

The Cost of Following Jesus

by Gbile Akanni

Gbile Akanni teaches that following Jesus requires total commitment and surrender, warning that partial devotion is not enough to inherit the kingdom of God.

Duration: 35:11

Scripture: Mark 10:17-22, Exodus 20:12-16, Joshua 6:20-21

Topics: "Discipleship", "Commitment", "Kingdom of God"

Description

In this powerful sermon, Gbile Akanni challenges young believers to examine the true cost of following Jesus. Using the story of the young rich ruler, he highlights the necessity of full commitment and warns against half-hearted devotion. Gbile encourages listeners to surrender all that competes with God's lordship in their lives and to embrace the call to discipleship with courage and faith.

Transcript

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Telephone numbers 0703 03636 59, 0703 76811 98. Email address lsmedia at livingseed.org or visit our website at www.livingseed.org. Let us sit back and listen as the servant of God brings forth the Word of Life. Father, we thank you so much again for this morning.

Thank you for another time for us to sit at your feet. Thank you for your faithfulness towards us as young people. Lord, we are grateful.

We want to pray this morning as we start this day. We want to pray that you will open our understanding in the name of our Lord Jesus. We want to pray, Lord, that you will reveal your plan about us, Lord, in the name of our Lord Jesus.

We are grateful, Lord, that you have reached out to us even while we are still young. Why we still have all the energy. Heavenly Father, we pray that you would not regret for what you have done to us.

We pray that we will not take this moment for granted in the name of our Lord Jesus. As we are going to look into your Word briefly this morning, we want to pray that you will guide us. Please, Father, have mercy on us.

We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen. Thank you very much.

For our devotional church, we are going to get two scriptures, actually. But we will read the first scripture from the book of Mark, chapter 10. We will read Mark, chapter 10.

We will start from verse 17 to 22. I'm sensing in my heart as I'm following God and dealing with us in this Congress, I'm sensing that God is speaking. God, rather, is calling for more commitment to us as young people.

I don't take this Congress as one of the conferences that is very light. I take it with a seriousness of heart in my heart. I'm hearing God looking for young people.

I'm hearing God looking for sons and for daughters that are going to be prepared to stand for His kingdom. I see this cycle as a recruitment. God is recruiting us.

He has told us the day before yesterday that He is coming to us because we are strong as young people. We have all what it takes to push the kingdom of God in our generation. But for this morning, I want us to look at this passage.

I want to look at a young man that was given an opportunity, but he never appreciated the opportunity that he was given by Christ Jesus. The young rich ruler. The story reads from verse 17.

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running and kneeled to him and asked him, Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. Thou knowest the commandments. Do not commit adultery.

Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Defraud not.

Honor thy father and thy mother. And when he answered and said unto him, Master, all the things I have observed from my youth. Then Jesus, beholding him, laughed at him and said unto him, One thing thou lackest.

Go that I may serve whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor. And thou shalt have children in heaven. And come, take up the cross and follow me.

And he was saved at that scene and went away free. For he had great profession. Let's stop there for now.

We're looking at the story here. The Bible talks about this story as a story of a young rich ruler. This person was young.

This person was rich. This person had a platform. But I want us to note a few things from verse 17.

We're noting that this man came to Jesus. Came running. This man had an appearance of being hungry for the Lord.

He came running. And when he came to him, he worshipped him. He knelt down at his feet.

And he said, good master, what shall I do that I may inherit the eternal life? Just this verse 17 speaks a lot to my heart as I'm reading. This man, as he's coming, he is looking like somebody who wants to inherit the

kingdom of God. He wants to inherit the kingdom of God.

And he's coming to the right person. The owner of the kingdom. I'm taking that and enlightening it with the way that we have gathered from all over the world in different centers.

Some of us, I know, we've been so excited that we are coming together for this student's congress. Some of us, we've been following this program for some time, for many years. We get so much excited.

There are so many things that we get to see, even our friends in this gathering. But I'm looking at this young man that had an external appearance of seeking the kingdom of God. This man, you know, when I read this, I'm thinking of Gideon.

You know, the Gideon that we're reading about, that is the theme of our conference. Gideon was also confronted. Actually, God visited him.

God visited Gideon and God showed interest in using Gideon. But I'm looking at their responses. This man, apparently, he did not have something genuine in his heart to follow the master.

But from his lips, he was saying he's looking for the kingdom of God. I'm looking at the price that Gideon was ready to pay when our father was taking us through yesterday and the day before yesterday. The price that Gideon paid for him to be used of God, the risk that he took.

