

The Salvation Army, Staple Hill
Sunday 12 May 2024

DON'T BE A CHICKEN!

What it really means to say 'yes' to Jesus

'As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him'.

(Matthew 4:18-22)

TO START WITH...

Think about Jesus' initial call to his disciples:

1. Did they have their faith, doubts, beliefs, and theology all sorted out when they were called?
2. Were they really 'good' people, or just ordinary, everyday people?
3. Why do you think Jesus called them? Why not the highly 'religious' people of the day?

JUMPING IN...

4. Some people think that being a Christian is all about what you believe; what do you think the first disciples believed at first?
5. What's the difference between 'belief' (what you think is true), and 'faith' (what you do as a result of what you believe).
6. Do we refer to the 'Christian belief' or the 'Christian faith'? Why do you think that is?

Prompt: What does James, the brother of Jesus say about this?

See **James 2:14-24**.

7. How much of the first disciples' lives would have been impacted by their decision to 'follow' Jesus?

'...when he [Jesus] saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them...'

(Matthew 5:1-2).

Throughout the gospels we see two group of people, 'the crowds' and 'the disciples'. One was a group of curious and interested onlookers, the other were fully committed followers...

8. How can we recognise the difference between those in the 'crowd' and those who are 'disciples' today?
9. How should 'disciples' relate to the 'crowds'?

DIVING DEEPER...

Read 'the Great Commission' from Matthew 28:16-20.

10. After spending three years living with Jesus 24/7, did all of the disciples have all of their doubts and questions answered? (see v17).
11. When Jesus sent the disciples out to 'make disciples' what exactly did he instruct them, and therefore us, to do? (see v20).

Read Matthew 16:24-25 and Romans 12:1-2.

12. Does the bible indicate that there are areas of your life which are 'off limits' to Jesus?
13. Are there areas of your life that are not yet fully submitted to the Lordship of Christ?

GOING FUTHER...

Teacher and pastor Dallas Willard writes in his book *The Great Omission*:

'Most problems in the contemporary churches can be explained by the fact that members have never decided to follow Christ'.

'We have generated a variety of religion to which obedience is not regarded as essential'.

That sounds pretty harsh! But, could it be true? What do you think?

AND FINALLY...

If you sense that the Holy Spirit is prompting you to say 'yes' to something, how will you respond?

I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed.

I have Holy Spirit power. The dye has been cast. I've stepped over the line.

The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of Jesus.

I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, and my future is secure.

**I am finished with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees,
colourless dreams, tame visions, mundane talking, cheap giving,
and dwarfed goals!**

**I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotion,
plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognised, praised,
regarded or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, love with
patience, uplifted by prayer, and labour with power.**

**My pace is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is
rough, my companions are few, but my guide is reliable, and my mission is clear.**

**I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back,
diluted, or delayed.**

**I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the present of the adversary,
negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or
meander in the maze of mediocrity.**

**I won't give up, shut up, or let up, until I've stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid
up, and preached up for the cause of Christ.**

**I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go 'till He comes, give 'till I drop, preach 'till all
know, and work 'till He stops me.**

**And when He comes to get His own, He'll have no problem recognizing me.
Because my colours will be clear**