

This week a comparison is made between “Free Grace” and Jesus’ Words. Free Grace relies on belief in the Gospel but **no** corresponding fruit or works of repentance are necessary to prove salvation upon confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Passages such as Romans 1:16, 4:5, and 10:9 are used to prove this position. It is not that works save a person (Eph. 2:8-9), but what works should follow salvation, James 2:14-26?

>Accordingly, Acts 19:18 is used as a proof text of this teaching showing that the magic books were brought later to be burned. But it says that many believed and **came** (NKJ) confessing their sins. They were believing and confessing their sins- which would have included witchcraft.

>2 Cor. 5:17 says that a believer in Christ is a new creation. Old things have passed away and all things have become new. A new believer has been brought out of darkness and into the light.

>1 Thessalonians 1:9 speaks of the believers that came to faith – they turned from idols to serve the living God. They left one (idols) for the other (God and Christ).

>Jesus’ preaching of the Kingdom of God in Mark 1:15, “Repent and believe in the gospel.” Jesus’ own words were “Repent and believe.”

The passage today in Matthew 8:18-22 answers a question: What does it cost to be a subject of the King? There are two requirements to be a genuine follower of Christ:

1. **One Must Understand the Cost of Following Christ:** V18, a scribe came to Jesus. In V21, the text says “another disciple” came to him. In the Gospels the word “disciple” is used to refer to three different groups of people: 1) The 12 Disciples (Matthew isn’t yet called in this passage -Ch 9:9). 2) Genuine Followers of Christ who would be regenerate. 3) Those with vague interest in Christ. These would be following to hear and see all that is happening.
 - a. In Matthews’ Gospel scribes are referred negatively in Matthew 23:2, 13, 14, 15, etc. In Matt. 23:34, scribes were sent to testify of Christ. Ezra was a scribe in Ezra 7:10 and described as a man who studied the Law of the Lord.
 - i. Scribes would be highly respected in the day. They would copy manuscripts of Scripture and by practice become very knowledgeable or experts in the Law. They could read and write and so were employable and useful and generally well off.
 1. Some scribes would come to faith, Matt. 13:52.
 2. In Mark’s gospel scribes questioned Christ, Mk. 2:16, 3:22, 7:5 about His preaching, teaching, and works.
 - b. V19, the scribe stated that he would follow Jesus wherever He went. Luke 14:28 speaks of the one who follows Christ needs to count the cost, in this example in Luke of one building a tower if he has enough to finish.
 - i. Gal. 2:20, confirms that the life of believer is no longer lived for self, but is crucified with Christ, dead to self, and lived for Christ.
 - c. V20, Jesus’ reply, “the Son of Man as nowhere to lay (kline) His head.”
 - i. The follower of Christ owns nothing, possesses nothing.
 - ii. Jesus refers or is referred to as the “Son of Man” 80 times in the Gospels. This term refers to Dan. 7:13-14 when in the future, Christ, the Son of Man, will receive His inheritance as King over all the earth. The Son of Man in Matt. 8:20 owns nothing, but will receive everything once He has fulfilled His purpose on earth.
 1. When Jesus’ died for sin, John 19:30 says that Jesus, “And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” The word “bowing” is the word “lay” in Matt. 8:20.”

2. **One Must Embrace the Cost of Following Christ:** V21-22, welcome the cost, demonstrate a life changed by it, yearn for it (Matt. 5:2-12).
 - a. V21, "Lord let me first go and bury my father." The disciple isn't saying that his father is dead. The man is saying he would follow Christ after he inherits the family business and finishes that part of his life.
 - b. V22, "Let the dead bury their own dead," is this teaching a cruel answer or response? Of course not. He spoke that those spiritually dead people bury their own. Jesus left His Father's home. We are heirs of God if we suffer with Him, Rom. 8:16-17.
 - i. The believer embraces the cost of following Christ. The suffering of this world is not to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us, Rom. 8:18.
3. **2 Reasons They Didn't Count or Embrace the Cost:**
 - a. The scribe called Jesus, "Teacher." This term was used when scribes questioned Him, Matt. 12:38, 22:16, and 22:24. Matthew uses the word "teacher" when the scribes and pharisees demonstrate they don't like Jesus' teaching and ministry.
 - b. In Matt. 9:9, when Jesus says to Matthew, "Follow Me," Matthew arose and followed Him. There was no delay. In Matt. 19:27, Peter and the disciples left all to follow Christ. Matt. 10:38, following Christ requires a believer to carry their cross. That meant to "die" to self, not to decide another day or time to follow.

Further Discussion and Application

What is the connection between salvation and repentance? Looking at John 3:16-21, what is the response of those who believe in Christ? What is the barrier for the unbeliever? Before Jesus' teaching on "in spirit and in truth" in John 4, what is a summary argument that we can share with a new believer about the new life in Christ? (John 3:5, 3:36)

Contrast the scribe in Matt. 8:18-20 with Matthew (the future apostle) in Matthew 9:9-13. What would it have cost for this scribe to have followed the "Teacher" of the day? How much would the scribe have known about the Law and the coming Messiah? How might he have felt about his self-righteousness? Contrast with Matthew in Matt. 9:9-13. What urgency should a believer in Christ take when they are born again? What should describe their affections? What should describe their speech and humility?

The Scriptures of Matthew and John show that Jesus laid His head down when He finished doing the work and will of the Father. What more could we give up now so that we might be even more useful to Him in this life? What new habits of prayer, discipleship, mentorship, serving, etc. could further the Kingdom of God? What is the cost of discipleship that is required to follow Christ? Who provides the strength to get it done (Phil. 2:12-18)? What should be the attitude and fruit of those while getting the work done?