

# What The Lord Expects From His Disciples

by Zac Poonen

---

*This sermon emphasizes the call to discipleship as the greatest miracle, highlighting the sacrifices required to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. It explores instances where individuals had to give up something precious to respond to Jesus' call, illustrating the principle of denying one's own will for the sake of discipleship. The importance of sacrificing personal desires and priorities to do God's will is underscored, drawing parallels to biblical examples like Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac and David's refusal to offer God something that cost him nothing.*

**Scripture:** Luke 9:57, Matthew 7:21, John 6:38, 2 Chronicles 3:1, 2 Samuel 24:24

**Topics:** "Discipleship", "Sacrifice for God's Will"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the call to discipleship as the greatest miracle, highlighting the sacrifices required to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. It explores instances where individuals had to give up something precious to respond to Jesus' call, illustrating the principle of denying one's own will for the sake of discipleship. The importance of sacrificing personal desires and priorities to do God's will is underscored, drawing parallels to biblical examples like Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac and David's refusal to offer God something that cost him nothing.

---

## Transcript

We were hearing that the call to be a disciple is really the greatest thing of all, the greatest miracle is to respond to that call. But we notice in, not but, we do notice in the people whom Jesus called, one significant thing, that every time he called them, there was something they had to give up, something which is very precious to them, whether it was a job as a tax collector or fishing or anything, may not have been a job always, not all are called to quit their jobs. But I think, for example, in Luke 9, 57, the Lord, someone came to him and said, Lord, I want to follow you, verse 57, like to follow you wherever you go, he wanted to be a disciple.

And Jesus said, the foxes and wolves, the birds, the air of nest, the son of man is nowhere to lay his head. He wasn't telling him to give up his job like Matthew and James and John, he was saying that, if you follow me, you may discover it sometimes that life is not very convenient, if you really decide to follow me wholeheartedly, and I don't have a place to lay my head, maybe like that for you too. There'll be some loss that you suffer.

It's true, for example, many people who in places of work, where there's a lot of unrighteousness, if you stand up for what is righteous and the person could even lose his job, not because God called him to quit his job, but because he chose to be a disciple and not do what is wrong, not do what is unrighteous, not tell a lie. So, there are many situations like that in jobs nowadays, where if you really stand up for what is Christian and upright, there's a price to be paid. So, being a disciple.

And then there's another example in verse 59, Luke. He said to another one, follow me, and he said, Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father. Now, that sounds like a very simple request.

Why in the world wouldn't the Lord allow a person even to just attend a funeral and come? But I think it is more than that. I think the meaning was, I'll come Lord, but I'd like to wait till my father dies and I'll bury him. Then I can follow you.

I think that's the meaning. I can't imagine that Jesus would hinder somebody from just going for attending a funeral. And the point here was that when the Lord calls us for something, and I have some other priority that I want to finish before I follow him, he says, allow the dead to bury their dead.

You go and proclaim the kingdom of God. When the Lord calls, there cannot be a delay. I know times in my life where, you know, I felt I was writing an article.

I used to write monthly articles in the early days in CFC Bangalore. And I was busy writing this article, which I had to finish. And I felt in the middle of it, the Lord saying, just leave that aside for a little while and listen to what I have to say.

Like the chap said, allow me first, permit me first. That's the point there. Permit me first.

Lord, just let me finish this article and I'll have all the time for me. So, the Lord never compels us. I finished the article.

And then I said, now, Lord, I want to hear you. And I couldn't hear him. I learned something there.

But when the Lord calls us, I have no right to say, permit me first to finish this other thing I'm just about to do. And I learned a lesson there, that there must never be that expression, let me finish this first or permit me first. In the Song of Solomon, there's a place where we read that the bridegroom comes calling for the bride.

And she says, I've taken off my, I put on my nightdress and I can't come now. It's in Song of Solomon chapter three. And then he says, she said, she looked for him and she couldn't find him because when the Lord called, she was not ready to go.

So, the same thing here in Luke chapter nine, again, another said, I'll follow you, Lord, but permit me first. You know, the same expression comes twice, again in 61. Permit me first to say goodbye to those at home.

And the Lord said, no, you put your hand to the plow. There's no question of looking back. I don't know how that can apply to our life, but it's possible in different situations.

The Lord checks to see whether he has number one priority in our life. And it could come in different ways to us in different times. And if ever I say to him, permit me first, I'm going to miss out on something.

What I'm trying to say is you cannot be a disciple if you're not willing to sacrifice. When the Lord, every disciple he called, they had to give up something, maybe something small like this, or it may be something big. But without that sacrifice, that's it.

If I neglect that sacrifice, then I cannot be his disciple. The great miracles are not the things, the other things that Jeremy mentioned. And you see that also in the end of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus says in Matthew seven, there are people who will come to him, not one or two, but many.

Verse 22, the spectacular miracles that people may have genuinely done. I don't question it. A lot of what people say are miracles today are fake.

