

# Luke 9

Sunday 7/15/2018

I am really excited for camp. I think camp is going to be a great time this year. We have so many kids going, and we have all the other groups coming from St. Louis and all of that. It is going to be a challenge; it really is. This is the first year we have brought so many outside people in, but it is where we are going.

I was telling somebody the other day, every aspect, every facet of our church is hitting on all eight cylinders. From the prayer groups that Bob organizes—and by the way, Bob, in three weeks we are going to switch prayer groups again, so if you want to be a prayer group leader, you can be thinking about that. Every Sunday when I come in, it just overwhelms me to see what everybody is doing and how well it is going. From everything that we are doing, the Lord is blessing it, and it is just really going well.

I have no doubt that camp will be 100% successful. It is going to be a lot of work. It is going to be a lot of challenges. But I have never been in a church or been around people who were so good at rising to challenges, and I am sure it will be fine. We will all pull it off together. We will do it together with the Lord's help, give Him the honor and glory for it, and we will get some kids shaved. We will get some kids right with the Lord and come back and give Zach a clear bunch of kids that have their minds cleared, their hearts cleared, and are ready to go, that he can begin to do what God has called him to do.

That is why I have asked Zach to speak today. I know next week will be a lot of chaos, and a lot of things will be trying to get done, and a lot of tension will be focused in a lot of places. I want him to have this time today. Zach and Jenny run our youth department and do a great job with it, and I appreciate Zach and Jenny for all that they do.

I ask him today to come and just lay on his heart what God has for him that he wants to give us today. Pray for Zach next week at camp, a week after for Jenny, for Danny, and for all of the workers and all of the counselors. It is going to be a hot week. It is going to be a challenging week, but it is going to be a great week. We will come back with some great victories and some great time together that we can make stories for Telco, but to each other. Zach, you come and lay on us what God has given you today. I love you, buddy. I appreciate all that you do for us.

## I. The Contrast of Camp and Sunday Nights

I love camp, and part of the reason I love camp is because anybody that has been around our church a long time knows that we love to hang out and fellowship with one another. One of the number one things that people compliment us on when they first show up is just the spirit, the welcoming spirit that everyone has here, and how friendly everyone is, and how well they are accepting.

To me, camp is like a glorified weekend at Old Paths. It is a long weekend that is uninterrupted by the work week, and that is one of the reasons I love it so much. It is just the time that we get

to share with one another continually, back to back. We do not have the distractions from the world and the influences from the world coming in and distracting us.

If camp is like a glorified weekend, going into the millennium and going off into eternity, I think Sunday nights must be like the fall of Adam and Eve. This is back where they are in the paradise that God gave them. We are coming through the great weekend: Friday, all the birthday or over at Danny and Jamie's house where we are hanging out at this place, Saturday. Maybe there is something happening up here where we get in the Bible and learn something, and then after that, we go out to lunch, and then we have fun. Maybe there is an activity. It just keeps escalating, escalating.

Sunday mornings happen. We have a great time in church. Everything is going great. Next thing you know, maybe we have some ministry to go out and restart or do something fun, and then all of a sudden, Sunday night is getting closer and closer and closer. Everybody knows that that thing is coming up. To me, I felt like Adam and Eve, right when God sent them out of that garden and said, "Go out there. The ground is cursed. Step away from here and spread out there."

Maybe I cannot prove that in the Bible, but I am pretty sure that Sunday nights are the devil. I am pretty sure that if we can look this thing up and tie the cross-references, I believe that it is a type of the fall. Each Sunday night is a picture, and I picture myself that way as Adam and Eve, heading back out and having to leave the paradise of God to go to this cursed world and whatnot. Even right now, I am kind of marking my hours and getting ready to go back into the long work week.

That is one of the main things I really look forward to at camp: just the fellowship with you guys. I was talking to my counselors on Friday night about why we are going to camp. Absolutely, we want to go out and be a testimony to our unsaved friends and family that we get to invite there that normally probably would not do stuff with us. We also want to get refocused. But for me, it really is just about getting together with believers. I interrupted with that good fellowship, and that is what we are going to be doing for all eternity. So I am always looking for an opportunity to do that.

## II. The Christian as a Soldier

Turn to Luke chapter 9. Today I want to share what will help prepare us for camp. There are some questions that I believe that we can ask ourselves in order to receive all that God has for us this week, a week of camp.

Last week, I was at work, and while I was out there driving on the sport cliff, I had my laptop on the back of it, and I got to tune into the message. This is definitely OSHA certified. I am listening. Will is up here doing a great job leading the music, getting me hyped up. Then Bob gets up, does an awesome job preaching on Proverbs 24:6. I think that was an awesome message because it really does kind of tie into the mindset we ought to have going to camp. That verse back there where he talked about, "with good advice, make war," and how he charged us as Christians to remember that we have been called to fight. We are soldiers.

Thank God for "Kumbaya." Thank God for the love that Christians are supposed to share with one another. Thank God for all the charity that we do. But overall, folks, we are called to be soldiers. Thank God for that. Bob charged us in Proverbs 24:6 last week that we are in God's army, and we have been charged to fight. That is cool because our theme for camp this year is "CrossFit."

When it comes down to it, what that is all about—and you guys know the cool workout trend that is going on right now about CrossFit—what it basically comes down to is, are you in shape to do what the Lord has called you to do as a Christian? I think it is about going back to the basics for kids, understanding that once you got saved, thank God, your sins are taken care of at Calvary. Your soul is sealed; you are headed to heaven. But folks, it does not stop there. Now that you are saved, God has a plan for your life. He has a purpose for your life. The question that comes up is, are you in shape to do that purpose? God has called us. He has charged us. He has commanded us to do some things. Oftentimes, the sad thing is that we forget about that calling.

You say, "Zach, is it about bearing your cross?" Absolutely. You say, "Well, I thought the cross was just a big piece of wood that was just something they used for execution." Look at Luke chapter 9. This is one of our main verses that surrounds our theme for camp this year.

*Luke 9:23*

*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

I love that verse. Check that out. When Jesus Christ says this, is He heading to Calvary right now? Absolutely not. He is not talking about a piece of wood. He is talking about a calling that God has put on our lives once we choose to be disciples for Jesus Christ. The cross is more than just an instrument of execution. It is the purpose. It is the plan. It is the call that God has put on your life now that you are saved. The question that comes up is, are you willing to carry that cross? Will you bear it? Will you bear that cross?

