

**JESUS SAID WHAT?!!****25<sup>th</sup> July 2021 – week 4****HillSide's Minister – Rev' Allan Booth****THE KEY TO DENYING ONSELF**

Blurb:

*A story of 2 dads...*

*This age of self-promotion leaves little room for Jesus, when you are followed where are you leading people? Do join us this Sunday as Allan shares the 4<sup>th</sup> Key, The Key of Denying Oneself, to a meaningful life with us in our "Jesus Said What?!!" series.*

The world says: You are number one. Just live for yourself pursue your own interests.

Jesus says: Crucify your selfishness. Come and follow me.

**Luke 14: 25 – 35*****The Cost of Being a Disciple***

<sup>25</sup> *Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: <sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.*

<sup>28</sup> *"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? <sup>29</sup> For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'*

<sup>31</sup> *"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.*

<sup>34</sup> *"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? <sup>35</sup> It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.*

*"Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."*

**Sermon**

We all know this person... the one in a group of friends who is confident to the point of being a braggart. This person who has done everything better than anyone else can. During Wimbledon they can tell you exactly who should be playing what shot when. During a rugby or football match they pronounce the referee and line judges as rubbish, because they know the game better. When you talk about the vaccine, they can tell you all about the tenders and the contracts, you might find yourself wondering why this person isn't president, or occupying some other key position...

But worse than all of that, when you are chatting about things you have done, they have done whatever it is, better. This person simply has to be the centre of attention in any room. Now I am sure none of us is like that.... But we do live in the selfie age, and sometimes it is just so important that everyone can see the great big steak we're having at Spur!

Then along comes Jesus and effectively tells us to give up everything, yes even your own life, and follow him.

I have noticed as I work amongst followers of Jesus, that there are some who take great delight in telling every one else just how much they have given up and willingly list sacrifices they have made, after all it's their cross to bear. My friends we need to understand clearly that such a person is just as boastful as the one who has to be better at everything. And therefore defeats the real call to self denial.

I think Jesus in our reading is once again using his favourite teaching tool, exaggeration, to make his point. To understand it like my favourite bear would, simply; if I am the centre of my existence, the most important person in my world; then I cannot be truly following Jesus.

Paul in his letter to the Philippians takes up Jesus' thought when he writes 'do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interest but each of you to the interests of others.'

There is a whole lot of common sense in living humbly, we build better communities when each considers others as more important than self. The true leader is not the one who barges ahead clearing the way, but the one who can carry the weakest to reach the destination at the same time and with the same sense of accomplishment as the strongest.

I want stitch together two of the stories that are in the homework for this week. Let's call it the parable of two fathers...

There was a father who would often escape his responsibilities and walk from his family home a few blocks to the local pub. Often he came home well under the influence, and would stagger toward the bedroom and fall into bed. Family life suffered and his wife became depressed. One night in winter the father came face to face with his 4 year old son sitting on a bar stool next to him. Surprised and embarrassed he asked the child what on earth he was doing in such a place... the little boy replied I followed your footsteps in the snow, I wanted to see what was more important than mom and me! There was another father, hard working and honest. One any given Sunday the community watched for this dad walking down the aisle. In reality, with anticipation, they always looked just behind him... there without fail would be his four year old son trying to match his father tep for determined step, the same set to his shoulders the same position of his arms. It was evident to anyone with eyes, this little guy wanted to be just like his dad!

The big lesson today is that following Jesus means walking in his footsteps. He is the one who really did give up everything, more wealth and power than we could ever imagine, to come and live as one of us. Not only that he gave up his life to the cruelest of death sentences, so that people just like you and I could rise with him and live eternally. This is the best example of self denial, with the best possible result that any who truly gives up self to follow Jesus, is showing another the way to the kingdom of heaven.

**Let us pray that truth:**

Lord Jesus you set before us the best example what an amazing privilege it is to walk in your footsteps. We know our strides cannot match yours, so we thank you for the patience you show when you reach back for us and carry us a while. We want to step along your way, to become more like you every day. Help us all Holy Spirit, that we would become more like our Lord Jesus. Give us a heart like his, a love like his.. so that those who walk in our steps would also grow closer to you... to your glory, Amen.