

Life-Sharing & Pioneers Lesson 1 “Turning Back For This World” Luke 14:25-34

1. Has there ever been a time in which you turned back to go get something , to do something, or to give someone another chance that you later regretted?
2. What images comes to your mind when you read the following verse: 2 Timothy 2:9-10, “Come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.”
3. When the bible talks about the love of the world or the love for this world, what kind of love do you think is being described?
4. If someone asked you, what is the cost involved in following Jesus Christ, how would you answer his or her question?
5. What do we give up in order to follow the call of the world to come back once again to things we had given up?

Luke 14:25-34 (New International Version, ©2010) Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶ “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ **“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? ²⁹ For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, ³⁰ saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’**

³¹ **“Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples. ³⁴ “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? ³⁵ It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”**

6. What is Jesus getting at when he speaks of hating one’s family to follow Him? How serious do you think Jesus is about this?

7. What does it mean to actually hate one’s own life? How do you do it?

8. What are the different types of crosses we are to carry in following Jesus since Jesus words seem to indicate, we each have a cross.

9. Why is Jesus so interested in us counting the cost before choosing to say yes to follow him?

10. Do you think Jesus expected for many people to go back to their old lifestyle after an initial contact with him?

11. What is at stake when we say, “I know its wrong, but I ask God to forgive me each time I do it and I plan to keep on doing it, at least for a while.”

12. What do you think it means when the writer says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom?”

Life-Sharing Lesson 2—I Didn't Expect This To Happen To Me
2 Kings 4:8-37

1. What was an unexpected loss that you had in your life, and what impact did it have on you?

2 Kings 4:8-10 (Today's New International Version, ©2005)

The Shunammite's Son Restored to Life

⁸ One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. ⁹ She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. ¹⁰ Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us."

2. What special gifts does the woman from Shunem appear to have in verses 8-10?

2 Kings 4:11-13 (Today's New International Version, ©2005)

¹¹ One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. ¹² He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the Shunammite." So he called her, and she stood before him. ¹³ Elisha said to him, "Tell her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?'" She replied, "I have a home among my own people."

3. Why do you think the woman was reluctant to ask Elijah for anything when given the opportunity to do so in verses 11-13?

4. What have you desired from God, but have been reluctant to let others know about your request? Or What keeps you from sharing that desire publicly with others?

2 Kings 4:14-17 (Today's New International Version, ©2005)

¹⁴ "What can be done for her?" Elisha asked.

Gehazi said, "She has no son, and her husband is old." ¹⁵ Then Elisha said, "Call her." So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. ¹⁶ "About this time next year," Elisha said, "you will hold a son in your arms."

"No, my lord!" she objected. "Please, man of God, don't mislead your servant!" ¹⁷ But the woman became pregnant, and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.

5. Why do you think the woman is reluctant to accept Elisha's words about her having a son?

6. What do you think the woman's reaction was to getting pregnant and having a child?

2 Kings 4:18-20 (Today's New International Version, ©2005)

¹⁸ The child grew, and one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. ¹⁹ He said to his father, "My head! My head!"

His father told a servant, "Carry him to his mother." ²⁰ After the servant had lifted him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon, and then he died.

7. What do you think was going through the woman's mind as she held her child in her arms in verse 20 and watching him die?

8. Why is it that the very gift that God promises us and gives to us, can end in tragedy?

9. Was there anything the woman could have done to have prevented the death of the child?

10. Why do we beat ourselves up over losses that we may not have been able to prevent?

2 Kings 4:21-28 (Today's New International Version, ©2005)

²¹ She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out. ²² She called her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and a donkey so I can go to the man of God quickly and return." ²³ "Why go to him today?" he asked. "It's not the New Moon or the Sabbath." "That's all right," she said.

²⁴ She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, "Lead on; don't slow down for me unless I tell you." ²⁵ So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When he saw her in the distance, the man of God said to his servant Gehazi, "Look! There's the Shunammite! ²⁶ Run to meet her and ask her, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?'" "Everything is all right," she said.

