

WEEK 4 - BURY THE DEAD

Watch

Watch Lesson 4: Bury the Dead (34:23 minutes)

Story Content

At first Anna seems thrilled that Eric was changing and following Jesus. But over time she grows resentful.

Going Deeper

Read Luke 9:57-62.

Why does Jesus have to be so demanding?

Unlike what happened in last week's passage about the rich young ruler, Jesus doesn't tell any of these three would-be followers to sell everything before following Him. In even greater contrast, we find in Luke 8 a man who wants to follow Jesus after having had a number of evil spirits evicted from his life. But Jesus sends the man back to his family, a scenario quite different from the man who was rebuked for even wanting to say good-bye to his. Why these different responses to different would-be followers?

Kyle points out that the symbol of the cross has been romanticized, and even turned into an attractive logo for Christianity. But that was not the feeling toward the cross in ancient times. Crucifixion was considered the worst form of death. The Romans perfected its use as a deterrent for crime and rebellion. Roman citizens could not be crucified; this punishment was only for the worst crimes committed by the lower classes. People accepted the practice of crucifixion, and even supported it, because it was inflicted upon thieves and runaway slaves. Crucifixion helped keep the peace and curb crime.

But crucifixion was still perceived to be disgusting. The cross was described by writers of that time with phrases like:

- ◆ That infamous stake
- ◆ The criminal wood
- ◆ Bound in the most ignominious fashion
- ◆ Executed in a shameful way
- ◆ The most wretched of deaths

Even the Old Testament says, "Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse." (Deuteronomy 27:26). All these are reasons why, when Paul described Jesus' death, he called it "foolishness to the Greeks" and "a scandal to the Jews" (1 Corinthians 1:18). In Hebrews 12:2 we are told that Jesus went to the cross, "scorning its shame." This form of death was so shameful that there arose a heretical movement among early Christians who denied God's Son could ever die on the cross. They taught that the man crucified was not God's Son but someone else. Knowing all this, what does the phrase, "Take up your cross and follow me," now mean to you?

Personal Challenge

1. How did you come to Jesus? Was it more by way of a sales pitch or deep call to commitment? What was the effect of coming to Jesus in that way?
2. Would you say most believers are sold out? How does that perception affect your own walk with Jesus?
3. Have you ever been around someone who changed like Eric does in the story? If so, what was it like for you?
4. What do you think Kyle means by, "Following is not trying everyday but dying every day?"
 - a. "And yet we learn that following Jesus means dying every day. Every day we take up our cross & die to ourselves." What's the most challenging aspect of dying daily for you?
Listen again to the quote by Bruce Thielemann: "Please don't say anything to me about tomorrow. Tomorrow is the word the Bible does not know. If you can find me any place in the Scriptures where the Holy Spirit of God says 'tomorrow,' I will step down from this pulpit and never step into it, or any other pulpit, for as long as I live. The Holy Spirit's word is the word, 'today.'" "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 3:15). Don't say tomorrow. Shakespeare said, "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow lights for fools the way to dusty death." The word is today."
5. Are you hitting the snooze button on God's alarm clock? Is there something He is calling you to do and you are putting it off?