There is a good old song: "The Son of God goes forth to war. Who follows in His train?" From the triumphant chorus of Christianity nowadays, "Not I." That is the problem. Jesus Christ is bearing His cross. He is going forth to war. We are the faithful followers. That verse in Luke 9:23 says, "Whosoever cometh after me, number one, let him deny himself." Well, there is the question, who is denying themselves in the age of rights and entitlements? It is all about "find the Bible that fits you." "Find the church that accepts you and appreciates you for who you are." That is the sad thing about it. Jesus Christ said, "Folks, if you are going to bear your cross, if you are going to be CrossFit, how are you going to do that in the age of entitlements and rights of the people?" That is something you have got to consider.

The next thing He says there, He says, "It has got to be a daily cross bearing, a daily cross bearing." Maybe we can sober up on Thursday nights. Maybe we can find the time to get out of bed Sunday morning and listen to the right stuff on the way to church or whatnot. But Jesus Christ said, "It is a daily cross bearing." That is something you have got to think about, a daily cross bearing.

Thank God our sins were left at Calvary. But unfortunately, the problem is that we have also left our commission to fight there too. That is the problem with it. One of our favorite songs as Christians, not for the right reasons, is "Leave It There." We like to leave our commission at the cross. We like to leave all the responsibilities that Jesus Christ has given us as Christians at the cross. "Leave it there, leave it there." We walk away from it. Then when somebody has to talk to you about it, the other favorite song is "I Shall Not Be Moved." That is pretty much how that thing goes.

The last thing He says right there, "If any man take up his cross daily and follow me." Look at that. He says, "Follow me." When you follow someone, you are going to end up where they do. Do you remember where Jesus Christ ended up on this earth? It was on a cross. It was not in a palace. It was not ahead of a political party. It was not in the White House. It was on a cross. That is the question that comes up: Are you crucified with Christ? Are you CrossFit?

Our church is a high-motivation unit. You have heard Bob say it oftentimes, "It is not for everyone." Like in the military, there are some things that you have got to consider before joining one of these highly motivated groups. The question that I have for us today, there are just going to be three questions I want to go over with you guys. It is three things that I believe if we can ask ourselves this, if we can examine ourselves and apply these things to our heart, I believe we will walk into camp with a tender heart. We will walk into camp with the fertile ground for Jesus Christ and for God to plant that seed in there to do something in us.

The three questions are:

1. Are you willing to lose it all?
2. Will you leave them all?
3. Will you forget it all?

When it comes down to it, guys, until you become completely committed and driven to carry that cross, you will never do these things. It comes down to how open are you to God? However open you are to God is how open He will be with you. If you hold nothing back from Him, He will hold nothing back from you. That is why I believe this is a great message for us to prepare ourselves for camp.

### III. The Test of Discipleship

Luke 9:23, we saw that great verse. Let us look at the end of the chapter. Pick it up here in verse 51. At the very end of this chapter, we are going to see that Jesus Christ, when He was going around looking for disciples to bear His cross with Him. Luke 9:23, He just asked some people, He said, "Listen, if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, let him take up his cross daily, and let him follow Me." At the end of that chapter, He gives a couple of fellows the opportunity to do just that. But what we see in that is a test of discipleship. He gives these guys three different opportunities to accept Him. I am going to show you guys the three different things that oftentimes we will use as our excuses not to bear our cross.

*Luke 9:51-56*

*And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,*

*And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.*

*And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.*

*And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?*

*But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.*

*For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.*

This is funny here. In just a little doctrinal note, you can put this note in your Bible: it is funny because when Jesus Christ talked to the Samaritan woman, she went and witnessed to the folks in Samaria, and they listened to her. But now the Man Himself comes and tries to speak to the same people, and they will not listen to Him. They are like, "There is that Jew trying to speak to us."

Here is a great little inspirational thing for you guys. This is why Jesus Christ wants to use you in your workplace. It is not me, it is not Bob, and maybe they want to open up the Bible and listen to Him directly, but they will listen to you because they can relate to you. They can relate to your lifestyle. We see right there, even Jesus Christ got rejected, where a person just liked Him, they listened to the same message.

We just had a whole city that Jesus Christ could have testified to and got them to be cross-bearers, but they rejected Him. Now we are going to go to individuals. We had a whole group of people that just rejected Him. Now let us watch when you give this question to individuals. This is where we are going to get the meat of our sermon from right here.

## IV. Test 1: Are You Willing to Lose It All?

*Luke 9:57-58*

*And it came to pass, that as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.*

*And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

That is the first thing that comes up here. "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." I was not there. I might look that old, but I am not. The funny thing about it is that this guy has gone along. Jesus Christ is doing what He does. The Bible says, "And they sought Him in the way." He is doing what He has been doing since He was like 12 years old. Since 12 years old, Jesus Christ has got a testimony amongst the people in His community and things like that. Since

that time, this guy has gone and gotten the baptism of John, and then the heavens open, a dove comes down, and these supernatural things happen all around Him. Since that time, He has gone out to Cana of Galilee. He has turned water into wine. Since that time, He has done all these great miracles, and I guarantee you, people are getting impressed by the miracles and the ministry of Jesus Christ. That is what is going on here.

I believe this first disciple, this first test that comes up, this guy is impressed with Jesus Christ. He is impressed with His preaching, how He speaks not like the scribes, but as one with authority. He is impressed not only by that, He is impressed by Jesus Christ's soul winning. He is impressed by the people that are being healed. These are folks that have been crumpled all their lives, and now Jesus Christ is saying, "Arise and walk." He is impressed by Jesus Christ. He is impressed by the folks that were blind, and now they have sight. He is impressed by those that got raised from the dead. This guy sees Jesus and is impressed with what He has got. That is why He says, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever thou goest."