But here are genuine miracles where they stand before the Lord, Matthew 7, 22. Picture this in your mind, number of famous preachers, very well-known, standing before the Lord, many, not one or two, Matthew 7, 22, saying to Jesus in the last day, Lord, we preached powerful miracles in your name, powerful messages in your name. We cast out demons in your name.

See, the average believer would tremendously respect or look up to someone who can cast out a demon because they see it so rarely. They say, boy, this man, when he commands a demon, the demons flee. He must be a real man of God.

And we performed many, not one or two, but many miracles in your name. I mean, apply that to yourself. If you could see some person who does many miracles, how would you look at that person? That's a great man of God.

I mean, there are multitudes of Christians sitting open mouth when they watch television, not realizing that most of it is fake, but still, even where it's genuine, because these people are not boasting to the Lord about fake miracles, genuine miracles. And the Lord says to them, Lord, I do not know you now. I never knew you, meaning you never had a relationship with me.

You never made any sacrifice to be my disciple. Your whole ministry and Christian life was centered around yourself. The sermons you preached, the miracles you did, the respect you got from other people in your church for the type of Christianity you live, it was centered around you, because permit me first, you are not a disciple.

And he says, on the other hand, in verse 21, it's the one who does the will of my Father who enters God's kingdom, the one who has given up his own will. See, that's the point that when the Lord tells me to do something, maybe very small, and I give up my own will at that point, maybe when you're about to say something to somebody, and the Lord says, don't say that. Shut your mouth.

Forget it. And if you don't shut your mouth and say, he's got to hear this from me. After that, I'll shut my mouth.

You missed something. You missed something for all eternity. Be very careful.

Whenever you feel a prompting of the Holy Spirit in your heart, and you say, let me just finish this and do that, or let me just put this one word in, and then I'll keep my mouth shut. You'll miss something forever. These are the lessons that we learn from this, because it's the principle of doing his will.

God, Jesus came here, and his entire life, he summed up in one sentence, not to do miracles, John 6 and 38. I always call this the one sentence autobiography of Jesus' life. That means he wrote his own life story in one sentence.

Most people, if you ask them, why did Jesus come to earth? Most Christians would say, he came to die for the sins of the world, but that's not what Jesus would say. He says, I came, John 6, 38, to do, to deny my own will. Why did you come to earth? I came here to deny my own will.

All my life, to say no to my own will, to say no to my own will, because that is the only way I could do the will of my father. What about dying on the cross? That is point number 867 in denying his own will. That's not everything.

That is item number 867 in denying his own will, or 8,941, whatever it is. One aspect where he denied his own will, dying on the cross. Now, most Christians haven't seen it.

They've just seen that Jesus died on the cross, and my sins are forgiven. See, it's what I call the difference between maximum Christians and minimum Christians, and something we always have to evaluate ourselves in. A minimum Christian is one whose whole attitude to the Christian life is, what is the minimum I have to sacrifice in my life in order to get to heaven? Just give up some external sins and believe in Jesus.

Is that all? Yeah, and then there are other people who are a little better. They don't only want to go to heaven. They want to please the Lord.

What is the minimum I have to sacrifice to please the Lord? I want to please the Lord, but what is the minimum I have to do? Tell me the minimum. They won't say it like that, but their way of life is such where they are always calculating. If I do this, what will it cost me? Well, I have to do this much.

I must do the minimum. And you'll find such people, even after many, many years of sitting in a very good church, even a so-called new covenant church, their knowledge of the Lord is pretty pathetic. They are very eager to listen to sermons.

Oh yes, they're challenged by sermons, and they always feel stirred when they hear a good sermon, and they appreciate good sermons, and they can distinguish between, oh, and that preacher is not so good, and this one's not good. But when it comes to their own life, there's very little sacrifice. Then we can talk about discipleship, but it's all a deception.

Jesus came. His entire life was, I will not do my own will. And I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, you may never raise the dead.

You may never heal a sick person. You may lay your hands on a hundred people, and nobody gets healed. Never mind.

You didn't have that gift. Fine. But if you sought to do God's will and denied your own will consistently, day by day, if not from the time you're born again, at least from the time you got a light on it, perhaps from today, you'll find in the final day that you will be the one who pleased the Lord most.

I don't want to say you're the one who'll get the greatest reward, because we don't work for reward. To me, the greatest reward, I'll tell you, the greatest reward I look for is the Lord saying to me, you're my beloved

son in whom I'm well pleased. There's no greater reward for me than that, even now or in eternity.

And if you want to hear that, there's no way except denying your own will every day. And you know, there are many, many times in a day where the Lord will say, now don't say that. Keep your mouth shut now.

I know you can explain something, but don't do it. Many, many conflicts will never arise in a home. Many conflicts will never arise in a home.

If you follow that rule, I will not do my own will. I'll give up my own will at this point. Sometimes we have an itch to let someone hear what we want him to hear or what we want her to hear.

