

The Cost of Discipleship

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[0 : 00] Look at the front of your bulletins. You would see a section called Church Resolutions for 2016.! What has amazed me is that the year has gone so fast.

! And I remember when we as a church made these resolutions. And the question I want to ask members of this local church is how have you been doing with your resolutions so far for the year?

And this morning I will be addressing one of the resolutions, the last one, number five, called Discipleship.

Grow in being disciples. My message this morning is taken from Luke chapter 14, verses 25 through 33.

Luke 14, verses 25 through 33. Now, many people today do not understand what it means to be a genuine Christian.

[1 : 25] There are multitudes that follow Jesus or claim to be Christians. But what they do, they follow him on their own terms.

And they do it as we say how they want to do it. They do not truly comprehend what the Bible means by discipleship. And as a result of their ignorance, many people consider themselves to be followers of Jesus the Christ.

The truth is, they are not. And in many ways, they look like followers of him. After all, they attend church gatherings.

They have a profession of faith. They pray. They read their Bibles. They give offerings. They give offerings. They give offerings.

But they are not genuine. Now, in our text today, Christ confronts this problem and makes it extremely clear what it means to be a Christian.

[2 : 37] So, after today, there is no reason to be ignorant or self-deceived. Now, interestingly enough, in the New Testament, the word Christian is not predominantly used to describe followers of Christ.

In fact, the term disciples occurs some 269 times in the New Testament, while the term Christian only occurs three times.

In the book of Acts, we are told that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. Acts 11, verse 26.

We understand that those who believe in Jesus Christ and follow him are fundamentally disciples who are called Christians.

Disciples are who they are, and Christians are what they are called. Now, traditionally, over time, the word Christian has overshadowed and marginalized the term disciple.

[3 : 53] So, that is where we are today. You will hear most of the time, Christian, but that is not what Christ called us.

But, this is where we live, and this is what has happened. Now, Luke 14, verse 25 through 33.

And when I read this, it's amazing how you can read the Bible and not really read the Bible. You can see things and not really see it.

And this particular passage here, I guarantee you, there are things that we, as Christians, disciples, have overlooked.

Luke 14, verse 25 through 33. Now, great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

[5 : 27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 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 and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish.

Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able, with 10,000, to meet him who comes against him 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. So therefore, any of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Heavenly Father, we pause, Lord, to thank you for your word. And thank you, Lord, for instructions in scripture.

[7 : 03] And most importantly, Lord, words of Jesus the Christ on how we are to be disciples. Father, we all need help.

And Father, I need help today to bring your word with clarity to your people. And Lord, to help them to understand what you meant by following you.

We thank you, Lord, that we will hear. We will obey. And Father, our lives will be changed as a result of your word today.

And Father, we thank you once again for Jesus the Christ, who was a true disciple.

Now, in these verses, Jesus calls out to those who would be his disciples.

[8 : 21] And he calls them. He commands them. He compels them to make a choice about who they will put first in their lives.

And as we read and hear what Jesus has to say to the people of that time, we shall also hear the radical call that goes out to us today as well.

Now, according to the gospel writer Luke, in his account, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. And Jesus knows what is ahead of him.

Hostility and violence, suffering and death. Now, this crowd has been following Jesus.

And those of us who are familiar with the gospels know Jesus was very popular. Jesus' message was different from that of the religious leaders of the day.

[9 : 24] He could actually raise the dead. He could give sight to the blind. He could heal crippled people.

Apart from that, multiply loads of bread and fish. And walk on water.

So, what we have here is this young Jewish rabbi who is very popular.

And he is being followed by crowds and multitudes of people. And everybody knows that, as Jesus said, they were not really interested in his message of salvation.

They were interested more in the things that he could do. And in the context of the time, they thought that they were on this victory march to overthrow the Roman occupation.

[10 : 34] And that Jesus would be the promised Messiah to free them from Roman oppression. And take up the rightful throne of David.

Now, they were oblivious to what Jesus had in mind. Or his mission or his destiny.

We, on this side, we knew that Jesus was headed towards Jerusalem. And we know, ultimately, what awaited him.