²⁷ When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, "Leave her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me why."

²⁸ "Did I ask you for a son, my lord?" she said. "Didn't I tell you, 'Don't raise my hopes?'"

11. What do we learn about the woman in verses 22-28.

12. Why had she been afraid to ask for a son?

2 Kings 4:29-37 (Today's New International Version, ©2005)

²⁹ Elisha said to Gehazi, "Tuck your cloak into your belt, take my staff in your hand and run. Don't greet anyone you meet, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff on the boy's face."

³⁰ But the child's mother said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So he got up and followed her.

³¹ Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the boy's face, but there was no sound or response. So Gehazi went back to meet Elisha and told him, "The boy has not awakened."

³² When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. ³³ He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the LORD. ³⁴ Then he got on the bed and lay on the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out on him, the boy's body grew warm. ³⁵ Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out on him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

³⁶ Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunammite." And he did. When she came, he said, "Take your son." ³⁷ She came in, fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.

13. Why is it that God grants her the miracle of her son being healed, and yet so many other mothers have prayed and not received their children back alive?

14. What do we learn about God from this passage?

15. Does hearing God say "no" to your request cause your faith to be weakened?

Life-Sharing & Pioneers Lesson 3 “How Long Are You Willing To Persevere” Jeremiah 20:1-3, Jeremiah 37:11-21

1. What assignment or job have you had in life in which you said, “that’s it, that’s all I’m going to take. I am through with this”?

2. How do you think you would handle a job from the Lord in which the Lord says “Oh by the way, if you do everything exactly as I tell you, nobody is going to listen to you anyways.”

The people of God had rejected God’s rule over them. The Lord had sent the Babylonians to destroy the city of Jerusalem and to take the people away as captives. At first the false prophets told the people the Babylonians would not come. When they came, the false prophets promised a miraculous deliverance. Jeremiah on the other hand prophesied, the Babylonians were going to come. When they arrived, Jeremiah told the people the Lord said the only way they would survive would be to voluntarily surrender themselves to the Babylonians. Many of the leaders saw Jeremiah as a traitor by telling the people to defect to the other side. After a great round of preaching to the people by Jeremiah, we find the following passage:

Jeremiah 20:1-2 (Today’s New International Version, ©2005)

Jeremiah and Pashhur ¹ When the priest Pashhur son of Immer, the official in charge of the temple of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, ² he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the LORD’s temple.

3. What would have been your reaction if you had been Jeremiah and was beaten for doing what God told you to do?

4. If God was able to stop Pashhur from beating Jeremiah, why didn’t He do it?

5. Jeremiah thought about just quitting the preaching assignment because he felt the job was unfair. Have you ever thought God's role for your life has been unfair and what feelings did it lead you to possess.

6. Jeremiah stated :**Jeremiah 20:9 (Today's New International Version, ©2005)**

⁹ But if I say, "I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name," his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.

What are some of the kinds of motivations God uses to keep us going when we feel like we just want to hang it in in our situation?

Jeremiah 37:11-21 (Today's New International Version, ©2005)

¹¹ After the Babylonian army had withdrawn from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's army, ¹² Jeremiah started to leave the city to go to the territory of Benjamin to get his share of the property among the people there. ¹³ But when he reached the Benjamin Gate, the captain of the guard, whose name was Irijah son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah, arrested him and said, "You are deserting to the Babylonians!"

¹⁴ "That's not true!" Jeremiah said. "I am not deserting to the Babylonians." But Irijah would not listen to him; instead, he arrested Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. ¹⁵ They were angry with Jeremiah and had him beaten and imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the secretary, which they had made into a prison.

¹⁶ Jeremiah was put into a vaulted cell in a dungeon, where he remained a long time. ¹⁷ Then King Zedekiah sent for him and had him brought to the palace, where he asked him privately, "Is there any word from the LORD?"

