Sacrifice isn’t something that is a very popular theme in evangelical Christianity. We are encouraged to think about having our needs met, to think about worship, and blessing, and God answering our prayers. But, think with me for a moment. When was the last time on radio, TV, Christian book or magazine you heard someone read and teach about what Jesus said?

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.” Matt 16:24-25

Sacrifice: “An act of giving up something valued for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy.”

One of the marks of the NT church that set them apart from the world is that they lived the way Jesus lived. They understood that the life they had…and EVERYTHING that encompassed…was given by God to be used for His kingdom.

4 Ways in Which We are Called To Live Sacrificially
Acts 2:42-47  Page 772

So let’s talk about that this morning. I want to look with you at 5 Specifics
Possessions;  Comfort;  Personal Preferences:  Time:  Life

Acts 2:45;  4:34-35

Notice here that what is going on is much larger than just what they put in the offering plate!!!  Write a check and done.

- What they were doing:
  Acts 2:44  “Selling their possessions and goods, gave to everyone as they had need.”
  Acts 4:34-35  “There were no needy persons among them. Selling lands and houses…”
  Acts 4:36  “Joseph (Barnabas) sold a field and brought the money to apostles.”

Here is what I want you to see:  This was not a one time occurrence. It was a lifestyle that they created and nurtured. They lived this way on a regular basis. All the way through the book of Acts we see them doing things like this.

- Why they were doing it:  Jesus taught us that to be his disciples that is the way we live!

  Luke 6:31-35  “Do to others as you would have them do to you. ‘If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.’”

Applic:  I have to take this opportunity to say, Riva is an exceedingly generous church in this regard!

Applic:  One of the failings of modern Evangelical Christianity is that we want to make following Jesus comfortable, easy.

- Take up your cross:  Voluntary Action:  Just like Jesus chose to pick up HIS cross…We do the same
  ~Follow:  We name his name, we claim to be his followers, then we have to follow!

Applic:  One of the failings of modern Evangelical Christianity is that we want to make following Jesus comfortable, easy.

Question:  What are you sacrificing to for Jesus and His work today?  Ask yourself that question…if it is nothing…Then you MUST reevaluate:  Do you really think He meant OTHERS had to...and not you?

One of the things we have to come to grips with if we are going to follow Jesus is we have to submit our preferences to Him! Again, this is one of those areas that our culture struggles with. We all have “things” that we like...or don’t like. Could be attitude towards race, or how we view politics, hot button item could be the way we view money, or any of a thousand different things that we have a settled opinion on...based on preference. Peter was that way. He had a cultural bias toward Gentiles. He and most of the Jews view Gentiles as second class humans. They were not God’s chosen. They didn’t eat with them, socialize with them, worship with them, talk to them...hang out...while that may have been accepted culturally in the Jewish society of his day...that was ENTIRELY unacceptable Jesus!

- Everything in Peter’s heart, mind, background has to change:
  - If he was going to be a faithful follower of Jesus...then He had to accept people the way Jesus did!
  - Why they did it! Had 3 years of watching Jesus accept people...and put His needs in second place!
    - Samaritan Woman: John 4 (Only people they looked down upon more than the gentiles...Samaritans)
    - Lepers: Matt 8: Healed a leper...by TOUCHING Him! Not done!
    - Woman anointed: Luke 7:39 “What kind of a woman she is...a sinner!”
    - Tax collectors/sinners Matt 9:11 “Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

Applic: What personal preferences DO YOU need to lay down?
- Race? Politics? Socio-Economic?
- Your know of course that Jesus wasn’t a white, middle class republican right? He wouldn’t have voted the party ticket?
- He would be more likely to be found down on Clay Street and out at Meade Village, over on the Block in Baltimore When you got saved...when you accepted salvation He offered...you laid down ALL of your rights...now serve HIM He sets the agenda, He decides what is acceptable and what is not, He is the final arbiter of what is right...NOT YOU!


Now this is where I am going to stop preaching and start meddling! Jesus can have our money, he can have our attitudes and preferences, he can have out comfort...but our TIME! That is the most precious thing we have! The idea that he might actually want MORE than an hour or two a week! I mean...if I go to worship...and maybe even SS or a bible study...what more could he possibly want from me?

- What they were doing: Acts 13:2 Pg 781
  - Set apart Paul and Barnabas “for the work to which I have called them!”
  - There is a calling on our lives: To serve Him and to serve Others
  - That calling demands we make a choice to follow after him.
  - Following Jesus...means by definition that we are NOT following other things.

Sacrifice: Act of giving up one thing...so you can pursue something else of more value!

- All over the book of Acts: Well known like Paul, Barnabas, Philip, Peter,
  - Little known or Unknown like Cornelius, Tabitha, Lydia

- Why they were doing it
  - Joh 9:4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.
    - Jesus knew the Father had a call in his life
    - Jesus knew time was limited
    - Jesus knew the day was coming when the opportunity to do what God called him to do would pass

Applic: Every single person that is a part of RTBC has a calling in their life
- If you consider this your church home...IF you are a part of this body
- Then you bring something to the table that NO one else has!
- By necessity that will cost you: Time, Talent, Treasure
- And you need to count the cost!
  - Luke 14:25-33 Pg 739
  - Crowds: Time to filter them out!
  - Follow me? Put me before your family! (THAT is deadly in our culture...Jesus before your CHILDREN!
  - Jesus before your own life! (He gets precedence?) ~Jesus before your Everything in your life!

CONCL: One question: What Are Your Sacrificing to follow Jesus today?
- Possessions: Money and Things: That’s Easy! Those are the first things that go!
- Comfort: Willing to lay that down? Willing to struggle, fight, be uncomfortable to follow him?
- Personal Preference: Are there some attitudes, Some deeply held beliefs...that you need to surrender to Jesus?
- Time: He has called you to some area of work...Are you doing it? I don’t have time...sure you do: Use it for Him Everyone in this room has the same amount of time 24 hours: Issue is not what you have: How you use it!

SACRIFICIAL LIVING: Jesus ASSUMED it for His followers: Are you living that way?