And he knew as well. Now, he was not moved by the enthusiasm of the crowd. Because Jesus knew that even though they were walking with him, their hearts were not really with him.

And Jesus didn't waste time. Because he knew it was necessary to make the crowd aware of the commitment required to be true disciples.

[11 : 50] You see, Jesus was seeking recruits and not spectators. Discipleship is not an easy task. Because discipleship requires putting Christ above everything in our lives.

And discipleship requires paying an extremely high cost. If you're going to really, truly follow Jesus Christ.

Now, in our world today, it seems that the greatest sin that you could commit is offending a person.

And when I talk about offending a person, we don't want to tell people the truth about what it means to follow Christ. We guard our words.

We guard our attitudes. We guard our actions. And we're afraid that people are going to be offended. And they're going to turn away.

[12 : 54] And they're not going to be interested in receiving the message of the gospel. What is interesting here is, when we examine the words of Jesus, we realize that Jesus didn't make the path to discipleship easy.

And that really got my attention. Jesus didn't make following him easy. He never did. Because he didn't want followers to get the wrong idea or impression.

He didn't want them to get a false sense of salvation. He actually made extreme demands that discouraged people from following him.

And that is what got my attention going through this text. In our world today, we tend to make things...

Well, let me put it this way. There are people who make things easy and say, If you give your life to Christ, if you follow Christ, all of your problems are going to disappear.

[14 : 11] If you've got an illness, you're going to get healed.

If you've got a money problem, abundance of money. If you have a relationship problem, it's going to be worked out.

But this is not the message. This is not the call to discipleship as we read in scripture. And it's not about music that plays, that works on your emotion, that sets an environment for you to make a decision.

That is completely opposite to what Jesus required of those who would follow him. Now these things happen in the Christian world today.

It's called manipulation. But you see, Jesus knew that if a person really sat down and counted the cost and made a decision to follow him, there would be people who would last.

[15 : 27] There would be people who when the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, the obstacles, the problems with families, relationships, the problems with money, the problems with health, they're going to still hold on to him.

So, we see it being the complete opposite to what is being, I say, manipulated or promoted in Christianity today.

Now my message today. My theme is, true disciples put Christ above everything else and consider the course.

My thoughts will be focused around two areas, two main points.

The first being, true disciples of Christ put him above everything else. True disciples of Christ put him above everything else.

[16 : 48] True disciples of Christ put him above everything else. Now, can you imagine the astonishment and the offense that must have occurred when Jesus said this?

You see, Jesus refused to not want to hurt feelings on those who claim to be his followers. You see, the call to discipleship is one of allegiance.

A call to put Christ above everything in your life. And in this particular instance, human relationship.

Now, in Jesus' time, society then valued family ties and commitments above all else.

And you see, his words were a blatant and frontal attack on that treasured aspect of social life. Because, just like back then and now, I know you love your family.

[18 : 11] We love our families. Now, this word hate that is used here in this passage is not to be taken literally, but it is used figuratively to express a point.

You see, in Jewish culture, the word hate was used to express a lesser love for something. So, what Jesus is actually saying here is that we must cultivate such a devotion to him that our attachment to everything else, including our own lives, would seem like hatred in comparison.

And Jesus is not contradicting love for parents. Because, honor your father and your mother.

This is what these people knew. The book of Deuteronomy. Also, loving your neighbor as you love yourself. See, he's not contradicting love for parents, family, and persons.

Jesus is addressing a level of commitment. A level of commitment to him that disciples should possess.

[19 : 31] He is saying that a disciple's commitment to obey and follow him must be greater than any other relationship you have in your life.

And this is challenging. There are some relationships we have in our lives that tend to get in the front of our relationship with Christ.

We have family members whom we love dearly. But we know the life that they live, the things that they do, are not pleasing to God.

And we compromise. Because one of the things that I've come to know is that evil and sin is very powerful.

It's very influential. Listening to Brother Celie this morning reminded me of that particular passage about Abraham and Lot.

