

CHURCH PLANTING SUNDAY

So, today is officially the first Church Planting Sunday put on by Acts 29. So, if you aren't aware, you are currently sitting in an Acts 29 church plant. We planted Fathom 6 years ago with a network called Acts 29.

- Acts 29 is not a denomination; it's a global network for churches serious about church planting.
- We're made up of nearly 700 member churches (and counting!)
 - in more than 50 countries.
 - And on any given Sunday,
 - our members are worshipping
 - in nearly 30 languages!
- And by being a member of an Acts 29 church, you are part of Acts 29's global community of healthy, multiplying churches.
- We have hundreds of church planters in our pipeline
 - and expect our global network of churches
 - to nearly double in size over the next few years!

Just last year, during COVID, we celebrated 6,500 conversions in Acts 29 churches globally as more people made decisions to follow Jesus!

So, check out this video about Acts 29.

VIDEO

So, this is who we are and who we're a part of. And I'd love for you to join me in actively praying that God would raise up a church to plant out of Fathom as soon as God would allow us to!

Let's pray. [Pray for church planting.]

INTRODUCE

Alright, if you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to Matthew chapter 8. Matthew 8. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to Matthew 8. If you open one of the hard-backed black bibles under your seat, Matthew 8 will be on page **813**.

INTRODUCTION

So, I recently did a little car shopping.

- I don't do this often...
- most of my vehicles have been hand-me-down rides.

Like, I've been driving a 1999 Toyota 4Runner for a while...

- Nice ride!
- Loved it!
- It was camel-brown. Ok?
- I named it Charlie...Charlie Brown.

Ok...but remember, this was a vehicle from the 1990s.

And when people younger than me would get into my 4Runner... they'd sometimes laugh out loud at me:

- because Charlie Brown...
 - which was built last millennium mind you...
- didn't have a plug in for an iPhone.
- And we were nowhere close to a Bluetooth connection! Ok?

So, for me to listen to my iPhone,

I had a miracle device called a cassette tape adaptor.

SLIDE

You remember these things?

- People laughed at me!
- It's a little cassette tape
 - If you're under 25...
 - there used to be these things called cassettes...
 - it was music...
 - recorded on miles and miles of durable analog tape...
 - which you would often find in bushes,
 - or strewn about in gutters.

But the cassette would go into my tape deck

- with a cable coming out
- that I plug into the headphone jack into my phone.
- Ghetto. Ok?

BLANK SLIDE

Well, Charlie got totaled in an accident...

And we decided it was time to retire Charlie, and get me a new whip.

So, I'm online doing a little car shopping.

- And if you're over 65...
- There's this thing called the internet...
- You remember going to car lots?
- Yeah, it's like that, but on a screen!

So, I'm online...and on the website you can create your own vehicle...

- so, I'm adding the features I want,
- and picking the color,
- and do I want the off-road package?
 - Trying to remember the last time I went 4-wheeling?
 - Well, you never know when you'll need it...
 - so, absolutely I want to off-road package!

So, I'm building it out,

- and at the end of the process,
 - when I'm expecting to see the price,
 - it doesn't show the cost...
- but instead, it says, "*Call for Pricing.*"

Now, how many of you know

- that when the prices aren't even listed...
- you don't want to know. Right?

Well, I called...and wow! I mean, wow!

And on the phone with the dealership I asked the question we all ask:

Is that your best price?

- And the guy laughed at me!
- Apparently cars are expensive!

And I had to back off on some of those options,

- because I wasn't willing or ready
- to pay the price for that truck.

TRANSITION

Today's sermon is called **SLIDE IS THAT YOUR BEST PRICE?**

What I want us to talk about from Matthew 8

- is the idea that many of us want to follow Jesus...
- but the question is:
 - are we willing to pay the price to follow Jesus.

We often wanna haggle with him asking, *"is that your best price?"*

- But if we actually want to follow Jesus,
- we have to count the cost,
- and pay the price that he sets.

You see, what you'll discover about Jesus' teaching is that he makes it very clear that following him comes at an extreme cost.

- Jesus did not sugar coat his message.
- He wanted you to understand that
- **yes, salvation is free...but it is not cheap.**

So, let's look at our text today where we'll see a couple of guys essentially asking Jesus, *"Is that your best price?"*

And Jesus' responses are really important.

