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Luke

Chapter 9 - A Peculiar Kind of Calling

An Unprecedented Commitment (vs. 57-62)

Luke 9:57-62: As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, “I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.” Another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.” But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

This chapter opens up with the phrase, “And He called the twelve.” It really is a chapter about the calling; an interesting call it is. The call to be selfless. The call to clearly hold others in higher esteem than yourself, the call to be willing to sacrifice. “Take up your cross, follow Me,” Jesus will say to the disciples. And throughout the chapter, we see this counterintuitive mindset in which we're called to, but it seems to be so efficacious, it's irresistible. We can't help but come. It is the calling of God. And the calling of God, as I have looked at this so many different ways, seems to be literally the beginning of the personal relationship with God. I oftentimes hear people say the phrase or use the phrase, “You can have a personal relationship with God.” They go, “Well, where does that start?” And it really starts with the calling. And you then have to commit to the calling in order for the relationship to come. You think about Abraham as God calls him out. He had to commit. He had to commit to come out. He had to commit to do the things that God did. And once he did, then God reveals Himself to him and begins to show him things beyond. Jesus will say in John 15, “You are My friends if you do what I say.” And so, we

realize that there is a part of this in which we make a commitment to the call. We hear the calling. Like John 10 says, that the shepherd calls and the sheep hear His voice. And then what's the next phrase? "And they come." There's a commitment that takes place in the coming. And once again, it's something that's really inexplicable. Why is it that you would drop everything? How is it you could drop your nets and everything that you've known beforehand? And yet, now you don't even think about those things anymore. And it really is an all-or-nothing thing, this whole thing of commitment. You want to have a personal relationship with God? Commit.

The same thing is true with the marriage ceremony, right? The one has to commit to the other in order for there to be a relationship. The person says, "I'm not really wanting to commit." I don't think you have a relationship. So, as we come to this, we begin to see, as this chapter ends, it will be talking about the commitment aspect. Who are committed? And what Christ will do in these ending statements of this particular chapter, and as we've been talking about, Luke actually kind of goes through a

sequence of events to pull everything together to reveal that this is all about the calling of God; and it's about a peculiar kind of calling. I mean, there's nothing like this in all the world. And so, the following of Christ is clearly different, and one of the reasons why, when you come to Christ, the first thing that you have to do is repent, "think differently about." And it is a different way of thinking. I have to agree. It's a strange thing that you no longer think the same way you had thought before. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away; all things have become new. As Jesus will put it, in such simple forms, you have to be born again. That's just a total change.

So, we come to this Luke 9:57, as Luke will actually place three individuals in a row together as he begins to explain to us the commitment that Christ is revealing. And Christ reveals this in such a wonderful way. I just want to say at the very onset of this that when we're looking at these individuals, what we're really seeing are those that are not committed and why it is that they're not committed.

And so, we'll be looking at three different kinds of personalities.

If I could just kind of summarize it for you, we're going to be looking at one that is "cavalier." We're going to be looking at another that is "cautious," and we're going to be looking at another that seems to, and we would perceive to be the one that actually is the good one, he's "caring for others." But he's caring for others at the cost of not caring for God, and thus he is not committed. And so, as we look at these three, the cavalier, the cautious, and those that are caring for others above God, what we're going to see is that Christ is really revealing when we oftentimes say, "I'm going to follow You no matter what," we really haven't thought this thing out. And we're also going to be looking at a passage that is parallel to this in Luke 14, in which Luke will be really emphasizing this in a deeper way. And I think it's important for us to pull those two texts together.

If you begin with me in Luke 9:57, it actually begins this way,

"As they were going along the road..."

You almost feel like it's just a normal day. They're just heading in a particular direction, and then someone pops up a question or pops up a statement, saying, "I'm going to go with You no matter what."

And so, the phrase is,

"As they were going along the road, someone said to Him,
"I will follow You wherever You go.""