[20 : 49] You see, Lot took the better portion of a piece of land. But what Lot didn't truly understand is that his land, this land that he possessed was close to a place called Sodom.

He put his tent outside Sodom. He didn't go into Sodom. But what we come to realize is that over time, he ended up in Sodom.

So what I'm talking about is an influence. Jesus' influence over us has to be greater than the influence of friends and families who can lead us astray.

We have situations where it may be a married couple. One is a committed follower of Christ. The other isn't.

Now, that's hell on earth. That is hell on earth. How could two walk together unless they're in agreement? It doesn't work.

[22 : 01] Young people, if you've got a relationship with someone and you know they're not walking with Christ, it's only a matter of time before they influence you to do things that are contrary to what you believe.

It doesn't work. You see, one of the deceptions we have is that we're stronger, we're smarter, and it won't happen to me.

Throughout scripture, that is not the case. We have to be very careful about who we align ourselves with. Now, relationships in all form and fashion are difficult in and of themselves because we live in a fallen world.

But we who follow Christ have to stand for what is right regardless. And this is the kind of stand, this is the kind of commitment, this is the kind of putting everything else in our lives to Christ.

Put him above everything else. This is where, as we say, the rubber meets the road. So, we have to be careful as it relates to relationships where the other party is not a follower of Christ.

[23 : 36] I want you to think about a mother and a father at the bedside of a critically ill child. The doctors prescribe some medication that the child desperately needs to recover.

But the child hates the medicine and refuses to take it. Do the parents follow the desires of their precious child? Or do they follow the instructions of the doctor?

What is the priority here? What comes first? As loving and concerned parents, and I'm sure many of you, you would administer the medication, regardless of what the child says, regardless of what the child feels.

Your loyalty is to a principle. Your loyalty is to an authority greater than the child's feelings at the moment. Our loyalty, our commitment, has to be to Christ.

If you are a follower or a disciple. In verse 27, Jesus uses a metaphor.

[25 : 02] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Now, crosses today are in abundance.

On buildings. On buildings. Around people's neck. Figures, figurines, etc.

But, everyone who was in the audience at that time, knew exactly what Jesus was talking about. Carrying his cross.

Crucifixion. That is what the Romans used to keep. As they would say, keep peace. Wherever they occupied.

Or wherever they colonized. And crucifixion was brutal. And it was cruel. If you were a condemned criminal. Or if you were a rebel. The Romans.

[26 : 06] Knew exactly. How to deal with you. Condemned criminals were forced to carry the cross beam. To the place of execution.

Those pictures about a full cross. You have to carry a cross beam. And you carried that. And it was heavy. And they made sure.

That when you carried it. They would be beating you the same time. Until you got. Until you got. To your place of execution. So everybody knew. That whoever was carrying a cross.

That person was saying goodbye. To everything. Because there was no turning back. And you were not coming back home. To whom. And you see.

Jesus used this graphic illustration. To bring home the point. That following him. Requires the same kind. Of saying goodbye. The same kind of attitude.

[27 : 10] You have to adopt. If you've got. Habits. Lifestyle patterns. Things that are not pleasing. To God.

As I indicated. Jesus is headed towards Jerusalem. And he is headed towards. And death. On our behalf.

And he. Invited. And he continues to invite. Those who would follow him. To identify with him. In the fellowship of dishonor. And suffering.

So getting back to what I said earlier. There are situations that we. As followers of Christ. That we live in. They're difficult. They're hard. We suffer.

We suffer as a result. Of following the Christ. But. We look to him. Who.

[28 : 18] Who. Endured. The cross. And the shame. Who persevered. To give us strength. And give us hope. So you see.

True disciples of Christ. Give up their claims. The things that they think. They deserve. Claims to comfort. Claims to.

Companionship. Claims. Claims. To even. Life. Itself. When we look around the world today.

There are countries. We are following Christ. Results in. Ostracism. Isolation.

Persecution. Or even death. I. Read an article about. Christians.

[29 : 20] It's. Iran. And. You know. It's. It's. It's. These people have existed.

