

Devotions with Matt

April 23, 2020

COME AND DIE

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said about the calling of Christ upon someone's life that, "When Christ calls a man (or woman), He bids him come and die." It is not the invitation most presidents, prophets, holy men or religious leaders use to recruit people to join their movement. Most of the time people like to extol the benefits of what they are inviting people to. Their sales pitch might promote that if you follow them you will become a better person, make more money, have many followers of your own, become a hero or have the luxuries of a greater afterlife. Those kinds of things, and more, draw people to movements and religions. Not too many people answer the call to "come and die."

Of course, the Disciples first calling included becoming fishers of men and there was no immediate mention of death. The Scripture in Matthew chapter four says that once they heard the invitation from Jesus to follow Him, they left their nets at once. Their response to His calling was yes. But, did they really know what they were signing up for? Did they know where this leader would take them? Did they know they were agreeing to a lot more than just the benefits of what Jesus was offering? Did they know they must die?

The story of the Disciples is kind of my story as well. One day Jesus showed up to where I was working. One day, as I was minding my own business, doing my own thing, trying to earn a living for my family, Jesus broke into my life. He wasn't there physically, but I heard His voice. I heard Him say to me, "I am The Truth and The Way." Just like the first Disciples I instantly said that if Jesus can break into my life like that I will follow Him wherever He leads. My response to His calling was yes. But, maybe just like the Disciples, I didn't know what that meant or where He would lead me. Just like the Disciples I didn't know He was bidding me to come and die.

Somewhere along the way, the Disciples did die. They ended up picking up the instrument of death, the Cross, and died to their old ways, their old lives and their old selves. They also died a physical death, being punished and persecuted for their faith. On that front, my story is still being written. I don't know what the future holds for me, nor do any of us. But I do know that the old me has died. In fact, it is dying daily. I too must pick up that instrument of death each and every day. I must continue to die so that I can truly follow Jesus. It is a daily death that must say to Jesus, "Yet not what I will, but what you will".

If Jesus has called you and you are wondering what it is like to truly follow Him, know this; there are so many great benefits of following Jesus. There is new life, there is eternal life, there is grace and mercy, there is hope and peace, and there is true love. But also know this; to truly follow Jesus you also must die. You must let Him truly be Lord of your life. When Jesus calls a person He bids them come and die in order for them to really have life. Have you picked up The Cross today and died in order to find your life?

Wherever you are at this moment, Jesus is calling you to follow. He is bidding you to come and die.

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."
Galatians 2:20

In Christ,

Matt

