

CAN YOU TAKE THE HEAT?

I. [Matthew 8:18-22](#) [Luke 9:57-62](#)

A. The title of today's message is, "*Can You Take The Heat?*" You may not be able to answer that question before you leave today but it's one I'm hoping will bother you for days to come. The late Marlowe Brainard used to quip sometimes, with a wry smile, "*May the Holy Spirit provoke you!*" My sentiments today exactly.

B. We begin with two similar passages, one from Matthew and the other from Luke. While they both could be referring to the same incidents, they could've happened on separate occasions. In most of your Bibles these verses come under the subtitle, "*The Cost of Following Jesus.*" Yes, salvation is free and can't be earned. But to those called to follow Jesus, it may cost you dearly. "*In this world you will have trouble...*" "*Through much tribulation do we enter the Kingdom of God...*" "*The Kingdom of God suffers violence and violent men take it by force...*" **There will be heat!**

C. [Matthew 8:18-22](#) (ESV)

- 1) **V18-20** "*Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to go over to the other side. And a scribe came up and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*" **(Jesus is asking: Are you sure you can take the heat?!)**
- 2) **V21** "*Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."* **(That's an excuse! Many excuses are actually lies. More on that shortly...)**
- 3) **V22** "*And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."*" **(That's a play on words--Jesus is saying let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead. You may think Jesus is being too blunt, insensitive, harsh even. He's saying He and His Kingdom come first--period!)**
- 4) **Theological note, V22 from the ESV Study Bible:** "*Leave the dead to bury their own dead.* While Jesus clearly upholds the Biblical command to honor father and mother (see Matt. 15:1-9), the call to follow Him rises above all other allegiances. Anything that hinders unqualified commitment to Him and to the new covenant family of faith must be set aside."

D. [Luke 9:57-62](#) (ESV)

- 1) **V57-58** "*As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*" **(But TV preachers promise mansions with swimming pools!)**
- 2) **V59-60** "*To another He said, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."*" **(Dead? When? That day? Yesterday? Soon? In a matter of days, weeks, months, a year? Jesus' response tests the man's heart.)**
- 3) **V61-62** "*Yet another said, "I will follow You, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."*" **(How to drive crooked! Don't try this on a tractor or your car!)**

D. I once heard a teacher share a list of excuses they had comprised over their teaching career of students' excuses for being absent or not turning in homework. They were hilarious! Some of them were full of imagination and creativity but most of them would take faith the size of a coconut seed to believe. We can fool others. Perhaps we can fool the teacher or the preacher, the spouse or the kids, our friends or the boss. We can even fool ourselves, but we cannot fool God!

E. Excuses, while sometimes legitimate, are often comprised of artful half truths, tidbits of honesty laced in falsehood. Untruthful excuses break the 9th Commandment--they are bear false witness. Now you know Pinocchio!

F. Ask yourself: When it comes to following Christ, serving God, obeying His Word, commitment to Him and His family, will my excuses for not doing those things hold up on the Day we all have to give an account?

G. So you're called to follow Jesus? "*Follow Me!*" He says to you. But then can you take the heat? I believe it will get harder and harder to be a follower of Jesus in our culture. The anti-faith community is being joined by corporate America, pop culture, and segments of the media in opposition to Bible-believing Christians. Church membership is in steep decline. *(It's a Gideon revival!)* The past perks of being a nominal believer who gained social status from being a church member have evaporated. It's no longer cool. It actually can negatively impact your career, cause you to lose friends, hurt you economically and influentially. Many just can't take the heat!

H. It's an election year *(if you hadn't noticed)*. Every candidate becomes very religious when they're up for election. How much longer can you affirm the Biblical definition of marriage ("*A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife...*") without taking serious heat? When it comes to those who've divorced, moved in together without marrying, or entered into gay relationships, you must know that showing acceptance without granting approval isn't enough for most. Declare the Word, even in love, on any issue, and you will take heat!

I. So you've become a follower. What'll happen on your job if you put your Bible on your desk? Can you take the heat? What if you quit telling off color jokes, stop being flirtatious in the office, delete all your porn sites or break off the affair you've been having? Can you take the heat? What if you refuse to lie to clients or deceive customers? What if God convicts you of gossiping at the salon, can you take the heat? What if God prompts you to start eating with the Blacks, Asians, or Latinos where you work? Gays or muslims? Can you take the heat? What if God convicts you of your locker room banter and to clean up your filthy spew--can you take the heat? Refuse to cheat on a test, turn down heroine, say *no* to your boyfriend pressuring you for sex? Can you take the heat?

