



**Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture**

**SERMON TEXT:** Matthew 8:18–34

**KEY POINT(S):** Jesus is worth following, even if it means carrying our crosses, leaving everything behind, going through storms, and giving stuff up that’s important to us.

**FOR LEADERS**

- *Welcome back! THANK YOU so much for leading a community group, and for all your faithfulness in this ministry.*
- *As a reminder, we have a number of resources available for all our leaders online at [emergencenj.org/weeklyresources](http://emergencenj.org/weeklyresources).*

**GETTING STARTED**

**[1] Communities Video** - Watch this week’s *community extras* video.

**[2]** What were some things that stood out to you from the sermon this week? Was there anything you found particularly helpful or eye-opening?

**[3] Icebreaker** – What’s the most exciting thing you did over the community group season break?

**THE PROFESSOR OF FAITH**

**Choose two volunteers, one to read Matthew 8:18–20 and the other to read 16:24–28.**

**[1]** Why do you think Jesus answered this scribe like he did? Why not just tell him, “Okay, follow me”?

**[2]** In what ways do Christians sometimes obscure what Jesus says in these two passages?

**[3]** Do you think it is disingenuous when churches downplay this in presenting the gospel to unbelievers? Why or why not?

**[4]** If you claim to be a Christian, what have you given up to follow Jesus? What has “take up your cross” meant in your life?

**In the message, Ryan recommended *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*, by Rosaria Butterfield. Why not pick up a copy to be encouraged by this woman’s journey to Christ and her testimony of what it has cost her?**

**THE PROCRASTINATOR OF FAITH**

**Read Matthew 8:21–22.**

**[1]** What is Jesus teaching us by responding to this man as he did?

**[2]** When someone postpones getting serious with God, what does that reveal about that person’s heart?

**[3]** In what ways are you procrastinating with Jesus, and what does this reveal about your heart?





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***THE STORM-TOSSED BOAT***

**Read Matthew 8:23–27.**

- [1]** Why do you think Matthew tells us that Jesus was asleep during this fierce and violent storm?
- [2]** Clearly, the disciples want Jesus to save them from the storm and they believe he can do it. That’s why they wake him up and appeal to him to save them. Why, then, does Jesus say they are “of little faith”?
- [3]** How does knowing that Jesus is with you help you to endure life’s storms?
- [4]** After Jesus calms the storm, his disciples ask, “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and sea obey him?” Read Psalm 107:23–32. In light of this, what do you think is implied by the disciples’ question?

***PRECIOUS PIGS***

**Read Matthew 8:28–34.**

- [1]** What does Jesus’ interaction with the demons in this passage tell us about his power over even the most frightening and hopeless spiritual conditions? Point to specific features in the text to support your answer.
- [2]** Why do the people of the city beg Jesus to leave their region after hearing what happened, and what does this teach us about human nature?
- [3]** Why might a person, fully aware of Jesus’ power and goodness, not want anything to do with him?

***PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER***

**[1]** In the sermon, Ryan mentioned four kinds of people who fail to follow Christ: Those who won’t carry their cross, those who want to follow him later, those whose faith is shaken by storms, and those who love other things more than him. With which one do you most identify and what have you learned from this passage that helps you with this?

***PRAYER***

- [1]** Pray that God would convict you of the things that hinder your walk with Jesus.
- [2]** Pray for the people in your life who are avoiding Jesus for the reasons highlighted in this passage.