

Intro

1. Many of us have found something good in God. *Because of the cross.*

2. When we find something good, we need to reach beyond the wall.

Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; his branches run over the wall.
- Gen 49:22

a. Joseph's choice to reach over the wall included the excluded

b. We're to take what we've found and bring it beyond the wall.

3. All the good stuff we have is because of the cross.

4. You can't take something beyond the wall that you're not willing to pick it up and carry.

Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me."

- Luke 9:23

Read: Luke 18:18-23

Luke 18 presents a picture of someone who was called out from the crowd, called by Jesus to take up the cross, but couldn't.

- Same call that was presented to the apostles was presented to this man.
- You have a call from God, many are called, few are chosen.
- Easy to be part of the crowd but tonight you'll have an opportunity to respond to the cross. *Address new people.*

I want to draw some distinctions between the crowd and the cross, and at the end of tonight you need to decide if you'll pick up your cross, or like the rich young ruler, rejoin the crowd.

I. The Crowd Is An Experience, The Cross Is An Encounter

A. Crowds gather around for an experience.

1. Many crowds gathered to experience Jesus.
2. Know what he looked like, sounded like, taught about
3. Experienced healing or saw someone getting healed
4. The rich young ruler had probably experienced Jesus as part of a crowd - and this was his up close and personal.

B. Individuals are called to an encounter.

Luke 18:22 - Then come, follow me.

1. Jesus was calling the rich young ruler to an encounter.
2. Following = Discipleship *Not meet twice a week type of deal.*
3. Young man wanted reputation and reward, not a relationship.

C. An experience is all about me, an encounter is all about Him. (*What should I do... I've obeyed... Since I was...*)

What I can get out of this vs What He wants to do in me.

D. An experience feels good for a moment, an encounter changes something forever. *Reduce an encounter to an experience.*

E. Jesus encountered the cross for us - He wants to encounter us.

II. The Crowd Is Convenient, The Cross Is Commitment

Luke 18:22 - When Jesus heard his answer, he said, "There is still one thing you haven't done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

A. We're willing to do anything that is convenient.

The young ruler was willing to do whatever Jesus asked, as long as it wouldn't cost something he treasured.

Where's the line in our lives?

B. The idol of this generation is comfort and convenience.

1. God must fit into our plan and schedule.
2. God doesn't promise comfort and convenience, God DOES promise that He'll be with you.
3. Created a false theology that if something makes me uncomfortable it must be wrong.

Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong - you only want what gives you pleasure. - James 4:2-3

4. Sacrifice calling on the altar of convenience
5. Sacrifice babies on the altar of comfort

C. Convenience hangs around when it's easy but leaves once it gets difficult. *Relationships in our generation.*

D. Jesus was calling him to commitment - a decision that he would never be able to walk away from.

1. There's no going back from selling your possessions.

You can't unsell everything.

Dr Strange.

E. Jesus was committed to you.

1. The cross was a commitment.
2. It wasn't a convenient stop along the way
3. He was committed to seeing it through (*not my will*)

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- Heb

12:2

III. The Crowd Is Ambiguous, The Cross Demands A Response

Matt 19:22 - But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

A. The crowd feels safe in their numbers.

1. Herd mentality. Boys school.
2. As long as someone else does it with me.
3. I don't have to decide for myself, the crowd decides for me.
4. I don't have to take personal responsibility for my response.

B. Jesus' challenge to the rich young ruler demanded a response.

1. Jesus called him out.
2. Would he choose the cross, or simply melt back into the crowd.
3. Many are called, few are chosen.

C. The cross is the answer to our generation. Our generation is in desperate need of the cross.

What's the solution to all the problems in our generation?

Drugs, suicide, depression, alcohol, broken families, poverty, sexual sin

D. The cross comes with a burden.

Souls

E. Today, we're being confronted with the cross. What will we do with the cross? *I love crowds, but don't let yourself get lost in the crowd today. This is an individual decision you have to make. YOU and Jesus.*

Conclusion

What will you do with the cross?

Salvation

- Some of you have never made a decision to believe in Jesus, or maybe you're far away.
- The cross is salvation and freedom, how will you respond?

Altar/Ministry Time

- I'm going to ask you to do something bold today, and respond to the cross.
- Not an internal, quiet, private response. But a bold, public, declaration.
- Why?
 - No going back. A declaration for all to see.
 - If you can't stand for Jesus in a room full of people that love Jesus, how are you gonna stand for Jesus in a world that will come against you.
- Revelation of the cross
- Burden for the lost