

Counting the Cost

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[0:00] There is a river that flows beneath the throne, and the surface there reflects that holy place.

! Oh, I'm sure that all the splendor will be so grand to see.

! What I long to see the most is Jesus' face. Cause that's all that matters to me.

To bow my head and thank my blessed Savior on my knees. On those peaceful hills of glory in His presence I will be.

To know I'm home, that's all that matters to me. Oh, the lights of that fair city will never fade away.

[1:25] It's a perfect land where night will never come. But all the beauty I'll behold there can't compare to how I'll feel.

When I hear my precious Lord say, well done. That's all that matters to me.

To know I'm home, that's all that matters to me.

I'm looking forward to that day as well.

I hope that you are. If you have your Bibles, Luke chapter number 14. If you're able to stand for the reading of God's word, Luke chapter number 14, I ask that you would. And back in our series here in the Gospel of Luke, finishing up this chapter.

[2:58] And Jesus has been reminding the listeners, really the Pharisees and all those that have been gathered around Him, that He is coming back. And to be ready. And many were there and they would have heard this.

And many in the crowds would have been excited and said, hey, I want to follow Him. I love His teaching, man. He's a great teacher. He's a great preacher. He's healed people. He's fed people. I want to be on His team. And instead of Jesus saying, yeah, everybody come on in. Here's what Jesus wants us to do. He wants us to count the cost. Because here's the reality.

There is a cost for following Christ. And it's a heavy cost. But it's worth it. But Jesus lays out the cost of discipleship here in Luke chapter number 14. You found your place there in verse 25.

You can follow along the screen as well. Here's what the Bible says. And there went great multitudes with Him. And He turned and said unto them, If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

[4:08] This is a really strong recruiting pitch. This is not how you think you probably should gain followers. Verse 27.

And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Verse 28. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it?

Lest happily, after he laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish.

Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth the ambassage and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

[5:11] Salt is good. But if the salt has lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill. But men cast it out.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. So Jesus has this crowd following him. The Bible says multitudes. Instead of saying, hey, let's keep going, he turns around and says, here's what it looks like if you keep going.

Here's what discipleship really will cost you. And here's the reality. God is still sending forth a call. Jesus still says, follow me.

But there's a cost and he wants us to see what it is and to make sure that we understand what we're signing up for. So let's ask the Lord to help us this morning as we go through this text. Father, thank you for this time together.

Thank you for the songs that have been sung, the special that reminds us really what is important, Lord, and it's you. We see that here in our text. That many, I would say even in this room, many in this crowd in our text would desire to follow you.

[6:12] But Lord, help us to understand the cost. Help us to understand what it entails that we would be all in for you. Lord, you're not looking for halfway discipleship. You're looking for all in followers.

Lord, I pray you be with me. I pray you would just empty me of self, cleanse me of sin. Lord, I pray that you would fill me with your spirit. Lord, we need you. I need you. That you would speak to hearts. You would challenge us.

You would convict us where need be. And we ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. I'm sure you've started a project at home.

I think we talked about this a while back. But you start a project and you think, I'm going to finish this. A real quick project. I was trying to fix some sprinkler heads at my house last Saturday before we left for camp.

It did not go quite like I thought it would. You know, I take pictures of it. Anybody else take pictures of what you need so when you go to Home Depot, you have the picture. You find the Home Depot guy, you're like, hey, I need something like this right here that's going to fit on that.

[7:10] You're like, what size is it? I'm like, this is the size. Right here. I don't know those kind of questions. Why would you ask me something like that? And he's like, oh yeah, that's good. This is it. And so I get it home.

That guy, it was not it. And then I came back and he's like, what are you doing here? I'm like, okay, here's another picture. This is actually what we need. And it's kind of one of those things. Maybe you've been there and I thought it was going to take just a little bit of time.

And then a few weekends later and a hundred trips to the hardware store and I'm way over budget. The sprinklers work, praise the Lord for that. Apparently, I didn't even need them to work because it just rains from heaven all the time around here in Gainesville, Texas now.

We've all signed up for something that sounded super exciting, super amazing. And it seems like this is a great deal. But you realize that the commitment was far greater than you expected.

We've all found our place there. And the problem usually isn't the activity or the project. The problem is we didn't count the costs beforehand. We didn't count what it would actually come out of our pocket, how much time it would actually take.

