

"THE FOX TELLS OF A HOMELESS SAVIOR"

{Matthew 8:14-20}

Trinity Presbyterian Church

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I saw a t-shirt that got my attention: "JESUS WAS HOMELESS!" I had never thought of Jesus in those terms before.

Jesus' life began in a borrowed stable...and...it ended in a borrowed tomb. Between those times, his family became migrants and fled from King Herod into Egypt while it was unsafe for them to return to Nazareth. He lived His life in public ministry as a 30-something homeless man...and He lived with 12 other homeless men. And...He left his world the same way He came—homeless!

You may recall when two of John's disciples decided to follow Jesus they asked Him, "*Where do you live?*"

He didn't hand them His business card, tell them His name was in the telephone book; instead, He invited them to "*come and see*" for themselves. *{At that time He may still have been living in Joseph's home with Mary and his brothers and sisters—or, He might just possibly have taken them to a hilltop, stretched out His hands and said—"Take a look—as far as you can see—that's My home!"}*

He was a vagabond who wandered from place to place...no where to retreat.

"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head."

Jesus was the divine vagabond who left His heavenly dwelling so that He might wander among us and kindle a hunger within us to follow Him...to pattern our lifestyle after His.

Note, Jesus didn't proclaim an itinerant life as an ascetical ideal or make an ideology of it. He simply wandered through the country meeting people.

...He spoke to them

...He ate with them

...He healed the sick when they came to Him

...He always had time for anyone He met

And to those people residing in those villages where He felt compelled to visit He would say...

“The time has come! The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

But, He abandoned any intention of preaching and **devoted Himself primarily to the individual before Him.**

Is it any wonder that His family and society had problems with this homeless vagabond?

...He never married...never...had a family

...He hadn't safeguarded His professional career

...He just simply kept wandering!

His was a simple life—free from anxiety, and He encouraged others to live the same...

“I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air, they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?” {Matthew 6:25-27, NIV}

Wherever Jesus went He attracted enormous crowds. He was seen as a superstar...a teacher...a healer...a miracle-worker--all wrapped up in one...and, unfortunately, that was the sole reason that many followed Him.

Strange as it may seem—oftentimes people wanted to join His entourage of disciples. Few, if any, really thought through the ramifications of discipleship. To follow Jesus was not glamorous—instead it meant Gethsemane, Golgotha, and the tomb!

The teacher of religious studies approached Him in our text...

“Teacher, I will follow You no matter where you go!”

Jesus' reply must've shook the man up a bit...

“Is that so? Let me tell you, foxes have dens to live in and birds have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have no home of my own, not even a place to lay my head!”

His “*superstardom*” didn't include staying in the Presidential Suite at the Fairmont Hotel—He's telling this inquirer that the jackals and the birds have far more comfortable dwellings than He. Following Him was not an exalted position...! **Jesus was a homeless vagabond!**

...to follow Him meant to live as He lived

...to care for those whom He cared for

...to love those whom He loved
...and to forsake everything else
...to give Him first priority

Mother Teresa summed it up...

“At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received. How much money we have made. How many great things we have done. We will be judged by—‘I was hungry and you gave Me to eat. I was naked and you clothed Me. I was homeless and you took Me in.’”

To follow Jesus was to care for the homeless!

So, Jesus informs the inquirer, ***“I don’t have a home!”*** as if to say, ***“You better think this over very carefully before you make commitment to follow Me no matter where I go!”***

When Jesus tells His disciples He wants to cross to the other side of the lake, one His potential followers says...

“Wait...let me return home and bury my father!”

But Jesus responded—

“Follow Me now! Let those who are spiritually dead care for their own dead!”

Get with it man—fish or cut bait!

Lead...follow...or get out of the way!

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 7...

“I can see it now—at the final judgment thousands strutting up to Me and saying, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in Your name and cast out demons in Your name and performed many miracles in Your name.’ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Go away, the things you did were unauthorized.’” {Matthew 7:22-23, MSG/NIV}

TO BE JESUS’ DISCIPLE MEANS AN ATTACHMENT TO HIM...

...not to a cause...miracles...but to Jesus—a total commitment of one’s life. And, once you make the commitment, there’s NO turning back!

And, think of it—attaching yourself to Jesus means attaching oneself to a homeless vagabond who just happened to be the Son of God!

We sang the song last Sunday: *“Lord, I offer my life to You...!”* That’s precisely what discipleship entails—offering our lives to Him as a living sacrifice!

The first person who promised to follow Jesus, really didn’t know what he was getting into—no way had he counted the cost of discipleship {nor have many today who call themselves “Christians”}

The second person was willing to follow Jesus when it was convenient for him—after he'd taken care of his personal affairs.

Sound familiar?

Following Jesus requires cutting the umbilical cord of the past—OLD things are past tense to the *true* disciple—EVERYTHING becomes new. From being self-centered... to being Christ-centered!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS?

- Count the cost
- Don't be swept away in a moment of emotion
- Don't be carried away by a tide of mere feeling
- Know what you're doing—whom you're following
- Follow the passion of your heart
- Be willing to take up the cross and go wherever that may lead you.

That's the way to discipleship...following the homeless Savior and reaching out and offering hospitality to the homeless...and in a way, ministering to Him.

APPLICATION

The United States is the wealthiest nation in the world—owning 59% of the world's wealth and having 4 million millionaires and 170 billionaires. We are blessed...yet...

In this blessed nation 35 million people suffer from poverty—over 11% of our population...

- 3 million people experience homelessness every year
- 4 million children under 12 go hungry
- women and children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population

Our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ is to reach out to the homeless—**show them by our actions that God loves them**—they are people of worth for whom Jesus gave His life whether they are homeless orphans in Sub-Saharan Africa...in Calcutta, India...Cambodia...Indonesia...*or*, on the streets of San Jose, California. **It is not an issue to debate—it is Christ's mandate to follow!**

"I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave

Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited Me in, I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit me...”

“Lord, when did we see You hungry...thirsty...as a stranger...needing clothes...sick...or in prison...?”

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these my sisters and brothers of mine, You did for me!”

One Solitary Life

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth - His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

--Dr. James Allan Francis, 1926--