He is just like that rich young ruler back in Mark 10:21. That rich young ruler saw Jesus Christ. He has been following Him since He has been a young kid. He has followed all the commandments. He has been a church kid all his life. He finally sees this opportunity to get behind one of the greatest religious guys coming on the scene right now. He probably grew up in church. He has a great heart for God. He has never fallen for the world's lies or its religious hypocrisy. Finally, the Jews are hearing that ring that truth has and only truth has. They hear that ring in the streets one more time. Finally, someone is speaking with authority on the behalf of God. Finally, someone's faith is lived out by their actions.

You know what they say? "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever you go." If Jesus Christ is like the religious leaders of our day, He gets flattered by that. He is saying, "This is about time somebody sees it my way. That is right. Boys, get behind me. Let us make Jerusalem great again." That is exactly what we would expect Him to say, right? But what does He say? He does not even sound like sweet Jesus here. Listen to Him.

Jesus said unto him, "Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." What is going on here? Watch the first test. If you want to bear your cross, if you want to get behind Jesus Christ for discipleship, test number one: Will you lose it all for Me? You see, this guy was impressed by what he saw with Jesus Christ and all the power, all the wonders, all the signs, all the miracles. But what he had not done, he had not counted the cost to get that. That is my question to you. You will be willing to go to camp and get right with God, but folks, be careful. Have you counted the cost for a relationship with Jesus Christ today?

I personally, one of my favorite things to do when I am not doing stuff in the Bible or something like that, is to dive into what is happening in the military and special forces. That is a dream of mine. I would have loved to go that route in life. One of my favorite branches of the military would be like JSOC and the special missions units and stuff like that: the SEALs, the PJs, the Delta, the Rangers, and all that stuff. Everyone is so impressed with them. Hollywood is eating that stuff up right now and banking in on that right now. Whenever we go out and paintball, I guarantee that is what is in the back of every guy's mind. You might be a little bit out of shape,

but I have seen Delta operators that are kind of out of shape. They have to kind of blend in anyway. I am kind of like one of those guys, you do not have to put in the work, just kind of blend in.

We are all impressed with those guys, but have you counted the cost? Everybody wants to be a Navy SEAL. That is the big thing. But then you look at their training. He ended up going a whole week in Hell Week with only four to five hours of sleep out there getting wet and sandy. Then that cold, frigid temperature out there in the sandy bays of California, it is like, "Oh my gosh, four to five hours of sleep. That is wild."

One of my favorite groups is Delta Force. I really got into reading about them. One of the most excruciating things that they do when they are asking their boys, "Have you counted the cost to be a Delta member?" One of the things that they do is they take them on a 40-mile ruck march. 40 miles with over 80 pounds on their backs. I am not talking about walking around the mesh track or anything like that, or on the nice, beautiful, flat surface of the football fields. We are talking about the Appalachian Mountains out there, North Carolina, at Bragg and stuff like that. Have you counted the cost?

I read about one of those guys that went on that march, and these guys, they are Type A personalities. They will push themselves until there is nothing left to be pushed. One of those guys got blistered so bad on his feet, and the calluses got so bad, and he just kept pushing himself. Finally, when he got done, he took his shoe off, and the sole of his foot was still left in the bottom of that boot, because the blisters that crusted so hard, and the calluses that it could completely peel off all his skin, there is nothing but flesh left under there. Have you counted the cost?

You hear about Green Berets and stuff like that, and how awesome they are. One of the books I read about those guys, I found out that most of those guys' deployments are 285 days out of the year. Try raising a family like that. How about a great marriage? Have you counted the cost?

I believe Jesus Christ, when this guy runs up to Him, "Lord, I will follow you whithersoever thou goest," I believe Jesus knows that this guy is impressed by the glamour of the ministry, but He also knows that cross-bearing is not about your willingness to add to your life. It is about what you are willing to lose for Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is asking that question, "Son, have you counted the cost?"

You say, "Well, Zach, what will it cost me?" Only one thing, and that is the thing that you are not willing to give. For whatever reason, that is what God comes after. We are all about adding to our faith. We love that spot over there in 1 Peter, "add to your faith virtue and knowledge and so on and so forth." We are like that rich young ruler, "Lord, I have kept this, I have done that, I have done this, and I have done that." All Jesus said was just, "I want you to lose something." He could not do it. He does not lay it to see the right to the people, but we are increased with goods and in need of nothing. That is the thing that gets us. It is losing something. It is not adding something. As a matter of fact, that is why we are lukewarm. We have the fire, we have the King James Bible here, but we are not willing to get rid of what is cold in our lives. That is what it comes down to.

It is not that we will not add what we need to to our lives. Our schedules are more busy than they have ever been in church history. You look at some of the great saints and stuff like that, Brainerd and Edwards and Whitfield and stuff like that, it blows your mind. Some of the time they just fit in prayer would be like sickening to us, eight hours a day in prayer. It is like, "Did this man not have a job?" You are wondering stuff like this, how do these guys that allow for so much time with God, their schedules were nowhere near as busy as ours. They did not have camps to prepare and stuff like that. They did not have a youth group to get ready for. Kids would go out and disciple and go to sports events and stuff like this. "Lord, should not I be more spiritual since I am doing more?" What happened? I am adding, adding, adding, adding, adding, but what have I lost for Jesus Christ? That is what it comes down to. What are you willing to lose for Jesus Christ? We are like spiritual pack rats, and it is like we want to have our cake and we want to eat it too.

To touch on my own personal testimony here, my own story, that is kind of how it was when I first came to Old Paths. At that time, I was in college, and I was searching. I was trying to figure things out at that time. I was really impressed with this guy named Ravi Zacharias. I thought he was the night and the day of my life. I was just all about that guy. The same thing happened to me when I finally ran into Bob. If Bob was impressed with Ravi, Bob almost gave me a heart attack when I ran into him. It was like a man crush at first sight. If you focus and pay attention, you might actually see Bob's features and mine are very similar. I do not know what the black equivalent of "rat pit" is, but you have got to figure that out and get back with me. I have even noticed that some of his humor is the same, the way he walks and stuff like that. I was like, "Lord, I am not trying to act like this guy. I am just saying, we have got the same spirit stuff. I do not know what is going on here."

