

**LifeGroup Sermon Series Study**  
**2021-2022**  
***Series Seven***



## “Enemies of the Cross”



The last two years our lives have been dramatically changed. We have experienced pressures, emotional difficulties, and death without our normal support groups. We have also experienced unprecedented division, hatred, and violent conflict. This environment has caused people to seek shelter in many different ways – some good and some bad.

Four desires have emerged in our American culture that people are using to try and cope. These desires were here before the pandemic but have dramatically increased with all the anxiety provoking trauma.

The four coping desires are the desire for comfort, control, approval, and power. These desires conflict with what Jesus asks of us when following Him. In fact, in many cases the desires, when embraced, make it very difficult for us to follow and rely upon Jesus. The desire for comfort places our confidence in physical circumstances. The desire for control places our confidence in our ability to handle the circumstances and people around us. The desire for approval places our confidence in what other people think about us. The desire for power places our confidence in position and influence.

We are putting “the desire” in the position that Jesus should occupy; and comfort, control, approval, and/or power become our gods. Living with these desires, we soon realize they are a shallow impersonation of what we are really looking for and the disconnect creates a crisis in our lives. A relationship with Jesus is what we are all seeking and the only thing that will provide security, confidence, and peace.

In this series, we will look at four biblical examples where people bought into the lies these desires produce and we will see how Jesus dealt with and redirected each situation.

Don't allow for these desires, these enemies of the cross, to creep into your lives and destroy what God wants to do in your life.

For His Kingdom,

Pastor Doug

**“Enemies of the Cross”**

**LIFEGROUP ROSTER**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>PHONE #</b>	<b>E-MAIL</b>

# **“Enemies of the Cross” – A Desire for Comfort**

## **Luke 9:57-58**

### **Lesson 1**

#### **I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand the cost of following Jesus.
- B. To help us know the real reason the man did not follow Jesus.
- C. To help us see how we use this same excuse today.

#### **II. Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

#### **III. Community that Understands the Background:**

Jesus' appeal to follow Him was never a big sell job. He was honest, realistic, and set the expectations high. This first man approached Jesus and told Him that he would follow Jesus wherever He went. Jesus offered the man some very important advice, making sure the man understood that following Jesus would cost the man a comfortable life.

Jesus doesn't tell the man he can't follow, He just showed him what the life would look like. In the context of Jesus' response, He didn't say He was poor, but homeless. Jesus trusted God for every material thing He needed. He taught us not to worry about clothing, food, or drink because God would supply them. We are to seek His kingdom first.

Jesus told the man that foxes have holes in the ground that they live in. Birds have nests made of twigs and feathers to live in. The "Big Fox" in Luke 13:32 refers to King Herod. The birds that Jesus speaks of are people who are poor and insignificant, but God still cares for them (Matthew 5). Jesus had no place to call home. He had no security a home provides. He had no comfort of a home. He lived on the road sleeping on the ground, under the skies, and in the harsh elements of weather and threat.

## Lesson 1 cont.

### IV. Community that Learns:

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message.
  
- B. Sermon outline: "Enemies of the Cross" – A Desire for Comfort.  
Three pieces of the desire for comfort excuse (Luke 9:57-58):
  1. The man is \_\_\_\_\_ up in the excitement.
  
  2. The man does not measure the \_\_\_\_\_.
  
  3. The man values \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_.

### V. Community that Applies:

- A. Why do you think the man approached Jesus in the first place?  
What was the motivation? Was it pure?
  
- B. If you were the man, what would have been your reaction to Jesus' response to you?
  
- C. Do you think that the man thought about what was involved in following Jesus before approaching Him? Why or why not?
  
- D. Do you think Jesus expects us to be poor or homeless to follow Him? Why or why not?
  
- E. Make a list of the hardest things for you to give up today if Jesus asked you to give them up.

## Lesson 1 cont.

F. Why is a desire for comfort such a threat/enemy to our relationship with Jesus?

**VI. Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about the desire for comfort?

**VII. Community that Prays:**

Have a couple people share what their next step is and spend a few minutes in silent prayer for them.

**VIII. Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are Luke 9:59-60.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# **“Enemies of the Cross” – A Desire for Control**

## **Luke 9:59-60**

### **Lesson 2**

#### **I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand the cost of following Jesus.
- B. To help us know the real reason this man did not follow Jesus.
- C. To help us see how we use this same excuse today.

#### **II. A community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

#### **III. Community that Understands the Background:**

Jesus' words to this man seem very harsh but the point is made clear. Following Jesus must be the priority; it cannot be an “add-on” or an “extra thing.” Jesus was telling the man that the time was now. He needed to act now, or he never would.

Luke doesn't tell us if the man's father was dead or not. It is likely that he was still alive because, if he had died, the son would have been involved in preparing funeral arrangements. Most likely this man's father was terminally ill and was about to die.

Maybe this man wanted to follow Jesus, but he wasn't ready to give up control yet and was using his father's impending death as an excuse. Jesus isn't saying to neglect our family responsibilities but when Jesus calls us, true discipleship requires immediate action. Giving up control involves allowing God to be in control of the timetable.

#### **IV. Community that Learns:**

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message.

## Lesson 2 cont.

B. Sermon outline: “Enemies of the Cross” – A Desire for Control.

Three pieces of the desire for control excuse (Luke 9:59-60):

1. The man \_\_\_\_\_ to follow his timetable.
2. The choice \_\_\_\_\_ between right and wrong but between right and right.
3. The man \_\_\_\_\_ sure his excuse was valid.

