

The Cost of not....Following

Share when you made a decision **not to do** something that ended up having a great cost.

Read Matthew 4:19 and John 21:22.

- Describe what you think it looks like to follow Jesus.
- How does following Jesus differ from "admiring" or "adhering to" Jesus?

Read Luke 5: 1-11.

- In this passage, we can see 4 stages of following Jesus.
 - **Listening** – hearing God's word, (re)considering it, asking questions
 - **Being inconvenienced** – changing your schedule, serving others
 - **Taking Jesus fishing** – bringing him into your everyday life, work, home
 - **Surrendering** – dedicating your entire life to Jesus
- What if Peter had just kept cleaning his nets and ignored Jesus? What stage best describes how you are currently responding to Jesus' invitation to "Come, follow me": Listening, Being inconvenienced, Taking Jesus fishing, or Surrendering.

1. To what starting point is God leading you to follow Jesus today, and how can your small group pray with you?

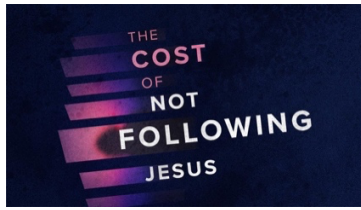
Digging Deeper

Read Matthew 11:28-30

- We typically associate a yoke or harness with doing labour or work and not about finding rest. How does being yoked with Jesus bring rest to our souls?
- How can Jesus claim that his yoke is easy and his burden is light? Can you give an example of this from your life?

Read Luke 5:1-11

- In what ways did Jesus interrupt Peter's life? How did Peter respond?
 - How have we responded to similar interruptions from God? Can we reframe our priorities to follow Jesus?



The Cost of Not - Praying

What are your thoughts or feelings about praying?

Read Matthew 6:5-13.

- How does Jesus pray? • What are some of the things he asks God for?

Read Matthew 26:36-42.

- Jesus often begins his prayers with “Father”. What do we learn from this about how we should approach God when we pray?
- What does this tell us about God?
- Why is it important for us to ask God for what we really want?

Apply

1. How would your life and your relationship with God be different if you did not pray?
2. How would you describe the way you pray?
3. What would you like to change about your prayer life?

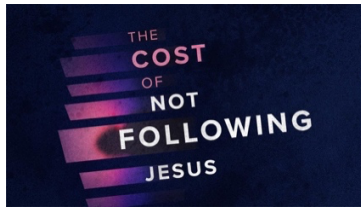
Pray

Write your own version of the Lord’s Prayer, making it relevant to the specific circumstances of your life. Pray it this week. Remember to modify it as things change, so that it doesn’t become rote.

Digging Deeper

How comfortable are you with asking God for what you really want?

- Read Luke 11:9a, and James 4:2. How can we reconcile these verses with the times when it seems God does not answer our prayers?
- Read Luke 18:1-8. What do we learn from this parable about always praying and not giving up?
- How do you feel about asking God repeatedly for the same request?



The Cost of Not Adding

Share a time in your life when a simple act of love led someone to come to know Christ.

Read Acts 2: 37 -47.

- What do we learn about the early church through this passage?
- Why do you think the church was growing so rapidly?

Read John 13: 34-35. Luke 15:2.

- How does our simple act of love teach others about Jesus?
- Why do you think the Pharisees and religious leaders were bothered by Jesus welcoming and eating with sinners?

Apply

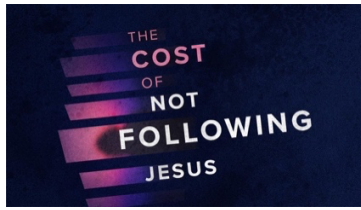
1. Discuss each of the following three principles and what that looks like in our church: *Everybody's Welcome, Nobody's Perfect, and Anything's Possible.*
2. Discuss each of the following three principles and what that looks like in your life:
3. What will you do this week to grow in one of those three areas?

Digging Deeper

Francis of Assisi once said *"Preach the Gospel, and if necessary, use words."*

What do you think Francis of Assisi meant?

Romans 3:22-23. How does knowing that "nobody's perfect," help us to love others more?



The Cost of Not - Celebrating

What is your favourite way to celebrate a new accomplishment?

Read Luke 15: 11-31, with particular focus on Verses 22-32.

Picture yourself as one of the servants standing near the father when he sees his younger son return. What thoughts and emotions do you experience?

Picture yourself as one of the servants standing near the father when he pleads with his older son to come inside. What thoughts and emotions do you experience?

What reality does the father point out to the older brother that the older brother is failing to understand?

Apply

1. Describe a time when you have felt like the older brother and what you learned from that experience.
2. Identify an area in your life where you fail (or refuse) to celebrate.
3. How can celebration be a more integral part of your life?

Digging Deeper

Identify the different kinds of things that we celebrate.

Which of those occasions are the most meaningful for you and why?

Share something that you recently celebrated and how you felt when celebrating.

What kind of things does the church celebrate and why?

○ Luke 15:11-31, with particular focus on Verses 22-32

- a. What was being celebrated and why?
- b. What was the conflict, and why was it present?
- c. What do you learn about God and about God's people (us) as a result of the conflict?

1. Discuss this quote from Richard Foster: ***"Celebration is central to all the Spiritual Disciplines. Without a joyful spirit of festivity the Disciplines become dull, death-breathing tools in the hands of modern Pharisees."***

What is the cost of not celebrating?