That is exactly what it was. Finally, I saw Bob's ministry and all that he was doing, and I was like, "Man, this guy is speaking with authority. I have never had that confidence behind my face." I wanted that. I wanted that deeply. The question God jumped on me was the same thing: "Son, have you counted the cost? Do you understand what that man went through to get what he has got?" At that time, I was willing to add to my faith. I was willing to add to my life. I had a lot of things going on in my life at that time. The thing that God said to me was, "Hey, boy, are you willing to lose your reputation and gain a reproach?" You see, that is something that was dear to me. Remember I said, "It is not going to cost you one thing. Get that one thing you do not want to give up." Well, that is something I have been building all my life. But the Bible says in Philippians 2:7, "He made himself of no reputation." Folks, the servant is no greater than the master. I am trying to be His servant.

Up to that point in my life, it had been building pretty well. Since we were young, we always tried to do very well in sports. We did not really hang out with friends that much. So when we started out, we were kind of socially awkward. Alex and I mostly spent a lot of time with one another. When we were not doing that, we were working on sports and music and stuff like that. We were spending time building up those things, trying to get good at that stuff. I oftentimes cared about what my teachers thought of me. I know those kids do not give a flip, but I did. For whatever reason, any person that I ran into, I was very conscious of what they thought about me.

I wanted to impress them and be nice to them. I tried to play that game where I pleased the teachers and my friends. I was a big politician back then. So I was building up my reputation with my teachers, building up the reputation with the coaches. I got a part of National Honor Society. Danny gives me crap about that. He says they put all the special ed kids in there. It is not really that big. I am like, "No, Danny, that was huge." I am pretty sure National Honor Society has some weight behind it.

Anyway, I tried to keep my GPA up. I know you guys will not believe this, but I am a celebrity right here. I was homecoming king. I was prom king. I was this thing called Mr. Raytown South, which is like the man's fashion show in our school. These good looks do something. I was voted the best personality. I got this reputation I am working on. I am building this thing up. I am just thinking, "Man, this is great." All the stuff the older people are telling me to do, I am pretty much taking heart to it. I am jumping on it. I am like, "Man, there is nothing. What is next to me? The stars, right? What else can I do?"

I am building this thing up. I know what everybody is saying, "All right, so you have got to go to college. Make sure this career is set up." So I am planning that stuff out. I cannot wait to get to college. I am going to hit that thing so hard. I am going to have an awesome career. I am going to be a great testimony for so many people because I was a Christian at that time. I believe that if you were a Christian, what you should have, you should have the best things in the world, but also live the right way because you are God's child. The devil's kids should not be having better things than God's kids. So I figured you have got to be able to go out and do the same thing as the kids in the world are doing, but pretty much put a Christian blanket over that thing and say, "God gave it to you." That is exactly what my mindset was.

College was a no-brainer. Once I got into college, my idea was I am going to capitalize on this reputation and actually put it to use now and get a career for myself and make this thing happen. I have had a great childhood, and I have had a great reputation with that childhood, and I cannot wait to get there and capitalize on that. But then all of a sudden, my bubble got popped. I started getting to college and started trying to do the same things. My first thing was to do something athletically, and I just kept being injury-prone, so that did not work out for me. But thank God all the work I put into music got me a scholarship to get into college. So I am working on that. I am like, "Okay, obviously God, not everybody gets a scholarship. I am here on a scholarship. Obviously, you are going to bless me. I am going to be like the drummer for Prince or something like that. This thing is going to work out great."

I am just working that thing out, trying to hit it eight hours a day. Will has kind of already paved the way for me. Everybody at the conservatory knows who he is. Now his little brother is coming up, and they are like, "Oh, this is going to be great. We have got the brother. This is going to bring a great jazz scene to UMKC and all this stuff." So we are going at it. I am trying to spend eight hours a day in the practice room. When I am not at the practice room, I am in the club playing. I am not in the club playing, I am always listening. That is my cycle: practice room, club, listening; practice room, club, listening.

I started getting more and more depressed. How does that happen? If my spiritual gift is playing the drums, and God is giving me a scholarship to play music, and I am doing all that stuff, why is my life falling apart? That did not make any sense to me. I started to get confounded by this. Everything that I had planned in life started to kind of fall apart for me. So I am like, "Okay, finally, the worst thing happens." This thing never happened to me. We are having like one of our first concerts of the year, and I am up there on stage. Everything is going pretty good. I am feeling it. Then the grand finale comes, our last song. All of a sudden, right in the middle of that song, somehow I lose time. I started going one direction. The band goes the other. It is a complete train wreck on the stage. It was horrible. I think Will said he was out in the audience, and he was just wanting to get up and leave out of shame because they associated us together.

What are you doing in a situation like that? God got ahold of me. I went out to the cars at the point of tears, and I was at that time saved, like I said, and I was just like, "Okay, God, obviously I am trying to do this. It is not working out. What is it that you are trying to tell me? I do not care what it is you tell me to do. I am going to do it. I do not care how embarrassing it is. I do not care what it is." See, God is starting to chip up my reputation. Before, I had too much pride to really listen to what He said. I was like, "I have got the experience. I know what I am supposed to be doing, God. You jump behind me and bless this." That is what the idea was. He started to chip away at that thing.

So I gave up that music scholarship, and I said, "All right, it has got to be like maybe I have always been into wanting to be kind of a Christian apologist." So now I am not going to be able to be just this awesome funk drummer on the road and have a testimony with it. So I am able to give up my music, go and be like, start learning philosophy and psychology. So I did that. I made a minor in education and a major in philosophy and psychology, and I start working on those things. That is when all of a sudden, once again, my life was just still, it still was not where it needed to be.

I started trying to, I was like, "Maybe I want to go to California." That is where Ravi Zacharias was at the time. "I will go meet up with him and just be like one of his disciples or something." So I really did start planning like that and thinking that is the route I wanted to take. Then I ended up running into a guy from this church. That guy ended up, long story short, leading me to a Thursday night, and I ran into Bob. All of a sudden, for the first time, I felt like I had purpose. I felt like I had direction. I felt like I got that fire back inside of me that it carried me all throughout childhood.

So what was I going to do? I was going to add what I was doing in school to what I had started picking up in the Old Paths, and I started trying to add that. But then all of a sudden, once again, the same thing started happening. My life was still in shambles. I was still kind of getting depressed. For whatever reason, like I said, college was a no-brainer for me. That is what you did. Life did not make sense without it. But for whatever reason, my focus with my study was just not there. It seemed like the only thing that I could do at that time was get into the book, and more and more and more that I started getting into the book, the less and less and less I started to be able to focus in class and stuff like that.

