

Luke 14:25-35 PM

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[0 : 00] Folks, while you're standing, let me pray for us. Father, would you open our hearts to hear your word this evening. In Christ's name, amen.

Yay. If you are new, my name's Aaron. Come and say hi afterwards. I'd love to meet you. So Luke chapter 14, verses 25 to 35.

Let me just sort of situate you a bit here so you know where we're at in Luke. So just before this, Jesus had been in the homes of some of the religious elite.

And these were folks who were really focused on the minutiae of rule keeping. And Jesus has been saying to them, basically, come on. Come on, man.

You're like ruining it. You're ruining what it means to follow God. He's saying following God, it's more like a banquet. Than what you guys are on about.

[1 : 01] And a banquet that everyone is invited to. And it's going to be awesome. So Jesus, he's preaching. He's preaching up a storm. And he's telling people about the kingdom of God. So, of course, he's making some enemies, though.

Especially the religious leaders. The religious elite. Because what he's saying there is really messing with their gig. But at the same time, a whole lot of people are loving what he's saying. In fact, you've got these huge crowds of people. They just start following him. Like literally just start walking behind him as Jesus is out doing his thing.

So that's the context of today's passage. Verse 25. Now great crowds accompanied him. Like it's literally like a crowd of people just following around.

And he, that's Jesus. And he turned and said to them. So it's a great picture. Jesus, he's walking. And he just stops.

[2 : 03] And he literally turns around. And he speaks to them. And he says some just outrageous things. So what's going on here?

Why did he stop? Why did he turn around? Why did he say outrageous things? Well, the people in these crowds were excited about Jesus. They're kind of caught up on what was going on. He's this new like prophet guy who's stirring things up.

And he's doing some cool things. But this crowd, that doesn't mean that they were like committed to Jesus. It doesn't mean they were disciples. And I think this disturbs Jesus.

Because he doesn't want, you know, excitable spectators. He wants followers who are just all in.

So he stops and he basically says, Look, this great banquet that I've been, you know, talking about. That you're invited into. Everyone's invited. To be an all in follower of Jesus.

[3 : 05] You don't have to be fancy. You don't have to be extra special to get in. You don't have to be rich. You don't have to be part of the elite. You don't have to be educated. You don't have to get caught up in the minutiae of all the rule keeping.

It's all about grace. But if you accept this invitation. Jesus is saying, I do not want fake disciples. I don't want groupies.

I'm not interested in that. Jesus says, I want your whole life. I want your whole life. He says, nothing can be more important than me in your life.

So that's kind of the guts of it. And now we'll sort of dive into a few more details. Basically, stops. Addresses the crowd. Because he knows their hearts.

He knows their attitude. And he says, here's what it looks like to make a commitment to me. It's going to impact how you think about your family. It's going to impact your willingness to suffer.

[4 : 02] You know, your desire to have a comfortable life. It's going to impact that. And it's going to impact your relationship with your stuff. So those are three things.

Family. Suffering. And your stuff. Let's talk about these three things quickly. So we'll start with family. Verse 26. Bit of a shocker. Verse 26. If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters in his own life. He can't be my disciple. It's just outrageous. What could that possibly mean? What could Jesus be possibly saying? Hate your family. This is, of course, and I know you know this, deliberate hyperbole.

I mean, in our first Bible reading tonight from Genesis, I mean, God invented family. And the fifth commandment says to honor your parents.

So it can't mean to literally hate your family. Also, we're not a cult. You know, that's the thing that cults cut off family, you know. We're not a cult.

[5 : 07] So what's going on here? What does Jesus mean? He really is just saying, with deliberate hyperbole, he's saying, he has got to be more important than any other relationship in your life.

Even your most precious relationships. He has to be more important than that. And he says it in a very provocative way, so we'll remember it. Another way to say it would be this.

To be a disciple of Christ, this area of your life, this really, really important area of your life, must come under the lordship of Jesus. It must be Jesus. This thing must come under that. You must lay our families at the feet of Jesus.

And trust our families with Jesus. But Jesus is number one. Okay, family. Family. That's family.

Next, Jesus addresses our willingness to suffer.

And the flip side of that would be our desire to have a comfortable life. Jesus says, look. Well, no, here's what he doesn't say.

[6 : 08] He doesn't say, look, if you follow me, there's going to be a few dramas. And I just want you to be cool with that. You know, you'll basically be okay. You may be inconvenienced. He doesn't say that.

What he does is he presents them with the most horrific example of pain that they would have been aware of. And says, it's going to kind of look like this. Verse 27.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. So remember, at this point, Jesus is stating the obvious, has not died on the cross yet.

So when he's saying this, they're not thinking, oh, you know, Good Friday. You know, they're not thinking like, oh, the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. They're not thinking any of that sort of carry on other.

This is on no one's radar. See, back in the days when the Romans sentenced somebody to death, they didn't just like take him up to the place, nail him to the cross.

[7 : 08] They made a big sort of palaver about it. So the person would actually have to carry the horizontal cross beam on their back, and they'd have to carry it through the town.

It was like political theater. They made them carry it through the town up to the place where they get crucified, and then they crucify them. It was a way of kind of terrorizing the locals into submission.

So when Jesus says, carry your own cross, that's what he's talking about.

So everyone who sees this person carrying this cross beam through the town, they would know that person is done. There is no coming back from them. That's a one-way journey.

They are going to suffer, and they are going to die. So that's the vivid picture. That's the picture that Jesus gives us for saying, here's what it's like to follow me. It can mean pain.