[8:13] And here's the thing. The same thing can happen to us spiritually. I believe many people are attracted to Jesus for what he can give them. We've seen it here in the Gospel of Luke.

There's crowds that are following Jesus. They're always around them. They don't want to miss the next miracle. They don't want to miss the next meal. I mean, when's the next time he's going to break five loaves and two fish and feed a multitude? And they wanted to be a part of that.

But they also wanted that peace that he offers that he was always talking about. They're looking for forgiveness. They're looking for purpose. They're looking for meaning. And they say, hey, I want what Jesus offers.

And we should, by the way. I'm not down on that. I want all those things too. I'm thankful for the mercies of God. I'm thankful for the peace and the forgiveness and all the things that he offers us freely.

But sometimes we never stop to consider what it truly means to go all in for Christ. Because when you do study the Gospels, you see many times after, not many times, pretty much every time after he does a miracle, he preaches a message.

[9:16] And the crowds start to dwindle. I mean, go back to the feeding of the 5,000 in John chapter 6. I mean, he feeds them. They want to make him king. Like, hey, this guy's got my vote.

Let's crown him king right now. And then he starts preaching. He starts teaching. They said, this is a hard saying. Who can hear it? Here's what they said. We didn't sign up for that. We're here for the free food.

We're not here for this, all this talk about following you and dying and all of these things. But as we've seen even in this section of Luke's Gospel, Jesus is steadily making his way towards Jerusalem.

Why is he doing that? Well, the Bible tells us that his face is set towards Jerusalem. It's set towards the cross. That Jesus knows why he came. He didn't come to draw crowds.

He didn't come to do miracles necessarily. He came to die on a cross. And he knows this. He knows the road ahead is going to be difficult. But yet when we meet the crowds constantly, it seems they have a very different picture of what's taking place.

[10 : 20] A very different picture of what's actually happening. I mean, they're astounded by his miracles. His teaching is so powerful. Man, I've never heard a guy preach like this. His popularity is skyrocketing.

And see, what many in this crowd would have thought is they were following the Messiah to what was headed towards a coronation. It was headed to a kingdom. It was headed to something they've been looking forward to their whole life.

Hey, if they could just get rid of Rome or they could get rid of all their problems, then everything would be good. But what they did not understand is that before the crown was going to come, there was going to be a cross.

And so Jesus, as this great multitude is traveling with him, he stops and he begins to teach them and he gives them a reality check. Don't you love growing up when your parents gave you a reality check?

I didn't care for those too much. Because I just wanted to be oblivious and enjoy my life. And my dad would say, well, that's just not how life works. I'm like, well, let's just pretend like it does. It's a lot more fun when life's just kind of, we're oblivious, so to speak.

[11 : 23] But what Jesus is doing here in our text this morning is he is laying out the terms of discipleship. Not after they commit, before they commit.

You know, when you try to sign something, especially these days, you've got to have like a law degree just to figure out what you're signing up for. You know, and most of us were like, agree, agree, agree, agree, agree, agree.

And you're like, wait, what did I agree to? We don't know all the fine print. We don't know all that. Jesus lays it all out right here. He wants them to know before they sign up and say, well, we didn't know that. Hey, Jesus, this is not what we signed up for.

He said, no, before you keep following, hey, you're here and I'm thankful you're here. But he says, I want to talk to you about a few things. Why is Jesus so serious about laying out the terms and the costs of discipleship?

Because he's not looking for fans. Jesus isn't coming saying, hey, I want as many fans as possible. No, he's looking for disciples. He's looking for followers. And discipleship always comes with a cost.

[12 : 27] He intended for them and he intends for us today that know him as our savior to be all in. And here's kind of the big idea of the text that following Jesus, it requires complete surrender to him.

Because he will not share first place with anyone or anything else. And he wanted them to know that. He wasn't going to try to pull the carpet from underneath them once they got in and say, hey, just so you know, this is how it looks now.

So what does true discipleship require? If you're taking notes, we're going to answer that question. What does true discipleship require? Number one, it requires this, a supreme love for Christ.

Maybe when you read verse 26 or you heard me read it out loud, you kind of just squirmed a little bit. Like that doesn't seem like Jesus. I mean, he's talking about hating your father and mother and your wife and your children and your brothers and your sisters.

You say, I can get on board with that one, but I can't get on board with the other ones. This doesn't seem like Jesus does it. I mean, he's taught us and you look at the Bible, he teaches us to honor our father and mother.

