

**"THE CAGE OF RESPONSIBILITY"**

Luke 9:57-62

Starting today, we begin a new sermon series entitled: "Chase the Goose." Not only will we be address the topics on Sunday morning but during the week, small groups will be studying and discussing the book written by Pastor Mark Batterson, *Wild Goose Chase*.

A little background about this study-It seems that in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity made its way into Britain, Scotland and Ireland. Those Celtic Christians had a fascinating name for the Holy Spirit—they called Him An Geadh-Glas or the Wild Goose. I mean, isn't that an interesting name to call the Holy Spirit- Wild Goose? And yet the more you think about it, it really is a great description of what it it's like to live a spirit-led life. Consider this- if we lead a spirit-led life, it will be one that is full of adventure, certainly not boredom. When you think about it, the wild goose is something that cannot be tracked or tamed.

There is unpredictability and even a hint of mystery, yes, even danger, that accompanies the Wild Goose. Have you ever thought about this- if you take the Holy Spirit out of the Christian their life will be boring? But if you add the Holy Spirit in to the equation of a Christian's life, you never know who you'll meet, you never know where you'll go, you never know what you'll do. I mean, all bets will be off.

As I was reading the book and pondering what was written about wild animals being able to run, swim or fly free and animals which were once wild but have been caught and caged, my thoughts drifted to the Cockatoo- that exotic bird that people describe as beautiful and cuddly. The Moluccan Cockatoo is unusual in that it is one of the few lap birds and it acts more like a dog than a bird sometimes. I have known people who have had a Moluccan Cockatoo for a pet, maybe you have as well. As babies, Moluccans so easily touch your heart that it's hard to walk away from them without taking one home.

Their liquid eyes look like black pools of inquisitiveness as they carefully study your facial expressions, and you seem to be able to look right into their very souls. Both Moluccans and Umbrella cockatoos possess a sweetness that few parrots can match, *for awhile*. As all good things must come to an end however, so goes the sweetness as these babies mature. This is not to say that there will be a complete change, but the odds are great that the 'Too you'll wind up-with years later *is not the sweetness and light you brought home*. Do all birds change? No. Will most change to some degree? ***You'd better believe it!*** And it's these changes that sometimes *drive owners to animal rescues*. Now there are those who do not think these large cockatoos should be caged. And yet we all know of the countless r animals that have been taken from the wild and are domesticated and caged. Go to the local zoo and you see what once where wild animals tamed and caged up.

Now let me make a shift and bring it home to us- There is the thought that the church has, in some ways, done to people what zoos do to animals.

The thought is that the church has somehow tamed people in the name of Christ and in the process has removed the risks, removed the struggles,

removed the opportunity for adventure and we have, somehow, produced caged Christians- could you buy this idea? The thought is that, in the

process, we, in the church, have made it relative safe and comfortable for people when, in fact, we need to encourage people to spread their wings

and, upon entering into that relationship with Christ, chase the Wild Goose.

For when we do, we can live our lives the way God intended- living our lives where we are not playing it safe but rather longing for more.

This study is about chasing the Wild Goose- the Holy Spirit. This study is about tearing down and breaking out of those self-made cages that we have allowed to build up and hold us hostage and captive. And we begin today with the Cage of Responsibility.

How many of us can honestly say we have responsibilities- and even if you aren't old enough to have a family, do you have chores to do around the house or play on a sports team where you are responsible to the coach and the other members of your team? We all have responsibilities, in one way or another, whether they are big or small. And the point I want to make it that we need to watch so that those responsibilities don't form bars around us or cage us in, where we allow the lesser responsibilities to replace the more important ones. And it might be that we could be prevented from embracing the greatest responsibility that is before us, following Christ. Our passage from Luke's gospel gives us a glimpse of what is important when it comes to following Jesus. Let's look at our passage.

First, **following Jesus can be costly**. I don't know about you but there are times in my life when I want to follow Jesus, but on my terms- can you identify? I want to play it safe and keep the demands at a minimum. And yet Jesus sets the bar high and demands we give our all to His agenda.

In verses 57-58 of our passage there is someone who says to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus' advice to him was, "before you say 'Yes' to following me, you need to do something, you need to count the cost." That is why Jesus said in verse 58, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." There will always be things in this life of ours that will keep us from following Jesus, and, I am sure, that many of them will be legitimate; many of them will be good. And yet many times we must choose between that which is good and that which is great.

There is a great story in the Bible that I want us to turn to and you will see what I mean. Turn with me to Luke 18:18-23 and read along with me. "A certain ruler asked him, Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor

your father and mother.’ He replied, ‘I have kept all these since my youth.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, ‘There is still one thing lacking. Sell

all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have

treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’ But when he heard this, he

became sad; for he was very rich.” Here is a guy who had a number of good

things in his life. I mean he had power and authority- it says he was a ruler.