Following Christ. For years. And. This threat of. ISIS. Has changed. Their whole way of life. They are not able to.

Worship. Openly. They've lost their homes. They've lost their families. And. What was amazing is. It. And they're saying that. We still.

Will not give up. We will still. Follow Christ. Even. If it means. Losing our lives. And. For many of us.

We. Will not be called. To give our lives. For Christ. But we must be prepared. To die. To ourselves. To die.

[30 : 20] To our own. Personal agendas. To die. The things that. We feel. We deserve. We feel. We should do it. Our way.

And not. His way. The question is. Are you prepared. To die. To yourself. Are you prepared.

To be crucified. As Paul said. I am crucified. With Christ. It is no longer. I who live.

But Christ. Who lives in me. You see. You see. This is the graphic. Illustration. That Jesus is saying. For commitment. To follow him. And as I said.

Some of us. Would not be. Required. To give our lives. But there are those. In this world. It is happening. And it. Will continue to happen. Because of their stand.

[31 : 21] For Christ. As Martin Luther said. A religion. That gives nothing. That costs nothing. And suffers nothing.

Is worth nothing. Nothing. So what price. Are you prepared. To pay.

In order to follow. Christ. I. Think about those.

Who. Are in this congregation. Those who have. Left their homes. To come to a foreign country. And to serve.

And. It's admirable. They understand. This gospel. They understand it. Now. That's not everybody's call.

[32 : 20] That's not everybody's situation. That's not everybody's circumstance. But. Demonstration. The actual living. Of being a disciple.

Is shown. And seen. Every day. We think of people. Like the Seelies.

We think of people. Like the Ryans. We think of Jennifer Rogers. It's.

Life. Right in front of our faces. They are living. In. What they have read. What they have been taught. What they. What has been preached to them. This commitment. This following.

Putting. Christ above everything else. Because I can tell you. For most of us. We ain't moving nowhere. We.

[33 : 17] We. We. We. We. We're not going to leave home. Because it's comfortable. It's comfortable. For some people. Following Christ.

It is not comfortable. It requires. Sacrifice. And commitment. I. I think about.

Those in our congregation. Who. Drive the bus. Early. Every Sunday morning. A lot of things.

Goes on in this local church. That goes unnoticed. Because think about it. You got to get up earlier. You got to. Pick people up. And most of the people do it.

With no complaints. I think about those who serve in. Prayer ministry. Sunday morning.

[34 : 14] Before service. I think about those who serve in. These are people who made commitments. And put Christ above everything else. And this is what it comes down to.

It comes down to real life. One of the things I've come to find out.

I just finished. The last. Christianity Explored. Session. And I said this to. Troy. And I'm going to tell you.

Brothers and sisters. The only way. Christianity Explored. Is going to be successful. Is when. Members of this local church. Make a decision.

To identify. To identify people in their lives. Expose them to Christianity Explored. Or invite them.

[35 : 16] And for seven nights. Accompany them to Christianity Explored. It doesn't work. Any other way. Most people.

If you invite them to a church. They're not coming. Especially to something. That they're not familiar with. I've seen members in this local church. Seven.

Tuesdays. Committed. With people they've invited. It. What I'm trying to show. See. This is discipleship. This is.

This is real discipleship. You want to say it this way. Discipleship 101. It's not going to happen any other way. Yes. Prayers required. Yes.

Inviting people to. Social functions. Social functions. But when it comes down to the. Real deal. Or the foundation. You have to become a part of these people's lives. And let me tell you.

[36 : 15] They got to fight the traffic. They may not have. Transportation themselves. Which means you have to pick them up. And afterwards you got to take them home. I think.

Those are. Small in comparison. To give in your life. For dying. For Christ. I think it's small in comparison.

To leave your home. And go into a foreign country. And serve. You see. I've come to realize. You see. God looks at the broad picture. The broad picture.

Because God knows everything. About every single one of us. And if you say. You're following Christ. The demands. Are right here written.

Now the next. Area of my message. I'd like to cover is. True disciples of Christ. Consider. The cost. True.

