



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Topic: Commitment/Faith

Release: June 30, 2017

ALL IN

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Matthew 16:24

How deep is your spiritual commitment? You made the decision to receive life from Jesus Christ, right? But have you made a commitment to surrender, to give everything, to commit your will to Him and let His Word guide your life?

"Hold on for just a minute," you are thinking, "not quite so fast!" I want to go to heaven, yes, but what you're asking seems a bit much.

We are often like the chicken and the pig who, one day, were walking down the road and observed a sign on a church saying, "Missionary breakfast." "Hum," the chicken says, "What a marvelous idea. What do you say, let's donate something! Tell you what: I'll lay the eggs and you provide the bacon." Thinking over the suggestion the pig answered, "For you that would be a donation; for me it would be total sacrifice." There is a difference between a decision to put a little effort into something, and an unconditional-no-strings attached commitment.

"When Jesus Christ calls a man," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer in a German prison cell shortly before his death, "He calls him to come and die." But death is not very attractive to us. We want validation; we want gratification but to sustain personal sacrifice in giving something to someone else-- that's another matter. And that is exactly what is wrong with Christianity today.

In one phrase, it is a lack of commitment. "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me," said Jesus (Matthew 16:24).

The New Testament speaks much of commitment, and in doing so the writers of Scripture used Greek words that are often translated the same but really have three nuances of meaning: 1) To abandon yourself or your ambitions to His cause; 2) To yield to His will and control; and 3) To place yourself in the hands of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master. No more forcible plea for commitment is found in the letters of Paul than the words he wrote to the Roman believers as he said, "...I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.... Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1-2).

When it comes to your commitment to Jesus Christ, God does not force you to enlist in His cause; He invites you. The word which Paul used when he said, "present your body as a living sacrifice" is an active word. It was the same word which was used of pagans who brought sacrifices to the temple and offered them to heathen gods. Paul, however, is saying, "Look, as an act of your will, I am calling on you to give yourself as a living sacrifice to a living God."

Why are we so reluctant to commit to anything--your marriage, your vocation, even to God? There is a risk attached to commitment, and we want to play it safe. Instead of becoming vulnerable, instead of abandoning ourselves to anyone or anything, we want a safe area to which we can retreat, and on that parcel of our heart we put up signs, "No trespassing," or "Keep Out," or, if we want to be less offensive, we simply post the ground, "Reserved". But the message is still clear: "Do not get too close to me; I do not want to run the risk of getting hurt by you."

Friend, if you hesitate, there's a fundamental issue which you need to settle: Is God a good God? If you answer yes, and you fully mean that, you've eliminated your hesitance to trust Him, to commit yourself and your future to His care. Apart from commitment there is no hope for anything really enduring including heaven itself. Think about it.

(Resource reading: Romans 12)