

Radical Faith:
The Hard Sayings of Jesus
Part 4: Radical Loyalty

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection

- Read Luke 14:25-26. Pastor Doug noted that Jesus was **not** enamored with big crowds of followers, for they often were motivated by what they could **get** (healing, food, enjoyable diversion from daily life). What first attracted **you** to the Christian message? **Be honest!**

When and how did it register to you that following Jesus was **not** all fun and games?

How did you respond in that moment? Upon further reflection, how did your response change?

- Tell us about a relationship which became strained or broken due to your relationship with Christ.
- Jesus demands undivided allegiance; he will not be in competition with the other loves of our lives. He requires no less than our total, wholehearted, exclusive loyalty and commitment. Is this fair? Why or why not?
- Jesus almost universally is recognized as the most loving, humble man who ever walked the earth, yet in Matthew 10:37 he said "*if you love anyone else more than me, **you are not worthy of me***". Does that strike you as egotistical? **Is it** indeed egotistical? Why or why not? Explain.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement—and why? "*If Christ is lord of 99% of your life, **he is not lord at all**—for **you** have told him where he can and cannot reign.*"
- **Is Christ your** lord? What is a costly choice you made in order for God to have first place.

Application-Challenge

- Who is in first place in your life?
- Who is in that place that no one else should reside, other than God?
- What thing, what person, what pursuit has become more important to us than obedience God?

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Sermon Summary

In Luke chapter 14:25, we read that large crowds were following Jesus. Now you might think that was a good thing, but Jesus wasn't very impressed. He knew that at best, their motives were mixed. Because Jesus was interested in quality, not quantity, he really wanted to thin out the crowds. In Luke 14:26, Jesus declares, "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. So, the question is this: Does following Jesus mean that I must hate my parents, my brother, my sister, my wife, my husband? It's not that simple. Here, Jesus is using a figure of speech called "hyperbole" to make a point. However, the point he is making is no less radical. What he is really saying is: "Are you willing to follow me, no matter what the cost?"

In Jesus' day, to follow him would mean for many that they would be cast out of their family. That is a reality for a lot of people, and that's why Jesus spoke very plainly and honestly. Jesus knew that relationships are more important than anything else. Jesus wanted to say, "If you decide to follow me, it may cost you some of your relationships. Are you sure that you are willing to pay that price? Is there anyone or anything that you love more than me? If so, then you shouldn't start down this path, because you are not going to be able to complete the journey. I demand your undivided allegiance. So, before you begin, count the cost." What about you? Is there anything that stands in the way of your following Christ wholeheartedly? Because it's about Lordship. Who is going to be Lord of your life?

There is a reason the Bible uses the analogy of marriage to describe our relationship with Jesus. In the Bible, Jesus is portrayed as the bridegroom and the church is the bride. Marriage is a great picture of what it means to be in relationship with Jesus. When you get married, out of all the people in the world, you devote yourself wholeheartedly to one person: You are devoted to that person; you love that person; you serve that person. Jesus wants to have that place in your life, even above your husband or wife, if you are married. He wants you to look to him for salvation. He wants you to look to him for provision. He wants you to look to him for your hopes and dreams. He doesn't just want to be your Savior, he wants to be your Lord! He wants you to honor, serve and obey Him, because he is worthy of your allegiance. Jesus knew that our families will flourish when we give him first place in our lives. Because when we do, we will do a better job of loving our family, leading our family, and caring for our family than those who put their family above God. God loves you too much to allow your family to come before him. Jesus is Lord. If you will let God be God, your family will benefit from that decision.

The very things that keep people from coming to faith in Christ are the very things that cause them to drift away from God. And we need to hear that message repeatedly.

- Who is in first place in your life?
- Who is in that place that no one else should reside, other than God?
- What thing, what person, what pursuit has become more important to us than obedience God?

That is a hard saying we need to hear today, and it's a question that we need to answer.

Talking To God About This Week's Message

"Heavenly Father, today I want to be a 'doer' of the Word, and not just a 'hearer'. Amen."

Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, "What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

The most extraordinary friendship recorded in the Bible was that between David and Jonathan. There is so much we can learn from their loyalty and costly choices. Let's take a look!

Monday—Background to the story: Israel's first King was named Saul. He was physically impressive, but a spiritual failure.

- Read 1 Samuel 15:10-35. Jot down what you learn about Saul's lack of character. (Note: Samuel the Prophet was the religious + political leader of Israel prior to Saul becoming king, and he continued as a religious leader thereafter.)
- Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13. **After** God had decided to remove Saul as king, but while Saul was **still** officially on the throne, God told Samuel to secretly anoint David as Saul's replacement. How do you think Saul would respond if he found out?
- Read 1 Samuel 16:14-23. What a twist of events! Unbeknown to Saul, his future replacement was now in his court!
- How is David described in v. 18? According to v. 21-23, how did Saul evaluate and respond to David?

Tuesday—More background to the story: Saul's oldest son—and the who man **should** become the **next** king—was **Jonathan!** But like Saul, Jonathan did not yet know that David had been anointed as the next king. How would Jonathan react to David?!

- 1 Samuel 17 tells the story of David killing Goliath. Saul and the whole army were scared—but “little David” (v. 32-37) wasn't!
- In 1 Samuel 17:55—18:2, Jonathan meets David for perhaps the first time. Although David had been around Saul's court for some time, he was just one among many. But after killing Goliath he was a **rock star!** Now **everybody** noticed him!
- But whereas everybody else liked David for what he could do for them, Jonathan **“loved him as himself”** (18:3). Does that sound weird? Or, does it sound like obedience to “the second great command”? Read Matthew 22:39.
- According to v. 3, what did Jonathan **do** as a result of his love for David? Look up “covenant” at webstersdictionary1828.com. Definition #1 describes what Jonathan and David did. Put this into your own words.
- Kings—and kings-to-be—wear royal robes (typically purple or scarlet) that commoners were not permitted to wear. Now, interpret Jonathan's actions in v. 4. What was Jonathan acknowledging? How would **Saul** feel about that?

Wednesday—Jonathan willingly—gladly—yielded the throne to David! Incredible! But what would Saul think?!

- Read 1 Samuel 18:10-16.
- Read 1 Samuel 18:20-29.

Thursday—Read 1 Samuel 20.

- In v. 14-17 Jonathan reaffirmed his covenant with David. This time he enlarged it: now Jonathan acknowledges that in yielding the throne to David, he was making a covenant with David's “house” (v. 16)—Saul's dynasty would end; David's would take over.
- Look again at v. 30-34. Saul is full of venom even toward his own son!
- David is now on the run. His very life is at stake.

Friday—Read 1 Samuel 23:15-18.

- In v. 16, what did Jonathan do? What is the significance of the fact that he **“encouraged him in God”**? What characterized **the nature of** David's and Jonathan's love and commitment to each other?
- In v. 17, what did Jonathan affirm?
- How do you think Jonathan's **third** affirmation (v. 18) of their covenant impacted David during this difficult period?
- Alas, Jonathan's desire to serve David during his kingship (1 Samuel 23:17 **“you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you”**) was not to be. Saul, in his raging foolishness, leads Jonathan and his brothers to their death in battle (1 Samuel 31:1-2). Saul, in despair, committed suicide (1 Samuel 31:3-6) and his dynasty comes to an ignoble end.
- David ascended the throne, and he honored Saul and Jonathan with a proper burial. Read 2 Samuel 21:12-14.
- But David was not done honoring the memory of his friend Jonathan. Whereas most kings kill off all remaining members of the previous dynasty as a means to ensuring the future of their own dynasty, the man of God does not stoop to human treachery. Instead, he displays covenant-loyalty. Read 2 Samuel 9. What did David do?

Saturday—Review all that you learned this week about the radical loyalty of David and Jonathan.

- What are the key elements that made their friendship so extraordinary (2 Samuel 1:25-26)?
- Which of those elements do you see in your own friendships? Which ones are lacking?
- What changes would you need to make in life in order to have radically loyal spiritual friendships? **Will you?**