[13 : 38] He teaches us for husbands to love their wives and vice versa. He even taught us in the Sermon on the Mount that we're to love our enemies. But yet Jesus looks at a group of people that want to follow him and say, hey, if you want to follow me, you got to hate all these people.

That's not what Jesus is saying like we would have maybe think off the top of our head. He's not commanding literal hatred. We know this, the Bible doesn't contradict itself.

So what is Jesus saying here? Jesus is making a deliberate, he's making a kind of a crazy comparison. See, the idea is that not that we hate our family, but that our love for Christ must be so great.

It must be so supreme. It must be so consuming in our life that every other type of love, every other relationship appears secondary by comparison.

It doesn't even approach the same level. That Jesus is on a plane all of his own. And what Jesus is saying in verse 26 is I must be your first loyalty. We see in the great commandment.

[14 : 46] When they try to trap and say, hey, what's the great commandment? Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, all thy soul, all thy might, all thy strength. That we are to be all in. And see, every other relationship in our life must take second place.

That's what Jesus is saying. That he must occupy the place in our heart. That he will not share the throne with anything else. That he's worthy. We sing about it all the time and we would agree with it. But sometimes when he gets real practical like this, we're thinking, I don't know about that. I mean, Jesus, my number one job is to love my family. My number one job is to do these things. And I would imagine the majority of us in this room would never say that we hate God.

But what Jesus is exposing here in this verse is where our priorities lie. Because sometimes our priorities say something different. Sometimes our priorities say, well, God's on the list. No, no, here's the list.

God. And then way down there somewhere else is other things in our life. See, often our priorities are going to show us where our heart is. And we're not wrong for loving our spouse.

[15 : 56] We're not wrong for loving our children. We're not wrong for caring about our responsibilities. All of those things are gifts from God. God wants you to take care of them. God has a purpose and he has a plan.

But sometimes even good gifts can become idols in our life. They become what we worship when they occupy a place that belongs only to Jesus Christ.

That becomes an issue. See, some people love success more than Jesus. Some people love comfort. Some people love their plans, their reputations. And yes, some people love their family more than Jesus.

Well, we can fall into that trap and it's easy. Because it's there. And we have to live our life and we're going to work. And my kids say, why do you go to work? Because you always ask me what we're eating. That's why I go to work.

I mean, I love my children so much. We've been gone all week long. We're like just on grand going home. We haven't even made it home. What's for dinner?

[16 : 56] It's like, don't ask me that right now. Still trying to pretend like I'm at camp and having a good time. It's just where we are. Now hear me carefully.

And I think this is what Jesus wants us to say. There's nothing wrong with wanting what's best for your family. I mean, I understand the struggle. I want my children to succeed. I want them to thrive. I want them to have opportunities. I want them to do well in life. I want my wife to have all of the same things and to provide for her. But sometimes we can miss the mark. When we become more concerned about all of the things that they are doing in their life.

As opposed to what God wants to do in their life. We live in a culture that can be so more prone to just look at athletic success and academic success or social success.

Or setting them up on a path for a great career. And those things are good. And there's a time and there's a place. But here's what Jesus is interested in. Our soul. Our heart.

[17 : 54] That he wants all of it. Because he knows where he wants to take us. He knows what's best for our life. And all of those things that we tend to live for sometimes, they're temporary.

But our soul is eternal. And that's what Jesus is reminding. That sometimes we're so focused on things that are important, yes. And people are important, but their soul is more important than having this and going there and being involved in these different situations.

See, Jesus is reminding us that no relationship should come before him. Not because he doesn't want us to care for our families. No, because he knows what our family needs.

And here's the beautiful paradox about this statement. That when we love Christ the most, we're going to love other people better.

A husband who loves Christ the most is going to be a better husband. A wife that loves Christ the most is going to be a better wife. A parent who loves Christ the most is going to be a better parent

and a better friend.

[18:57] I mean, you go down the list. When Jesus is where he needs to be, when this relationship is right, these relationships will be right as well. And that's what Jesus is showing us. That true discipleship, it's not about adding Jesus to your life.

No, it's about surrendering it to him. And that's what we see. And if he's truly first, then how do we make that happen? Well, this is the hard part. We say no to ourself.

Anybody, as a parent, no is about the easiest word that comes out of my mouth. I mean, my kids start to open their mouth like no. I don't even know what it is.