Matthew 8 starting in verse 18:

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MATTHEW 8:18

[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."

EXPLAIN: SCRIBE

Now, this is an interesting man to approach Jesus, because he was a scribe. In the Bible a scribe was an educated interpreter of Jewish customs and laws.

- They were scholars,
- seminarians,
- even teachers.
- And very often they will be opponents against Jesus.

But this scribe seems to be a potential disciple...

Not an antagonist there to test or trap him.

And this gives Jesus an opportunity to teach what true discipleship must entail.

- You see, the scribe makes a bold commitment in his statement.
 - *"I'll follow you wherever you go."*
- It would seem this scribe is offering complete loyalty.
- Essentially, *"I'll pay whatever price you set."*

Now, in Jewish practice, a disciple chose which rabbi he wished to follow.

- This scribe has likely examined several other rabbis to follow,
- and selected Jesus as the one he wished to study under.

Kinda like how most high school students get into colleges.

- They decide and apply at the colleges they want,
 - Harvard, Yale, CCU (the Harvard of the west!)
- and then they are either accepted or rejected.

This is what this guy is doing. *"I'm picking you as the college of my choice."*

But Jesus functions differently...cause in the gospels...

Jesus calls his disciples, they do not call him

Look at verse 20:

MATTHEW 8:20

[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."

EXPLAIN

Well, to our eyes it may look like this scribe had what it took to count the cost to follow Jesus. But Jesus obviously sees a halfhearted commitment in the man.

- Jesus illustrates the extent to which one must go
- to be his follower
- by pointing out the creatures have homes,
- but that the Son of Man has no such home.

Jesus is essentially challenging the man's statement,

- *"I will follow you wherever you go,"*
 - with,
- *"Ok...will you go this far?"*

Jesus does not want shallow commitments but demands that the one who truly "follows" him counts the cost AND makes a radical commitment.

WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING?

You see, in those days, AS IN OURS, a lot of people followed Jesus because of what he could do for them.

He was a miracle worker:

- he could heal the sick,
- calm storms,
- and multiply food.

His teachings brought them comfort,

- *“Oh, I love the prodigal son story...it just brings me to tears.”*
- *“And then there’s the one about him knowing the number of hairs on my head...that just makes me feel so awesome!”*

And then there were some religious students, and even teachers

- who followed him because it was a way
- of substantiating their own authority—
- building their own resumes.
 - You see, in those days,
 - if you wanted to gain credibility as a teacher,
 - you attached yourself to other famous teachers.

So, many followed Jesus for these reasons.

APPLICATION

And today, many people come to Jesus because they know he can:

- help their marriages,
- bless their finances,
- relieve their burdens,

- make them successful,
- sometimes even heal their bodies.

And yes, he can do all those things!

But here's the question:

- What if obedience to Jesus
- leads you away from all those things?
 - What if it leads you to a place where you don't even have a place to lay your head down?
- Are you following Jesus for comfort, or for a cross?

Jesus teaches us in these verses:

- If following Jesus leads you away from even having a place to call home, will you go?
- Is he enough...even without your comforts?

Jesus was not into *"follow me for your best life now"* invitations.

He was into *"I'm enough for you even if you have the worst life"* invitations.

TRANSITION

So, this first man is promising too much!

And Jesus points out that he hasn't counted the cost.

But the next man is different. Look at verse 21:

MATTHEW 8:21

[21] Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

EXPLAIN: DEAD DAD

So, this is another disciple who's a part of the larger circle of people following Jesus.

- At this point the 12 disciples or apostles haven't all been called.
- So, when you see the word "disciple" here
 - we're just talking about someone
 - who has been following Jesus,
 - listening to his teaching,
- but now, this man wants to become more official.
- He wants to commit.

But he has a qualifier. He wants to go and bury his father.

Now, we do not know whether the father is near death or has already died.

- If he's already dead it could be a request for a few hours.
- If he's near death, it could be a few years to care for his father.

Additionally, some scholars say

- this wasn't simply about going to his dad's funeral
- to pay his respects or to leave him unburied,
- but that it was about going home to obtain his inheritance.

He wanted to follow Jesus, but he also wanted his inheritance.

So, this might be a valid request...

- but I'm not sure Jesus' response would make sense if it were...
- which makes me think this man might be wanting his inheritance.

