HIS Story – Chapter 6 – Jesus Calls For Commitment

What do you think of when you think of Jesus? Common answers to this question include peace, joy, love, compassion, and salvation. If I were to ask you what characteristics draw you to Him, I would probably get a lot of the same answers. These characteristics are seen in verses like Matthew 9:36 “When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them...” and Matthew 10:8 when He tells His disciples “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons.” Jesus was compassionate and loving, and He brought peace and joy. But, we often overlook the radicalness of His person. Webster defines radical as “very new and different from what is traditional or ordinary” and “having extreme views that are not shared by most people.” By those definitions Jesus was certainly a radical. And, He calls us to follow Him!

When we decide to answer Jesus’ call to commitment, we can’t overlook His radicalness. Jesus said things like “Don’t imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth. I came not to bring peace, but a sword.” (Matt 10:34) Go back to the beginning of this devotional and look at those common answers; Jesus just crossed one of them off the list! He also tells us that if we love our families more than we love Him, we aren’t worthy to follow Him and that we must take up our crosses to follow Him. (Matt 10:37-38) Jesus tells us we must carry around a torture device if we want to be a Christian! Is He starting to sound radical yet?

Jesus goes further by telling us what happens to people who commit to Him. Matt 10:16-18 tells those who commit to beware; we’ll be handed over to the courts and we will be flogged! He says that nations will hate us because we are His followers. He warns that we will stand trial and be called names worse than “the prince of demons.” Wow! This guy really knows how to recruit, doesn’t He? Are you excited to sign up yet? So far, everything about Jesus says lunatic and we’re even crazier for following Him! When Jesus says things like “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you cannot have eternal life in you,” He makes Christianity sound more like a cannibalistic cult rather than a relationship with the Living God! But we must keep in mind what happened later, at the last supper; Jesus said the bread was His body and the cup was His blood. See, Jesus wasn’t calling us to cannibalism, He was calling us to a sincere commitment that would honor His sacrifice.

Was Jesus a radical? Yes!!! But He had to be. He had to weed out the bad guys, the insincere, the fakes, and He had to make His point; that following Him is not for the light-hearted. Following Jesus takes commitment, but it’s worth it! Jesus warns His followers of persecution, but promises hope! He tells us that when we stand trial, not to worry, because God will give us the right words at the right time. In Matthew 10:22, Jesus says we will be hated by all nations, “but everyone who endures to the end will be saved.”

How do we commit; how do we follow Him? We give ourselves completely to Him. Matthew 10:39 “If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for Me, you will find it.” His ways may be radical and unconventional, but they’re a lot better than my ways! I don’t know about you, but I’m more than happy to give my life to the only one who can heal the sick, raise the dead, and make me never hunger again!