You don't know what it is. No. I mean, sometimes it's just prone to come out of my mouth. But you know who I have a hard time saying no to? This guy.

Because I like what I like. I want what I want. And I'm going to make sure that it happens for me.

And that's exactly where Jesus takes us next. Here's what true discipleship requires.

[19:56] It requires daily self-denial. I mean, verse 26, verse 26 to us might seem just extreme. But really to them, to the first century here, verse 27 would have just blew their mind.

Here's what the Bible says. And whosoever that doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. We think of a cross.

We may think of, we got one here in the baptistry. You see a church has one. You may have one on a necklace right now. It's a piece of jewelry, a ring. It's decoration. That's not what a cross was when they heard about it.

To a first century person, when they start talking about a cross, they knew exactly what it meant. It meant one thing. Death. They would have seen it as they were in Jerusalem. It was a tool of the Romans.

And it had one thing. And it was execution. No one wore a cross around their neck in the first century. There's nothing wrong with it, by the way. I'm not coming against you wearing that. I want us to understand where they're coming from in their context.

[21:02] Because the cross is a beautiful thing to us. And we do wear it as a reminder. You may have it on a ring. We have it on a wall in our house. And it reminds us what Jesus did for us. But to them, the cross was a terrifying instrument of execution.

And here's what Jesus says. Carry your cross. Bear your cross. You know what you would have done in those days if a cross was anywhere near you?

Run the other direction. It's not something you wanted to be a part of. It's not something that was exciting. His audience would have immediately understood that he was speaking about surrender and sacrifice.

And what Jesus is teaching here in the context of discipleship is that true followers of Christ, it involves dying to self. Dying to our wants, our desires.

Not wants. Daily. Daily. I mean, that's exactly what Paul says, 1 Corinthians 15, 31. I die daily. Because every single day, I mean, I can make a decision today, I'm going to live for the Lord.

[22:06] But tomorrow when I wake up, you know what my flesh wants to do? What it wants to do. And we heard it all week at camp, young people. It's easy to make a decision at camp when everybody's talking about it and everybody's surrounded by it.

But you come back to the real world, so to speak, and you have a decision. Am I going to die to myself or am I going to do what I want to do? That we must die to our self. See, real biblical discipleship is a series of perpetual deaths.

It's exciting on a Sunday morning. Woo! Just what all you came to hear. But this is not what they came to hear either.

They're following like, man, we're going to Jerusalem. This is going to be awesome. Now Jesus is talking about hating people and dying. Well, what is up with that? But every day we must die to our pride, to our self-will, to our desire to be in control, to the temptation to place ourself on the throne. You say, not me. Don't lie. That's built in us. The closer we get to Christ, the easier it is to die to self sometimes because we understand the reality of it.

[23:17] But what Jesus is saying is this. He's saying, hey, following me is not merely adding me to your life. That's not what discipleship is. I mean, these people were there and Jesus, hey, Jesus, come along.

I need help here. I need help there. But when something better came on, you know what they went? They just went the other direction. Or when they didn't like what he said, they said, well, I'm going to

go the other way. Discipleship is not adding Jesus to your life.

It is completely yielding your life to him. Surrendering everything you have and are to him. Not keeping compartments. Well, Jesus, you can have this and you can have this and you have this, but don't touch that.

That's mine. Hey, this part of my life is my life. This part of, you know, it's not bad. Just let me have this. No, here's what the disciple says. Lord, whatever you want, it's yours.

That's what Paul describes in Philippians chapter 3. He says, listen, he counted everything in his life lost except knowing Christ.

[24 : 20] I mean, he lists, you read the first eight or nine verses of that chapter. He lists everything he had. He had every religious credential known to man. He said, I count it but dung. He said it's worthless.

Why? Because that's not what life is about. It's not about doing all of these things and just adding Jesus where you need him here and there. No, it's about knowing him. That's why Paul said that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering being made conformable unto his death.

Paul understood what it meant. Paul understood to really know Christ, you have to die to yourself. And he wasn't saying that his life was horrible because, well, life stinks because Jesus took everything from me.

You know why Paul came to that conclusion? Because he realized that Jesus was more valuable than anything else in his life. But sometimes we're not true disciples because we love Jesus but we value other things more than we value him.

Because it's maybe tangible. And maybe we feel like that's really helping my life. It's not going to help your life. It might be temporarily helping your life but it's going to fade. It's going to run out. That job's going to, the newness is going to wear off.