J. You're on the path to a very successful career, but what if God calls you to the ministry or to the mission field? Can you take the heat? You have a lovely house in a safe neighborhood, but what if God calls you to sell and move to a less desirable hood or a trailer park, can you take the heat? You might say, *'God would never call me to do that!'* He's been orchestrating such things from the incarnation on! It's the normal Christian life! Jesus showed the way! **Phil. 2:5-8 (NIV)** *"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death--even death on a cross!"* (Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in ***The Cost of Discipleship***: "When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die." **Still want to be like Jesus and follow Him? There will be heat!**)

K. When Muslims become Christians, many are disowned by their families. Some face the loss of their livelihoods and possessions. Some face death if they don't recant. What losses have you suffered for following Jesus? How much heat can you take before you quit? Did Jesus promise rose gardens or crosses?

L. **Luke 9:22-26 (NIV)** First Jesus tells us the cost of our salvation; the price paid for our redemption. Then He declares what it will cost us: **22** And He said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." (That's the price He paid for us.) (Here's our invoice.) **23** Then He said to them all: "Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me. (But what about the American dream?! Your candidates for president may promise that but not Jesus!) **24** For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will save it. **25** What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? **26** Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. (And so the question we began with is the one we end with: **Can you take the heat?!** May the Holy Spirit provoke you!

* Close with Prayer...

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[Matthew 8:18-22 \(ESV\)](#)

18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to go over to the other side. **19** And a scribe came up and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever You go." **20** And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." **21** Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." **22** And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

[Luke 9:57-62 \(ESV\)](#)

57 As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow you wherever you go." **58** And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." **59** To another He said, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." **60** And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." **61** Yet another said, "I will follow You, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." **62** Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

[Luke 9:22-26 \(NIV\)](#)

22 And He said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." **23** Then He said to them all: "Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me. **24** For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will save it. **25** What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? **26** Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die."

Theological Note on Matthew 8:22

The ESV Study Bible

Matthew 8:22. *Leave the dead to bury their own dead.* While Jesus clearly upholds the Biblical command to honor father and mother (see Matt. 15:1-9), the call to follow Him rises above all other allegiances. Anything that hinders unqualified commitment to Him and to the new covenant family of faith must be set aside.

- Theological note on Matthew 8:22, *The ESV Study Bible*, Crossway, p. 1836.

Film Clips & Other Links

The Cost of Following Jesus - David Platt (Sermon Jam)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4fnPcXc9CU>

The Cost of Following Jesus - Francis Chan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KylEUY3e3II>

The Cost to Follow Jesus - Dr. Dallas Willard

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_AbnvbHVB8

"I Will Follow You" - Kristene DiMarco

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8Sx_U0Ztr8

Bonus Stuff

Luke 14:25-33 (ESV)

25 Now great crowds accompanied Him, and He turned and said to them, **26** "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. **27** Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be My disciple. **28** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? **29** Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, **30** saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' **31** Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? **32** And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. **33** So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple.

Quote by Augustine

"Christ is not valued at all, unless He is valued above all."

Quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"No one should be surprised at the difficulty of faith, if there is some part of his life where he is consciously resisting or disobeying the commandment of Jesus. Is there some part of your life which you are refusing to surrender at His behest, some sinful passion, maybe, or some animosity, some hope, perhaps your ambition or your reason? ... How can you hope to enter into communion with Him when at some point in your life you are running away from Him?"

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*.

Quote by Kyle Idleman

"Following Jesus isn't something you can do at night where no one notices. It's a twenty-four-hour-a-day commitment that will interfere with your life. That's not the small print—that's a guarantee."

- Kyle Idleman, *Not A Fan*.

Quote by David Platt

"Radical obedience to Christ is not easy... It's not comfort, not health, not wealth, and not prosperity in this world. Radical obedience to Christ risks losing all these things. But in the end, such risk finds its reward in Christ. And He is more than enough for us."

Quote by A.W. Tozer

"Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival."

- A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*.

Quote by William Gurnall

"We fear men so much, because we fear God so little."

Theological Note on Matthew 8:21-22

The NKJV Study Bible

Matthew 8:21, 22. This passage most likely describes a follower whose father was still alive, because by Levitical law the man would not be out in public if his father had just died. His father was aged, so the man wanted to go to his home, wait for his father to die, and then follow Christ. Jesus' answer means that we must never make excuses for refusing to follow Him. There is no better time than the present.

- Theological note on Matthew 8:21-22, *The NKJV Study Bible*, Thomas Nelson, p. 1502.

