Two Suitcases and a Violin

Kristle Williams 3 March 2020



It's near midnight when I lie down on my bed, hot tears wetting my pillow. I find myself counting the cost of following Jesus when He says "go", yet recounting the joy and privilege of being called by Him who has gone ahead of us. It was at this moment that the Holy Spirit counselled me, 'Carry your cross.'

Leaving it All Behind

My husband and I were born in the paradise that is Port Elizabeth, South Africa. It is all we have known and it is home, along with our precious family and friends. After a long-time-coming call of God to plant a church in another country, we are now preparing our hearts and positioning our lives to see the Kingdom advanced in a completely foreign place. The call will cost us our precious home with the closeness of those very special relationships, but all of this is for His glory.

> **We have simply put up our hands and trusted that a big God will use a little pair like us.**

Jesus says to His disciples that anyone who may wish to follow Him and be His disciple must take up his or her own cross, just as He did. That person must be willing to deny themselves their own desires. The Amplified version of Luke 9:23 describes how one must 'express a willingness to endure whatever may come' for Jesus' sake.

My husband and I have always spoken of the day when we would sell all we have and go to another country for the gospel, but it feels quite surreal to be doing that now. Stripped of the items that have once made life comfortable and familiar, very soon I will face an airport check-in counter with only two suitcases and a violin to my name.

The Beauty in Surrender

Jesus' invitation of 'Follow Me' is to each one of us. Our journeys may look different and have different requirements, but each is called to carry his or her own cross for the Lord. The beauty is that there is such joy in our Jesus adventures! Even in the heartache or challenges we face, our Lord and friend promises that He is 'near the broken-hearted' (Psalm 34:18). It is often in those moments, when hot tears hit your pillow, that God is felt so near! He is present. He is close. And He is most certainly worth it.

'All to Jesus, I surrender. All to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live. I surrender all. I surrender all. All to Him, my blessed Saviour, I surrender all.' Century-old words of a heartfelt hymn that I and many others have sung over and over. Jesus – who held nothing back – is calling us out onto the water. Out of our homes. Out of our normal. Out of what we thought was life and, courageously, into true life – which is living for and with and like Jesus.

'For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.' (Matthew 16:25)

'If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.' (Colossians 3-3:1 ESV)

A Lineage of Inspiration

My husband and I have an inspiring lineage of grandparents who have obeyed Jesus' call to go to the nations, who have seen many come to know Jesus, and who said yes to Him when things looked impossible. They lived for more than this world. Their lives, however, do not qualify us. We have simply put up our hands and trusted that a big God will use a little pair like us.

> **What is Jesus asking of you today?**
> So my hope is that we will all live full, faithful, and faith-filled lives of adventure with Jesus. He promises that, as we go, He goes with us too. My 'going' may be to a nation, but yours, at least for today, may be to your colleague across the room.

What is Jesus asking of you today? Could it be a giant leap of faith to a country far away? Or is it a couple of steady steps in the direction of someone who doesn't yet know Jesus? Both may

feel like a leap into the dark, but praise God that He is the light that guides our every step.

Truly we have been transformed. Let’s be those who share His transforming power with others today.