

May 5, 2014

Salvation That Is Above Budget

Luke 23:8 (NASB), ***“Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.”***

My wife and I enjoy watching the HGTV show “Property Brothers.” The show follows twin brothers Jonathan and Drew Scott, one is a realtor and the other is a contractor. Each show is basically the same; they meet a family who wants to buy a home and the family has almost impossible expectations for what their new home will look like.

The first thing the brothers do is they show the family a “dream” home. This home is always immaculate and as near perfect as one could ever expect. After the family has seen the home and are appropriately jazzed up about the house they pull the rug out from underneath them by telling them the price which is always way above their budget. You see they want the dream house but they just can’t afford it!

Coming to saving faith in Jesus Christ is somewhat like that show for many people. Many people just like those home buyers want the perfect life in Christ, they want the assurance of heaven and salvation, but they do not want to count the cost of salvation. They want to come in under budget so to speak.

Today’s verse from Luke 23:8 is from the account of Jesus’ crucifixion. Herod is much like our home buyers and like many casual Christians. Herod was interested in Jesus but my no means wanted to make any sort of commitment. This was the same Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded at the request of his wife after her daughter had danced for him. Herod was a very depraved man who spent most of his time giving in to every desire of the flesh. But he was fascinated by Jesus and was no doubt very familiar with Him and His miracles by this point. Herod wanted Jesus on his terms.

Verse 8 says that ***“Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus.”*** While he was happy to see the Lord he most certainly was not seeking Him or any sort of salvation. Herod was curious about Jesus and as the end of the verse says he ***“was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.”*** Jesus, do a trick for me! I want to see a show!

We like to chuckle at Herod because he seems (especially in some of the cinematic renderings of him) as sort of clownish. But in so many ways we are just like him, we want Jesus on *our* terms; we want Jesus to do things for us, to give us goodies and to give us a show. Our primary idol is ourselves so we want Jesus to be just like us instead of what Jesus really demands of us which is much more than most of us are comfortable with.

Luke 14:26-27 says, ***“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”*** So often we picture Jesus as offering this invitation to us

and all we have to do is pray a prayer, or walk down an aisle and then everything will be alright in our lives. Many preach a gospel that teaches that by “inviting Jesus into our hearts” our lives will magically be full of everything we have ever wanted. The only problem with this is that Jesus never said that Himself.

Instead Jesus calls us to follow Him in a radical way that is very different than what we expect. What Jesus calls us to is to a love and commitment for Him that is so great that every other relationship seems like **“hate”** in comparison to Him. Jesus calls us not to a life of prosperity and worldly success but rather to hate **“even his own life.”** He does not call us to an easy and smoothly paved road. In fact in verse 27 He says, **“Whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”** We cannot come to Christ just part way. Being a Christ follower is not a part time endeavor but tragically most people treat it as a hobby (if that).

Jesus is not just a mere curiosity and He is not some genie from whom we can have all our wants met. Jesus Christ is the Son of God who came and died an excruciating death so that we can be free from the sin that **“so easily entangles us.”** He does not call us to a life of ease or a life that will be free from strife or suffering. He calls us to the opposite of that which is a life in which we give everything we are and everything we have to Him and to the furtherance of His kingdom.

The problem in the modern Evangelical Church in America is that we have succumbed in large part to “easy believism.” We have lost sight of the Biblical fact that the call to Christ is a call to sacrifice. My prayer is that the church in America will turn back to Scripture and back to the Biblical definition of salvation and not the cultural pressure of what we want it to mean.