The gospel doesn’t tell us what happened to those followers of Jesus who decided not to follow him anymore and returned to their former way of life because they found his teachings too difficult to accept and put into practice. I think Proverbs twenty-six eleven (Cf. Prov. 26:11) sheds light on this issue but I won’t tell you what it is because I don’t want to ruin your breakfast. You can read that at home: proverbs chapter twenty-six, verse eleven. There is a good number of gospel teachings that are quite difficult to accept and to put into practice. I think the following five are the most difficult ones.

-Number one: sell all you own and give the money to the poor (Cf. Mt. 19:21 || Lk. 18:22) We have a hard time giving away our money and our belongings. We tend to make sure we have enough for ourselves and we might give a little when we see that the amount we give is not going to put at risk our financial freedom. Generosity is a virtue; stinginess is a vice.

- Number two: if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. (Mt. 5:40) This one is about the same as number one. We don’t want to lose our possessions; when we are sued we hire an attorney and if we can countersue we wouldn’t think it twice.

-Number three: forgive and you will be forgiven. (Cf. Mt. 6:14-15) We all know that we need to be forgiven to make it into heaven; however, forgiving others is quite difficult for us. Sometimes it takes us years and even decades to forgive someone. That’s quite silly. The sooner we forgive, the sooner the healing process begins. By forgiving others you are not doing them a favor, you are doing yourself a favor. But we tend to hold a grudge, we just don't let it go that easily. Remember, the first one to benefit from forgiveness is not the one who is forgiven but the one who forgives.

-Number four: If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. (Cf. Mt. 5:39 || Lk. 6:29) Most of the time we fight back. Even when it is just a verbal confrontation, we fight back; if we are called stupid, we get angry and out of anger we begin to spit obscenities out at our opponent, we just add fuel to fire, not very wise.

-Number five: this one is the most difficult Christian rule to follow, no doubt. Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you. (Cf. Mt. 5:44) Some people do pray for their enemies but they don’t say the right kind of prayer. So, if you pray for vengeance, you are not doing the right thing.

It is not easy to follow the teachings of the gospel. A few weeks ago, we talked about how the Israelites grumbled against Moses as soon as they began their journey through the desert. God had opened the waters for them, God had destroyed their enemies but they had to do their part, which wasn’t easy. Their problem was that they didn’t want to do their part; they wanted freedom but were not willing to strive for it. They just wanted God to take care of everything. That’s not the way it works. We have to do our part and that’s not easy. Who told us that life was going to be easy? Who told us that it is easy to be a Christian? Who told you that marriage is an easy vocation? Who told you that the teachings of the gospel are easy to follow? We all know that life is difficult, don't we? Ironically, we all expect it to be easy, don't we? If we want to follow Christ and get into heaven, we have to follow him up to the very cross; but nowadays nobody wants to make any sacrifices, we want things to be easy. We don’t want any major commitment.

Let us turn to Jesus Christ our Savior, apart from Him we can do nothing, (Cf. Jn. 15:5) He has the words of eternal life and there is no other to whom we could go and let us pray that we may build the character, the fortitude and the courage we need to follow him up to the very cross.