

marathon

introduction

To introduce the message, talk about the training habits and racing strategies of long-distance runners. If you know someone who has trained for a marathon, you could invite them to share some of his/her strategies. Today's talk examines the cost involved in following Jesus. Have someone read Luke 9:57-62.

message

New converts to Christianity are usually excited about their faith. They are eager to follow Jesus and run the long-distance race for Him. They want to serve Jesus all their lives, putting Him first in all situations. As time goes on, however, people and things sometime get in the way. Christians start running out of energy or losing interest. You see, there is a cost to follow Jesus.

1. In Luke 9:58, Jesus told His disciples that even though animals have the security of homes, He would give up that security for the sake of the Kingdom. Does this mean we can't have a home or nice things? No, but it does mean that there is a price to pay to be obedient to the Father. His school of obedience is often demanding. To keep growing in our relationship with Him, we must be faithful students.
2. When Jesus said to the man, "Follow me." the man replied like some of us would. He said, "I would like to follow you, but I have some important personal business to take care of." To make a point Jesus replies, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60, NIV).
3. What is Jesus trying to teach us?
 - a. There is a high price to follow Him. Following Jesus is not an on-again, off-again thing. You must be willing to serve Him every day, sticking with it, even when it gets tough.
 - b. The Gospel is not a gospel of convenience. What if one of your Christian friends turns away from Jesus? What if things do not go exactly as you think they should go? Will you still serve Jesus no matter what?
 - c. The cost of discipleship is daily discipline to the things of God: reading His Word, sharing your faith, worshipping Jesus and obeying His commands. These should be life-long activities.
 - d. "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62, NIV).

salvation appeal

Don't think that you can wait forever to give your life to Jesus. Today, Jesus Christ is standing with open arms, waiting for you to give your life to him. He loves you. All you have to do is make the decision. When you do, you make this decision for a lifetime.

challenge

Too many people attempt to run a marathon but end up running a 50-yard dash. They fail to count the costs of a life dedicated to following and serving Christ. Have you counted the costs? Are you willing to pay the price?

