
Salvation Costs Everything (Genesis 12:1-8)

A Sermon by Pastor Jason Liebenow



One dollar! That's all! I was one dollar short! I had been travelling with my wife, and we got to one of those expensive toll roads. We had been in the car for about 6 hours at this point, and we get to this toll road out of nowhere. We had searched every inch of our car for extra change and we were one dollar short. And the person in the booth would not let us through. Only the full price would work.

There are a lot of times when only the full cost, only total commitment, will get you what you are looking for. Today, we will consider the cost of following Jesus. Today, we will see that Salvation Costs Everything.

Are you willing to pay the price? Are you committed enough to your God? In our lesson from Genesis, we saw God come to Abram when he was 75 years old and God told him to leave behind his whole life, everything he had known, in order to follow God. Would you be willing to do that if God told you to?

Most people are not committed enough. Saul was committed, but just not enough. Saul had been a nobody, but then God raise him up to be his chosen leader for his people. God made him king over Israel, though he should have lived a life in utter obscurity. Saul became a great king and led God's people to victory and power!

Saul was committed to God, but just not totally. Saul followed God, except when it came to listening to God's Word. You see, Saul was a man of action. He had some deeply held beliefs ingrained in him since he was a kid. He knew that he was right. When God's Word didn't match his previous beliefs, Saul just kind of ignored what God said.

He was committed to God, but just not to *everything* God said. And because of that, Saul fell away from God and died in unbelief.

Judas was committed, but just not enough. Judas would have been forgotten to history, but then Jesus chose him to be one of his disciples. Judas got to travel all over Israel right next to Jesus. He got to listen to everything Jesus said. Judas left his home to follow Jesus and to listen to every word he spoke.

Judas was committed to Jesus, but just not totally. Judas followed Jesus, except when it came to money. You see, Judas knew that money was power. He knew that money was really what made the world go around. He knew what Jesus said about money, but he really just preferred to have the money in his pocket, rather than trusting the God would somehow provide.

He was committed to Jesus, except when it came to trusting God. And because of that, Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver and killed himself when his money couldn't pay for the guilt he felt.

David was committed, but just not enough. David should have died defending his sheep from lions and bears, but God gave him strength to defeat them all and even the giant Goliath! God raised David up to be one of the greatest kings over Israel! David was even called a "man after God's own heart."

David was committed to God, but just not totally. David followed God, except when it came to his sexuality. Though God had given him the blessing of marriage, David still just had these urges. And when he found the opportunity to sleep with another man's wife, he jumped at the chance. When his urges came, he acted on them, instead of finding fulfillment in the way God had commanded.

David was committed to God, except when those urges were too strong. And because of that, David committed adultery, had the woman's husband killed in order to cover it up, and he almost destroyed his faith completely.

Are you more committed to God than they were? Have you led and served God's people better than Saul did? Have you followed and listened to Jesus as much as Judas did? Could you be called a person after God's own heart like David was?

How much of your life are you willing to give to God? Are you willing to give everything or are there areas in your life that you struggle to give to God? Do you say, "Jesus, I will follow you everywhere!" But when you look at your life, there are certain things that you just aren't willing to do for God?

Dear friends, that very same lack of commitment, has destroyed faiths in the past, and led people straight to hell. Whatever it is in your life that you have held back from your God, repent. Turn away from that sin that you still hold on to, and

follow God wholly. Turn from your sin and do the works God requires.

In Jesus' own words, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." (John 6:29) Repent and put your faith in Jesus. While none of us can claim total commitment to God... while none of us can say we have been willing to pay 100% for our salvation, Jesus is committed to our salvation. Jesus was willing to pay 100% of the price for us.

He is totally committed to you. If Jesus had sinned just once, we would have been lost forever. If Jesus had left just one good deed undone, we would have only hell to look forward to. But Jesus paid the full price. He never sinned once! He did everything right! He fully obeyed God's law! He perfectly loved God and his neighbor! He let nothing stop him from earning God's favor for us!

Jesus was committed to your salvation. He resolutely went to the cross to pay for our sins. Even when he was still a long way off from Jerusalem, where he knew he would suffer and die, we read in the gospels that Jesus "set his face like flint" toward Jerusalem. He was totally committed to going to that cross, to suffer the punishment that our sins deserved. He let nothing stop him from paying the price for our sins.

Jesus is still committed to you today! He has been determined all your life to keep you in the faith, even up to this very day! In the gospels, we read about a time when Jesus *had* to go through Samaria. Jesus didn't *have* to because of geography. He could have gone around Samaria. Jesus *had* to go through Samaria, because there were people who needed to know the gospel message of full and free salvation in Christ, full salvation even for those who have failed in their commitment to God. In the same way, Jesus has worked in your life to make sure that you heard the gospel message, to make sure that faith was miraculously created in your heart, to make sure that you keep hearing that gospel message, to make sure that faith in your heart is continually strengthened until that day that you can fully enjoy your salvation with God in heaven.

Dear friends in Christ, since Jesus is so committed to your salvation, today he warns you that there will be a cost to you too. Some of you have been paying that cost already. Some of you have found divisions in your relationships because of your faith. Some of you have faced ridiculed. Some of you have seen the bloody

battle within your own soul as the new life God created in you struggles against that vile sinful nature that still lives in you too.

Dear friends in Christ, do not let the cost of following Jesus discourage you. Do not fear to give your whole life to your God. Do not be afraid to follow your God into hard times and dangerous places. The cost we pay now may seem very steep at times, but it will always be worth it. The cost we pay now pales in comparison to the reward that Jesus has won for us!

We know that in everything, we can fully trust and rely on our God. We know that following him leads to true happiness and fulfillment, even if right now it leads to pain and suffering. We know that whatever we have to lose in this life, our God can pay back to us 100 times over!

Sometimes, only the full price will do, only 100%. Our salvation costs everything. And Jesus was willing to pay that. Therefore, give your whole life to your Savior, because he gave everything for your salvation. Let us not be afraid to pay everything to follow Jesus, because he is totally committed to us. Amen.