attention behind you is to plow a crooked field. The quality of our work for Christ is very important. Diverted focus has kept many of God's servants from being the best they could be.

Butcher Varley once said, "The world has yet to see what God can do in and through a man totally consecrated to Him." D.L. Moody said, "By the Spirit of God in me, I will be that man!"

* *Beware of the worldly excuses that prevent us from following Christ*

I. EXCUSE # 1 - The cost is too great - (v.58)
(People excuse themselves from following Christ because of THE COMFORTS OF LIFE)

V. 58

Jesus, knowing the shallowness of the man's commitment to follow, reminds him of the price he will have to pay if he is to be such a follower.

To follow Jesus wherever he would lead will often require sacrifice, doing without, difficulty, pressure, trials, hardship.

This man evidently thought that following Christ is all glory, all comfort, "a bowl of cherries."

Jesus' point: The foxes and birds have houses - places of comfort, shelter, and rest - but He did not even carry a pillow!

Christ's itinerant ministry would require Him to travel light and miss out on the comforts He deserved.

"Son of man" - a title that shows Christ's humiliation in becoming incarnate. Jesus, although He was God (Phil. 2:6), humbled Himself in becoming human.

The "Son of God" became the "Son of man" so that we, the "sons of man," might become "sons of God."
In a world that isn't fair, God never promises the Christian an easy, carefree life; but He does promise a blessed life with true purpose, meaning, and eternal reward.

Only the Lord knows how many Christian workers missed His perfect will for their life because of their lust for the “comforts of life.”

Perhaps their heart was stirred for foreign missions, etc., but they looked back at the comforts of life and were tempted to stay in America. There is nothing wrong with the comforts of life, but when those “niceties” prevent you from surrendering to go wherever and do whatever God wants, you have succumbed to the temptation to look back and abandon ship from God’s will.

II. EXCUSE # 2 - I'll serve You later (v.59-60)

***(People excuse themselves from following Christ because of* THE CUSTOMS OF LIFE)**

v.59

"He said to Another" - Evidently not one of the 12 but perhaps one of the 70

Having described the selection of the 12 disciples (Lk. 6:12-16), Luke now describes a couple of excuse-making "disciples" (Lk. 9:59, 61)

"Bury my father" - There is no indication that his father had actually died, but he is man is excusing himself from following Christ so that he could go (fulfill a Jewish custom) and care for his father until he died, and then he could get his lucrative inheritance (perhaps he was afraid he would lost his inheritance)

V. 60

"Let the dead bury their dead" - Obviously, physically dead people could not bury anyone. Jesus is saying let those who are <u>spiritually</u> dead worry about burying those who die physically. In contrast, however, following Christ takes <u>pre-eminence</u> over everything!

Christians can get so involved in doing that which is lesser priority, that they fail to do that which is paramount; that which shall come first.

"Jesus was not asking the man to be disrespectful to his father (who was not yet dead) but to have the right priorities in life" (Wiersbe, Matthew, p. 34)

Jesus is saying: "Let the world take care of the things of the world"
(MacArthur, p.25)

III. EXCUSE # 3 - Other things or people are more important - (v.61-62)

(People excuse themselves from following Christ because of **THE <u>CARES</u> OF LIFE**

v. 61

It is possible that this person, having realized the cost of following Christ, used "family" as an excuse to give him legitimate reason to leave his verbal commitment made earlier. Perhaps he had no real intention to follow Christ and needed a way out.

Jesus is <u>not</u> saying that it is wrong to love our family or that it is wrong to say "good bye." However, He brings up family (those at home) to warn us of the temptation that often comes from those closest to us to prevent us from following Him supremely and completely. Our love for Christ should be so great that our love for anything or anyone else should pale in comparison.

Luke 14:26-27, 33 - 26 If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.
27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.
33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

How many times has "family" been the reason why God's people didn't serve Him? (EX: Husband says to his Christian wife, "I don't want you to go to church anymore?")

Jesus Himself fully complied with ever one of those demands which He requires of His followers.

1. He followed the way of utter self-denial and privation to the bitter end.

2. He even set aside the most intimate family ties with His mother, brothers, and sisters.

(Norval Geldenhuys, p. 296)

The three excuses for not following the Lord can be summed up in two words:
"<u>ME FIRST</u>" (v. 59, 61)

Selfishness is always a the core of our failure to follow Christ.