Now, if you look at this young rich ruler, when you hear him, you will be convinced that this man is looking for something great. The way he rushed to the master. I believe there were people around Christ that day.

I believe those people were impressed that this man is actually looking for the kingdom of God. And he came down running and he knelt down. Now, let's look at verse 18.

Jesus said unto him, why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. Let's go to 19. 19, thou knowest the commandments.

Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal.

Do not bear false witness. Defraud not. Honor thy father and thy mother.

Very interesting. Jesus is raising very important issues with this man. He is actually raising issues that are a problem to many of us, even as young people.

The issue of do not commit adultery. We know that we, as young people, we are victims of fornication and all sexual immorality. Now, Christ is raising these issues with this young rich ruler.

You know, what is interesting in my heart, what is also causing pain is the fact that this young rich ruler passed those standards. This young rich ruler was not committing adultery. And he was not a murderer.

He was not killing people. He was not stealing. We're not talking about a man who is a thief here.

By the grace of God, this man was above those things. And then this man was not a liar. This man was honoring his parents.

All those things are looking very great. In fact, during the course of this student's congress, we've been repenting of these issues. God has been continuously touching our lives of all these things.

And these things are not correct. Nobody will inherit the kingdom of God if you have not overcome fornication. If you have not overcome adultery.

If you are still a thief, you cannot inherit the kingdom of God. For that matter, for the purpose of the theme of this congress, you cannot be used of God. You cannot be a vessel in the hand of God with these things that are counted here.

And this man was a very respecting man. He respected his father. He actually kept the law.

That is very interesting in me. But I think this man stopped there. And I was thinking even Christ himself would be impressed to find such a young man.

Remember, this is a young man. We are living in a generation where young men are very, very violent. Young men are very rebellious and disobedient.

We don't obey our parents. We don't obey authorities. But in this young man that we're learning about today, we found a young man.

I would call him he was a Christian. I don't know how to. But this man was a churchgoer.

Because there's no way that he would have known how to keep himself from these things if he was not going to church. You would say this young man was always attending even students' congress. He was always there on conferences.

He knew about these things. He was taught about these things. So it even makes a matter difficult for me that we're not talking about a pagan here.

We're not talking about somebody who does not know anything about God. But we're talking about somebody who has good morale. Somebody that was brought up in a proper way.

A proper way of honoring the parent. A proper way of not stealing. All those things.

But I'm surprised when we read down, we see Christ is not satisfied. I think that's what is burdening me this morning for us to pray as we prepare our hearts for this day. Christ is not satisfied with these things.

Christ is looking for more. That's what I've been... The more I listen to the messages coming, something is telling me in my heart that God is not looking just for people. You know, the story of Gideon, the message last night, the message was so serious to me.

Because when Gideon blew the trumpet, 32,000 men came. They were not forced, but they heard the sound of the trumpet. And they all voluntarily came.

They came to him. I can imagine that when those men had families, when they were living, they were seen as heroes by their wives, by their children. They are going to face a very, very big army.

But they followed. You know, that's the impression they created, they left in their family. But do you know, these people followed, but there was fear in their hearts.

Those people were not ready to be used by God, because they were so fearful. They could not believe God. They could not trust God in their heart.

Now, I'm looking at the impression that we may simply make to people. The first impression that we can make. For instance, for me, if it was me, when Jesus was encountering this young race ruler, I think the CV of this man, I would have qualified him for the kingdom of God.

But Jesus was not satisfied. My question is, Lord, what do you want of me? I pray that you will keep that prayer in your heart as we follow this student's congress. Lord, what would you have me do? What are you looking for? I just know that God is not looking for what we can cheaply give him.

He is not looking for what is cheap. All this did not satisfy the master. Can I challenge you, young person, wherever you are? All those self-righteousness that you have managed over time, God is not looking for that.

All that religious behavior that you have gathered over time because of your exposure, God is not looking for that. I was impressed yesterday when our father was talking about Gideon. He was saying, when Gideon met the angel, it was not in church.

There was no fanfare there. He was just doing his normal work there. I know people that are brought up to church and sometimes we may not actually get to understand what God is looking for.

God is not only looking for a person that is going to sing in the presence and worship. God is not looking for a person that is only going to preach from the pulpit, but God is looking for a life. God is looking for a life that is going to owe.

God is looking for an ownership. Even to us as young people, I know some of us may think, no, maybe this is for adults. Maybe this is for grown-up adults.

Not for me. I am only 18. I am only 15 years old.

But I want to tell you, God is looking for a life to owe. Now let's continue to read, listen to what Jesus confronted this young man with. Verse 21 reads, then Jesus beholding him loved him and said unto him, one thing thou lackest, go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven, and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

I'm looking. This is very interesting. You know, verse one begins to say Jesus loved this young man.