Look at verse 22:

MATTHEW 8:22

[22] And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

EXPLAIN

Now, Jesus' response here is even more shocking than his first one! Bro can't even get his dad into a decent grave?!?

But Jesus is doing something intentional here.

- Jesus often used sayings like this for their shock value
- and here he wants to demonstrate
- the extent of a total commitment to himself,
- which took absolute priority
- even over the greatest of obligations such as one's parents.

He says things similar to this, like in Luke 14:

SLIDE LUKE 14:26

[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."

BLANK SLIDE

Now, these sayings seem harsh.

- *"I've gotta hate my family?"*
- *"I can't I even bury my dad?"*
- *"This seems pratty harsh, Jesus."*

But Tim Keller calls this “comparative hate”, not “active hate”.

We aren't to hate our family actively, but comparatively.

- You wanna know the price of following Jesus?
- It's a devotion and love and obedience and reverence
- that makes every other relationship
- comparatively look like hate.

ILLUSTRATION: PET

JD Greear illustrates like this: If you have a pet, I imagine you love that pet.

- Unless it's a cat...
- and then you're stuck with it,
- just waiting for it to die,
- so you can get a real pet
 - like a dog
 - or a hamster
 - or a lizard...
- goodness, anything except a cat.

But you love your pet and you're committed to it.

Some of you spend a lot of money taking care of it.

But I would imagine that as committed as you are to that pet,

- your love for your pet pales in comparison
- to your love for your children,
- or your spouse,
- or a best friend.

And if you just had to think about that, that's not good!

But for most of you,

- if you had some situation
- where you had to choose between the wellbeing of your pet
- or the life of your kid,
- it's no contest.

You're committed to your pet,

but compared to the intensity of your commitment to your child,

your commitment to your pet seems like hate.

APPLICATION: HATE/LOVE

- He's not calling you to hate mom and dad.
- He's not calling you to neglect your family as they die.

He's saying,

- *"if you want to be my follower,*
- *the price is loyalty to me over everything.*
- *Your love for me*
- *will make every other love in your life*
- *look like hate comparatively."*

And in the greatest irony...loving Jesus this way

will ACTUALLY make your love for your family

deeper and more meaningful!

TRANSITION

You see,

- the first man, the scribe...promises too much
 - what he cannot deliver...
- while the second promises too little
 - what he does not want to sacrifice.

He wanted to follow Jesus, but didn't want to give up that inheritance.

And so, he asks, *"IS THAT YOUR BEST PRICE?"*

But Jesus says,

"Are you willing to follow me if it means giving that up?"

APPLICATION

And here's the question for you:

- Are there ANY limits to your obedience?
- Is there ANY place where you say,
 - *"I cannot...no, I will not walk away from that?"*

More practically:

- Is there anything you know God's told you to stop doing...
 - that you're still doing? (some relationship, some habit)
- OR, is there anything he's told you to start doing...
 - That you're not doing yet?
 - Maybe it's tithing or generosity;
 - or obedience to some call.
 - Maybe it's engaging in some ministry;
 - or it could be as simple as committing to church...

A follower of Jesus has forsaken all that Jesus has forbidden...
and begun practicing all that Jesus commanded.

Not perfectly...but progressively!

ILLUSTRATION: MASTER DRIVE

You see,

- when I was 15,
- I got my driver's permit,
- and enrolled into Master Drive,
- which was the driving class in my area.
 - It was a series of classes and bookwork,
 - but it also included on-street lessons
 - with a driving instructor.

And we would always drive in one of their cars,

- which were mid 90s PT Cruisers...
- all blinged out with Master Drive logos...
- so, you knew you were driving next to a student driver.

I never felt dumber

than driving in a red PT Cruiser

with *Master Drive* plastered on the side.

And these were completely normal cars, with one exception.

- On the passenger's side,
- where the driving instructor would sit,
- they had installed another brake pedal.

And so, we're out doing our on-street instructions and who was in charge?

- Well, it was me!
- I was the one driving.
- I was in charge...mostly.

But anytime the instructor wanted to,

- she could override and veto every decision
- by just slamming on that brake.

APPLICATION

Many of you are driving around with Jesus.

- The question is, "Who owns the brake pedal?"
 - Is it you or him?
- Maybe you took Carrie Underwood's advice and said:
 - *"Jesus take the wheel!"*

But you've installed another brake pedal just in case you need to veto him.