[37 : 21] Disciples of Christ. Consider. The. Cost. The. Verse. Verse. Twenty. 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.

And is not able to finish. All who see it. Begin to mock him saying. This man. Began to build. And was not able. To finish. Or what king.

Going out to encounter. Another king in war. Will not sit down first. And deliberate. Whether he is able. With ten thousand. To meet him. Who comes against him.

With twenty. Thousand. Now what Jesus is. Using here. Is two. Parabolic. Illustrations. Involving building.

[38 : 22] And going to war. And both of them. Warn against. Making. A hasty decision. To follow him. Those who.

Consider following. Jesus Christ. Must first count the cost. To see. If they will. Persevere. On this journey.

I. You know. I. I remember. Telling him. I say. It's amazing. And this is what. I appreciate people. Who tell me. The deal up front. You ever. Went into a deal. With somebody. And they didn't tell you.

Everything up front. And down the road. It changed. I've been in some agreements. Like that. Well you know. I didn't. I didn't. I didn't. I. You know. I didn't say that. You know. Oh.

I forgot to tell you. Mm-mm. Jesus. Tells you. The deal. Up front. And that's called being. Honest. And as I said earlier. He wasn't looking for.

[39 : 22] The crowd. You know. I can imagine. I can imagine. For some. Of those who. We call. Preachers. Evangelists. Man.

It was an evangelist dream. You know. Just have a crowd of people. And you're right there saying to yourself. I got all of this. And Jesus is saying. I'm not impressed with the crowd.

Your hearts ain't really with me. They're only really interested in the things I could do for them. I'm popular. I could solve a lot of their problems. Uh-uh. His thing was.

You have to count. The cost. You see. Because Jesus knew that this road. Of discipleship. Is difficult. There will be obstacles. Trials.

Tests. Temptations. And you got to be able to make it. He wasn't looking for. Stony ground. Follow it.

[40 : 22] He wasn't looking for that. He's looking for. Good. Soil. And we're talking about hearts.

Hearts that are receptive. And hearts that sit down. And truly understand. What it means to follow Christ. Now. This particular.

Builder that Jesus is referring to here. Is a person. Who built a watchtower. And in Jesus' day. Watchtowers. Were put up around the city.

Watchtowers were put up around. Large agricultural holdings. And these watchtowers were designed. For safety. Under protection. This is where guards or watchmen would be stationed.

And they would be able to see. Those who would. Seek to. Steal. Pillage. Whatever. Possession.

[41 : 23] Possessions. Or if it's a city. Come to basically take over the city. And these towers were an expensive. Undertaking. And they were not to be taken lightly.

Those of you who have built. Houses. I know. You understand. Where Jesus is coming from. It's expensive. And especially in our.

Society today. The cost for building. Is astronomical. What Jesus is saying here. Is an expensive. Undertaking. That you cannot.

Take. Lightly. This is something. You don't just do. On impulse. You got to sit down. And you got to calculate. The cost. You got to sit down.

And you got to say. How much money. Is it going to take. To finish this project. What are the resources. That I need. You see.

[42 : 25] In society. Back then. It was a big thing. With honor and shame. That's the reason. Why Jesus is saying. That. Whether he has enough.

To complete it. Otherwise. When he's laid a foundation. And is not able to see it. All who see it. Begin to mock him. Well. Today. People are going to mock you.

If you can't finish the project. But back then. It was really. It was really a big thing. You would be disgraced. In society. And so. Jesus is saying. You need.

To really. Sit down. And understand. What you're getting. Yourself. Into. Because.

If you were not able to finish. It would be embarrassment. You see. Wisdom. Involves reflection. Rather than reaction.

[43 : 19] Wisdom. Wisdom. Wisdom. Involves. Reflection. Rather than. Reaction. And it's the same way. Jesus doesn't want.

Followers of him. To commit. Without understanding. The seriousness. About what is involved. In making. This decision. You see.

Decisions that are half-hearted. Unemotional. Unemotional. Unemotional. They lack. The integrity. To finish. The journey.

If you make a decision. To follow Christ. And it's based on emotion. It's based on not.

