

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, September 4-10 (C) - Luke 14:25-33

Discipleship: *A New Cost*

Focus Question: *What has it cost you to follow Jesus?*

word of life

“Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:27 (NRSV)

Read Luke 14:25-33

This passage describes the large crowds following Jesus. There is a sense of enthusiasm and energy as the crowd grows in numbers. Some people love to be part of a crowd even though they have no clue as to the reasons for gathering. They want to be part of the action and not miss anything.

1. *Why do you think some people are attracted to being part of a crowd?*
2. *As people join the crowd following Jesus, does that make them disciples? Why or why not?*

Jesus speaks directly to the large crowd about the consequences of following him. “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26 NRSV) Jesus is usually associated with the theme of love and not hate. But these strong words by Jesus have the potential of catching the attention of casual observers and prompt some prayerful reflection.

3. *Why might a disciple of Jesus end up hating a parent?*
4. *Are we not to honor our parents?*
5. *Imagine being in the crowd how would you have reacted to these words of Jesus?*

To hate someone is to turn away from that person and to become detached. That person no longer claims primary loyalty. Jesus is not interested in the numbers of the crowd as much as the depth of individual commitment. Jesus wants to become the primary allegiance. Consequently, a person may have to choose priorities and turn away from important people, especially if those people draw a disciple away from Jesus.

6. *How do you describe the cost of being a disciple of Jesus Christ?*
7. *What is gained in becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ?*

Jesus understands the transformation which occurs in the life of a disciple. Once a follower commits to Jesus, then life, relationships, time, and possessions are viewed through the lens of Jesus. Life does not remain unchanged.

Jesus prepares the crowd for the consequences and cost of following him by using two parables. First, Jesus describes building a tower and the process to build it. A wise person estimates the cost. “Is it worth it? Can I complete it?” In the same manner, a wise ruler calculates the cost of the war before going into battle. “Is it worth it? Can I complete the war?” Whether a person is poor or rich, each must count the costs.

Jesus concludes with a plea for disciples to give up their possessions. He knows how much possessions can possess us and our time. Possessions are another example of something to draw us away from faith-filled discipleship.

8. *How serious is Jesus about having a disciple’s full attention?*
9. *What might Jesus say to you about your commitment to him?*

word among us

For weeks, construction workers met each day to work on adding two new wings to a house. The walls went up quickly, followed by the roof. Then, one day all the work stopped. For months and months, all was quiet. Rumor had it the family ran out of money.

1. *Describe a time when you miscalculated the cost of something. What were the consequences?*

During this time of year, many churches kick off their Sunday School programs to coincide with children and youth returning to school. For children and youth who have developed habits of staying up late at night, the first days back at school can be rough. Sometimes, it is hard to get into the routine of Sunday worship and learning.

2. *Imagine a family has gotten out of the routine of worshipping on a Sunday morning. What might you say to them?*
3. *Imagine that family has sports obligations on Sunday morning. What might you say to them?*

There are so many activities to compete with Sunday worship and learning. Some families are worn out by all the rushing around during the week. On Sundays they collapse. Once the routine of Sunday at church is broken, it is sometimes challenging to begin the habit again.

4. *Is this what Jesus met by the cost of discipleship?*
5. *Is going to church part of picking up one's cross?*

Our consumer society encourages us to choose with our own self-interest in mind. *What will I get from this? Is it worth my time?* Jesus turns this thinking upside down and invites us to view our choices through his eyes and heart. We order our lives based on the values of Jesus, one who sacrificed his life. He picked up a cross and carried it to his death. The invitation to pick up a cross to follow him may not appeal to all, but it is consistent with the practice of Jesus. (Luke 14:27) He does not ask his followers to do anything that he has not done himself.

6. *How did you pick up the cross of Christ this week?*
7. *How did you ignore or choose not pick up the cross of Christ this week?*

Following Jesus may put us in conflict with others – even our own family and friends. It seems harsh to consider hating our family for the sake of Jesus, but loved ones can become a barrier to discipleship. We can become a barrier to loved ones as well. Jesus warns us to be wary of all that draws us from him.

8. *Describe a time when a loved one drew you away from Jesus or church.*
9. *How can we keep our eyes focused on Jesus?*

Prayer

Amazing Christ, your promises of eternal life, forgiveness, and grace outweigh the cost of discipleship. Help us pick up our cross and follow you on this journey. Amen

Dig Deeper

Philemon 1-24

last word

Prayerfully name those loved ones who may become barriers in following Jesus and pray for wisdom to deal with those situations.



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