There's a certain dogma, certain certainty in this, and what we're really dealing with is this initial desire. Perhaps it was by virtue of seeing the great miracles in which Christ had done. Of course, it's very inspiring, the things, the healing, raising from the dead, demonics being removed! I mean, I'd want to follow that. What an amazing event that is taking place. But what we're going to see is, though, the initial desire is there; the fortitude and the character doesn't follow. And Christ is going to be talking about that fortitude and character within the text. So, at first, you have this one that gives this sense of dogma, and "Master, I'm going to follow You, not only now, but wherever You go. It doesn't matter, wherever

You go.” Of course, the person is not taking into consideration a lot of things.

And Jesus throws out, and you almost feel like Jesus is just trying to discourage the guy,

(Luke 9:58) “And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.””

His remark is, “You just haven’t thought this one through.”

It is interesting that Luke, of course, writes this gospel, also writes the Book of Acts. And one of the individuals that we follow in the Book of Acts is a young man by the name of John Mark. And Luke records this particular incident in which John Mark actually wanted to go along with Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journeys, related to Barnabas. What we also know about this, and if you were to go on the Book of Acts in particular in Chapter 12, you’ll see that John Mark is from a fairly wealthy family. The reason we know that is that his mother owns this large house, and the reason we know it’s a large house is it has gates on the outside, and the

church is meeting upstairs, which at that particular juncture is over 3,000 people. Now, I don't know if everybody's there, but the church had grown exponentially because of Pentecost. And we know she has a maid that comes and answers the door. We know that Mark kind of tells on himself in the Gospel of Mark in which we see this wealthy individual running away at a particular point in time. So, just to kind of describe him as a poor little rich kid that is in a scenario in which probably spoiled to some degree wealthy, privileged, and a privileged household, there he is. He wants to go with Barnabas and Paul, so he does, but it doesn't last long. And by the time you come to Acts 13, he's out of there. And the way that Paul actually describes that particular incident, he says that he abandoned the work. So, I don't know if it was as much about fear as it was that he didn't like the work involved. But somewhere along the line, he didn't stick with him. Now, later on, Barnabas wanted him to go, and Paul says, "I don't want this guy going with me. Can't depend on him." But the way it turns out ultimately in 2 Timothy 4 is, that Paul will ultimately say, "Bring John Mark. He's shown himself useful to me." So, we know that

he eventually grew up, which I would say a lot of people never do. But in Mark's case, he grew up and he showed himself faithful in that respect. The point of the matter is that he's an interesting example of somebody that says he wants to do something but doesn't have the fortitude or the character to endure the hardship, the work. And I remember as a kid, I think I was about 5 or 6, my dad was painting the house, and up in Illinois, we had a detached garage. And I told him, "I'll paint the garage." And he said, "I think that's too much work for you." I said, "No, I can paint the garage." So, I started painting the garage. I think I got about 8 feet. And I'm not really sure how tall I got. Maybe about 4. But I was worn out. That garage somehow grew, because when I first looked at it, it didn't look like that big of a job. But you start doing something, you realize that "Maybe I bit off more than I could chew, and maybe I said something that I didn't know that I could do."

So, what you have here is kind of a sense of maybe naivety that's involved. And I think there are people that make decisions not based on understanding what all is

involved. I mean, Jesus has been very clear to His own disciples, "You're going to follow Me. You're going to have to take up a cross to follow Me." Now, even then, they're having a hard time grasping that concept. In fact, to such an extent that in Luke 9:46, they're arguing about who's going to be the greatest. Now, that's after He told them they're going to have to take up the cross; that's after He told them that they're going to need to be a servant. So, part of this is ignorance; it's part of an impetuous nature that comes into play. But also, part of this as well is a sense of inflated ego. It's you saying that you can do something in your own power and your own strength, not unlike Peter, which will ultimately say, "I'll go no matter what. Everybody else is going to leave You, but I'm going to stay there." And there was a kind of inflated ego in stating that. And ultimately what Jesus is saying is that you can't come with your inflated ego and you can't come with your naivety. Commitment goes beyond this, and you begin to realize that there is this thing that I have to release, and that is my own idealism of myself. And it's unrealistic expectations that I have that's impractical and quixotic in our life, and we're inflated in our extravagance.

