

The Reluctant Saviour

Matthew 8:16-22

Conventional wisdom says we will grow our churches by tailoring our music, ambience and sermon topics to suit our culture. Jesus didn't get that memo...

Read Matthew 8:16-18

- Why were there crowds around Jesus (v16)?
- When Jesus saw them, what did he do (v18)?

Most of us would be thrilled to have the kind of crowds that Jesus attracted. And yet Jesus' reaction was so different from ours.

- Why did Jesus react to the crowds in that way, do you think?

Jesus not only tried to escape the crowds, he also attempted to challenge, or even discourage, individual people who seemingly wanted to follow him!

Read Matthew 8 v 19-20

- How would you describe the teacher of the law (v19)?
- What warning did Jesus give this would-be follower (v20)? Why might Jesus have needed to give this warning?
- What does Jesus' statement to the teacher tell us about what following him is like?
- How is Jesus' response different from how churches might treat "seekers"?
- What are the dangers of low-cost, low-expectation "discipleship"?

Read Matthew 8 v 21-22

- What request did the second prospective disciple make (v 21)? Does it seem reasonable to you?
- What is shocking about Jesus' answer (v 22)?
- In what two senses does Jesus use the phrase "dead" (v22)?
- Again, what does Jesus' response teach us about the nature of following Jesus?

Caring for and eventually burying your father is important. But Jesus' challenge is that even this is not as important as hearing his call and following him. We can only have one top priority; is it him? Jesus does not offer an easy life or a low-cost discipleship option. As the 20th-century German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it: "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."

Pray

Ask the Lord to reveal any of your priorities that compete with a complete devotion to Jesus. Pray that God would strengthen your desire to follow Jesus above all else.

Ask God for courage to tell others about Jesus without watering down the cost of following him. Pray these same things for GWAC.