

The Cost of Discipleship

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Date: 04 September 2022

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[0:00] Let us pray. Lord God, we know that your word gives light. And your life will seep in.

And Lord, we ask, Lord, that if there is anyone here even that doesn't have a new life in Christ, that you will arrest them in the preaching of your word. And Lord, you will bring them to saving faith in you.

We know that you are the Lord who calls and you give life where there is none. And so we also pray, Lord, that you will mold us in the preaching of your word this morning.

That you will allow us to submit ourselves, our minds, our wills to you. And in doing so, Lord, you draw us nearer to yourself.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. This passage that we have before us, Luke 14, 25-33, speaks about the cost of discipleship.

[1:28] Again, it's on page 1039 of your pew Bible, so I encourage you to follow along. You know, it's said that politics is the art of winning friends and influencing people.

I'm sure you've heard that before. And the way that's done since time immemorial is that one goes about doing, the way that one goes by doing that is by promising the moon and the stars.

Even if you know that when it is time to deliver on those promises, you will only manage to achieve a tiny fraction of what you promised. All politicians do it, for no exception.

But it is not so with Jesus. He's not a politician. We saw last week that he's not your typical dinner guest. This week, we'll see that he's not in the game of winning friends and influencing people.

At least not in the way we would prefer to be influenced. He speaks truth in every situation.

Because he is the embodiment of truth.

[2:38] And he again has hard words for us this morning. He has hard words for those who will follow him in these verses. Notice there in verse 25, Great crowds follow him.

Jesus was a celebrity in his day. His fame had spread throughout. And many are flocking to him, to see him, to hear him.

But he sees through it all. Jesus would have, he would have disciples who were committed to take him as master and lord over their lives.

But he would not have spectators who were tagging along for a show. So he warns the great crowd following him of the cost of being a true disciple.

What will it cost? Look there in verse 26 and 27. Now we must be careful to understand what Jesus is saying here and what he isn't saying.

[4:07] The use of the word hate is a way to convey preference and allegiance for something over another in the Hebrew language.

So for example, in the Old Testament, God said, Jacob I loved. Esau I hated. It's not a matter of emotion or affection for Jacob over Esau. The phrase essentially means, Jacob I have chosen. And Esau I have not. So in the same meaning here, Jesus says, You must choose me over all of these relationships that you have.

God chose Jacob. He preferred Jacob over Esau. God chose Israel over the other nations of the world. And God has chosen and prefers preeminently his son, Jesus Christ.

And all who are found in him for salvation over the rest of humanity. So Jesus is saying here, The cost of being my disciple is that you must choose me over your most intimate earthly relationships.

[5:28] We don't want to minimize what Jesus is saying either, do we? Your parents, your wife, your children, your siblings, even your very life.

You must choose me over the people and the things that you treasure the most if it comes to it. Your allegiance to me must be first and foremost over any other allegiance. Even over your very own life.

It's hard to hear. Jesus' demand is nothing less than your complete and total loyalty.

But you know, many follow Jesus as a means to their own end. And I think Jesus sees that in the great crowd that is following him. These people are following me as a means to an end.

[6:34] Whatever, they all have different ends. And they think Jesus will be the vehicle by which they achieve those ends. But those people who are following Jesus as a means to an end, when it gets difficult, when the cost of following Jesus gets too steep, they get off the bus.

They turn in their notice. They switch their allegiance. That's the Christianity of the crowd. That's easy religiosity.

I mean, everybody is doing it. It's the cool thing to do. It's the hip thing to do. So I'll do it too.

That's largely what's going on here. I mean, I think we live in the world now when it's not so cool to follow Jesus anymore. I mean, I think about 50 years, 75 years ago, it still was.

A lot of people came into the church building. And it's the cool thing to do. It's the respectable thing to do. It's less so now.

[7:37] That's a good thing, I think, in some ways. Because the true disciples stay. And we see around us, many are getting up.

Because it's no longer convenient or cool or respectable. The Christianity of the crowd. It's also the Christianity of sentiment. Of atmospheric.

It's what I will refer to as atmospheric Christianity. Right? There is, it's just, when I go there, I just feel love. It's not a love that is grounded in God's word and obedience to God.

As God says, as Jesus said, what it means to love him is. It's just, I feel, they're all nice people.

They're friendly. And I just want to be part of the friendly crowd.

None of those things are bad, really. But that's not what true discipleship is. Because a Christianity of mere sentiment will not withstand fallouts within the church.

[8:43] Because, yeah, people are nice. But people are still sinners, even in the church. That brother will eventually offend you. That sister, maybe unknowingly, will say something that will hurt your feelings.

Maybe knowingly, we're sinners. We offer mercy and forgiveness to one another. But that will happen, even within the church of Christ. So what happens when that happens? You take off. You go home. Or maybe it becomes when there's discord and disagreement. It becomes my way or the highway. That's the Christianity of sentiment, of atmospheric Christianity.

That doesn't really know what the cost of true discipleship is. Or maybe it's the Christianity of self-therapy. You say, you know, there's a lot of that being extolled in the world today in many churches.