Listen, I want to do like a parental advisory real quick right now. This is Zach's testimony. Do not take your kids back there and tell them this is how you do it. Listen, I tell the kids all the time, "You stick with what you know. You have been in school all your life, you knuckleheads. You stick with what you know until God shows you something new." But for me, and this is the part, like I said, that completely destroyed my reputation for me. For me, that was it. For God, it was clear as day. He told me, "Son, you get a job, you start learning this book." That is what He dropped on my heart. If I would have done anything else, I guarantee you I would not be here right now. I guarantee I would have been somewhere else. I guarantee I probably would have been just as miserable and depressed, and who knows what I would have gotten into. But that was for me. For me, that is exactly what God was requiring for me. He was going to add the book to me. Thank God, it is the greatest thing I have ever had.

It cost me my reputation. Because at that point, all the parents, all the teachers, all the friends that knew Zach Sanders and what he was about, they start to see the opposite start to happen in his life. "Well, Zach, all the emphasis you put on education. Zach, you are all the people pleaser. What the heck is going on? Now you are going to this place that looks like a cult. What the heck is happening in your life right now?" Let me tell you this. When I quit school, I hated it. I hated it. That is the one issue that I had in my life. I hated what God started doing in my life at that time because it started to destroy my reputation amongst other people. I started to get talked about badly about those things. But at the same time, God was building me up in His Word and adding to me and adding to me. Sadly, folks, that is what it took for me to bear my cross. I say sadly from a flesh perspective. Thank God, there has been nothing better in my life than what I have now. But that is what it took. It was humiliating. I hated it. But learning that book was the greatest thing that God ever gave me. That is the question that He ended up asking me: "Son, have you counted the cost? Are you willing to lose your reputation for a relationship with Jesus Christ? Are you willing to lose your reputation for a reproach?"

Even now, I look back at some of my old friends that I was running with at that time. One guy, we used to play back and forth together and spend time together. I look up, and he is on tour with J.Lo. He is on the late show. He is with Miguel. He is with this guy named Lita Wise. I look at an old girlfriend I had. She is the associate producer for CBS Morning Show. She is doing interviews with Dave Chappelle and stuff like that. I look at my cousins. They are acting in movies and on TV shows. Right then you get that whisper from the devil. See, but that is what it comes down to. Have you counted the cost?

You say, "Zach, will He take it all?" He probably will not. He probably will not treat you like Job, but He might test you like Abraham. That is what it comes down to. He wants to see are you willing to give it up if He asks it. I do not know, but you have got to be willing to give it, folks. The problem with us is that we want to cure our disease without, excuse me, we want to cure without getting rid of the disease. It is like the doctor says, "Listen, I need to take this cancerous tumor outside of you and get rid of it." You say, "Well, actually, Doc, I was just kind of hoping that you would give me some prescription drugs I can add to it." That absolutely will not work, guys. It just will not work. The Bible says God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. Otherwise, if we still had our strength, we might think that we are the ones doing it. Listen, you

have got to be willing to lose what you have trusted in to make that spot void for Jesus to fill it and take control of your life.

## V. Test 2: Will You Leave Them All?

The first thing He asks is, "Son, are you willing to lose it all?" And He counted the cost. But the next thing He asks us is this: Will you leave them all?

*Luke 9:59-60*

*And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

*Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*

This time, the Lord seeks out the disciples. It is not someone that is impressed by what Jesus Christ is doing, but this guy is minding his own business. Here comes Jesus Christ marching on the war with His group following in His train. He walks up to a guy and He gives him the invitation. He says this time, "Follow me." All the guy says, it seems like the most legitimate excuse ever. He says, "Listen, yeah, that sounds great, Lord. I will follow you. But let me go bury my dad first." The second test that comes up right here is this: Will you leave them all? Will you leave your relationships with man behind to follow Jesus Christ? It might cost that.

His request is legitimate. It is a funeral. Even the unsaved world, you get bereavement time at work. Here comes the Son of God, the Life of the world. He sees someone dead, and a guy just says, "Yeah, Lord, let me follow you, but let me first go and bury my father." Once again, we get Jesus with this wicked response: "Let the dead bury their dead." What in the world?

You guys remember that spot over there in Matthew chapter 10? He is talking with His disciples, and He lays out some of the most controversial doctrine we have ever heard.

*Matthew 10:37-39*

*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

*And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

*He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

"What a rude thing to say, Jesus." I am guessing the verse right after that is "Children, obey your parents in the Lord," but this is right, right? How does that work out? The simple principle here, folks, is Jesus must be first. He has got to be first in your life. You have got to lift Him up to the proper place above all. But what it comes down to is that your love for Him should be so much greater than your love for others that in comparison, it looks like He hates them.

I am sure you guys can relate to this. Any man that has been caught between his mother and his wife understands this. You do not hate one or the other, but when you choose to do one, listen, the doctrine is clear, guys. You stick to what your wife says. You have been separated from your mama with your wife. The two have become one flesh. One to leave his father and mother

behind. Maybe around Thanksgiving time, we have to choose which house to go to. "You hate me! You are going to her instead of..." Yeah, that is what it comes down to. This is nothing Jenny and I were going through at all. I am talking about stuff I have seen on movies. This not works out.

Maybe it is the parent that is caught between their kids. You choose to give one something and out the other one. What do they think? They think you hate them because you chose them. Whoever you do not choose will feel like you hate them in comparison to the other.

One of the funny things that just happened last week with us, we had some family come down, and they were visiting with us. We were having a great time. Like I said, my family, when I came to this church, it went crazy. It was completely devastating. Since that time, they have been saying the testimony of our lives and how while they have been saying we have been a part of a cult and all this stuff, God has been blessing our lives. Will, Alex, and church together, we still know each other. We still talk to each other. Like I said, I am not boasting in this, but their families are falling apart, folks. I do not think people realize the importance of the church in a family. You want to talk about keeping your family together and get them all in the same church together. That is what it is. That is what it comes down to.

