

FREEDOM OF A COMMITTED HEART



There is Freedom Melani Pyke

While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Genessaret. And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word, I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Oh God." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on, you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Luke 5:1-11

"And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything.... they left everything, and followed him."



Prophetic Message Sketch 45 Anne Cameron Cutri

What a wonderful thing, to be able to leave everything and follow Jesus with such freedom – no agonizing, - what will my wife say? or my husband? What will my relatives think? Who’s going to run the business? Who’s going to take care of the equipment?

They just pick and go. Why was it so easy for them, while it’s so very, very hard for us, it seems. Why did these men find it within them to so light-heartedly, so joyfully, pick up and go with Jesus, and leave their nets, their careers, and even their families, when we, it seems, become so heavy-hearted even when we just think of the word “commitment”.

Remember, too, that the commitment they made that day lasted for the rest of their lives, whereas we commit ourselves, and take ourselves back. We commit ourselves again, and take ourselves back. We surrender everything to Jesus, and pretty soon we’re withdrawing again. What was it that gave these men the freedom to get up and go, and keep going, in the footsteps of Jesus from that point on?

If we compare our commitment with their commitment, we will notice one fundamental difference:

Our commitment, at least in most cases, is commitment *to an idea, to a concept.*

Theirs was a commitment *to a person.*

If, that day in the boat, Peter had said, “Lord, I’m really, really impressed with your teachings, and I just can’t get over this miracle I see here, and so what I’m going to do is, from now on I’m going to change my lifestyle. I’m going to live the way you do.” That would have sounded great but it would not have lasted one week.

Peter did not commit himself to *a new lifestyle* that day.

He did not commit himself to *a ministry* that day.

He committed himself, simply, *to Jesus.*

Of course, as he followed Jesus, Peter’s lifestyle changed; he received a ministry; he began to accomplish supernatural things; and he ended up on a cross. But Peter was not committed to a

lifestyle, or to a ministry, or even to a cross. He was committed to Jesus. And as he followed Jesus, he was brought into all these other blessings.

If we're having a hard time – and most of us are – with this idea of commitment; if commitment so often inspires gloom and heaviness, and confusion, it's probably because we're committed to the wrong thing.

When we get our commitment where their commitment was....
we will be as joyful, and as free, and as lighthearted as they were.

Hence, we need to make sure that we are not committed to a lifestyle....
We are committed to a living Lord, to Jesus.

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found, and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has, and buys the field.

Matthew 13:44

The big message in that little parable is not that he sold all that he had.

The big message in that parable is that he *found the treasure*.

He wasn't committed to selling all that he had, he was committed to the treasure. We, on the other hand, so often, get ourselves hung up on lifestyle, and we determine what kind of lifestyle a radically committed follower of Jesus should have.

We get ourselves bent out of shape, and twisted and contorted into miserable hypocrites trying to arrive at a "discipleship lifestyle." Then the big issue becomes, "Shall I sell all that I have? *Can I sell all that I have?*" And the minute we sell the first piece of furniture, we're looking around to see whether the others are doing it too.

**We're not committed to selling all that we have,
we're committed to Jesus.**

If we get our eyes off the lifestyle, and on to the treasure, Jesus, then it becomes easy to sell all that we have. Then it's no big sacrifice, and we're not looking around to see whether everybody else is making the big sacrifice. When our eyes are on Jesus, and we hold them there, when our hearts are on Jesus, and we keep them on him, we let go of, and kick out, and push away every thing that we have to get rid of, in order to have him.

**Nor are we committed to a ministry.
We are committed to a living Lord.**

Commitment to a ministry will never hold us. When you're committed to a ministry, pretty soon you're going to find your ministry boring, and discouraging, and absurd. Commitment to a ministry will never keep us going, we can't stay committed to a ministry, unless the ministry is somehow tied up with our own ego; then it's not really a ministry. For instance, Jesus was not committed to a ministry; he was committed to his Father.

His Father gave him a ministry to perform, and he performed it. But his commitment was not to this ministry; his commitment was to his Father.

Peter was a fisher of men – that was his ministry. But he was not committed to fishing for men; he was committed to Jesus. And there were times that fishing for men got to be a pain in the neck. Remember that night when he finally says, “I’m going fishing!” – for fish. (You get fish in the net, and they stay put.) So some of the disciples say, “That sounds like a great idea, we’re going with you.” And so they take a little vacation out on the Sea of Galilee, back to doing what they used to do. And it was great---except they didn’t catch any fish. All night long they were out there, fishing, fishing, fishing.

Dawn breaks. The resurrected Jesus is standing on the shore, shrouded in the morning mist, but they don’t know who it is. He shouts across the water, “Children, did you catch anything?” They holler, “No!” “Cast the net on the right side of the ship and you’ll get something.” They still don’t know who it is. Well, who cares? We might as well try it, nothing else has worked. Down it goes, and up comes the net that looks just like it did that first time, three years ago. They’re stunned! Now they know who it is on the shore; and as fast as they can, they drag up the net, three-quarters of a ton. They can’t even get it into the boat, so they pull it behind them.