Come to Jesus and He makes everything better. Come to Jesus and He will give you wealth and wealth with some other side bonuses to go with it.

[9:54] But that's not what Jesus is saying in these verses, is it? Yes, Jesus does fill our lives. He gives us many blessings.

But there is a cost to follow Him. This is what D.A. Carson says about this kind of Christianity. A cheap sort of Christianity.

He says it in his book, Basics for Believers. I read, I quote, I would like to buy about \$3 worth of the gospel. Please.

Not too much. Just enough to make me happy. But not so much that I get addicted. I don't want so much gospel that I learn to really hate covetousness and lust.

I certainly don't want so much that I start to love my enemies, cherish self-denial, and contemplate missionary service in some foreign culture.

[10:52] I want ecstasy, not repentance. I want transcendence, not transformation. I would like to be cherished by some nice, forgiving, broad-minded people.

But I, myself, I don't want to love those from different races. Especially if they smell. I would like enough gospel to make my family secure and my children well-behaved.

But not so much that I find my ambitions redirected or my giving too greatly enlarged. I would like about \$3 worth of the gospel, please.

But Jesus demands more. In fact, he demands everything.

Remember that in Luke 13, 22-32. 22-30 is still in focus here. Jesus, this is still in the context of Jesus saying that the way to eternal life is through the narrow door that is him.

[12:07] Jesus brooks no rival for our loyalty and for our commitment. Loving Jesus is not only good for your eternal security, though.

What Jesus is calling you to do here is essential. Even for the well-being of your family as well. So as you think about it and you think, well, I mean, Jesus is asking a lot here. I need to choose him. I need to love him more than my wife or my husband, my parents, my children.

My ambition. Jesus is asking you to do that which ultimately is for your good.

Because loving Jesus, first and foremost, enhances your love for others. You know, we've made little gods often.

[13:13] Oftentimes we do. We make little gods of our family. Of our relationships. Of that person that we love. Of our children, our parents.

But in reality, no human love can survive under such a weight. Because no created thing can meet your heart's deepest need. Except for God who created you.

Only God who created you can do that. So God's call to love him more than anything else. Is a call to live as you were intended to live from the beginning.

We are created to love God with all our heart. With all our soul and with all our mind. And this is the first and great commandment. Only then.

Only then. Can we love our neighbors. Only then can we love our closest and dearest neighbors.

Being our family. The way.

[14:18] That is best. So this is the order of priority. That Jesus sets for us. Love me first. I want to have the place of first allegiance.

This is the cost of discipleship. But in the end. In the end. The call to love Jesus above all else. Is really a call to put even self-interest.

In the back seat. And Jesus in the forefront. This is the cost of following Jesus. Jesus says in verse 27. Whoever.

You see there. It's whoever. Does not bear his own cross. And come after me. Cannot be my disciple. So. All Christians here.

All who come to Jesus. Are called to be martyrs. Christ. Not that you will die. But you must be ready to. You know.

[15:19] The cross in Jesus' day. Was an insignia of death. It's a symbol of horrific and public death. Shameful death. So when you see a person carrying a cross.

You don't say. Oh that's. That's. So spiritual. Like we do in our day. You know immediately. Here is someone. Carrying. The instrument.

The instrument of his own death. So Jesus says. This is what it means to follow him. To be a disciple. You must carry the instrument of your death.

Daily. You must die to yourself. Now. This is meant. For many Christians. Since the time of the apostles. Even until now.

Literal death. For the course of Christ. But it does also mean. Daily dying to self. It's dying.

[16:19] To our ambitions. To other idols. That we will have before God. It's dying to. Cultural. Respect.

And cashier. That you've built up. It's dying to family acceptance. Or love. We. We know this. Many of our Hindu.

And Muslim brothers. And says. We've converted. From. From Muslim. From Islam. Or Hinduism. This is their reality. When they come to faith in Jesus Christ.

It often means. Being disowned. By their family. I think it is true. Even in. To us. Even in the western world.

To a lesser degree. Often times. How many of you. Have come to faith in Jesus Christ. And you've lost friends. Because they said. Well. You know. Your values.

[17:16] You've changed. They will say. Your values. Are no longer the values. You're not the person we know. How many of you. Have come to faith in Jesus Christ. And maybe.

You have unbelieving parents. And that caused conflict. In your home. Or maybe I'm believing spouse. Spouse. And that causes.

Tension. In your home. Yet Jesus says. You. Should love me. More. So that when the world. Sees your love for me.

It will look like you hate. Even those things. That are dear to you. Dying to self. Means the loss. Of these precious things.

If necessary. This is the cost. Of discipleship. Sometimes. Dying. Carrying that cross.
[18:10] Will mean. Loss. Of personal. And societal comfort. How many of you. Remember last.
Just. Last week. We talked about.

Taking Jesus with you. Taking Jesus with you. Bears a cost. So if you're. A true disciple. You don't leave Jesus at the door. Of your workplace.