[25 : 29] That car, that, whatever. It's all going to fade away. Jesus doesn't. That he's there constantly. That he's there consistently for us. And that's the heart of discipleship. That when Christ becomes worth more than comfort and convenience and popularity and personal ambition, that's when we really take a step.

That's when we say, Lord, I'm willing to die to all of that if I just know you more. If you just work in my life more. Before we move on to the next verses, I know this is true.

This wasn't a popular message for them. It's not a popular message today. We live in a culture that says, protect yourself. Promote yourself. Live for yourself.

All the marketing on the TV, you know what it is? You need this. You deserve that. And I'm like, you know what? I do deserve that. I do deserve that chips and salsa at that restaurant.

I'm going to go have it. Because that's what I want. And I'm going to eat it. But you know what?

Then Jesus shows up. Whether it's the first century or it's right here today.

[26 : 34] He says, deny yourself. Die to yourself. Which one of those two sounds better to our flesh? Easy. Live for yourself.

That's not what Jesus calls us to. The world says, follow your heart. Jesus says, follow me. And Jesus is not trying to make life miserable.

Here's what he's trying to do. Make it meaningful. He wants your life to have purpose and meaning. Because you know what? You live for yourself. You come to the conclusion. We see it all the time. Whether it's celebrities or this. And they think, this is all there is?

I have everything in the world and there's nothing? I mean, Jesus says, what is the profit of man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? This world has nothing to offer you. Yes, Jesus, it's going to be costly.

There's going to be difficulties. You're going to have to die to some dreams and desires and all different things. But listen, it's going to be worth it. He wants us to see that.

[27 : 31] See, no one has ever become a true disciple of Jesus Christ and lived a life of ease. There are some people that preach that. I can't find it in here.

It's not that we don't have comforts and blessings. It's not like we're just the most miserable people in the world. But life is just hard. One of the preachers at camp said this, life sometimes stinks. Okay, just making sure it wasn't just teenagers to deal with that. No, we all deal with that. And when we follow Jesus, we can't have this idea that as long as we follow him, we're going to be healthy, wealthy, and wise, and no problems are ever going to come across our table.

Not true. But we're not alone. We can walk with him. There's countless believers throughout history and probably even in your own life that you know that have discovered that surrendering everything to Christ was worth every sacrifice.

It always is. And I would imagine at this point that somebody in the crowd would have been thinking, man, that's a pretty high price. I'm not sure I'm willing to pay that kind of price.

[28:38] And let's be honest, maybe you're thinking the same thing. Like, who would sign up for that? Like, who's on board there? Well, here's the awesome thing.

Jesus would agree with that question. That is a high price. He would agree with that line of thinking. But he wants us to see this number three, that true discipleship, it requires us to count the cost. See, in these opening verses in verse 26 and verse 27, Jesus has kind of described the relational cost. Because sometimes you are going to follow Christ and it's going to cost you relationships. It might cost you friends. We talked about it at camp this week, teens. It might cost you family members that don't understand why you're doing what you do and kind of ostracize you. But he also lays out the sacrificial cost that it's going to cost you maybe some things that you want in your life. And they may not be bad, but it's not what God has for you. So naturally, he just raises that question. Why would you sign up for something so demanding without thinking it through?

[29:38] And here's what Jesus answers. Nobody should do that. He didn't want these people just to keep following him thinking, everything's going to be great. As long as I follow this guy, I'm going to have no problems in my life.

And so what Jesus does in verse 28 through 33 is he gives a couple of illustrations. He gives an illustration of a man setting out to build a tower and we see a second of a king that's preparing for war.

Here in the first illustration, the builder lays out the foundation and the people see the project. You know, I don't know if they did this in the first century, but they would drive by on their camel and they're like, anybody know what that is?

You know, if you build something, they should put a, they should legally have to put a sign out that says, this is what this is. I mean, I guess it keeps our marriage exciting because we're like, what do you think that is?

And so we try to, you know, we're trying to go with that. We're trying to figure out what it is. I'm like, Google it, Google it, figure it out. And, you know, brother Kevin works for this in the city. I'm like, call brother Kevin. He might know what it is. I call him all the time. He's like, man, I don't know what it is either.

[30:39] But everybody saw it. They were excited about it. They were expecting the completion. But all of a sudden the work stops and the tower sets unfinished. I'm 40 years old and I used to live in Flower Mound area and we drive up here all the time.

