

The Parables of Jesus #26
The Parables of the Cost of Discipleship
(Lk. 14:25-33)
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INTRODUCTION

A. The U.S. government is finally admitting a truth that most of us have known for a long time -- you cannot spend more than you bring in

1. If you do, sooner or later, it catches up with you and you go broke
2. The point is that everything has a cost and we must prepare for it
3. Only a foolish person would continue to acquire things without considering how much it is going to cost

B. Being a disciple of Jesus has a cost too

1. Few modern Americans seem to pay much attention to the cost
2. Many seem to think that being a Christian is cheap -- maybe free!!
3. We confuse the free grace of God with the expensive responsibility we incur when we say we want to be a Christian

C. Jesus addressed this issue head-on

1. It is a teaching that gives us a lot of trouble
2. We don't like his words or the demands he makes
3. They are sometimes explained away and end up meaningless

D. Tonight, let's try to examine them honestly to see what he desires

1. You may be a bit uncomfortable
2. You may feel like you have a long way to go
3. You may think this isn't what you thought being a Christian was all about
4. But, at least think about it -- it might motivate you become the kind of disciple that Jesus is looking for

I. THE TOUGH TRUTH ABOUT THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

A. Luke 14:26-27

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. (NKJ)

1. These are strong words about discipleship
 - a. we are to hate the very ones that are closest to us
 - b. we are to bear our own cross, an instrument of death
 - c. unless we do these things, we cannot be his disciple
 - d. our burden is to understand what he is trying to communicate
2. There are only three other statements in the New Testament where Jesus gives an identification of "my disciples"
 - a. John 8:31
Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ""If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. (NKJ)
 - b. John 13:35
"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (NKJ)
 - c. John 15:8
"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (NKJ)
3. These three are the positive statements of discipleship, but like all things of value, there is a cost involved
 - a. like all costs, it is fair and right to consider whether it is a cost that we are willing to pay
 - b. and, we must be honest enough to acknowledge the fact that without paying the cost, we will not acquire what we desire

B. Breaking down the cost of discipleship

1. One way of looking at the things we must hate

a. the idea of hate itself

- 1/ cannot mean not to love
- 2/ cannot mean to do evil things to them
- 3/ cannot mean neglect or failure to care for them
- 4/ meaning must be confined to whatever it might be about them that conflicts with being a disciple

b. hatred of parents

- 1/ I've heard people reject plain teachings of the Bible because it differed from what their parents believed
- 2/ many people follow a religious tradition only because that's what their parents did before them
- 3/ a disciple must make his or her own decisions to follow Jesus and it may very well conflict with parents

c. hatred of siblings

- 1/ I've known younger siblings who followed the lead of an older sibling similar to the attachment to parents
- 2/ sibling relationships are often strong and important, but following Jesus must be more important

d. hatred of one's spouse

- 1/ I've known people who would not become a Christian because their spouse was an unbeliever and they didn't want to "abandon" them
- 2/ following Jesus must be stronger than a marriage vow

e. hatred of one's children

- 1/ how can a parent even think of abandoning a child?
- 2/ the only reason to do so is if that child gets in the way of following Jesus

f. hatred of one's own life

- 1/ would you give your life to follow Jesus?
- 2/ would you compromise the truth, bow down to the demands of the world, cheat in some way to save your life instead of being true to the Lord

C. Are you willing to bear your own cross to follow Jesus?

1. The cross is a symbol of cost
 - a. it is the symbol of the cost of our redemption
 - b. it is the symbol of the cost of God's love
 - c. it is the symbol of the cost of God's grace and mercy
 - d. it is the symbol of the cost of discipleship

2. What cost are you willing to bear to be a Christian?
 - a. will you pay the cost by severing any relationship that keeps you from following Christ?
 - b. will you pay the cost of giving up a friendship that keeps you from following Christ?
 - c. will you pay the cost of sacrificing anything of material wealth that keeps you from following Christ?
 - d. will you pay the cost of sacrificing your position, your reputation, your benefits or anything else that keeps you from following Christ?

3. Be sure of one thing -- Jesus requires your whole life to be his disciple
 - a. if you think you can be a disciple without paying the cost, then you are foolish and unwise
 - b. you can play at being a disciple, but it will never actually be true until your discipleship is on the Lord's terms

II. PARABLES TO ILLUSTRATE THE HARD TRUTH

A. The parable of building a tower (Lk. 14:28-30)

1. The person who wants to build a tower, first calculates the cost
 - a. it is done carefully and accurately
 - b. the goal is to insure that there is sufficient money to pay for it

2. Who wants to begin a lofty project only to stop with it unfinished?
 - a. that person would be mocked by others
 - b. his ignorance and foolishness would be on public display

B. The parable of the king making peace (Lk 14:31-32)

1. A king going to war calculates the cost
 - a. can the king with 10,000 men defeat the enemy who has a force twice as big?
 - b. to not consider the cost would be disaster
2. Perhaps it would be best to make peace instead of war
 - a. the king might be better off conceding loss and asking for terms of peace
 - b. which cost is he able and willing to pay?

III. THE POINT JESUS DRIVES HOME

A. Luke 14:33

"So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (NKJ)

B. Discipleship costs everything that a person has -- are you willing to pay it

1. 2 Cor 6:14-18

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'" Therefore "'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.'" "'I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.'" (NKJ)

2. Gal 2:20

"'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (NKJ)

3. Phil 3:7-14

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (NKJ)

4. Rom 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (NKJ)

CONCLUSION

A. Modern Americans are largely accustomed to a comfortable discipleship

1. Our freedom lulls us into complacency
2. Our comfortable buildings make it easy to gather for worship
3. We have more conflicts over things of comfort than things of cost
4. For many, the idea of any cost to follow Jesus is a turn-off

B. The truth is that discipleship is expensive and hard

1. Will you pay the cost and follow Jesus?
2. If not, have you considered the cost of not following Jesus?
3. You may be about to pay even more than you ever thought

C. Invitation