Anyway, we have been noticing just those things happening, and sure enough, the meeting is going cordial. We are having a good time. We are smiling and nodding, being good boys. Then, sure enough, there is a conflict that comes up. Friday, we are supposed to be having our big camp kickoff meeting. At the same time, Friday, they are supposed to be putting on something big for Grandma, up where they are at. "Hello. You boys coming up there on Friday? You know your grandma wants to see you. You know she is getting old now. You know blood is thicker than water, right?" That is how it goes. They start to push that.

The funny thing about it, right before that, my dad is going around. He is a spiritual patriarch in the family. He laid out a pretty cool little thing about faith. He said something like, "Your true faith is seen in what you are willing to act upon." He is talking about how your faith is not known by what you say your faith is in. Your faith is known by what you actually act upon. Sure, great stuff. They all, of course, "Amen, brother." They are all into that. Anybody that has been a part of a general, good Baptist black family, every other word is "Amen, sweet Jesus, oh Lord." It has been like a whole spiritual experience after that.

Then here it comes. What my dad actually said, "Your true faith is based off of what you are willing to act upon." I have got an opportunity to do something for God. Get this camp meeting going and do this. I have got an opportunity to go up here and serve the family. What do they give me crap about serving God? After that whole time, "Jesus is first, Lord of God, sweet Jesus," and this and that. Then with the opportunity, I actually came up to act for Jesus Christ versus act for the family. You know what I got persecuted for? Acting for Jesus Christ. They wanted me to "suffer me first and go bury my father." That is the picture right there. That is what we oftentimes say. "Christ is first. He is the first. He is number one in my life." When you get the chance to act on it, you find out where He truly is. "Jesus, your number cannot count that high." That is what it comes down to.

Before we were saved, guys, we know that we could not afford salvation. It was something that Jesus Christ had to completely do for us. Nobody could redeem their own soul. After you are saved, watch this. You have got to prove yourself worthy for a relationship with Jesus Christ. Christians have this warped idea today that Jesus is like some twisted addict chasing you for this fix. He has got to have more of you. He desires you. He is pursuing you. Listen, Jesus Christ absolutely wants to have a relationship with us. Folks, He chases us to Calvary. After that, it is up to us. You guys understand that? That is the problem. Laodicea. We have got this warped idea that Jesus Christ is like some lust that needs us as a fix. Folks, you cannot add anything to God. He benefits your life. We have got to get that down. After your salvation, if you want more of Jesus Christ, more about Jesus, you have got to pursue Him. You have got to get into it. You have got to go after Him. That is what it is all about. No cross, then Jesus will not fool with you. No cross, no crown. We all know that being J-O-Y: Jesus first, then others, and then yourself last. That is what it comes down to. It has nothing to do with "I am second." You are third. That is what it comes down to.

You say, "But Zach, it is your mama." Then Jesus Christ does a great thing in Matthew 12:50. He is pressed by this huge crowd. They are saying, "Oh man, look at these guys all around them. They are pressed. They are all around them. They are beaten up against them." Then someone calls out.

*Matthew 12:46-50*

*While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.*

*Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.*

*But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who is my brethren?*

*And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!*

*For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

You see, after salvation, your true family is determined by those who are serving God and becoming more like Him. A close kin is someone close to Jesus. A distant kin is someone far from Him. See, before you are saved, before you start being a disciple for Jesus Christ, you are the point of reference to who is close to you and who is not. After you become saved, God is the point of reference to who is close to you and who is not, because you are all moving towards Him, not yourself anymore. If you are wondering, this is great material for family reunions. I guarantee that you should preach this there.

But he says, "Lord, suffer me first to go bury my father." You see, the funny thing about it, folks, this is not even about his dad. It is about his reputation with his family. His daddy is dead, and his daddy does not care who buries his bones or what, or leaves him up there. But like I said, it is

all about the reputation with the family that oftentimes keeps us from bearing our cross. It is the murmuring, "Honey, did you see what he did? Is that his funeral? He got out of that casket, he left that hearse, he dropped that casket, and he would not follow that man." "Yeah, honey, that is why it is so cold. They do not take all that to serve the Lord. I believe in moderation." Like I said, "Blood is thicker than water," and that is true. The blood of Jesus Christ is thicker than any spiritually water birth or anything like that.

Jesus gave them a choice. Listen, what He is saying is, "Zach, you can drop their concerns from Mine, or you can drop My concerns from theirs, but in order to follow Me, I will test you with losing them all." I want to say this just as a personal note for even our church, guys. Our church is a great and loving environment. It is the most friendly and welcoming. But did you know that it is going to come to... and this is one of the best things I have ever had, is just the companionship that I have got here. But did you know that you have to even choose between companionship and discipleship sometimes? Because eventually you will settle in, you will start doing the work. This is what I saw even while I have been here my 10 or 11 years. The ones that were most warm and welcoming to you sometimes are the ones that are not willing to grow with you. It is going to come down to that same question with you. Are you more concerned about companionship here or discipleship? Jesus Christ might test you with that. What are you willing to give up? Are you willing to give up the discipleship for the companionship, or will you always stick with the discipleship over it?

## VI. Test 3: Will You Forget It All?

The question is, will you forget them all? Lastly, the last test we see, look at verse number 61.

*Luke 9:61-62*

*And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

*And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

Now, I have got to be honest, of all the requests, this one really sounds the most reasonable. He says, "Oh, go, Lord, yeah, just let me say goodbye." But what you find out here is that it is really not what the guy said, but it is why he did what he did. I have got to show you that. You see, it is not always about the what, but it is about the why.

Did you know that there is nothing wrong with wearing a sheepskin and a wool and cooking your daddy a good old pot of porridge unless you are doing it to deceive him? Did you know that there is absolutely nothing wrong with getting along with everyone and deciding to build a skyscraper unless your motive is to work your way to heaven? There is nothing wrong with taking a boat ride to Tarshish unless you are fleeing from the presence of the Lord. By the response Jesus gives, I believe this guy wants to do the right thing, but for the wrong reasons.

