



⁴⁴ Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. ⁴⁵ Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.

⁴⁷ So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"

⁴⁸ And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. ⁴⁹ But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.



Into your hands . . . the last words that Jesus spoke. This, the answer to His prayer in the garden . . . the prayer we read in Luke 22. After the meal – what we call the last supper – he went, as he so often did, to Mount Olives. . . . He pulled away from [the disciples] about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, remove this cup from me. But please, not what I want. What do you want?" or, as the traditional versions record, He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

[Luke 22: 39, 41-42]

We could talk today about the dangers – from a human perspective – of putting our lives into His hands . . . of the prayer *Thy will be done*. We could talk about giving control of our lives over to God. We could talk about letting go of what we want to do to do what He wants us to do and what we think we should be to become what He wants us to become. We could admit or realize that Jim Elliot was right in how he interpreted Jesus words.



Elliot said *He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose*. Jesus asked *What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?* He said [you'll find this in Matthew 16] *If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?* [Matthew 16:24-26]

We could talk about that. Or we could talk about hands themselves. We could talk about what hands do. Bill Withers wrote a song about hands . . . about someone's special hands.



He said *Most of us at some point in our lives have somebody that means more to us than anybody else has ever meant to us before or will ever mean again . . . but in my case I learned how to really love somebody . . . just a nice old lady who used some very nice old gnarled hands to make life kinda nice for me at that time when I really needed somebody*. He was talking about a favourite old lady of his . . . his grandma. He sang

Into Your hands I commit My spirit, He said. I have given Myself to You in life and I give Myself to You as My life ends, He said. I give Myself to You, body and soul, He said.

It will almost be sad when the SNC-Lavalin controversy is over and I can't use Jody Wilson-Raybould as an illustration any more. But thankfully this is the gift that keeps on giving, so I get to mention her for at least another week!



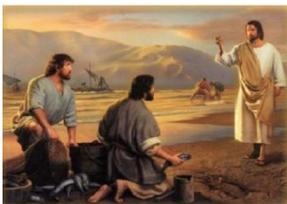
And the interesting thing about her is that even though she knew she was spending all of her political currency and even though she knew that she would pay a heavy price, she saw it through to the end. Some people call it foolishness. Other people call it integrity. And the pundits are going through a forest of internet trees writing about it as people try to understand and explain what she did and why.



Some suggest that she was – is – selfish and self-righteous. Some suggest that it was political manoeuvring and that she is really after the Prime Ministership. Some blame her for being hard to work with. Some say that she is naive. I don't know. Pierre Poilievre sure had fun with it though!

Into Your hands I commit My spirit . . . I give Myself to You, body and soul. If Jesus our example – and He is – then we can do no less than the same. But we shouldn't wait until death to commit the whole of our lives to God – we do it now, while we live and breathe and strength.

It goes back to that initial call. The call that was given to Peter and Andrew and James and John and Matthew and . . . well, all of them . . . and all of us. It was – it is – a simple call. Jesus said. *Come, follow Me, And they did. As we did.*



. . . as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him. [Mark 1:16-20]

Contrast that with this: *Jesus said to another, "Follow me." He said, "Certainly, but first excuse me for a couple of days, please. I have to make arrangements for my father's funeral." . . . Then another said, "I'm ready to follow you, Master, but first excuse me while I get things straightened out at home."* [Luke 9:58b-61]

Huh. If you are going to follow Jesus, *follow Jesus!* Not half-heartedly. Not on your own terms. Be committed to Him in the call! Philip Yancey reminds us that *The way of Jesus cannot be imposed or mapped.* You aren't forced to follow Him – it's our choice. But if you're going to choose to follow Him, *follow Him!* Be committed to Him.

The way of Jesus cannot be imposed or mapped. It requires an active participation in following Jesus as he leads us through sometimes strange and unfamiliar territory, in circumstances that become clear only in the

hesitations and questionings, in the pauses and reflections where we engage in prayerful conversation with one another and with him.

The disciples probably didn't realize what they were getting themselves in to. They had probably heard Him speak – preach. His priority: the Kingdom of God. His priority: the lost sheep. His priority: the least of these. His plan: *to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many* [Matthew 20:28].

The disciples probably didn't realize what they were getting themselves in to. But once they made the decision they were going to see it through to the end. They were all in.



It couldn't have been easy. Popularity came and went. Jesus offended people. Not only the Pharisees but some of the *regular people* as well. Not only the Pharisees and some of the regular people, but some of the very ones who followed Him as well. And one day after Jesus challenged people about their understanding of what He was doing, *a lot of his disciples left. They no longer wanted to be associated with him.*

Then Jesus gave the Twelve their chance: "Do you also want to leave?"

Peter replied, "Master, to whom would we go? You have the words of real life, eternal life. We've already committed ourselves, confident that you are the Holy One of God." [John 6:66-69]

They knew what they had given up. They were starting to understand what they were gaining. They had given up steady careers and a steady income and had gained uncertainty and insecurity and maybe a bit of brief popularity . . . and Jesus. *What do you think, He asked. Is this . . . enough?*

"Do you also want to leave?" "to whom would we go? You have the words of real life, eternal life. We've already committed ourselves, confident that you are the Holy One of God." You can count on us. You can count on me. We're all in!

And you . . . what about you? You may not have known everything that you were signing up for when you decided to follow Jesus. While fame and fortune were probably not promised to you, some teach prosperity and some guarantee God's always-on blessings and . . . well, Jesus never promised any of those things. But He did promise peace. And forgiveness. And His presence always.

You have learned that life in and with Jesus is not always sunny ways [hold it, that was someone else that promised those] . . . life with Jesus is not always everything going your way. But you won't trade what Jesus did for you for anything. Like the disciples, you are committed to Him. You're alive and have many more years to live and you've said *into Your hands I commit My spirit – my life.*

So what does that look like? What does a committed life look like? I did an internet search, and discovered that like everything else everyone has an idea or a suggestion. One article spoke on the four characteristics of a committed Christian and another on the seven characteristics; a different article pointed out the twelve principles of a committed Christian while yet another talked about the seven commitments of highly fruitful Christians. How are we supposed to know, to figure it out?

Meanwhile the church is being attacked for being rich, for being out of touch with society, for being complacent, and for being uncaring. Francis Chan says *We need to stop giving people excuses not to*

believe in God. You've probably heard the expression 'I believe in God, just not organized religion'. I don't think people would say that if the church truly lived like we are called to live.

So are you? Living like you are called to live? Loving like you are called to love? As you know, Paul says *here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.* [Romans 12:1-2] How's that working for you?

We are challenged, as we look at the last of the Cross Words, to be His. Fully His. *From life's first cry to final breath*, as the song goes, His. Holding nothing back. If I have anything, it is His if He wants it [trading Habs playoff tickets – next year of course – or anything else for a World Evangelism Fund missions offering if asked]. If I am anything, I am His. I hold nothing back. Time. Talent. Money. Possessions I worked hard for. All His. All in. Committed.

Yes?