It's a one-way journey. It can mean pain. It could mean being misunderstood. It could mean being really disadvantaged, disowned. Being my follower, it can be costly pain.

[8 : 12] And this is not a fun thing to hear, obviously, but just remember the context, right? You've got all these people who are just having a bit of a laugh following Jesus like groupies, because they've heard about the miracles, and he says really interesting things, and they want to be part of a big crowd.

It's exciting. But Jesus says, look, I need you to just make the leap from being curious about me to being absolutely committed to me, and this is what the commitment might cost you.

And he gives the craziest example he can, so it will be memorable, and so nothing is a surprise.

Because some of these folks did follow Jesus and lost their lives.

Okay, so family, suffering, a desire for a comfortable life. And now the last one is verse 33. So this is like money and just sort of stuff. Very simply, to be a disciple of Christ, that means we value Jesus over our stuff.

And again, deliberate hyperbole here. He says you renounce everything. He's not saying we have to give away everything. Although he does call some people to voluntary poverty.

[9 : 27] Like the rich young ruler, you might know that story. What he's saying here is we just can't be so welded to our things that it interferes with what God wants to do with our lives.

Like nothing you have, nothing you own, can be more important than Jesus. Family, a willingness to suffer, and your stuff.

Now here's the thing. You can have a great family. Jesus is not saying, well, you can't have a good relationship with your family. He's not saying, you have to be miserable all the time. Well, he's not saying, you can only have really awful things, cheap things, you know.

He's not saying that. You can have all of those things. You just can't hang on to them and cling to them and be so welded to them that they're more precious to you than our great treasure, which is Jesus.

Okay, what does Jesus say next? This is verse 28 to 32. And again, this is all quite tricky, isn't it? 28 to 32. He follows that up with a couple of mini illustrations. And I think these are quite interesting.

[10 : 40] And here's how it relates. So Jesus has just said, there's a great cost of following me. And all you people who are literally just following me, walking down the street with me, he's saying to them, I want, after he's told them that, he says, I want you to really assess whether you're going to be all in or not.

Like, you need to count the cost. Like, you need to count the cost here. You need to assess the cost. Are you willing to pay that cost? And two pictures of what that means.

Two little stories of what that means. And the first one is 28 to 30. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough money to complete it or not.

Otherwise, when he's laid the foundation, not able to finish, all who see it will mock him and say, this man began to build and was not able to finish. So what's he saying? Pretty straightforward. The builder is going to build something.

Are you willing to pay the money it costs to build that building? How does that relate to this? He's saying, folks, so the folks on the road hanging out with Jesus are all quite exciting.

[11 : 47] He says, you haven't made a commitment yet. You've dipped the toe in the water. You're kind of in the vicinity. But I really want you to think about it, whether you're going to jump in or not. You need to know, I really want your whole life.

So I need you to think about that. Because this is just silliness. This is silly. Are you going to be all in here? You need to count the cost. John Stott's really good on this.

He was an Anglican pastor, theologian guy. Let me read a great quote from him. Short paragraph on this. The Christian landscape is strewn with the wreckage of derelict half-built towers, the ruins of those who begin 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 on the cost of doing so. The result is the great scandal of Christendom today or so-called nominal Christianity.

Christians get somewhat involved. Enough to be respectable. But not enough to be uncomfortable. Their religion is great. A soft cushion that protects them from the hardness of unpleasant life.

[12 : 54] But doesn't transform their lives in radical ways. No wonder cynics dismiss religion as escapism. So I have known, you might have known, I've known many people that have started with Jesus.

They've been excited about Jesus. Jesus is cool. And a few months in, maybe a year in, it's like, oh, it's a bit too much. It's a bit too full on. But, you know, they want to keep their lifestyle.

And maybe have Jesus on the side to engage with periodically as like a philosophical partner, conversation partner or something.

But they kind of just really want to hang on to their life. Jesus doesn't give us that option. He wants the whole thing. So second illustration. This is a very interesting one.

31 to 32. 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?

[13 : 54] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So, what's going on? Why two illustrations? So the first one is count the cost of following Jesus.

The second parable, I think, says count the cost of not following Jesus. There's a cost to following Jesus.

There's a cost to not following Jesus. I think that's what the second one is about. I think. So, I think this makes sense. King is going to battle against a much superior enemy.

Why are they doing it? Is it pride? We don't know. Why would they do this? You're going to lose.

You will lose. It makes no sense. You need to make peace with that king.

That's what you should do. Jesus says, if you decide, you know what? Christianity is a bit too much. I think I'll pass. The warning here is, well, one day you will meet God.

[15 : 01] As we all will. But you will not meet him as a friend. There is a cost to not following Jesus. There's a cost to following him.

There's a cost to not following him. So, this is what Jesus says to the crowd. The crowd, their casual followers, their groupies. He says, they're like salt. This is the last couple of verses. They're like salt that's lost its saltiness.

Like, what's the point? Like, what are you doing? Don't. Salt that's lost its saltiness? Don't waste my time. You know, don't waste my time. Christ says, I must be your great treasure. And for that to happen, there's a cost.

But the gain, friends, as we've been hearing about so far, is immeasurable. Now, some people won't do this. And it's like, it's like you have, it's like inheriting a billion dollars.

And you, and, but you don't want to spend the gas money going to the lawyer to pick up a check, I think. So, it's a tricky little passage, this.

[16 : 08] It is a tricky little passage. And so, let me just say in one sentence. Friends, let's be all in for Jesus.

Let's be all in for Jesus. If there's anything more important in your life than Jesus, you need to lay it down.

Amen.