You don't leave. Jesus at the door. When you have family reunions. You don't leave Jesus at the door. When you gather. To meet your friends. Your old friends. Your college buddies. Your high school buddies.

You take Jesus with you. But doing that. Bears a cost. It might bear a cost. At your job. You might be passed over.

Because you just. You're not. You're not a. You're not. You're not a get along guy. It might bear a cost. Among your friends. Society might ridicule you.

[19:08] It might be disdain. From the world. God. What Jesus is saying here. Whatever it is you cherish. Whether it is control. Whether it's power.

Whether it's influence. Whether it's your family. Whether it's man's accolades. All of it.

You must be ready to lose. To follow him. All of it. Must be put to death. As you follow Christ.

And place him above everything else. In your. In your heart. That's what our baptism signifies. Isn't it? We are buried with Christ. So that we die. With him.

It's a public affirmation. I am dying with Christ. All of me dies. With him. My sin dies with him. My sinful habits die with him.

[20:05] My affections. For things that are not of God. Even my affections. That would threaten. To over. To supersede my affections for God. Dies with him.

In the waters of baptism. And I'm raised to new life in him. To follow Christ. Means. To die.

I'm reminded of what. District Point office says. When God calls a man. He bids him. Come. And die. But look in verse 28 and 33.

Jesus calls us also. To weigh the cost. So Jesus isn't trying to hoodwink us. He's not one of those. People that call. You. To try to get you to buy things. And you know.

Sort of oversell you. Promises things for you. He gives you. He tells you what it will cost. Jesus. Here in verse 28 to 33. Ask.

[21:06] Us. He asked the great crowd following him. He asked you not. Weigh the cost. Cost. You must do a cost. Cost benefit analysis. Before you.

You choose. You. You. You. You. You. Choose to follow him. Look there in verse 28 and 30. Yeah. It tells us. Can you afford. To sign up.

Verse 28 says. For which of you. Desiring to build a tower. Does not first sit down. And count the cost. Whether he has enough to complete it. Otherwise. When he has laid a foundation. He's not able to finish.

Always see it begin to mock him. And say. This man began to build. And was not able to finish. so Jesus essentially is saying to us can you afford to sign up do you know what you're in for of course it costs nothing to become a disciple Jesus loves you he's freely given himself for you he wants to have a relationship with you that's the good news of the gospel it is free it's for everyone no matter your situation in life no matter how messed up your past had been no matter what messed up situation you're in now Jesus loves you and wants to have a relationship with you and he has paid the way so that that may happen so he bids you come to him and he gives his life freely to all who will come but here's the hard news not bad news but hard news in the same way he died bearing a cross for you he has you to bear your cross this means that the cost of discipleship is death to yourself death to your agenda your comfort your will when Christ calls a man he bids him come and die so can you so can the cost before you come know what you're in for but then in verse 31 to 32 Jesus also calls us to ask ourselves this can you afford not to sign up that's what's going on here in this second example that Jesus gives what king going out to encounter another king in war will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able to with 10,000 to meet him who comes with 20,000 and if not while the other is yet a great way off he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace I want you to notice the difference in this example from the earlier one in the first one the builder is told to consider the cost of embarking on his building project you can take it or leave it if you know what you're in for count the cost go ahead and start construction that's what Jesus is saying here we're the builder but then he gives us another example the second example is not a take it or leave

[25 : 07] Jesus himself is the superior king he's the one coming with the larger force he's the one the supreme king with the superior force and he's coming to wage war you know this is why we said earlier this Christ is this the appeal that Jesus makes is not the appeal of a politician he's not running for office he's not in need of your of your validation or your vote to be elected he's not even a earthly king a mere earthly king that must pacify the nobles in order to remain in power here is the call of the king of kings and the lord of lords and he calls you to himself not with platitudes and gimmicks but with the truth with a realistic appraisal of the situation and a promise the truth is this he is your maker he is your lord he is your king you hold him your allegiance you hold him your worship and he is coming whether you like it or not to judge the living and the dead can you afford to resist or had you better come to him and sue for peace but the promise is this he gives life there is a promise he gives life to those who come to him on bended knees and ask him for mercy he is a benevolent king he is abounding in mercy but you must come on his terms you don't come bargaining with him you must surrender all to him and there is bad news the bad news is this it is folly to resist him it is utter foolishness to resist him the cost of not seeking peace with this king of kings the cost is too high and you cannot pay it the triumph his is his kingdom is advancing it is an eternal kingdom to resist his folly his kingdom has outlasted all the superpowers of the world and he will outlast every superpower to resist him is eternal damnation everlasting ruin and torment so count the cost weigh the cost which is more costly this is the example

Jesus will make you an enemy of the world it will mean loss of position and influence it may even
cost your very life it's a high cost but he's promised to help you he gives you strength and the will
to serve him even in the face of every opposition he gives strength to the weary he increases the
power of the weak so don't despair if you think I am not powerful to do this I am weak he gives
strength he will give you strength he gives grace even to the humble so come to him in your
weakness humbly come to cost let us pray and after you've suffered a little while the God of all
grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore confirm strengthen and
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