We feel like we know what to do, and it kind of reminds me of the Moabites in the Book of Jeremiah, which they virtually said, “We can war with anybody,” and God goes, “You haven't even fought yet.” And I think a lot of people perceive themselves to be great even before they've done anything. Some of that might be video games. They've at least been there in a video game. And I think God has reminded us, “You need to think this thing through.” And I think there is a thoughtlessness that comes into play, and Jesus is bringing this person back down to reality, that this decision is something that's deep, it's something that's real, it's going to be demanding, and you're going to need to take that into consideration. Once again, we're going to look at this in Chapter 14 as well.

So, as we come to the next person, we not only have in this particular example, verse 57 and 58, the person who is cavalier in their thinking, and once again, surface and superficial, but now we have a person that seems to be willing to follow, and yet Jesus is actually calling him to this. So, the first was volunteering. The second is dealing with one who is called by Christ to follow.

And verse 59 reads this way,

(Luke 9:59) "And He said to another, “Follow Me.” ...

It's an imperative within the text.

"... But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.””

Now, the phrase, “permit me first” is telling us that there is another priority in front of this calling. “First,” which means that you have something that is of greater importance on this person's mind than actually going with Christ. And the whole concept of permitting seems to be within it an inferring of turning. And so, the person is saying, “I'm unwilling to turn yet,” which would be committed, right? “Because I have something else that's very important to me.” Now, when we look at this, it seems altruistic in some respects and very benevolent or kind in the sense that he wants to be responsible, perhaps, in burying his father. That's a good thing. What we perceive, I would say inappropriately is that his father is maybe dead at this point, and has not been buried, so he's just a body laying on the ground. And that's not the point. The point is it hasn't happened yet, but he wants to

wait until his father dies. So, he wouldn't be with Christ at this particular juncture if his father had died and hadn't been buried yet. But the point is that he's wanting to see this thing through. And the problem with that is that what you have is a kind of feel of inflexibility, of placing plans above the call. All the way through this particular passage, what you're going to feel is a sense of urgency. You know that passage in Hebrews, "Today, if you hear the Spirit's voice," today? There is a sense of urgency. And when God calls, when He says, "Come," when He says, "Go," He means now. And the hesitation is that which really displays another priority. And in this particular case, there is another priority. And in this case, you have a person that is cautious, calculating, and I would say under the guise of somebody that may be possibly respectful. "Oh, this man just wants to be respectful of his father." You have to take in consideration that he's obsessed with the need to button up things. A little obsessed. You know, you've got to have everything in order, "The planets have to align before I follow God." And quite frankly, in the process of burial is also the process of wills and distribution of inheritance. And it's in the process of that

you begin to focus on the benefits of death rather than the proclamation of life.

This is very interesting because what Jesus will say within the text is,

(Luke 9:60) “But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.””

Now, what's interesting is Jesus makes mention of His proclamation of the kingdom of God in Luke 7:22, “the dead are raised.” And what's interesting is, I think oftentimes we tie ourselves to the benefits of death, and we neglect the proclamation of life. And Christ is saying, “You've got your priorities mixed up.” You're wanting to make sure that everything falls into place by virtue of taking care of yourself. And if you remember, as He called the disciples at the very beginning of this text, when He calls them out, He says, “Don't take anything with you.” So, that would kind of mess up the whole inheritance thing, wouldn't it?

I remember first getting into ministry, and I remember thinking, “You know what I want to do? I want to get into

ministry. I want to open my own business. I'm going to take care of myself, and people won't have to give any money. And I'm going to support myself solely.” And I remember thinking that way. And that in and of itself was probably not a terrible heart. But the problem is that I'm perceiving that I have to do all these things to take care of myself before the calling. And when God called the disciples, He just said, “Come.” Now, at that point, they dropped their nets, and they just followed. So, they weren't thinking and planning through how they're going to support themselves, because our walk is we're walking by faith, not by sight, and we're trusting Him; we're not trusting ourselves. And it takes you into a whole different realm. It's a whole different world. Besides the fact that it's good for people to give to the Lord. So, as Paul will ultimately say to those that are in ministry, “You need to get your living from the ministry.” Why would he say such a thing? I know people say, “Well, Paul was a tent maker.” Yeah, you don't understand. The only reason he was making tents was because nobody was supporting him and his support hadn't come in. As you continue to read the text, when the support came in, he devoted himself