I want also to make just that quick comment and pass to say the offer that God is giving to us as young people, it is because of love. You know, it is very interesting in my heart. I may not have time to share my testimony.

You know, I met the Lord while I was 20 years. I was still very young. And I was lost like any other young person.

But when the Lord came to me, and he did not come to actually entertain me. He came very strong while I was 20. While I was doing my final year in the church institution.

And God came. He gave me the offer. Do you know, I don't have time.

I know I don't have even that much of the experience to share. But I'm telling you, the little time I've spent with the Lord, I know that God is not wasting somebody's life. If God comes to you to give you an offer to follow him, it is because of love.

We are noting here that Jesus looked at this young man and he loved him. You know, if you want direction in life, you know, as young people, there are so many things that are bubbling in our heart. We want to explore this.

We are so anxious about our future. We want to make it. Young person, can I tell you one secret? If anyone wants to do well and follow the Lord correctly, the first thing to do is actually give ownership of your life to him.

The first step in life, you know, we are told many things. We are sent to school, and I know school is very good. Some of us are aspiring to do business.

We think to have money is the thing. Can I tell you this morning, all those things are secondary. The primary thing is to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

And we can only find that in Christ Jesus. In my little experience, I know everything must follow that. The biggest step that you need to take as a young person is to give the ownership of your life to him.

Now, Jesus said, go and sell whatever you have. This man, he was described as a young, rich ruler. Now, even though this man appeared to be seeking the kingdom of God, there was something that he was not ready to forego.

There was something that he was holding tightly. When Jesus saw that, he said, go and sell whatever you have and give the proceedings to the poor and come and follow me. Jesus did not want any competition.

Can I tell you, young person, Jesus does not need any competition in your life. He wants to own, and him alone he wants to own. He is looking for more than the sins that you are going to drop on the altar, for more than the misbehaviors and the bad habits that are troubling you.

He actually is actually looking for you. He does not want anything that will stand in your heart to compete with him. He is looking for a full ownership of your life.

Now, look, Jesus did the matter here. Immediately when he said that, this man was sad. Oh, it's very sad in my heart.

This man, this man, you are actually now seeing the true man. When he was coming, he gave an impression that this man is in the thing. But now we actually get to know who is the man.

When I look at him, I see somebody who wants to get hold of the kingdom of God by this hand, and he wants to hold something else by this hand. I see somebody who wants a mixture of life. Somebody who does not want to live a pure life of Christ.

Are you that young person? Are you not knowing what to choose? Are you that young person who is struggling whether to choose God or to choose friends? Is that your situation? You are not fit for the master. If you are not ready to let go of everything, you are not fit for the master. I pray that God will help us this morning as we pray, as we prepare our hearts, as God is bringing instructions to us during this students' congress, I pray that we will make that resoluteness in our hearts to say, Lord, listen, I give all.

I come to you. I pray that you will make that commitment in your heart that nothing matters more in my life. I want to be owned by you.

This young man turned away sorrowfully. He turned away very sad. He turned away from the master, the kingdom that he came to look for.

He turned away without getting the eternal life. He turned away still clinging on what he possessed. What is it that is possessing you, young person? What is it that is so dear in your heart that you cannot let it go for Christ? I'm telling you, if you are not ready to let go, you are not fit for the kingdom.

The Gideon that we are studying about, he actually gave all. He gave his all. He actually, you know, the risk that he took when he went by night to destroy the shrine of Baal, that meant that he was ready to be thrown out of his family.

He was ready to let go of his family. Can I also tell you that he was ready to die? Because if those people would have killed him, he was ready to die. I pray that God in our generation, God will find young people that are ready to die for him.

Young people that would not spare their life for the sake of the kingdom of God. I want to tell you, young person, those are the only person that can be enlisted in the army of the Lord. You have heard the story of Gideon that those 32,000, they were not fit.

22,000, they just left at a go. When they were told, anyone who is afraid, let him turn back now. 22,000, they disqualified themselves.

The fear in their heart, it disqualified them. But it was not enough. Even those who remained, even those who remained, they were at a go.

Because God searches their heart. God is not desperate to lower his standards. He knows the kind of men that he wants to use.

So, those young men, they are actually turned back because they were not fit. I want to tell you, you know, it's very interesting how Jesus did not hide to those who followed him. Jesus did not hide to his disciples the cost of following him.

I want us to note even to us this morning that the Lord will not hide to us that there is a cost in following him. If anyone is looking to be a vessel into his hand, then you must be ready to pay the price. Finally, before I round up, let's look at the book of Luke, Luke chapter 9. We'll read a few verses.