Jesus is waiting. Breakfast is ready. “Come and dine,” he says. They eat, and after breakfast, as we read from **John 21:15**,

Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” Do you love me more than these (fish)? He said to him, “Yes Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

Notice, Jesus does not say to Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love your ministry?”, because the truth was, he didn’t love his ministry. He went fishing last night; he was sick of his ministry. “Do you love me?” “Lord, you know that I love you.” “OK then, get back to it. Feed my sheep.” And it was this commitment to Jesus, this love for Jesus, that kept Peter feeding the sheep the rest of his life.

And so he says to each of us, “Do you love me?” Not, “Do you love your ministry?” Each of us has a ministry; each of us has work to do. Sometimes we love our ministry. Sometimes we hate it. Sometimes we’re bored by it. Sometimes we don’t even know if we have one. “Do you love me? Feed my sheep.”

We are not committed to success.

We are committed to Jesus.

The primary job of the branch is not to bear fruit. The primary job of the branch is to abide in the vine. If the branch abides in the vine, then it will bear fruit. So we read from **John 7:37**.

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, “Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.”

My commitment is not to make rivers of living water come out of my heart. The harder I try to do that, the worse it’s going to be. If I try to make living water come out of my heart by my efforts, it will turn out to be nothing but death seeping out.

My commitment is to go to the fountainhead of the living waters, and drink, and drink, and receive from him. Then, rivers of living water will flow out. If I’m drinking from Jesus, if I’m receiving him, abiding in him, then I will have life for the world around me.

I will heal the sick, I’ll raise the dead, I’ll cast out demons, I’ll set the captives free.

**But I’m not committed to any of those things.
I’m committed to Jesus.**



Jesus What else is There? Melani Pyke

What I am committed to is to know him in the power of his resurrection, to know him in the fellowship of his sufferings, and to know Jesus, even to the point where I become like him in his death, so that every day, I come forth alive, risen from the dead, in the power of his resurrection, with life for other people.

Finally, we need to see that we are not committed to a goal.

**We are not committed to a cross.
We are committed to Jesus**

Even though we know that our goal is a cross. We are committed to the Lord Jesus.

He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded your self and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God. And after this he said to him, "Follow me." Peter turned, and saw following them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper table, and had said, "Lord, who is it who is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man? What shall this man do?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!"
John 21:17-22

Jesus tells Peter that he, Peter, is going to die on a cross. Right away, Peter looks at the cross instead of Jesus. The first thing that comes into his head is, What about John? Is he going to die on a cross too?

When you get your eyes off the master, and start looking at the goal, you will soon be comparing yourself with someone else. Jesus says, "If I want John to stay alive until I come back, what business is that of yours?" i.e. Follow me. Keep your eyes on me, Peter. And Peter did.

What a wonderful thing! Peter kept his eyes and his heart on Jesus---held them there long after Jesus was no longer physically visible to Peter. Jesus was Peter's joy. Jesus was his fulfillment, his treasure, his comfort, his glory, his everything, so that when the time came for Peter to lay down his life on a cross, it became, for Peter, a thing of glory. He wasn't looking at the cross; he was looking beyond the cross, to his Lord.

There's a cross at the end of our road too. We are each of us called to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus. But our commitment must not be to the cross, it must be to Jesus, who will get us to the cross, through the cross, and beyond it.

So where is our commitment today?

Are we committed to a lifestyle?

Are we committed to a ministry?

Are we committed to some dream of success, some worthy Christian goal?

None of those kinds of commitment will ever keep us going in this stormy, turbulent world. If we try to commit ourselves to such things, we're going to find ourselves burdened down, wounded, gloomy, discouraged, and depressed. When they see us coming, people will run and hide.

But freedom, joy, and power will inflame our commitment, when we put our commitment where it belongs---when we get our hearts off all these good, Christian programs, and fix them exclusively on the Master.

**“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”
Do you love me?**



Restoration Mary Beth Stafford

He says to each of us, "My little brother, my little sister, do you love me? If you love me, then go and feed my sheep.

I'll give you living bread to feed to them.

I'll give you courage to lay down your life for them.

And I will be with you all the days, even to the end of the age.

Prayer- Jesus how lonely and forlorn we have become. Your tender voice has dimmed in our hearts. Forgive us for getting so caught up in service that we have wandered from you, our love, our life. Forgive us for not being committed to you, yourself alone. Open our hearts to your voice calling to us...do you love me...do you love me, do you love me? May our hearts respond...yes, yes, yes Lord, we love you, we need you... until nothing else matters but drawing close to you and responding to your love. In this love may we go forward and feed your sheep, in this love may we experience the freedom, the joy and the power that is ours. In this love may we find comfort and courage all of our days.

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Art Melani Pyke www.melpyke.com/ Anne Cameron Cutri anne-cutri.pixels.com and Marybeth Stafford www.marybethart.com



Maranatha Mirror Messages

mmirror.net

maranathamirror18@gmail.com

586-530-6983 (text or call)

