

Not a fan

Lesson 4: The Comfortable Cross

Opening Prayer

Introductions Do you or someone you know find it hard to live out their faith at the workplace? Are some days harder than others?

Watch Lesson 4: The Comfortable Cross (DVD title: "Bury the Dead" (Space for notes)

Discuss:

1. At first Anna seems thrilled that Eric's life was changing now that he met Jesus, but over time she grows resentful. What held Anna back from joining her husband in his journey to follow Jesus?

Have you ever been around a person like Eric whose life changed radically after he/she came to Christ? Do you think Eric was taking things too far or was he sincerely trying to follow Jesus' calling on his life? Should he have waited until his wife was on board before he sold the house and began serving the poor?

What should a person do if his/her spouse are at different places spiritually? What if the husband is not a fan of Jesus and the wife is an all-in follower? How can you authentically live out your faith and maintain a healthy marriage?

2. Read Luke 9:57-62. What was Jesus asking each person to give up in order to follow him? Notice each person was told something different about what it means to follow Jesus. Why the different demands to these would-be followers?
3. In ancient times, crucifixion was considered to be the worst form of death. People accepted it as a legitimate form of punishment because it was reserved for those who committed the worst of crimes - for thieves and runaway slaves. It helped keep the peace and curb crime.

Writers of the day described it using these phrases: *"That infamous stake."* *"The criminal wood."* *"Bound in the most ignominious fashion."* *"Executed in the most shameful way."* *"The most wretched of deaths."*

In Hebrews, we are told that Jesus went to the cross *"scorning it's shame."* (12:2) This form of death was so shameful that there arose a heretical movement among the early Christians that denied God's Son could ever die on a cross. They taught that the man who was crucified was not Jesus but someone else. Knowing all this what does *"Take up your cross and follow me"* mean to you? Luke 9:23

4. How did you come to Jesus? Was it more by the way of a sales pitch where someone told you how beneficial Jesus would be to your life and how much easier your life would be or by the way of making a deep commitment to Christ?

Discuss the Sermon

1. What stood out to you in the message?
2. Do you think we make it too easy for people to respond to Jesus or too hard? Explain your answer. Do we underemphasize the demands Jesus makes on a person's life and overemphasize the benefits of knowing him or do we make the opposite mistake?
3. Share a time when you were at your lowest and how God showed up in strength for you.
4. Has God done for you what he did for the cross?

Close by praying over each person that God would do for them what he did for the cross. He turned weakness into strength, death into life, and a symbol that reminded people of shame and cruelty into a symbol of love and grace.