fully to the ministry. So, are there times you have to make tents? Yes, there are times you're going to have to do that. But it's not about me fixing everything in order for me to get into ministry. It's about the power of the call that is so compelling that I have to drop everything and go. There is no planning within this. And what Jesus is clearly saying is this commitment thing is not a cautious thing. I mean, clearly you have to count the cost, but it's not about you making sure everything's shored up in order to be ministering. Once again, go back to the whole concept of missions; oftentimes it's based on that quality rather than, "Did God call you?" "Yes." "When did He call you?" "Today." "Go! Go!" And it's just the obedience that He's looking for and the trusting in Him. So, you have the cautious within this and those that are fixated on, I would say, the benefits of death rather than the proclamation of life.

And then if you look in verse 61,

(Luke 9:61) "Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.""

Once again, now this very seemingly gracious individual that wants to follow Christ, yet he has those that he's concerned about at home. And I guess in some way what I'm about to say seems antithetical to what I was preaching in the first service, because clearly, I was preaching in the first service that you have a responsibility to your family. But in this particular case, you have a responsibility to your family unless God calls you to something else. And there will be a time that God's going to say, "Forsaking all others." And He's going to call you to do what He's called you to do. And there have been many that have just simply obeyed and believed God will take care of those that He has placed in their care.

So, the passage reads this way,

"Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye..."

And the phrase here is not just simply saying goodbye, but it's also somebody that's going to the household and kind of placing the house in order, making sure that they communicate with those in the household about how they feel about going into ministry. I've seen some

individuals, they knew they were called, they felt like they were called in the ministry, and they said, “Well, I talked to this person in my household, or I talked to that person, and they didn't think that I should.” And I said, “That's because God didn't call them. He called you.” And I realize, talk about a personal relationship, it's a personal call, isn't it?

I mean, you look at John 21, and Peter's going, “What about this guy?” And Jesus goes, “Forget about him. I'm telling you what you're going to do.” And I think so many times, perhaps, we're just trying to get the sense of our consensus from those that we love, because these are the people that we've grown up with. And He says, “You've got to put behind you that relationship,” and I emphasize “put behind you,” “And you've got to look forward to.” Our ministry really is, and the issue is not as much about where you've come from; the issue is about where you're going with our faith. And when He calls you, you have to go.

So, Jesus says this in verse 62,

(Luke 9:62) “But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back...”

There's actually a phrase that makes reference to that. And it says, “No one looking back plows straight.” And the fact of the matter is that when your thoughts are with something else and someplace else rather than following Christ, because as Paul would say, “Forgetting those things which are behind, I press on towards the mark of the high calling.” So, there is a calling in which it doesn't matter.

And here again, let me just kind of throw this out. The example that He gives is a good example because we all will go to work without a thought of our family as we focus on the job and will not be with our family while we're working. But when God calls us to do something, it's like, “Oh, horrors, you left your family and you didn't...” Yeah, you went to work and did the same thing. So, it's an interesting example that He gives in this respect.

I said there was a parallel to this, and clearly, it's in Luke 14. If you look with me in Luke 14, as Luke will kind of

hound on this message. You have to be committed. You have to be committed to a point in which you're not fake and cavalier, you're not naive, you're not arrogant about the commitments that you make. And you can't be overly cautious in the sense that everything has to be planned out. And really, there has to be a discarding of what other people think or how they influence you. The calling is so personal and it's so powerful that you just have to do what God told you to do. "Go!" And you see this, whether it's with Abraham, whether it's with Moses, whether it's with David; it doesn't matter who you're seeing in the text. Each one had to go regardless. It was just the power of the call.

So, as you look in Luke 14, this whole chapter is really about prioritizing and what's valuable. It's interesting how it opens up with the Pharisees, and they don't think that you should heal on the Sabbath. Of course, Jesus is going to heal on the Sabbath. But Jesus will make this statement. It's a very interesting statement.