Jesus said unto him, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom." How many of you guys mow your grass out there? How many of you guys even have

grass left to mow in this hot weather? I remember back when I always wanted to mow my grass. I remember watching my dad and my grandpa out there on the yard, and we used to have these little toy lawnmowers that would go out there behind them and try to follow them while they are going. My grandpa, you might get cussed out if you get too close. My dad used to tolerate it a little bit more. But I remember being out there, and I remember when we first got started, they used to put us both on the lawnmower. Will would be on one side, I would be on the other. We would be shoving each other to try to figure out who got the leverage. Eventually, I got to do it by myself, and I was so proud about that. We actually split it up. I would do the front yard, Alex would do the back, Alex might do the back, I might do the front, something like that.

I remember we were so competitive about whose lines could be the straightest. I remember it took me a while to figure out how to make the lines the straightest. What I would do, I would watch like this, and I would cut, but then I would look behind me to see how straight the line was, fixing to go, "Oh," look up, get back on, then turn behind and look again like that. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom." Those are like some of the most crooked lines you ever saw in your life. You get seasick looking in our yard for a while.

It was stupid, but Alex would tell you how bad my form used to be running. One of the things I really used to do when I was super young was, you know how you watch your shadow sometimes, and you want to see what you look like when you are running? I remember one of the things I used to do to see if I was really going fast was to kick up my feet and really watch. It is completely stupid. If I would have tried to really be successful in track later on doing that, same principle, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for that."

That is kind of the same thing that is going on here. What Jesus Christ is telling us to do, listen, in order to bear our cross successfully and be able to pursue what He has for us in the future, we have got to stop looking back. What I want to focus on for this last point is, will you forget it all? Will you leave your past in order to follow Jesus Christ? Once you begin to do a job, guys, that job deserves your complete focus. When you try to split your attention between two things, you will do a poor job with both of them.

Following Jesus Christ and starting a relationship, like when you come into church for the first time, is a really tough thing. I do not know how many times I have seen that happen. A young person comes in, they get on fire, they start going, they get started in discipleship, and lo and behold, what happens? A boyfriend or girlfriend shows up. That is how that thing goes. The Bible says in James, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Your ability to get a reward if He does not see the Christ depends on your ability to leave your past behind you and to press towards the mark. Paul tells us that.

*Philippians 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.*

In order to carry your cross and to do the job that God has called us to do, we cannot let our past failures or achievements distract us. You say, "Well, Zach, how will my past failures distract me from carrying my cross?" They will keep coming up about your failures. You will constantly be bringing up your past, and you will be too ashamed to carry on a testimony for Jesus Christ.

But me personally, the thing that happened with me is I was always a jack of all trades and a master of none. I thought, "Man, once it came to me getting plugged into the church, I thought, 'Well, is this the same thing? Is this something I am going to start off on really fast and really quick and catch on to really fast, like I have everything else in life, like I did with sports, but then became injury-prone, like I did with music, but then lost heart for it?'" I was scared. I was worried about that. I was like, "God, is this something I am just going to have a quick burst at the beginning, but then fade out quickly?" That then kept me from really trying to get involved and go with it at first.

I remember after the guy that was before me left, being the youth pastor, those thoughts came into my mind. "All right, God, I will step into this place because I did not ask for it, but I mean, am I really supposed to be doing this, Lord?" Especially after you preach a bad message, and people are just kind of staring at you like, "What did you just say?" I am like, "God, I did not ask for this." But that thought came in, my past failures and that consistency and that pattern in my life. "Can you really do this, Zach? Is this where you are supposed to really be?"

What about the past achievements? Oftentimes, it will get hard to carry your cross because it humiliates you. Your old crowd and reputation do not mess with the cross-bearing of the day. Every time you get going for God, an opportunity or relationship comes in that reminds you of what could have been, that causes you to want to invest in that life again. I talked to you guys about that, when I was in college, and looking at some of my old friends and what they are up to right now. The same thing happens even today. I consider myself consecrated and dedicated, and I do not think nothing else could change me, but it is funny how even now, I will start to get some success or notoriety in the world, and those thoughts start to creep back in. They start saying at work, "Hey, Zach, you consider relocating? You can go anywhere in this company, and really be successful. Hey, you ever thought about joining management? We will increase your salary within five years if you consider that," until the thing starts to kick back in again.

Is this time to bear the cross, Lord? I am ready to be CrossFit, and I am ready to follow You. But just like that guy said, "Suffer me first to go and say goodbye." The "me first" things oftentimes kick back in with me, and I try to warn my kids about that in youth group all the time. It is okay to drop everything right now and focus on Jesus Christ and focus on what God has for you. Start to develop that relationship now because nothing else is promised. But too often, we say, "Lord, suffer me first." "Me first."

- Lord, suffer me first to get this scholarship locked down.
- Lord, suffer me first to complete my degree.
- Lord, suffer me first to start my career.
- Lord, suffer me first to settle into my house.
- Lord, suffer me first to get married.

- Suffer me first to raise my kids.
- Suffer me first to set up my retirement.
- Suffer me first to plan my funeral.

That whole life passes you up because you have gotten to that process and that pattern of "me first." Listen, the day to follow Jesus Christ is today. If He is knocking on the door of your heart, go after it now, folks.

## VII. The Example of Elisha

One of the last places I want to turn and show you the right way when Jesus Christ calls you is 1 Kings 19. Jesus Christ has given three guys the opportunity to follow Him, and they have all bombed it. They have all failed. In 1 Kings 19, you find an Old Testament prophet, Elijah. He is getting ready to choose his predecessor. It is funny how he goes about doing it. It is very similar to how Jesus Christ was using His disciples.

*1 Kings 19:19-21*

*So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.*

*And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?*

*And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.*

In verse 19, Elisha is just plowing. He has got a job. He has got a career. He is set. He has got something to keep him busy until he steps off. He is all set in his routine in life. While doing his routine, all of a sudden, this man of God comes and calls him. In verse 20, we see right there that Elisha asked an almost identical question to the man in our story in Luke chapter 9. He says, "Yeah, that is fine. Let me go back home again and say goodbye to my mother and my father."

What you find, guys, and I told you this, it was not what that guy from Luke 9 did. It was why he did it. I am going to show you by comparing these two guys. The first guy, he wanted to go back to keep his relationship with his family and his friends on good terms. You say, "What is wrong with that?" The motive. Watch. He has to keep access to his old life open in case this Christian thing does not work out. Watch out for that.

But look at verse 21 in 1 Kings 19.

