

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

Ephesians 6:10

Store In My Heart

Luke 9:23-24

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."

This quote from Jesus reminds us that we are called to a life of service and sacrifice. Answering the call of the Lord is not going to bring ease to our life. God expects no less from us than He required of His Only Son.

This does not mean that we must die a cruel death at the hands of men, but that we must be willing to give up everything to serve Him. We are obligated by our answer to this call to leave self behind and give our all to the Lord. Living for the here and now will never bring us to the hereafter. We must leave self and the world behind and follow Christ.

It is a "daily" willingness to give up self and live for Christ for the rest of my life.



Excuse Me?

Bubba Garner

While a guest in the home of a Pharisee, Jesus told the parable of a man who gave his own dinner party. When it was time for the invited guests in the story to come, *"They all alike began to make excuses"* (**Luke 14:18**). One of them had to go and look at a piece of land he had just purchased. (Was the land going anywhere?) Another had just bought five yoke of oxen and needed to try them out. (Shouldn't he have done that before he bought them?) Still another couldn't come because he had just married a wife. (Why not bring her with him?) The real reason they didn't go is because they didn't want to. As a result the man said, *"none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner"* (**Luke 14:24**).

Excuses do not excuse our responsibility. We may offer them in an attempt to blame others or the circumstances around us, but they do not remove our accountability to do what is right. And if it is easy for us to see through these excuses in the parable, can you imagine how flimsy ours appear before the all-knowing God?

I saw a clever billboard recently that encouraged people to quit smoking. It simply stated: "I'll quit when cigarettes reach \$____ a pack." In other words, the circumstances will determine when the decision is made. That's simply an excuse.

This same danger applies to our areas of responsibility before God. For instance, we try to excuse ourselves by saying:

"I'll obey the gospel when it gets to ____ time." Whether that's a certain age or time of life, we put off obedience until a more convenient season. Like Felix said after Paul preached to him about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, *"Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you"* (**Acts 24:25**). The sermon found its mark because Felix was frightened about the things he heard. But as far as we know, he never found the time to do anything about it.

We must see the urgency of our soul's predicament. I don't mean that we should rush into this most important decision of life. But there is a difference between counting the cost and calculating excuses. We see that with regard to the health of our physical body. What about the

urgency of obeying Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell? The Philippian jailer didn't wait around. He was baptized *"in the same hour of the night"* (**Acts 16:33**). If not now, when will it be time?

"I'll come back to the Lord when I get ____ under control." We'll give our lives to God only after we straighten them out first. Jesus was often criticized for the kind of company he kept: tax-gatherers and sinners. What was His response? *"It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners"* (**Mark 2:17**). Sinners are the ones Jesus came to seek and to save. He alone can take a broken life and make it whole again. He is the Great Physician.

How will we ever get our lives under control without Him who gave us life? Jesus does not invite those who are perfect and trouble-free to come to Him. He offers rest to *"all who are weary and heavy laden"* (**Matthew 11:28**). And yet, we will excuse ourselves from the assembly of God's people until we can get some problem worked out. When we wait for things to be in perfect order before we act, we run the risk of waiting forever.

"I'll be more evangelistic when I know ____ about the Bible." We know we ought to be doing more in this area, but we put off our responsibility until we can devote more time to Bible study. When did Saul of Tarsus begin his preaching career? After he was baptized, *"immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues"* (**Acts 9:20**). This amazed the people in Damascus because they knew he had come to the city to persecute Christians. *"But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews by proving that Jesus is the Christ"* (**Acts 9:22**).

We often shy away from personal evangelism because we think that one day we will all of a sudden know more about the Scriptures to explain them to someone else. But Bible study is like every other study. It takes time and priority. It takes the decision to grow and develop. It takes setting aside the excuses when other things interfere. When someone asks us a question, there is no shame in saying, "I don't know," or "I'll have to study that some more," or "I'll get back to you." But how many times do we say that when they ask us about sports, computers, or our favorite television show?

One day, we will stand before the Lord and give an answer for our deeds. This is one meeting for which no one will be excused.

For Our Information

Ruben Keisler has been released to drive by his surgeon.
Brenda Keisler is still dealing with neck and hip pain
Jim Soliday's heart has been in a more regular rhythm.
Sue Soliday has been feeling better.
Vickie McNees is still dealing with severe migraines.
Pierce family from Conway – Daughter died during surgery from a burst aneurysm leaving husband & children behind.
Spears family from Hot Springs – 5-month-old daughter died.

Sunday Evening – **Nehemiah 13** Wednesday - **John 7:10**

Our **Meeting** with **Jared Hagan** is scheduled for

September 15-19

Contact Us

We like opportunities to speak with others about the Lord.

Church of Christ

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The
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MEETS HERE



10:20 AM • Sunday Worship Service
5:00 PM • Sunday Night Bible Study
7:00 PM • Wednesday Bible Study