



The Cost and Joy of Following Jesus Pt 4: He is Coming Back!

August 22, 2021

Text: Matthew 16:24-28 (emphasis on verse 27)

We've said repeatedly that peace, contentment and joy is a result of living our lives for Christ rather than for ourselves. And we've said why:

1. Because one's focus shifts to **Christ!** Our "light affliction" causes us to look at eternal things! (2 Cor 4:17-18)
2. Because through such we learn **Christ!** Suffering loss becomes our gain; it causes us to know Christ...the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings! (Php 3:7-11)
3. Because through such we are strengthened in **Christ!** Like Paul, we learn to be content in all states and that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us! (Php 4:11-13)
4. Because in so doing we follow Christ! For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross! (Heb 12:2)
5. Because through such, spiritual virtues are produced unto **Christ!** A life of cross-bearing causes us to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh; we crucify the flesh in Christ! (Gal 5:16-24)
6. Because denying ourselves brings happy blessings in **Christ!** Jesus said we are blessed when we are persecuted and reviled for His sake! Peter said we are "happy!" (Matt 5:10-12; 1 Pet 3:14)
7. Because losing our lives for His sake helps us bear fruit for **Christ!** (John 12:24-26)

Indeed, we have learned that:

1. Self-focus can result in worldly gain, often to the loss of so much more!
2. Our love for Christ must be far greater than our desire for worldly wins!
3. Worldly love leads to sin: lusts of the flesh, eyes, and the pride of life.
4. Therefore, let us tune our hearts for heaven...our souls to sing of the Savior!
5. Eternal things are worth far more than temporary things!

In our Text, it's as if Christ is saying, *"You think you are living by focusing on you, trying to hang on to your life. You are not; you are losing your life. You are dead. You must reorient your life and priorities around Me. You must lose your life for My sake to truly be alive. I am life; you can only be alive unto me!"*

But if we are honest...

- Living for another is hard, even living for Christ!
- The cares of the world and the riches of this life exert a very strong pull!
- Everything in us will rationalize why we are different...why our circumstances are unique!
- Living this way therefore requires total surrender to the Spirit of God...and overthrow of ourselves, our wants, and our desires!

So yes...living this way brings true joy. Are there any other motivations?

- Why do all this? Why live this way?
- Why deny yourself, discipline yourself, and take such a "narrow" way?
- Why endure all fleshly pain, the mocking of the world, the constant spiritual warfare?

In short, because of our Risen LORD. He is Coming Back!

1. We do for His honor!
2. We do it because He gave us grace...He saved us!
3. We do it because we are overwhelmed with gratitude!
4. We do it for eternal gain!
5. We do it to receive a crown!

Looking at our Verse:

1. As we consider verse 27, and next week verse 28, know that some see here a summation of two judgments: an eternal one, Christ's Second Coming (v26), and a historic one, judgment upon Jerusalem and the Temple in 70AD (v28). In other words, a *far fulfillment of judgment and a near fulfillment of judgment.*
2. Verse 27 reminds us of our LORD's coming again to judge the living and the dead!
 - **2 Timothy 4:1-4 (KJV)** *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*
 - **2 Corinthians 5:10 (KJV)** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*
3. He will come in glory and power and judge the nations!
 - **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 (KJV)** *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*
 - **Revelation 19:15-16 (KJV)** *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*
4. Believing in LORD's Second Coming is orthodox Christianity.

The Didache (1st Century)
 Watch for your life's sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ready, for you know not the hour in which our Lord will come. But come together often, seeking the things which are befitting to your souls: for the whole time of your faith will not profit you, if you are not made perfect in the last time. For in the last days false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate; for when lawlessness increases, they shall hate and persecute and betray one another, and then shall appear the world-deceiver as Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands, and he shall do iniquitous things which have never yet come to pass since the beginning. Then shall the creation of men come into the fire of trial, and many shall be made to stumble and shall perish; but those who

endure in their faith shall be saved from under the curse itself. And then shall appear the signs of the truth: first, the sign of an outspreading in heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet. And third, the resurrection of the dead -- yet not of all, but as it is said: "The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him." Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.