*1 Kings 19:21*

*And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.*

That second guy there, he went back to sever all the ties to his old life. That was his livelihood, the ox. He killed it. If it did not work out with Elijah, there was nothing for him to go back to. He lost it all. Not only that, he did not take part in the 401K. He passed it out to everyone else. He killed that ox. They cut it up. Got some Arthur Bryant, some Jack... No, Lord, what are you saying, boy? Jack Stack. They sliced that thing up, passed it out, had a good old barbecue with that thing. He goes back. He severs all the ties to his old life. He is cutting all the strings in order to work un-shackled for God. He kills his means to make a living and passes it out to others. He let go of the past to be free to accomplish what God had for him in the future. That is the difference. Both of them had similar responses, but their actions showed their motive. That is what you have got to look out for.

Our second to last spot here, Hebrews 11:13-16. If you cannot turn there, do not worry about it. I will read it to you. I love this picture that God gives of His Old Testament heroes and why He loves them so much.

*Hebrews 11:13-16*

*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

*For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.*

*And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.*

*But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

Talking about these great warriors of faith, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." Watch this. "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned."

All of these guys wanted to go back from Jesus Christ. "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." "Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, the Son of Man have nowhere to lay His head." "Have you counted the cost?" "Put up the finger. I will be right back, Lord." The next guy, Jesus Christ, comes to him. "Follow me." "Lord, suffer me first to go bury my father." "Let the dead bury the dead. Go and preach the gospel of the kingdom." "One second, Lord." "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. But first, let me go bid them farewell that are at my house." "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom."

I love that because right here, Hebrews 11, God says, "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned." Abraham, Noah, Moses, all the great heroes of the faith, God said, "Listen, boys, if My plan, My program that I have for your life is not what you want, head back to Ur of the Chaldees. Head back to Lot's father's estate. Head back to the place that you guys came out of." The cross-bearing is completely up to us, guys. It is 100% voluntary. It is not something that is a draft. God is not going to force you to do it.

But look at verse 16. "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God." Wouldn't that be horrible? God looks at me and He gets ashamed thinking about He is my God because I will not drop anything for Him. I love that verse. "God is not ashamed to be called their God." Who would have thought they could have shamed God up there in all His glory in heaven? I guarantee you, we have got His name on us. I have been bought with His blood. He has got His name all over me. I bet He looks down here just in shame sometimes. "Man, you will not give that little thing up for Me? Are you serious, man? I left it all for thee. I gave it all for thee. What house do I give Him for me?" "Well, Lord, I was thinking about adding some things. Is that cool?" "Son, what will you lose for Me?"

But He says right there, "But now there is a country that is in heavenly. Wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared them a city." Listen, He has been working on what He is going to give us for the rest of eternity. It is going to be a blessing. It is going to be beautiful. I know the document picture right there of how He is preparing Jerusalem for Israel. But, He is looking forward to bringing us up there to show us all His glory. What a sad thing how we shame Him. So will you leave behind your past in order to take what God prepared for you in the future? Will you forget it all?

## VIII. Conclusion: Just Do It

Here is the conclusion, folks. We are talking about being CrossFit for camp. The absolute last spot. If I turn anywhere else, I am going to explode. So Luke chapter 5:27. We looked at three examples of what not to do when Jesus Christ comes to you. Let us look at one good one. In Luke chapter 5:27, you find the same invitation that Jesus Christ gave to those three guys in Luke 9, but this man does the right thing with it.

*Luke 5:27-28*

*And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.*

*And he left all, rose up, and followed him.*

Same invitation, right? Verse 28. "And he left all, rose up, and followed him." Boy, he made that seem simple, didn't he? Did Levi not have a father? Did Levi not have the same flesh that was worried about having a place to stay at night? Did Levi not have parents back at home he could have said goodbye to? What made this guy leave all, rise up, and follow him?

- He left all. The first man could not.

- He rose up. Stand up. Stand up for Jesus. He is ready to go.
- Lastly, he followed him.

You know what I find out here? Levi, his name means "attached." It is just a coincidence, I guess, that he has got the same name as the tribe that God chose to attach to Himself to be His peculiar people, to minister to Him, the tribe of Levi. This guy is completely attached to Him. You know what I get from that? All in all, when Jesus calls, just go.

We are getting ready to go into camp. I guarantee you, the workers, the counselors, even the preacher while he is up there speaking, and the kids, God is going to lay something on your heart. When He lays that thing on your heart, it is going to be the necessary thing to take you to the next level with Him. Just do it. When Jesus Christ tells you at camp while you are sitting there in that chair and you are listening, you feel the Holy Spirit of God tugging on your heart, and He says, "Follow me. Follow me. Follow me." "He left all. He rose up, and he followed him." Just do it.

Trust me, Jesus Christ knows the circumstances that He is calling you in. He knows the people that it is going to offend. He knows the dust that it is going to kick up. But He also knows that what you are going to gain with following Him is going to be worth it all. We sang that song for a purpose and for a reason.

Lastly, do you want to be CrossFit? Then examine yourself with those three questions:

4. Will you lose it all?
5. Will you leave them all?
6. Will you forget it all?

I trust that if we can ask ourselves those things and prepare for camp and examine ourselves leading up to that, folks, I think we are going to be ready to get what God has for us there. Thank you for your time and attention. Prayerfully, God will do something with that. I will turn it over to Bob now.

Thank you, Zach. Next week is going to be a crazy week. We are getting everything ready to go. Do not forget, Thursday night, we are going to have to have your help stuffing the packs. They are going to bring all that stuff down right now. I am going to dismiss you here in just a few minutes. Then I will give you a few minutes, and then we will get up and get ready for going on a restart. But just be flexible this week. There are a lot of things that need to be done. A lot of things are going to take place. Do not forget, I said that Danny needs some help next Sunday for you guys to help get everything over there and get it set up. So make sure you take care of that.

Let us have a word of prayer, and we will be dismissed. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We pray for this week that You will give us the time to get everything done and get all the things that we need to get accomplished, that this week becomes a great week. Lord, we love You. We thank You for all You do for us. Thank You for Zach and Jenny. Thank You for the service this morning and the message. Pray, Father, we will all dial in and be there to help these kids do and to be all that God wants them to be. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.