

SEMINAR 4 Journey to the Flame of Love

YOUR DECISION



The Crowds And the Disciples

1. The gospels describe two groups of people – the crowds and the disciples. They were quite different.
2. The disciples had made a decision. Jesus was the whole purpose of their lives.
3. After making this decision, some disciples traveled with him. Others, like Martha and Mary, welcomed Jesus when He came to their home. Once, Jesus freed a man from many devils. This man wanted to follow, but Jesus told him to go home and tell his story to others. All had made their decision to be Jesus' disciple.

No Decisions

4. In contrast to the disciples, the crowds had made no decision. They were “window shopping”, so to speak. They liked to hear Jesus preach and they certainly wanted to be healed. However, they held back. They wanted their freedom to come or go. They never really decided to become a disciple.
5. Some examples are startling. Jesus Himself invited the rich young man to follow Him, but the man walked away sad because he wanted his possessions.
6. Another man wanted to be Jesus' disciple but he needed more time to go home and settle his affairs. So, he didn't follow Jesus.
7. Another man was very enthusiastic. However, when Jesus talked about the difficulties involved in constantly traveling to new towns, he lost his desire.
8. Judas is another example. He spent three years with Jesus but made no firm decision. He certainly looked like a disciple but he withheld his heart, ultimately choosing money over Jesus.

The True Disciples

9. The gospels describe a great variety of real disciples. They come from every way of life. Some are poor fishermen, (like Peter, Andrew, James and John). Others are rich, like Joseph of Arimathea

(who gave Jesus his tomb.) Our Lady was sinless while Mary Magdalen had seven devils cast out from her.

10. The disciples also had different personalities. Peter was irascible, quick to love and quick to grow angry. The Beloved Disciple was probably more gentle. St. Paul, who had killed many Christians, was a fiery but loving personality. The disciples were all so different. Please, don't feel you cannot qualify.
11. What joined them together? They had met Jesus. He had touched their hearts and they had made a decision to surrender their whole life to Him. That is it! "In a nutshell", as they say. The moment they made their decision to give their lives to Jesus, they became disciples. You can do the same.

What About You

12. Hopefully, these talks have brought you to experience a new life, new hope and new faith. During these seminars you have met Jesus. (He is the Flame of Love). Now, you must make a decision to place Jesus in the center of your heart. Let the following thoughts lead to this decision.
13. Time is like a stream, always flowing on. If you don't grasp the gift, it suddenly flows beyond your reach. You missed your chance. You delayed. You said, "Let me think about this." The time for your decision is right now, during these seminars.
14. The importance of your decision is shown in a relationship. There might come a moment when one party is ready to marry and the other will not take the step. They come to a crossroads. Deciding not to continue the relationship, they cannot go on. They go their separate ways and the great opportunity is lost.

The Two Roads – Narrow and Wide

15. By being a disciple, you take the "less-traveled road". Jesus willingly admits that other roads are wider and that most people walk them. He says that His road has a narrow gate, and that the road itself is narrow. As a result, few walk with Him.
16. However, Jesus also describes how happy is that person who decides to be His disciple. Jesus' parables speak of the person who finds a pearl of a great price and another who discovers the treasure hidden in a field. Even though the pearl and the treasure cost the person all his life's savings, the person joyfully "sells all he has" because of what he has found.
17. Jesus' parables also describe those who take the wide road. They are people invited to a wedding banquet, but turn down the invitation. When the bridegroom comes, they have no oil for their lamps. When the feast is to begin, they arrive after the door has been locked. They lose out. They spent their time "window shopping".

The Problem of the World

18. Many reject Jesus because they want a worldly life, which is a road with dazzling lights. However, these lights soon dim. The world promises great excitement, but cannot give you great peace. Also, at the end of the world's road, you lose heaven. You wasted your life on what passes away.
19. Life is very short, like a merry-go-round. By birth, we get on. At death, we get off. The great mistake is to think you will always be enjoying the ride, and never make your decision to be a disciple.

The Benefits

20. Jesus' road is different. He offers you something to live for. Your life will have the greatest purpose, a call to save souls and an invitation to receive heaven's greatest gifts, the Flame of Love.
21. Jesus promised those who left brothers, sisters, and homes for His sake would receive a hundred of everything. That happened. The disciples were brothers and sisters to each other.
22. After becoming a disciple, you also will find others who have made the same decision. You are all members of Jesus' family and everybody shares in Jesus' friendship.
23. And what about the end of your life? As your years come to a close, you will have peace. You will have accomplished God's purpose in creating you. You will have helped many people to decide for Jesus. You will face death knowing that your years have been well spent and that heaven is waiting for you.

Your Decision

24. Make your decision now. Say this prayer, "Jesus, I accept your invitation. I choose to be your disciple and to walk with you. By your grace, I will walk with you to the day of my death. I am yours in life and in death. Amen"
25. Make sure to cleanse your life by a good and honest confession to a priest. Get rid of all your sins, your darkness and your fears. You will be ready for Week Five – receiving the Flame of Love.

Questions:

1. Looking back, what important decisions have you made? Were they good or bad?
2. What opportunities did you miss out on? What opportunities did you take?
3. In your Catholic life, are you a member of the crowd or a disciple?
4. What do you see as the costs of discipleship, the sacrifices that you must make?

5. What rewards of discipleship attract you most?

DAILY BIBLE READING

During the week, please read the themes of the following texts that explain this seminar.

Day 1 The first four disciples who left all to follow Jesus.
(Mark 1:14-20)

Day 2 The parables of the joyful decision to sell all.
(Matthew 13:44-53)

Day 3 Jesus describes His new family and the rewards of discipleship.
(Matthew 12:46-50) and (Mark 10:28-31)

Day 4 The crowds walk away. The apostles decide to remain.
(John 6:60-71)

Day 5 Jesus prophesies that even the disciples will waver in their commitment.
(Matthew 26:31-35)

Day 6 Judas, who looked like a disciple, makes his choice and leaves the last Supper.
(John 13:21-30)

Day 7 The beautiful story of Ruth deciding to accompany her mother-in-law back to Bethlehem.
(Ruth 1:7-18)

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