Luke chapter 9. We'll start reading from verse 23. Then he said to them all, If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and he and he himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of me and my ways, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his own glory and in his Father and of the Holy Nature. This is the scripture that Christ confronted his disciples. Because in them he knew that he is looking for people that are going to stand for his kingdom.

Young people, can I tell you this? The matter of the kingdom of God is not a joke in the heart of God. The matter of his kingdom, he cannot give it to people who are casual. Christ had to tell these people, look, I am not desperate for people that are going to come and stand for me if they are not ready to lose all.

He says here, if anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. In our Bible study, we are actually taught in discipleship, we are dealing with discipleship. But I want us to take note even this morning that those that are going to be enlisted by God or his army are those that deny themselves.

We see that in the life of Gideon. Gideon denied himself. He was actually ready to let go even of his family, to let go of his parents.

He was ready to die. He actually denied himself. God is not looking for less than that.

Do you remember the story of the young people in Babylon? Daniel and his friends, even those ones, they were young people, but there's something that made them to be outstanding young people. It is because they denied themselves. It is because they were willing to die.

They were willing to be thrown into the lake of fire for the kingdom of God. Now, we are seeing Christ here, we are praying. We are seeing Christ here telling that for whosoever desires to save his life will lose it.

Oh, as a young person, can I challenge you this morning? The best way to keep your life, the best way to invest your life is to be prepared to lose for Christ. Christ's hand is the best place to throw your life as a young person. Future is guaranteed to you if you are a young person and you decide to bring it all at the feet of the master.

Future is guaranteed to you. But anyone who thinks that is precious, more precious to throw it all to Christ, you are sure to lose it. Now, verse 25, for what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and is himself destroyed? I'm praying that each and every one of us here would be saying, Lord, take ownership of my life.

I think that's the only prayer that we'll pray this morning. Lord, I give you my all. Lord, there's nothing too precious that I cannot lay down.

You know, when Christ was calling his disciples, he would say, if anyone does not hate his father, his mother, his brothers and sisters, all those things, but he would conclude by saying, his life also. What God is looking for, he's looking for life. You cannot be ready for the kingdom of God if you are not ready to sacrifice your life.

I want you to bow down your head as we are praying. I want you to bow down and say, Lord, there's nothing more precious to me again. This is my life, I bring it onto the altar.

This is my whole life, I bring it onto your hand. Can you make that commitment to God and say, Father, come and take ownership. I don't want to live for any more reasons other than living for you.

The book of 2 Corinthians chapter 5, it says, he died for all so that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but to live for the one who rose again for them. Can you bow down your head as you are praying? Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much.

We pray that you will help us as young people. The way that you are coming to us is so serious. We pray that you will give us capacity to understand what we are looking for.

Heavenly Father, if you were not pleased by the credentials of the young rich ruler, oh, Father, you will not be pleased even with us. We pray that we will go beyond counting things that we do for you. Heavenly

Father, we pray that you will allow each and everyone to get to the point of laying our all for you.

The young people that you are looking for to actually stand for the kingdom of God in this generation are young people that will be like Christ. We remember when Christ was 12 years old, he got lost from his parents. When they came to ask him, we've been looking for you.

He responded to say, don't you know that I must be about my father's business. Father, we are looking and we are praying for young people as young as they are that are going to be kingdom minded. Young people that would know that I'm only existing for my father's business.

We pray that, Lord, in this student congress, you will find this one. You will find young men, you will find young women, Heavenly Father, that are going to sacrifice all for the kingdom of God. Lord, we pray.

We pray that you will help us. Oh, Lord, we pray that our growth will not come when we are old. We pray that we will be mature in our youthful days in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Father, we know that the enemy is looking for young people to destroy left, right and center. He's also recruiting young people for his kingdom. Father, they are ready to die for the enemy.

But here we are. We don't want, Lord, to give you our 10 percent. We want to give you 100 percent.

We pray that, Lord, you will visit each and every heart in this student congress this year. That this student congress will be a turning point in the name of our Lord Jesus. Thank you, Heavenly Father.

We thank you, Lord, for this time. Thank you for the privilege of being called by you. Thank you for the privilege of being recruited.

We pray that none of us will fall a victim of a young rich ruler. Heavenly Father, we pray that none of us all over the world, in the Americas, in Europe, in Africa, wherever we have gathered, let none of us, Lord, turn away so sad. We pray that you will give us grace to embrace your condition.

Thank you, Father. We worship you and we give you praise. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen.

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