DELAYED OBEDIENCE

Here's another question: Are you delaying obedience?

- You think, *"I'll do that later."*
- *"When I get older I'll follow Jesus fully."*
- *"After I get settled in my career."*

Jesus says that you can't have him and delayed obedience.

It's either full surrender or no surrender.

- He says, "Follow me," to this man.
- But he sets the price.

I think so many of us keep believing that we're gonna follow Jesus...

- we're gonna to count the cost...
- we're gonna to start taking this more seriously.
- But...we'll start tomorrow.

Funny.

- Yesterday, you said that about today.
- Last year, you said that about this year.
- Following Jesus isn't a tomorrow thing.
- Following Jesus isn't a yesterday thing.
- It's a today thing!

You wanna know what the price of following Jesus is?

The cost is today! It's saying, *"I'll put you first TODAY, Lord."*

CONCLUSION

Shallow Christians are not accepted by Jesus as disciples until they have counted the cost and deepened their commitment.

- These two men may be more sincere
- than many who attend churches today,
- yet Jesus sends them away
- with a startling demand for a deeper surrender to him.

This is how Jesus calls people to follow him.

- He doesn't mince words.
 - Take up your cross.
 - Hate your father and mother.
 - Renounce everything.

It was almost like he wanted to turn people away!

- But of course, that wasn't his goal!
- He wanted us to count the cost...
- to think about what he's asking...
- and not attempt to use Jesus as a get-out-of-hell-free card
- or divine genie to help us through problems.

APPLICATION

And that's what I want today, also. I want you carefully to count the cost.

You see, there's this thinking that's showed up all over the body of Christ that says this: *Jesus I will follow you if...*

- *"Jesus, I'll follow you if it makes me successful.*
- *I'll follow you if you make me happy.*
- *I'll follow you if I'm wealthy.*
- *Jesus, I'll follow you if I get the desires of my heart."*

But that's what I've been saying this whole sermon:

Yo, that's asking, *"IS THAT YOUR BEST PRICE?"*

This passage is telling us that Jesus will not be a means to an end.

- He must be the end himself.
- He must be the finish line.
- He must be the prize.
- He must be your upmost desire.
- It's Jesus and Jesus alone!

ILLUSTRATION: WEDDINGS

I officiate lots of wedding for people. I've done many of yours here!
But here's what always happens after the ceremony:

- while people are munching on appetizers...
- waiting for dinner...
- waiting for cake...
- waiting for dancing...

There's always like 12-hours of photos!

- But they get the bride all set up
 - and they fuss with the dress,
 - getting that train all spread out correctly,
 - and the flowers right,
 - Maybe even touching up makeup a bit from the tears she shed during the ceremony...
 - my part of the wedding!
- And then they bring in the groom,
 - and the parents,
 - and the wedding party.
- And they position them all around the bride.

And often you'll hear the photographer say,

- *"Hey, best man, can you move to the right a bit."*
- *"Hey, let's get Grandma a bit closer."*
- *"No, uncle Ted, you can't be in every photo!"*
 - *Stop creeping in there!"*

What they're saying is,

- *“you are all going to revolve around the bride.*
- *The bride is not going to pivot and adjust for you.”*

ENDING

And I want to encourage some people today...

- that the price of following Jesus...
 - is not asking God to revolve around my life.
- But instead, I'm putting Christ at the center.
- I'm orbiting my life around his.
- I'm saying, *“God, I want to position myself in relation to you.”*

It's the price of following. It's the cost of discipleship.

And just like he did 2000 years ago, Jesus still picks his disciples.

- And if you're here today, and you want to follow him,
- the invitation stands.
- But the cost is everything. Total surrender.
- Following Jesus isn't a part of your life...it is your life.

G.K. Chesterton famously said, *“Christianity has not so much been tried and found wanting, as it has been found difficult and left untried.”*

Yes, it is costly. But let's be clear, the cost of non-discipleship is as much or even more.

You shouldn't be asking God, IS THAT YOUR BEST PRICE?

You should be asking yourself, can I afford NOT to follow?

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Anyabwile, Thabiti. *Matthew 8:18-34*.
- Greear, JD, *Take Up Your Cross*.
- Osborne, Grant R. Matthew: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.