And money was not an issue- it says he was VERY rich, and yet there was

something missing in his life. Otherwise, why did he come to Jesus asking a

great question- “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” So what did Jesus

do? Jesus invited him to move from the good to the great, didn’t He? But

what did this rich, ruler do, how did he leave the conversation that day? It

says, “but when he heard this [what Jesus presented to him], he became

sad.” He walked away sad why? Because he couldn’t make himself leave

that which was good and so, he chose the good over the great. Now if you

have something good and you have something great- which do you choose?

Second, **following Jesus surpasses material responsibilities.** To follow Jesus He doesn't promise wealth and prosperity to those who sign on. That is what drives me absolutely nuts about those "prosperity" Gospel preachers. "Just believe in Jesus and all your financial issues will be solved, and by the way, throw in a few more hundred dollars to my ministry, while you are at it."

I don't know about your Bible, but my Bible has stories of people who would be regarded as failures when the world looks upon them all because they said YES to following Jesus. But world is not who we are trying to follow, is it? No where do I read where Jesus promises security, comfort, home, money, you fill in the material blank. But what He does promise is significance- heirs to the kingdom; daughters and sons of God.

Third, **following Jesus surpasses cultural responsibilities.** The second person said to Jesus in verse 59, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." The proper interment of the dead was a matter of great importance

to the peoples of the ancient Near East. Burial usually took place on the day of death, and it is still the case today. In the Jewish culture this is true to the point that one is even excused from other religious duties to accomplish it. Let me make a jump from back in Jesus day to today. I mean give the poor guy in the story a break; he wants to bury his Dad. Don't you feel sorry for him? But it is more likely that the guy's father wasn't dead, and maybe not even near death. What some scholars believe he meant was, "I will follow you after my father has died," and that could have been years away. How different are some of us than this man? We too, can turn our responsibility into an excuse and miss out on our opportunity with Jesus; following Jesus; serving Jesus.

Folks, when you think about it, we live in a culture that has certain expectations, spoken or unspoken, as to what is required if we are going to live a "successful" life- a nice car, big house, money in the bank, and, well, you can paint the picture with your own images.

And yet what Jesus is saying to this second person is that the Lord of lords and King of kings demands allegiance to Him over any allegiance to cultural responsibilities. What in our culture have we allowed to build a cage around us so that we let it block us or hinder us in a relationship with Jesus?

And fourth and finally, **following Jesus surpasses time responsibilities.** The third person in our passage said to Jesus, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." What is this person really saying? How about this, "Not now Jesus, not now." Or we can say something like, "I'm still young, I don't have to worry about this Christian faith, I don't have to worry about growing in my faith, I don't have to gather with other believers right now in my life, give me a couple of years and then...." And yet there is this thing called OBEDIENCE. What is the obedient thing to do in this passage? Obedience in this passage is doing what you're asked to do when you're asked to do it. And the third person didn't want any part of it.

Friends, the greatest priority of any person's life is following Jesus Christ. In our passage three people said they would follow Jesus but each one had a reason, a responsibility that kept them from the greatest spiritual adventure they could embark on in this world, following Jesus. We all have responsibilities in our culture, with our time, and with our everyday living, not to mention our careers. We all have responsibilities with family, friends, why, even with our church. Have we allowed any of our responsibilities to become our excuses? Even to the point that we hide behind our responsibilities because if we would let ourselves go the fear of the unknown is too powerful? And, Lord knows, we don't want to be fearful and definitely not uncomfortable.

Friends, our greatest opportunity, our greatest responsibility that is offered to us is to follow Jesus Christ wherever and whenever He is leading. Jesus' call for each of us is to count the cost and follow Him. \\\

That is the greatest offer, that is the greatest opportunity; this is the greatest responsibility we have. Follow Christ, you will not be sorry. Amen.

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Luke 9:57-62

Introduction: a new sermon series: "Chase the Goose"

Celtic- *An Geadh-Glas*= "the Wild Goose"= The Holy Spirit

Wild animals caught and caged- the Moluccan Cockatoo

The thought that the church has, in some ways, done to people what zoos do to animals

*The Cage of Responsibility*

How many of us have responsibilities?

Luke 9:57-62

First, **following Jesus can be** \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 57-58

Luke 18:18-23

Something good, something great- which do you choose?

Second, **following Jesus surpasses** \_\_\_\_\_ **responsibilities**

Third, **following Jesus surpasses** \_\_\_\_\_  
**responsibilities** vs. 59

The proper interment of the dead in the Near East-

Fourth, **following Jesus surpasses** \_\_\_\_\_ **responsibilities** vs. 61

Conclusion: Our greatest opportunity, our greatest responsibility offered to us is to follow Jesus