Sitting down. And seriously. Considering. And counting the cost. The chances are. You. Are. Going.

[44 : 16] To burn out. You're going to quit. You're going to give up. When things get tough. Theologian. John Stott.

When I read this. And it's from a book called. Basic Christianity. And this is just a plug-in. For John. John Stott. If you want to give. A very good.

Christmas present. To somebody. Give them this book. It's called. Basic Christianity. And John Stott. Writes in Basic Christianity. The Christian landscape.

Is strewn with the wreckage. Of derelict. Half-built towers. The ruins. Of those who began to build. And were unable to finish. For thousands of people.

Still ignore Christ's warning. And undertake to follow him. Without first pausing. To reflect. To reflect. On the course. Of doing so. The result. Is the great scandal.

[45 : 26] Of Christendom today. So-called. Nominal. Christianity. In countries. To which. Christian civilization.

Has spread. Large. Numbers. Of people. Have covered themselves. With a decent. But thin. Veneer. Of Christianity. They have.

Allowed themselves. To become. Somewhat involved. Enough to be. Respectable. But not enough. To be uncomfortable.

Their religion. Is a great. Soft. Cushion. It protects them. From the hard. Unpleasantness. Of life. While changing.

Its place. And shape. To suit. Their convenience. No wonder. The cynics. Speak of hypocrites. In the church. And dismiss.

[46 : 19] Religion. As escapism. That. Really. Hits home. That's really. Something. To really.

Contemplate. I am. This is one of my little jokes. You know. I always tell. People in here. I'm an Anglican.

In disguise. My brother. Is a priest. My first cousin. They're priests. They're Anglican priests. My background. Is Anglican. So. You know.

I'm looked at. As. An outsider. But what I've come. To learn. And I tell people this. We have to always be careful. About coming.

To assumptions. About people. As it relates. To what they believe. And how they worship. You see. Because at the end of the day. It all comes down to Christ.

[47 : 13] And the reason. Why I'm saying this is. I got a great joy. That John Stott. Happened to be an Anglican.

An Anglican. In fact. An Anglican priest. In fact. Christianity explored. Came out of the church. That John Stott served. So.

I always be laughing. All the time. At Pastor Moss. I always laugh. I say. Yeah. Anglican. And I always remember. Many years ago. It's another book.

It may be in the bookstore. It's called. The Cross of Christ. And I remember. When. Pastor Moss. His messages. Change. Change. And I was asking him.

I said. What's going on? And it was because of that book. Written by. This Anglican. called John Stott. So.

[48 : 13] I say that. To say. As long as a person. Makes a commitment. To put Christ first. I'm not concerned.

About the trappings. I'm not concerned. About. The rituals. And all that kind of stuff. Or the robes. That they may wear. We have enough information.

To know. Whether people are. Genuine. And true followers. Of Christ. Based on this same. Text. That we're reading here. Today. Now.

Jesus also talks about. A king. A king. Who was preparing. To embark. On a military campaign. Against another king. One thing I could say.

Jesus. I mean. He was very good. At illustrations. And you see. These people understood. Exactly. What he was talking about. Now you see. This king has fewer troops. Than his enemy. The truth is.

[49 : 11] He only has half the amount. Now if this king. Has any smarts. He's not going to rush into. A battle. Because the odds are against him. It would be.

A foolish. Campaign. Even. If he determines. That his army. Is not equipped. For the engagement. He just doesn't.

Sit down. On his throne. And twiddle his thumbs. And wait. To be conquered. He exercises. Prudence. And sends out a delegation. As Jesus said.

While. The other. Is yet a great way off. And asks. For terms. Of peace. As wisdom. Because. You could end up losing your life.

For making. Hasty. Foolish decisions. And as Jesus. See Jesus is trying to show us. How serious it is. When we make. This commitment. Or.