The Apostle's Creed (The earliest written forms date to the second century)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into the grave; The third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From there he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, The holy catholic church, The communion of saints, The forgiveness of sins, The resurrection of the body And the life everlasting. Amen.

Baptist 1689 Confession

God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ; to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

5. This truth gives us hope! It should drive our motivation as well. In fact, this is the context of verse 27!

- In the previous verses, Christ calls for and overarching life-commitment. He frames such commitment as conditional and essential for His true followers.
- Those who would come after Him must deny themselves daily, take up the crosses, be willing to lose their lives, and give up the world and all in it!
- Our LORD's point is this: such a "living sacrifice" (Rom 12:1-2) will be worth it. This truth might be hard to see in the midst of life's troubles, it will be made clear!
- One day, when the sky cracks and the trumpet sounds, the eyes of those devoted to Christ will fully open, and we will see Him as He is!

1 John 3:1-3 (KJV) *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

- **Knowing that Jesus is returning should motivate the believer. Knowing that eternal life has been granted unto us by grace and through faith should empower our joy and heartfelt service! Knowing that Christ is coming and will set all things aright should cause our willingness to die if necessary for His glory and honor!**
- Our lives should NOT be motivated by *getting*, but by the *Gospel!* *Ray Fournier wrote:*

But what would make us abandon our selfish desires, love Him more than ourselves, and want to live for His glory instead of our own? The answer is, His amazing, self-sacrificing love and undeserved kindness that He expressed for us on the cross.

Remember, if you are His, it was His love and kindness that led you to repentance and faith in Him. In the same way, by being reminded of the depths of His love for you, you will have more than enough motivation to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and live by His Word... In order for us to do this, we need to focus on our primary motivation for every good work; the love of God expressed to us through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹

Beloved, our LORD is returning! We don't know when, but He is. And what a glorious Day it will be.

Acts 1:11 (KJV) *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (KJV) *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

The hymn writer wrote:

1 Sing the wondrous love of Jesus,
Sing His mercy and His grace;
In the mansions bright and blessed
He'll prepare for us a place.

2 While we walk the pilgrim pathway
Clouds will overspread the sky;
But when trav'ling days are over
Not a shadow, not a sigh.

3 Let us then be true and faithful,
Trusting, serving ev'ry day;
Just one glimpse of Him in glory

Will the toils of life repay.

4 Onward to the prize before us!
Soon His beauty we'll behold;
Soon the pearly gates will open—
We shall tread the streets of gold.

Refrain:

**When we all get to heaven,
what a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus,
we'll sing and shout the victory!**

Even if He tarries, the news is still good! We, who believe, will all go and meet Him!

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 (KJV) *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

¹ Ray Fournier, *Education Reformation*, 2013.

Philippians 1:19-23 (KJV) For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, **20** According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. **21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. **22** But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. **23** For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better...

The news is not all good though. If you do not know Him, you will face a different kind of judgment:

Acts 17:30-31 (KJV) And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: **31** Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

John 5:28-29 (KJV) Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Hebrews 9:27 (KJV) And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Revelation 20:11-15 (KJV) And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

So please, repent and believe the Gospel! Share the Gospel with others! He's returning!

Mark 1:15 (KJV) And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Mark 16:15 (KJV) And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (KJV) Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; **2** By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. **3** For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; **4** And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Friends, we give Him ourselves because He has promised us so much!

2 Peter 1:4 (KJV) Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Mark 10:29-30 (KJV) And Jesus answered and said, *Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*

John 3:15-16 (KJV) *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Revelation 2:10 (KJV) *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* (Smyrna)

2 Timothy 4:6-8 (KJV) *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

Therefore, let us be Resolved to serve “He who is to come” and Rejoice!

Revelation 1:8 (KJV) *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

2 Corinthians 4:7-18 (KJV) *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. 8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you. 13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; 14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Jesus is Coming, and His reward is with Him!

Revelation 19:6-9 (KJV) *And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God*

omnipotent reigneth. **7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. **8** And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. **9** And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Revelation 22:12-13 (KJV) *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. **13** I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*

Even so, come LORD Jesus! (Rev 22:20)