And I don't know if anybody's ever driven this part of 35. There is a house in Sanger. That is exactly what this Bible is talking about right here. And every time I drive past them, I'm like, what are they doing over there?

Like, did they not figure out how much? I mean, it's been that way since I was a little kid. It might be longer than that. I don't know. Some of you may know the details. You can tell me afterwards. Even a year or two, they put an article in the paper that somebody bought it and they're going to turn it into a wedding venue.

Guess what? Still not finished. And now we drive past and we just make fun of them. Like, man, yeah. And that's what the Bible says. He said when people see it, they begin to mock and say, that guy thought he could build a tower.

He didn't even count the cost. I mean, he didn't know the cost of building something like that. The issue wasn't that this man decided to build a tower. The issue when they tried to build a really nice fancy house down there off 35 and Sanger.

[31:46] Here's the issue is sometimes we start things without understanding what completion would require. I think a lot of people get excited about serving God and they're saved and they're thankful for it.

And they know they're on their way to heaven. And they're there. I'm going to do all these things. But then they realize, well, I still have problems in my life. I still got difficulties in my life. All right. Why is this happening? And here's what sometimes they do.

They just walk away. Say, eh, it's not worth it. They would have told me that when I signed up. I wouldn't have signed up. Jesus gives another illustration there in verse number 31 of a king that discovers a larger army is approaching.

And he's got to decide whether he can take them or surrender. He's got to count the cost. Say, hey, can we go out and meet this army that's got 20,000 even though we got 10,000? Or are we going to just send out an ambassador to help us and to make sure that we don't get whooped in this war? Here's what they were doing. They were, he was understanding the cost. And what Jesus is trying to get us to see in these couple of illustrations is he's saying this, don't make a shallow commitment to me.

[32:53] He's got this crowd following. He's saying, I don't want you to be just some unfinished project on the side of the road. I don't want you to get out in the middle of a battle and realize you don't have the ability to win this battle.

Don't make a shallow commitment to Jesus. He's saying, listen, I want you to understand what discipleship means. I want you to know what you're signing up for. Like I'm at that age.

I want to know what I'm signing up for. I remember in elementary school the teachers say, can somebody, I'm like, I'm not raising my hand because what did they say? Clean the bathroom. And everybody's like, I'm not doing that. Listen, Jesus wants us to know what we're signing up for. Why? Because following Jesus is not a hobby.

It's not a weekend activity that we have on Sundays. It's not adding religion to an already crowded schedule. Anybody got a crowded schedule? You got a calendar just like, how am I going to make it through next week?

[33:55] Listen, we're busy people. Jesus isn't saying like, try to find somewhere to fit me in. No, here's what it is. It's surrendering your entire life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Every aspect, every area. That is the cost. That's what he says in verse 33. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Jesus must have never read the church growth books because he is saying, listen, if you're not all in, get out of here. That's basically what he's saying. He's looking for somebody all in.

Now, don't misunderstand what Jesus is saying. He's not saying sell every possession that you have and then just live as a monk on top of a mountain for God. That's not what he's saying. But here's what he's wanting us to think.

Does Christ have unrestricted access to every area of our lives? You say, well, he has it here and he has it there. No, no, no. I didn't say which areas.

[34:57] I said every area. Paul says that we are to lay down our life as a living sacrifice. You know what that includes? All your possessions.

All your plans. All your ambitions. All your relationships. Your future. Everything about you. Everything you are belongs to Jesus.

That's what discipleship looks like. That's what counting the cost looks like. I mean, think about it. Every worthwhile accomplishment in life requires the cost. I mean, you see these athletes that do it. I mean, I love when the Olympics roll around and they start talking about it. We just see the product. They're not. But they counted the cost a long time ago. And some of them, I mean, since they were five, six, eight years old.

I'm not saying that. I'm not saying six, seven. The poor speaker at camp, he kept saying six, seven to these kids and it just didn't go well. But they decided at five years old, they're going to completely focus on making the Olympics.

[36:01] And they'll spend their entire life. And they really don't have a normal childhood. They're training constantly. They're going here. They're in specialized schools. They count the cost. They count the cost. We see students do that in school when they realize I need to do this.

And if I'm going to get in this college, I'm going to have to count the cost. I'm going to have to buckle up. I'm going to have to really get serious about my studies. Business owners do it. Military does it. Parents do it. No one accidentally accomplishes anything significant without counting the cost. We're not going to accidentally just become a disciple of Christ and just, oh, we're just going to float into it. Jesus says that's not how it works. It's going to cost you and you need to know because before you follow him, you must understand the demands of complete surrender.