- [50 : 11] Those of us. Who continue. On this road. Of discipleship. Now. These two. Parables. They're. They're. They're parallel. But they. Approach.
- The issue. Of counting the cost. For discipleship. In two. Slightly different. Perspectives. In the first parable.
- Jesus calls. The crowd. To sit down. And consider. Whether they can afford. To follow him. Can you afford it? Moving towards.
- Discipleship. Involves. Serious consideration. It's not something. That you do. Impulsively. And we.
- Don't. Tell. People. Because. There's always. This pressure. For those. Of us. To push people. To Christ.
- [51 : 08] A lot of evangelists. Do it. This. And they've. Been doing it. And see. That's the reason. Why. The landscape. Of a lot of countries. That say.
- They follow Christ. Or they're Christians. When you really. Look at the country. When you really. Look at the people. You know. Is that a wise. And we have to be honest.
- Think about our country. In the second.
- Parable. Jesus calls the crowd. To sit down. And consider. Whether they could afford. Not to follow him. You see. After you've done.
- Your contemplation. After you've seriously considered. We. As those who hear the call of Christ.
- [52 : 09] We pursue peace. With God. On his gracious terms. I always recall. A. A pastor. That I. Appreciated material. When I did prison ministry. His name is Bob Mumford. And he. He was. He was explaining. How. Listen. You're going up against a king. And you're not going to win the war.
- And I'm talking about those who. Have not embraced discipleship. You can't win. I don't care what you do. I don't care what you try. I don't care what you go.
- You cannot beat this king. This king has far more resources. Than you would ever have. He only. Has the resources of life and death. That's all he has.
- Life. Think about it. The entirety of life. There are those of us in here. People have been placed in our lives. That have helped us on this road to discipleship.
- [53 : 14] And I recall people that helped me. And I look back and I say. It's amazing. People who you would not suspect. You see that's the reason why.
- You never underestimate. Your ability. Of speaking to people. Of introducing the gospel. Not the big stuff.
- Small stuff. And as I said earlier. Invitation to Christianity explored. And being with them for seven weeks. I guarantee you. It makes an impact on a life.
- And. You know. We do our part. And God will do his part.
- And just like. People who I know. As I say. Well they're not in the house. They're not following Christ.
- [54 : 11] You. You. You. You have to remember that. This king got some. He got some serious reinforcements.
- Serious. His army is vastly superior. To anything you could put up against him. And if he. Targets you. Or he sends somebody into your life.
- To bring you. To Christ. You're not going to win. See that's the reason why prayer. Is so powerful. That's why I know. There are a lot of people. They told me.

After the fact. Boy I was praying for you. I didn't know they was praying for me. And I said to myself. I really truly understand. How I was able to get through.

That particular situation. See we cannot underestimate. The power of God. In the lives of people. See God is interested. In your good. No matter what the situation is.

[55 : 10] No matter how it looks. And God is going to use. Whatever means necessary. To bring you to Christ.

So. A true disciple realizes. That nothing less than. Unconditional surrender. Is acceptable. You got to give it up.

We got to give it up. Yeah. Those of us. We got to get. We have given up. Some things. But we have not given up. Everything. But you see.

The king is patient. He is kind. And he waits. Little. By little. Situation. By situation.

Circumstance. By circumstance. He is going to get you. Now. We have this saying. In the Bible. You play crazy. As much as you want. But as I said. This is a king.

[56 : 08] You cannot defeat. Verse 33. So therefore. Any of you. Who does not renounce. All that he has.

Cannot be. My. Disciple. Now. It is in this context. Of surrender. That Jesus speaks. In this verse. Those who would be disciples.

Cannot afford. To maintain. As I said earlier. You cannot have a death grip. On people. And when I say that. There are people.

In your life. That are blocking you. That are obstacles. To get into Christ. In our.

Context. And I. I always like. I have. Because we have families. And we love them. And as I said.

[57 : 08] Earlier. One time. We have. I come from a family. Where. There are two sets of people. Those who follow Christ. And those who don't.

And where situations. Came up with. Came up. With some younger people. Who are shocking up. And there are those of us. Who said. That is not. Acceptable.

And I can tell you. We. It was a big argument. And it was a fight. Because they were saying. You. You. You. You. You. You're old fashioned. You all don't understand.

