

THE SUPREME OUTSIDER



*He was despised and rejected by men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,
And as one from whom men hide their faces.*

Isaiah 53:3

Yes, crowds followed Jesus on the hillsides of Galilee.
They flocked to hear him in the Temple.

But in the end, they crucified him.

Yes, they all marveled at his gracious words.

But changed their minds and tried to push him off a cliff.

Jesus was an outsider.

Jesus is still an outsider.

For all the pious talk by religious dignitaries,
Jesus is despised and rejected, not only by “the world,” but by *Christendom*.

While everybody pays lip service to Jesus,
very few take up their cross and actually follow him.

Why?

Because the minute you begin to follow Jesus, *you become an outsider*.

And who wants to be an outsider?

Do I really have to be an outsider?



Well, there are highly successful programs which make it attractive, comfortable, even exciting to be a “born again Christian.” These programs show you how to practice your faith in Jesus with smiling approval from the world around you.

No one thinks you’re crazy.

No one calls you stupid.

No one accuses you of being a fanatic.

You have found the Beautiful Life.

You won’t be an outsider if you join one of those programs.

But are they actually showing you what it means to follow Jesus?

What it means to be born again?

“Follow me!”

Jesus tells us that following him will never win us approval from the world. When we follow Jesus, we become “speckled birds” that make the other birds uncomfortable, and often angry.

Get used to it.

If you actually deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus....

you will be an outsider.



***“If the world hates you,
know that it has hated me before it hated you.
If you were of the world, the world would love its own;
but because you are not of the world,
but I chose you out of the world,
Remember the word that I said to you,
‘A servant is not greater than his master
therefore the world hates you.’
If they persecuted me, they will persecute you;
if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.
But all this they will do to you on my account,
because they do not know him who sent me.”***

John 15:18-21

Is it worth it?

Is it worth it to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus?

Each of us has to decide.

For Mary Magdalene it was pure joy.

For Peter and John, it was the only way to go.

For the Rich Young Ruler, it was just too much; so he walked sadly away.

Jesus never softens his call, in order to make it more attractive.

Jesus lays out the stark facts.

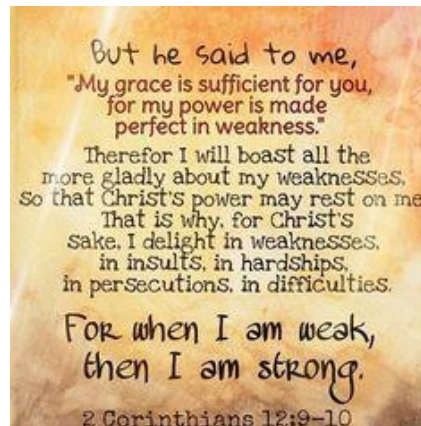
Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?"

Luke 14:25-28

If it's worth it to you to abandon your old life daily and follow Jesus, you will never regret being an outsider for the Kingdom of God.

When you're an outsider following in the footsteps of the Supreme Outsider, his Spirit of glory rests upon you.

You are sustained by the very joy of heaven.



Prayer

Oh, beautiful Lord, who was wounded, pierced, despised and rejected, what an honor it is to be a speckled bird, an outsider for you, the Supreme Outsider. May your glory rest upon us, may we be sustained with the joy of Heaven as we follow you, deny ourselves, and take up whatever cross faces us... for you, for love, for your sake. Amen.

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