We must die to self ambition; have a funeral for self-centeredness; mortify our preoccupation with self-advancement, self-promotion, self-satisfaction (at the expense of God's will).

SEE: Luke 9:23-25

Following Christ requires self-denial and cross bearing. (Mt. 16:24)

Following Jesus involves following Him on His terms and not our own!

Conclusion:

Paul forgot the past and pressed forward:

Phil. 3:13-14 - Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, **forgetting those things which are behind**, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul's purpose (motivation, goal) in life was singular. "This one thing I do" If you have more primary goals in life than one, you have too many. Having too many priority goals in life produces a lack of direction.

"This one thing I do" -- Actually those people who are talented in many areas are the least useful to Christ! They face the danger of allowing these things to pull their life away from having the single goal of pursuing Christ!

Concentration is the secret of power. EX: "If a river is allowed to overflow its banks, the area around it becomes a useless swamp. But if that river is dammed up and controlled, it becomes a source of power." (Wiersbe, p. 97)

"Forgetting: - does not mean to fail to remember (no person can forget the past--unless he acquires brain damage or senility). The word means to deliberately overlook or neglect.

You must determine that you will no longer be influenced or affected by the past.
Some of you may be shackled by regrets of the past. You are trying to run the race looking backwards! No wonder you stumble and fall!

ILLUS: of driving a car with your head turned back is
hazardous.
"Forgetting" means that we should not allow the past (status and achievements, and even failures) to influence our present attitude or conduct.

For Paul to remember his past in Judaism might encourage him to put confidence in the flesh.

Remembering his successes in his Christian career might lead to self-satisfaction. Remembering any failures (which he does not mention) would discourage him.

Why do people “look back?”

--They assume that what the world has to offer is of more value than what God has.

--Satan’s big lie: “God is withholding something from you that you really need for happiness in life.”

Examples of men who looked back and left God’s will: John Mark, Demas, etc.

Why look back? What is there to look back at?

--“Vanity Fair”

--Material (to be burned up)

--a world system that does not want our Savior

--a sinful life with regrets & remorse (Ro 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.)

You can't "look back" at the world and "look up" to the Lord at the same time. (No man can serve two masters.)

I Jn. 2:15-17 - Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.
17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

If you hold on to the sin of the world, you cannot be free to hold the hand of Christ
(ILLUS: How monkeys are trapped with their fists clenched in a narrow-necked bottle)

Our reward is coming later.

ILLUS: The ungreeted missionary who returned from Africa on the same ship as Teddy Roosevelt, who received a grant welcome in NY Harbor. The hurt missionary's wife reminded him, "Honey, we're not home yet!"

"Remember Lot's wife" (see: Luke 17:26-32)

"Excuses, Excuses, Excuses"

(Discipleship Series: Part 1)
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(People excuse themselves from following Christ because of THE <u>COMFORTS</u> OF LIFE)

II. EXCUSE # 2 - I'll serve You <u>later</u> (v.59-60)
***(People excuse themselves from following Christ because of* THE <u>CUSTOMS</u> OF LIFE)**

III. EXCUSE # 3 - Other things or people are <u>more important</u> (v.61-62)
***(People excuse themselves from following Christ because of* THE <u>CARES</u> OF LIFE**

"Don't Look Back!"

Luke 9:57-<u>62</u>
9/28/97

Introduction:

Lot's Wife - Genesis 19

** Don't Look Back or you will be of no use for the Kingdom of God!*

What would tempt people to look back?

I. THE <u>COMFORTS</u> OF THIS LIFE TEMPT MANY TO LOOK BACK (v.58)
(EXCUSE # 1 - The <u>cost</u> is too great)

II. THE <u>CUSTOMS</u> OF THIS LIFE TEMPT MANY TO LOOK BACK (v.59-60)
(EXCUSE # 2 - I'll serve You later)

III. THE <u>CARES</u> OF THIS LIFE TEMPT MANY TO LOOK BACK (v.61-62)
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Conclusion:

"Remember Lot's wife" (see: Luke 17:26-<u>32</u>)

Paul forgot the past and pressed forward: Phil. 3:13-14