

The Cost of Discipleship

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

"Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

Luke 14: 25-34

Context:

When Jesus said this he was on the road to Jerusalem. He knew that he was on his way to the cross; the crowds who were with him thought he was on the way to an empire. That is why he spoke to them like this. In the most vivid way possible he told them that the man who followed him was not on the way to worldly power and glory, but must be ready for a loyalty which would sacrifice the dearest things in life and for a suffering which would be like the agony of a man upon a cross.

William Barclay

"Love" and "hate" form a common idiom that does not refer to an emotion but a commitment. Jesus is laying claim to loyalty (ref. Matthew 10:37)

Large Group Notes

The cost of being a disciple of Jesus is:

- Family
 - Following Jesus requires putting God's will before your family's will
- Identity
 - "Carrying a cross" meant torture and death to the original audience
 - According to Matthew, that includes a death to self (ref: Matthew 16:24) including our identity (ref: Galatians 2: 20)
 - Your identity is how you will be remembered
- Career
 - "Give up" means "renounce" or "let go;" to "hold with an open hand" or "possess nothing in your heart save your relationship with Christ"
 - God speaks of "the plans I have for you" and has prepared "good works" for us in advance (ref: Jeremiah 29:11, Ephesians 2:8-10)
 - Following Jesus requires trading our plans/career for His plans/career for us

Following Jesus costs everything because there is a King going to war, and He is counting the cost. No half-hearted commitment will do, not even from the most sold out fan. He is building an army not an audience, and the King is Jesus. Because it cost him his life to establish his Kingdom, it will cost us ours to spread it."

Are we fans or disciples?

Potential Questions:

- Would you count each of these costs? How do you know? Where is the evidence in your life?
- How would you be remembered if you graduated this year? Would you be remembered primarily for being Christlike or something else?
- What is the work God has planned for you in advance? How do you know? How will that work make Jesus famous and prepare the world for his return?
- Quotes for thought:
 - "The blood of the martyr is the seed of the church." (Tertullian), or in other words, "The life of the witness is the seed of the church."
 - "When Christ calls us, he bids us come and die." (Bonhoeffer)