It says in verse 5,

(Luke 14:5) “And He said to them, “Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?””

In other words, “You would forego the whole Sabbath thing if, in fact, your son fell in the hole or a possession, an ox, fell in the hole. So, what is this really about?” And the point of the matter is that you are vigilant and you're diligent to care for what is yours. But would you be that vigilant to care for what is God's? That's an interesting question that actually begins to be posed throughout the passage; of course, the fact that man is concerned about his own position and the perception in which other people have of him.

He'll go on to say,

(Luke 14:11) “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

In verses 12 through 14, you know, we're concerned about reciprocity and return. You know, we don't mind doing work, but we'd like to get something out of it. So, if we can get something out of it, then we'll gladly do that. Once again, that just shows poor values, because our

value is more based on, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” So, we're just really mixed up.

If you look in verses 15 and as it goes through 24, there's this particular incident in which one sets the table when he calls people to join him at his table. And there are many excuses that are given.

(Luke 14:18) “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land...’”

“Sorry. I have to survey my possessions.” It's all about that.

And another person, it's about his contraptions, “I got these brand new ox or car or whatever. And so, I've got to go polish it.”

(Luke 14:20) “Another one said, ‘I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.’”

And that really kind of gets personal because what you're dealing with is a personal relationship. And what we're talking about is, “You're expecting me to put this invitation above the personal relationship?” And God

goes, “Yep.” So, ultimately, what we’re dealing with is, would you not make this fellowship with this one that is God, in the context of it, more of a priority than anything? And we come to this point.

Then we pick up in verse 25, which all of this kind of sets the stage.

Verse 25 reads,

(Luke 14:25) “Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,

(Luke 14:26) “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.”

That's just the icing on the cake, isn't it? I mean, if we thought He was ambiguous up to this point, now it's crystal clear that “You can't love anything more than Me.”

And so, He ultimately says in verse 27, once again, emphasizing this, which He's already stated,

(Luke 14:27) “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

Very clear, “You've not made a commitment. I've made the commitment to you. You've not made the commitment to Me. You cannot follow Me.” People say they want to have a personal relationship with God, and I go, “Make a commitment.” Because the commitment is where it starts. He called you. It begins there in the call, and now you make the commitment. And when you make the commitment, you can begin to have a personal relationship.

He goes on and says in verse 28,

(Luke 14:28) “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost...”

And we go actually back to that first initial naive proclamation, “I'll go wherever You go.” And He says, “I don't think you've thought this thing through. You've got to think this thing through.”

This passage will end in a very unique way in which He uses the metaphor of salt. And I thought it was very interesting.

So, the conclusion of all of this, if you look with me in Luke 14:33, once again, I just want to emphasize the word “therefore,” kind of a conclusive.

So, verse 33 reads,

(Luke 14:33) “So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”

Now, we're not just talking about things. We're talking about relationships too; that nothing can take priority over following God. Now, Scripture is not telling you to discard or neglect family. As we were preaching this morning, you need to be responsible. But what it is saying is that you can't make them more important than Him. And if He tells you to do something, or He calls you to do something, you need to obey Him above anything that they might feel or think.

He then writes this in verse 34,

(Luke 14:34) “Therefore, salt is good...”

Now, the word that He uses for “good” here is “*kalos*,” which actually makes reference to useful. So, that makes sense, right? Salt is useful. There is a use for salt.

“... salt is good (useful); but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?”

In other words, is it any good once it has no taste?

Look at the next phrase,

(Luke 14:35) “It is useless...”

Now, underline that word.

I want you to back up into Chapter 9, where you were.

And I want you to read the last verse there in verse 62.

(Luke 9:62) “But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back...”

See the word there,

“... is fit for the kingdom of God.”

It's the same word. It's useless.

So, Luke 14:35, Salt is useless. What we're talking about is that which brings you into relationship with God, is bringing you on board to serve with Him, believing that His directives and His calling is more gracious, is more loving, is more benevolent than yours. And you believe that when you follow God, if He tells you to do

something, it's going to be the best for that person. I oftentimes tell people, obey what Scripture says, and you'll do the best for your family. But listen to them, and you won't. And Abraham clearly revealed that with Sarah. So, the passage reads that the salt becomes useless.