### V. **Community that Applies:**

- A. Do you think that Jesus was being too harsh when He told the man to let the dead bury their dead? Why or why not?
- B. Do you think the man really wanted to follow Jesus? Why or why not?
- C. If you were the man, what would you have done?
- D. What areas do you battle Jesus for control?
- E. Why is being in control so appealing?
- F. Why is it so important to Jesus that we give Him control of our lives?



## Lesson 2 cont.

**VI. Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about the desire for control?

**VII. Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes in silent prayer over your next step.

**VIII. Community that Looks Ahead:**

A. The scriptures next week are Luke 9:61-62.

B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.

C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

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**“Enemies of the Cross” – A Desire for Approval**  
**Luke 9:61-62**  
**Lesson 3**

**I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand the cost of following Jesus.
- B. To help us know the real reason this man did not follow Jesus.
- C. To help us see how we use the same excuse today.

**II. Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
  
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

**III. Community that Understands the Background:**

A third man came to see Jesus and said that he would follow Jesus, but he had to go back to say goodbye to his family. We do not know why the man needed to say his farewells. Maybe it was because he wanted permission, or he wanted to be appreciated, or maybe he wanted his family to celebrate him for what he was about to do. Whatever the reason, it was standing in the way of following Jesus.

Once again Jesus is teaching that nothing, absolutely nothing, can get in the way of Jesus' call on our lives. Then Jesus gives us a very practical example for what seeking approval does to us. It is impossible to plow a field straight if we are looking backward. Sometimes we get caught focusing on the wrong thing. When we focus on the wrong thing, our path will not be straight.

When we get too consumed with looking good, being politically correct, and having people agree with us, we are not focused ahead to where Jesus is. Sometimes following Jesus is a lonely journey where the only approval that matters is our Savior Jesus Christ's approval.

## Lesson 3 cont.

### IV. Community that Learns:

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message.
- B. Sermon outline: "Enemies of the Cross" – The Desire for Approval.

Three pieces of the desire for approval excuse (Luke 9:61-62):

1. The man \_\_\_\_\_ to go back and say goodbye to his family.
2. The man's desire was a \_\_\_\_\_ that caused him to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Following Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ all our strength and focus.

### V. Community that Applies:

- A. Why do you think the man wanted to go back and say goodbye to his family? Do you think the excuse was valid? Why or why not?
- B. What would you have done?
- C. Describe a time when you made a decision based on what you thought other people would think of you.
- D. How important is it to you that people agree with you?
- E. Describe a time when following Jesus and being accepted conflicted and caused you stress? How did you deal with the situation?

## Lesson 3 cont.

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about the desire for approval?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Discuss together your next step as a group and then pray for the person on your right.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are Luke 14:16-24.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

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**“Enemies of the Cross” – A Desire for Power**  
**Luke 14:16-24**  
**Lesson 4**

**I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand the cost of following Jesus.
- B. To help us know the real excuse why these men would not accept the invitation.
- C. To help us see how we use the same excuse today.

**II. Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

**III. Community that Understands the Background:**

The most power-hungry people in the gospels were religious leaders. They had power, privilege, and position. Jesus was a threat to all that. He had the ability to disturb the balance of power that the religious leaders had with their own people and with the Romans.

In the middle of an exchange with the religious leaders, Jesus told a parable that the religious leaders understood clearly. It was customary to send two invitations to a party. The first was to announce the event (so that people could save the date and the exact time was unknown). The second invitation was to tell the guests that everything was ready and that they could attend. In Jesus' story, the invited guests had accepted the first invitation but offered excuses for the second.

The hidden meaning (directed to the religious leaders) was that the first invitation from God was to Moses and the prophets. The Jews and the religious leaders accepted the first invitation, but they rejected the second. The second invitation was to accept Jesus. The religious leaders rejected the second invitation because it would cost them their position and power.

## Lesson 4 cont.

So, the master in the story sent the servant into the streets to invite the poor to the party. God sent His son to the world to save the whole world and provide a way for all to enter God's kingdom.

### IV. **Community that Learns:**

- A. Review the points of the Pastor's message.
  
- B. Sermon outline: "Enemies of the Cross" – A Desire for Power.  
Three pieces of the desire for power excuse (Luke 14:16-24):
  1. They \_\_\_\_\_ their "good" excuses.
  
  2. The \_\_\_\_\_ of their excuses was they did not want to come.
  
  3. They had the \_\_\_\_\_ to say no.

### V. **Community that Applies:**

- A. What were some of the practical things that the religious leaders could lose if people followed Jesus?
  
- B. What was the message of the religious leaders compared to Jesus' message?
  
- C. Have you ever been in a position of power? What was it? How did that power make you feel?
  
- D. In what ways can power be addictive?

## Lesson 4 cont.

E. How is power abused?

F. What is a picture of authority wielded appropriately?

G. Why does Jesus want His followers to be servants?

**VI. Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about the desire for power?

**VII. Community that Prays:**

Pray your next step out loud to the group.

**VIII. Community that Looks Ahead:**

A. The scriptures next week are John 1:46.

B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.

C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

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## Fill in the Blanks

### Lesson 1

1a caught

1b cost

1c commitment

### Lesson 2

1a wanted

2a wasn't

3a was

### Lesson 3

1a desired

2a distraction    delay

3a demands

### Lesson 4

1a prioritized

2a point

3a power



## Prayer Requests

<b>DATE</b>	<b>PRAYER REQUEST</b>	<b>ANSWER</b>

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