Jesus is not looking for admirers. He's looking for disciples and he says it over and over and over again. And if discipleship is this costly, then why does it matter so much that he's so interested in

disciples?

Well, that's the question he's going to answer there in verse 34 and 35. Because when believers fail to live as true disciples, they lose the influence God intends for them to have.

[37:11] Look at verse number 34. Salt is good. That's Brother Garrett's life verse right there. Salt is good. He's got a salt shaker on his desk just in case food shows up. He needs salt on it.

But if the salt has lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Maybe at first glance these verses kind of seem disconnected. Your Bible may even have a paragraph mark on it. And this is a new little thought. But I think it's the perfect conclusion of what Jesus is saying.

See, in the ancient world, salt served several purposes. It preserved things. It purified things. It flavored things. And it prevented decay. But the usefulness of the salt depended entirely on his distinctiveness.

And true discipleship requires remaining distinct. That if we're going to be an all-in follower for Christ, we need to be that all the time.

[38:18] That it can't be a Sunday and a Wednesday thing. It can't be a church camp for a week thing. No, it's how we live our life every single day. Salt's got one job.

It doesn't matter if it's a Monday or a Sunday. It's to be salt. It's to season. It's to purify. It's to flavor. It's to prevent decay. But if salt loses its distinctiveness, it's useless.

He says in verse 35, I mean, you ever been somewhere and you put salt on it and you take a bite? You're like... Because if it's not salty, it's worthless.

You have to ask the waitress for another salt shaker. You might as well throw it in the trash because that's the only job salt has. Is to be salty. Salt that no longer acts like salt has no purpose in life.

And when it comes to discipleship, a disciple who refuses the cost of discipleship becomes spiritually ineffective. They're useless. Well, what's the purpose of saying I follow Christ when you don't follow him when it's hard and when it's difficult and when somebody needs it and when God calls you here and God calls you there?

[39:25] We don't lay the terms of discipleship out. Jesus does. And he says, follow me. That's where he calls us to. The world doesn't need Christians who look and act like everybody else.

The world needs believers who live lives that have been transformed by Jesus Christ that have counted the cost and said, listen, it might be not exactly how I would live my life, but I love you so much, Lord, I'll live it for you.

Wherever you send me, I'll go. However you call me, I'll follow. The world needs believers who love Christ supremely, who deny themselves daily, who have counted the cost and are willingly following, because that's the kind of people that God uses.

He uses people that are worth their salt. You ever met somebody, you think, they're not worth their salt? We get this from the first century. They would pay Roman soldiers in salt.

It was a valuable commodity. And if a soldier wasn't worth his salt, he didn't get paid. Listen, are we worth our salt as Christians? I mean, Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount, ye are the salt of the earth.

[40:29] But salt doesn't accomplish anything when it's in the shaker. It doesn't matter how fancy your shaker is either. You can have a cheap one, the one with the little fruits on it, you know.

Or you have real fancy ones you bought in a bottle and all this kind of stuff. It doesn't matter what kind it is. In order for salt to be useful, it has to be poured out. It has to be applied. And that's the same way discipleship works.

Being a disciple is not, I go to church on Sunday. Now, how do you live outside of these walls? Are you all in? Hey, discipleship's not, well, I'm here on this and I read my Bible.

No, what about that one area that God keeps saying, give it to me? He's like, well, that's mine.

That's my area, Lord. See, God doesn't save us so that we can sit comfortably.

No, he saves us to impact the world around us. That's what a disciple does. That's why we have to count the cost. Because we know this, that he's coming back.

[41:31] That's what he's been, he's been preaching this over and over the last few chapters. He's coming back, be ready. How's the world going to know that he's coming back? How are they going to know he's going to be ready? That Christians that are salty go out into the world and say, listen, Jesus loves you.

Jesus cares about you. The gospel's true. Imagine standing in that crowd that day. You've watched the miracles. You've heard the teaching.

You've seen the excitement surrounding Jesus. You think, man, I want to follow that guy. I mean, this is awesome. I've never seen anything like this. And then Jesus turns around to you and says, you're going to come after me.

You've got to hate your mom, your dad, your spouse. You've got to pick up your cross. It's going to cost you a lot. And you're going to have to forsake all.