This the new. This is a new age. That. That. That. That's what's happened. That's a new trend. And then we're telling them. So. So. What does. What does the scriptures say? What does the bible say? You.

And then. And then. And then. And see. And then it gets heated. Because. You tell them. We say. Okay. You saying. You following Christ. You say you is a Christian. And this is what you are allowing. You.

[58 : 03] And then they're telling us. I mean. They're looking at us like. We're enemies. And this is. This is what I was talking about earlier. About deception. And this is what I was talking about.

Influence. We have to be very careful. When we say. We. Are followers of Christ. We are disciples. It cannot be.

Superficial. As I read. Let's just have a veneer. Of Christianity. It's not the real thing. It's the counterfeit.

So. You got to release people. So. If it's a love affair. It's an illicit love affair. You got to let it go. Position.

It may be some position. That you. You have. Or your socioeconomic status. Yes. And what I'm talking about is.

- [59 : 05] You may be involved in things that. Are not. Pleasing to God. Yeah. You're making a lot of money. Yeah. You're living well. But in the final analysis.
- Are you. Living. For Christ. Again. Another situation. In my family. There's a place.
- That. Could be. It's a bar. And it's. Owned by a member of my family. And. Somebody else.
- In my family. Say. Listen man. You need to put them people out. And take over that bar. And make yourself some money. So.
- She's talking to me. I'm talking to her. She. She said. David. I don't want to get involved in that stuff. I say. I with you. I.
- [60 : 03] I'm with you. You ain't got. Listen. If there's one person. I'm going to be on your side. It's going to be me. It's going to be. So. We. Again. We have to be. Those.
- Who stand. For Christ. And these are just little things. Little things. That probably may not mean. Anything. You say. But there ain't no harm. There ain't no harm. Just a bar. But. What are the results?
- What are the consequences? And I know the place. Riot is carrying on. Cursing. All day. And I feel like. This thing. Even making no sense. But.
- This is what. This is what people do. This is what people compromise. Compromise to make money. But everybody is a Christian. Now.
- The disciple who. Considers the plan laid out by Jesus. He realizes that. There is no greater person to love. No greater position to pursue. No greater position.
- [60 : 58] Possession to run after. True disciples. True disciples. Understand. Understand. That they do not possess. Within themselves.
- The resources necessary. To pursue. The call. They have received from Christ. This has to happen. By the work.
- Of the Holy Spirit. It's called divine enablement. That is how. We. Are called. To Christ. You see.
- True disciples know. They don't have enough money. To build the tower. The king has the money. He has the resources. They know they don't have enough troops.
- To win the war. He has the troops. To win the war. This war is going on for the souls. For the hearts of men. And they realize.
- [61 : 56] By renouncing their possessions. They become stewards of everything. And owners of nothing. All for the service of the king. True disciples accept.
- That salvation. Is by grace. And the gifts. That God provides. Are the resources. That make it all possible. And this enables them.
- To be. What he calls them to be. Disciples. So.
- In ending. We have to be. People. Who put. Christ above. Everything else. And for many of us.
- It looks different. In our lives. You know. I heard. Brother Sealy. Talk about idols. Some of us. We got some. We got some big idols. In our lives.
- [63 : 03] We got to smash them. And break them down. And they're very subtle. Especially. Especially those of us. Who live in the western world. We have to be people.
- Who. Truly really. Count the cost. And I ask ourselves. Are we really. Living.
- According to. What Jesus said. About his followers. Not what. Some. Churches say. Not.
- The big crowds. Who are. In for it for. The ride. The popularity.

The glitz. And the glamour. But people. Whose hearts are truly. Resolved. In service for the king. These are questions.

[64 : 02] We have to ask ourselves. Our. Road to discipleship. Has to be reviewed. And. As I started earlier.

The year is almost finished. How have you grown. In your discipleship. How. How. So.

These are questions. We all have to answer. These are issues. We have. That have to be addressed. And. God is going to give you. The grace to be able to do it.

We have to submit. We have to give ourselves to him. We have to give it up. We have to. Surrender. Amen.

Amen.