Say, Lord, I won't do my own will. That is discipleship. I never get tired of pointing out this Old Testament example in 2 Chronicles, in chapter 3, 2 Chronicles chapter 3, where we read in the first verse, many people talk about the fire that came down when Solomon completed building the temple, great expression of God's approval and all that.

But here it tells us where the temple was built, the location. Solomon began to build the house of the Lord, 2 Chronicles 3, 1, in Mount Moriah. You know where Mount Moriah is? That's where the Lord told Abraham to sacrifice his son.

Way back, that's 1,000 years before Solomon, God had chosen a place, the place where he was testing Abraham. And it wasn't just around the corner of Abraham's house. The Lord told Abraham, go to Mount Moriah.

It was three days journey from where Abraham is living to go to Mount Moriah. It was, go and sacrifice your son, kill him there. And Abraham would have gladly offered 10,000 sheep or everything else, but his son, the one he received after being 100 years old, and he had three days to think about it.

The Lord never pressurizes us. He doesn't say, do this tomorrow morning, or by this evening, do it. No, no, no, never.

Take three days to think about it. If you do it suddenly, you may regret it. No, take three days to think about it.

Is it worth serving a God who asked me to kill my son? Abraham, think about it. Yeah, it was easy to leave your relatives and all in Ur of the Chaldees and follow me, but now I'm asking for something more. And take time to think about it.

He never pressurizes us to take a decision in a hurry. And Abraham thought about it. And after three days, he says, it's worth it.

This is the most difficult thing I have to do, but I'll do it. And he took his son and lifts up, and the Lord wasted the last minute. He lifts up his knife.

That's when the Lord stops and says, Abraham, you don't know how much I bless you now. All nations will be blessed through you. And that is the spot the Lord marked saying, one day, a thousand years from now, I will build my temple here.

This is where people will come and worship me. And that is a picture of the church being built. That temple is a picture of the church.

Where should we build a new covenant church? Where we have understood Romans 6, 14? Where we have understood Hebrews 8, verse 10 to 12? That is just a matter of intelligence and understanding. No, where we do what Abraham did, giving up that which is most precious, our will, our self-will, every day. That's the place, that's how Jesus lived, not one or two days.

For 33 and a half years, he spent his life denying his self-will and laid the foundation of the church. And the only people who can really build on it are those who go that way, saying, Lord, every day of my life, I want to give up my will and do yours. And the little, little things in your home and the little, little things in your place of work, even if it means because of your uprightness, you lose your job, I will do the will of my father, whatever it costs.

I'll tell you this, there are not many people like that, for whom sacrifice is something. Let me show you another. It says here in 2 Chronicles 3, 1, another thing.

This is not only Mount Moriah, it says in verse 1, this is the place where David offered an offering in the threshing floor of Ornon the Jebusite. And that's an important passage also that we must remember. 2 Samuel 24, there was a time when God is going to punish the land of Israel because of David's sin.

And the Lord said, you can go and make a sacrifice for me. And it must be in this particular place. And you know where it was? Where the Lord told him to go? Mount Moriah.

But not just Mount Moriah, that exact spot where Aaron had a threshing floor, which happened to be in the same place where Abraham had offered up Isaac. God had sanctified that spot. He said, go there and offer an offering for me.

And when he went there, he told Aaron, I've come here to offer an offering to the Lord. And 2 Samuel 24, verse 21, I will buy this threshing floor from you, and I'll buy everything you needed for the sacrifice, the oxen and the wood and everything. And Aaron said, oh, no, no, my Lord, I'm not going to sell anything to you.

It's all yours. I'm your servant. Take it, take it freely.

Take the land, take the, I'll give you the oxen and I'll give you the yokes of the oxen for wood. And look at David's reply. I will never take it freely from you.

I will pay a price for it because, verse 24, if I get it free from you and I offer it to God, it has cost me nothing. 2 Samuel 24, 24. My dear brothers and sisters, remember this verse all your life.

I will not offer to the Lord my God that which costs me nothing. It cost Matthew something when he became a disciple. It cost James and John something when he became a disciple.

We need to ask ourselves, what has it cost you and me to be a disciple? The principle of sacrifice is what is emphasized in the place where the temple was built in the case of Abraham offering Isaac and these words of David. These are very precious words to me because about 55, 56 or nearly 58 or say nearly 60 years ago, I came across this passage. This is the word the Lord spoke to me 60 years ago.

And the Lord said to me, you must never in your life offer to me that which costs you nothing. I said, Lord, I'll try and do that. I will not treat you like some cheap God, like some cheap idol, give you some cheap offering.

If I give you an offering, it must cost me, really cost me something, probably everything. I'll do it. And I've tried to keep that word in front of me.

I will not offer to the Lord my God that which costs me nothing. And the thing that we have to deny most is our own will. And if we follow this principle, you will find that that is the place that the Lord says, I will build my church.

Amen.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/A3oyWwCvaX8.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/what-the-lord-expects-from-his-disciples/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**