How would we respond then? Not the recruiting strategy that most people would choose. But here's why Jesus is so serious.

[42:32] Here's why he's so blunt because it's the truth, number one. But number two, he's not interested in emotional decisions that are going to disappear tomorrow. We talked to the teenagers about this at camp.

The preacher talked to them. I know Brother Garrett and Brother Forrest did. Camp has the opportunity to be emotional. And it's okay to make an emotional decision because God is stirring you.

I think God gave us our emotions. But our discipleship is not based on our emotions. It's based on commitment to Christ. Yielded to him. That when the hard times come, it's not some emotion that we made a long, long time ago.

Lord, I'm going to do it because that's what you want me to do right here today. See, Jesus wants people who understand what truly following him means.

Jesus is not some tyrant asking us to surrender our life. He's not some stranger. He's not someone who doesn't love us. No, in fact, he's the only one that loves us like he loves us.

[43:37] The one who came and gave all is the one that's asking us to follow him. That he laid down his life for me and for you. And when we understand who he is and what he's done, the question changes.

The question is not, well, why would I surrender my life to Christ? The question should be, why would I hold anything back from him? If somebody loves me that much, willingly lay down his life for me.

He's not trying to make my life miserable. No, he's trying to give it meaning. He's trying to give it purpose. And every true disciple of Christ comes to the same conclusion. Jesus is worth it.

Every sacrifice, every surrender, every act of obedience, every cross we bear, everything he asks us to do, it's worth it. Why? Because he's worth it.

I want to leave you with this. Following Jesus is not adding him to your life. It's surrendering your life to him. Because true discipleship begins when Jesus is not just part of our lives.

[44:42] Listen, I'm thankful you're here today. But Jesus wants you to be more than just a part of your life. He wants every part of your life. You think, well, I wish I could do this and do that.

I wish I was a better husband. I wish I was better to do this. Jesus can make you that. That's what he promises. Would we surrender all? We must count the cost.

Let's stand with our heads bowed and with our eyes closed. If you're new here, we're just going to have a moment of invitation. Many pray right here in their chairs. But I believe any time the word of God is open that we should respond to the Lord who spoke to our heart.

I'm so thankful that Jesus isn't trying to pull the wool over our eyes. He's not trying to get us in before then we have to read all the fine details, the fine print.

No, he lays it all out and said, listen, there's going to be a cost. It's going to be difficult. But he reminds us this, it's going to be worth it. The fact that you may know the Lord as your Savior this morning is because somebody realized this, it's worth following Christ.

[45:47] They counted the cost. They counted the cost. Maybe you grew up in a Christian home and they realized, it's not that they didn't want you to be involved in certain things, but they made a priority on the word of God.

And because of that, your life has been changed. I'm so thankful for the parents here today that counted the cost and said, you know what, it's worth sending my kid to youth camp. And God uses that in a way and impacts us eternally.

Maybe there's some areas in our life that we've surrendered to God in certain areas, but not all of them. Believer, maybe there's an area that Christ has kind of just put his finger on this morning and said, what about this area?

Is there an area you're holding back, you're reluctant to surrender? Why don't you come to this altar and lay it at his feet? Why don't you pray right there in your chair and say, Lord, I'm just going to trust you on this.

I'm struggling letting this go. Maybe you're here and you don't know Christ as your savior. You can't be a disciple without knowing him first. And Jesus loved you so much.

[46 : 47] Yes, he's going to ask a lot from you, but he gave everything for you. He gave his own life on the cross of Calvary. He paid your sin debt. The Bible says we've all sinned and come to the glory of God.

And the wages, the payment of that sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. That's where it begins. He died for your sins and he rose again. And today he's inviting you to follow him.

Will you surrender to him? Will you surrender your life? You don't find heaven by being a good person. You find it by surrendering to Christ. Placing your full faith in his work on the cross of Calvary.

Father, I pray you would just work in this invitation. That if you spoke to hearts, whatever it may be. If there's somebody that needs to know you as savior, that today would be that day. Maybe there's some that know you.

They know heaven's their home. But if they're honest, they really aren't all in. They kind of count at the cost and say, well, at least I'm in, but I'm not going to go that far.

[47 : 47] Lord, you went all the way for us. Help us to go all the way for you. We ask it in Christ's name. With every head bowed, every eye closed, Brother Jerry begins to sing a verse of invitation.