Theological Note on Matthew 8:18-22

The Reformation Study Bible

Matthew 8:18-22. These two events show the radical commitment Jesus demands of disciples. Those who identify with Jesus will be "sojourners and exiles" in the world (1 Peter 2:11). Honoring one's parents by providing a proper burial was a strict obligation in Jewish society, a fitting application of the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12), which Jesus affirmed as God's Word (Matthew 15:4-6). But Jesus demands a great allegiance to Himself.

- Theological Note on Matthew 8:18-22, *The Reformation Study Bible*, Reformation Trust-Ligonier Ministries, p. 1684.

Theological Note on Matthew 8:21-22

The Life Application Study Bible

Matthew 8:21, 22. It is possible that this disciple was not asking permission to go to his father's funeral but rather to put off following Jesus until his elderly father died. Perhaps he was the firstborn son and wanted to be sure to claim his inheritance. Perhaps he didn't want to face his father's wrath if he left the family business to follow an itinerant preacher. Whether his concern was financial security, family approval, or something else, he did not want to commit himself to Jesus just yet. Jesus, however, would not accept his excuse.

Jesus was always direct with those who wanted to follow Him. He made sure they counted the cost and set aside any conditions they might have for following Him. As God's Son, Jesus did not hesitate to demand complete loyalty. Even family loyalty was not to take priority over the demands of obedience. His direct challenge forces us to ask ourselves about our own priorities in following Him. The decision to follow Jesus should not be put off, even though other loyalties compete for our attention. Nothing should be placed above a total commitment to living for Him.

- Theological Note on Matthew 8:21-22, *The Life Application Study Bible*, Tyndale, p. 2018.

Good News: Some in the Media Recognizing Anti-Christian Bias

by Eric Metaxas - Publication date: July 15, 2016

<http://www.breakpoint.org/bpcommentaries/entry/13/29533>

When liberal journalists come out and confess their bias, it's tempting to say, "The first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem." But don't. This is good news.

Writing at the New York Times recently, columnist Nicholas Kristof took that hard first step. The title of his piece says it all: "[A Confession of Liberal Intolerance](#)."

"We progressives," he writes, "believe in diversity, and we want women, blacks, Latinos, gays and Muslims at the table, so long as they aren't conservatives." (Or, one might reasonably add, evangelical Christians).

Kristof and fellow liberals profess a love for tolerance and diversity. But when it comes to the most important kind—diversity of thought—he admits that the gatekeepers in academia and the media actively stigmatize those who hold views different from their own.

"We're fine with people who don't look like us," he writes, "as long as they think like us."

Universities, once recognized as bastions of tolerance and diversity, bear perhaps the greatest blame. Kristof cites studies showing that just 6 to 11 percent of humanities professors are conservatives. Fewer than one in ten social-studies professors call themselves conservative. For perspective, consider that twice that number identify as Marxists!

And lest anyone blame this on conservative self-selection, a third of academics openly admit that they would be less likely to hire a qualified candidate who voted Republican. Black, evangelical sociologist George Yancey says he faces more discrimination on campus for his Christian beliefs than he does off-campus for the color of his skin. This aggressive bias turns classrooms into hard-left “echo-chambers” where only one side of any debate is ever heard.

Kristof took his concerns to Facebook, where he asked his mostly liberal followers why those who pride themselves on tolerance can be so intolerant. The replies he got were stunning.

“Much of the ‘conservative’ worldview consists of ideas that are known empirically to be false,” commented one fellow liberal.

Why stop with conservatives? asked another. “How about we make faculties more diverse by hiring idiots?”

Wow. Kristof was understandably dumbfounded. “My Facebook followers have incredible compassion for war victims in South Sudan, for kids who have been trafficked, even for abused chickens, but no obvious empathy for conservative scholars facing discrimination.”

Speaking of Facebook, Kristof wasn’t the only one this month coming clean about left-wing bias. Several former Facebook employees recently told Gizmodo that the social media titan’s “news curators” “routinely [suppressed] conservative news” on the site’s trending module.

Rather than serving as an unbiased meter of what people are talking about, concluded Gizmodo, “Facebook’s news section reflects “the biases of its workers and the institutional imperatives of the corporation.”

Whatever your political persuasion, this skewing of education and news to push an agenda is toxic to free societies. It’s gotten so bad that even a few brave liberals are asking, “Is this really what we stand for?”

And we should applaud them! But it’s only a start. If we want other voices heard in academia and the media, we have to make the case for why that’s crucial—both by helping our friends and neighbors recognize the bias, and by offering our own voices in answer to the echo.

- Eric Metaxas is a co-host of *BreakPoint Radio* and a best-selling author whose biographies, children’s books, and popular apologetics have been translated into more than a dozen languages.