



HIS OTHER-CENTERED LIFE

March 2020

Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

Matthew 8:19-20

Jesus was explaining to this scribe that following him was not simple. It was as though he was saying "Are you sure you want to be homeless with me? Even the animals have a place to sleep, but I have no place to rest. Following me comes at a cost."

When we open our Bibles and read about Jesus' life, we may forget that he lived a day-to-day life where many personal needs had to be met. Like any human being, he must have experienced a lot of stress. Refuge was often provided by those who held him in esteem. But,

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like the homeless, he and his disciples would probably have had to look for a place of safety to rest each night.

Imagine days filled with people begging to be healed, crowds coming to hear you speak, constant cruel criticism from religious leaders. Can you imagine the stress of such a life?

When I facilitated my support group, there was a word we used which was true of the kind of life Jesus led. The word was “other-centered,” which means a life lived for others. More than anyone, I think Jesus showed us how to live such a life.

When we help others, our own stresses become easier to manage. We take the focus off ourselves. When we make others happy, our low spirits rise. When I facilitated my group, I struggled much with depression and other stresses. I was an extremely busy person, but by spending time with another when I felt myself becoming more relaxed, I was able to keep going.

Consider how amazing Jesus’ other-centeredness was. As he suffered on the cross, in excruciating pain, he heard one of the criminals hanging on the cross on one side of him call out, saying, *“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”* Jesus answered him, *“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”* (Luke 23:42-43)

He was in great pain, yet he responded to another’s needs. Even as he ended his life on earth, he was an example of other-centeredness. An example for you and for me.

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