It's interesting, in ancient times, salt was actually gathered from the Dead Sea in that particular region. And the sea salt was oftentimes mixed with minerals. One of the minerals was magnesium. Another was something called bromine, which is highly toxic, almost chlorine-ish like. The problem is that if this mixture of the salt and the bromine got the salt wet, it started mingling with it, it actually contaminated the salt. And what happened was that the salt would dissolve, and it would leave a tasteless, gritty residue that was literally useless. Actually, salt is good in some cases to put around plants as a kind of fertilizer. But if it gets to the point where it's contaminated, and this is the key to the text, it's no longer useful. Now, the question that you have to ask yourself is, "What is the contamination that He's talking about?" And the contamination that he's talking about is

the inability to make a commitment, that a person who says they're following God and yet their life betrays that, by virtue of the fact that they're not willing to commit, contaminates what they say. And it makes their proclamation useless. We were talking about Lot, and nobody believed him. Why? Because his life didn't reveal a commitment to God. And so, the same thing is actually being said within this passage. You're no longer fit because salt now has lost its ability to have flavor. Salt will always be salt. It's a very interesting thing. The makeup of salt doesn't break down, but it loses its flavor. Therefore, it loses its savor, and it can't be useful.

(Luke 14:35) “It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile...”

When salt is contaminated, they say that it actually harms plants rather than helps them. Which is pretty bizarre when you consider that God created this thing called salt for a particular purpose, and you thought it was just so your food would taste good, but it was actually so that He would reveal to us a quality. And as Paul was saying in

Colossians, that we speak in such a way as we season things.

Now, after saying all this, I think it's important that I emphasize that salt is a seasoner; it's not the main course. This is very important to understand, too, because when you consider passages like Colossians 2, and as it goes to verse 16, towards the end of the chapter, what he's dealing with in that particular chapter is a sense of, "I'm going to be committed, and I'm going to show myself committed by building monasteries, by hunger strikes, by doing things. So, I'm going to show myself committed and suffer." And so, they beat themselves. And he goes, "This is useless." It would be like making salt the main course and saying, "Eat it. You're going to be very healthy because salt's good for you." And if you eat too much of that, it's just going to not only make yourself sick, but it's going to kill you. You don't want to drink salt water, right? So, the point is that it's a seasoner, but it's not the main emphasis. What is the main emphasis? Well, the main emphasis is on why you're committing. You're committing because you love God. So, if you make "commitment" the

whole ball of wax, “Well, it's all about commitment. It's all about this. It's all about sacrifice.” Well, a lot of people have done that, and that's not what it's about at all. But it's the love of God that compels me, therefore, I make a commitment. And now, the commitment is the seasoning that comes on that which is the most important. And you realize that now you've become useful.

I want to emphasize this. If you say you love God, if in fact you won't make that commitment, you no longer are useful. Do you understand that? So, you've lost your usefulness. And God is revealing this within this wonderful passage. And as we come to this passage, what we're talking about is making that decision, following through, going through.

“It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Are you ready to make a commitment? God is calling you. You can't think of this in a cavalier way. You can't be overly cautious in the sense that “I'm going to make a commitment if everything fits,” or “I'm going to make a commitment if I get a green light from my family.” This is

between you and God. This is a personal walk with you and God. But make the commitment, because without that, you can't be useful in the kingdom of God.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for this word that reveals to us just what it means to follow You. This call, how deep and how meaningful it is, and how oftentimes we have not thought through it, or if we have, we've placed other things in front of it. And by so doing, we have minimized the value of this call. Lord, we say we want to have a relationship with You, and yet, where is the commitment? Speak to our hearts even today.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, just talk with the Lord. He's talking to you, personally. He wants you to make a commitment to Him. Stop listening to the voices. Understand the depth of this. Be willing to give up all for Him. Will you hop on board? If you will, you can now be useful to the kingdom.