“Yes,” Jeremiah replied, “you will be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon.”

¹⁸ Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, “What crime have I committed against you or your attendants or this people, that you have put me in prison? ¹⁹ Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, ‘The king of Babylon will not attack you or this land’? ²⁰ But now, my lord the king, please listen. Let me bring my petition before you: Do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the secretary, or I will die there.”

²¹ King Zedekiah then gave orders for Jeremiah to be placed in the courtyard of the guard and given a loaf of bread from the street of the bakers each day until all the bread in the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard.

7. Just when it looked as though things were about to look better for Jeremiah, he is again falsely accused and beaten pretty badly, along with thrown into a pretty dismal prison. What do you think was going through Jeremiah’s mind at this point in his life?

8. Some may have thought Jeremiah became depressed. Do you think depression is normal for Christians when Jesus has given us the victory over all things?

9. Is it normal for believers to have long periods in their lives in which things just do not seem to be working for their good? What is the role of faith when this happens?

10. Would you have been as bold as Jeremiah was in telling King Zedekiah the truth, or would you have been tempted to say something more to the liking of King Zedekiah such as “the Lord will save this city, because God loves His people.” Why or Why not.

11. Why do you think King Zedekiah only helps Jeremiah a little, rather than setting him free as he deserved?

12. What does this verse really means to you?

Romans 8:28 (Today's New International Version, ©2005) ²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose.

13. Where in your life, do you need to claim this verse for yourself.

Lesson 4 Life-Sharing & Pioneers “Sold Out Completely” Acts 6 & 7

In February of 2011, a couple put all of their wealth into their yacht so they could go around the world delivering bibles. They were seized by pirates in the Indian Ocean and eventually murdered by them. The Adams ran a Bible ministry and had been distributing Bibles to schools and churches in remote villages in areas including the Fiji Islands, Alaska, New Zealand, Central America and French Polynesia. They knew the dangers involved in their journey, but chose to go on anyways.

1. Has there ever been a time in which you knew the possible danger awaiting you, but you chose to go ahead and do something just the same, because you thought it was the right thing to do? If so when.

2. If the Adams above had of been your relatives or friends, would you have encouraged them or discouraged them from delivering the bibles around the world via the yacht?

3. What do you think it means to be sold out to Jesus?

3. b What does a church sold out to Jesus look like?

Acts 6:8-15 (New International Version 1984, ©1984) Stephen Seized

⁸ Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. ⁹ Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene

and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen,¹⁰ but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.

¹¹ Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God.”¹² So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.¹³ They produced false witnesses, who testified, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law.”¹⁴ For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.”

¹⁵ All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

3. How can we tell that Stephen was sold out for Jesus Christ?

4. What was at the root of the attack by Synagogue of the Freedman?

5. How should Christians handle blatant plots to attack their character by others?

6. What do you think was happening in verse 15 when they said Stephen’s face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen uses most of chapter seven to explain the history of God's people from the time of Abraham right up until the death of Jesus Christ. He leaves no stone unturned. He says in verse 51-53 Acts 7:51-53 (Today's New International Version, ©2005)

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— ⁵³ you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

7. What does verses 51 to 53 say to us about Stephen's character?

8. This was going to be Stephen's last sermon, even though he's only recently been used in such a powerful way by the Lord and appears to be in the prime of his life. Why do sold out saints tend to live shorter lives when they are doing so much for the Lord?

Acts 7:54-59 (Today's New International Version, ©2005)

The Stoning of Stephen

⁵⁴ When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

⁵⁷ At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹ While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”
⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

9. Why is it that sold out saints receive the opportunity to see things that other people do not get to see? (No one else is recorded as seeing Jesus standing at the right of God)

10. What do we learn about Stephen’s character from the way he was dying?

11. What affect is Stephen’s death having on Saul?

12. Why are sold out saints often considered lunatics or mentally unbalanced by others?

13. What’s an area in your life that you could be more sold out to the Lord that you currently are?