How Much Does It Cost To Follow Jesus?

Luke 14:25-33 (NKJV)

Today we want to continue with our series of messages on “Counting The Cost.” Please turn with me to the Gospel of Luke, chapter fourteen. And let’s read verses 25-33.

Luke 14:25-33 (NKJV)

25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them,

26 “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.

27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—

29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,

30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’?

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

P R A Y E R
Introduction

When it comes to most anything we do in life we have to “count the cost.”

We “shop around” for the best price!

We look for “the best deals.”

We watch for SALES.

We bargain hunt!

-When you go to fill up your gas tank on your vehicle you don’t look for the station with the highest gas price in town do you? No! You look for the station where it will cost you the least.

-When you shop for a new or used vehicle, probably one of the first things you look at is the sticker price. You want to know how much its going to cost.

-Whether you are buying a new pair of shoes........a new power tool........or a new house.......COST MATTERS!

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In today’s message we want to answer a very important question and that is: “How Much Does It Cost To Follow Jesus?”

Our salvation is FREE! Salvation is “the gift of God's grace.” We can't live a good enough life or do enough good works to ever deserve it. Salvation costs us nothing, but it costs GOD everything.
But while our SALVATION is FREE, being a true DISCIPLE of Jesus Christ is very costly. In fact, being a true DISCIPLE of Jesus Christ costs us everything!

-What has it cost us to follow Jesus?
-What sacrifices have we made to follow Jesus?
-What have we given up to follow Jesus?
-What have we forsaken to follow Jesus?
-What changes have we made to follow Jesus?

All of these are very legitimate, soul-searching questions that demand an answer from each of us.

“To Be A Shallow Disciple Is To Be No Disciple”

In our text, we learn a very sobering truth and is “to be a shallow disciple is to be no disciple at all.”

Look at the first part of verse 25........


Well at this particular point in His ministry, Jesus' popularity was soaring! People loved to listen to Him preach and teach. Many followed Him hoping to see Him perform a miracle. And many brought relatives with various handicaps or diseases to Jesus to be healed. And so in our text we are told that “great multitudes went with Him.”

Now, we read that and we think, “Wow, that's great!” Its wonderful huge crowds were following Him. You see, we tend to measure “success” by numbers.
But Jesus was different! Large crowds didn't fool Him! Large crowds didn't give Him an “ego boost.” Jesus knew the hearts of the people. He knew that in that giant multitude of people many of them were following Him for very shallow and superficial reasons.

In fact, by today's standards, if you look at the small number of people who were true followers of Christ at the time He ascended and returned to His heavenly Father, Jesus would be viewed as a failure.

In Acts 1:15 (NKJV) Luke tells us, “And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty...........)

NOT “great multitudes,” not “hundreds of thousands.” Just one Hundred and twenty people! That's all! That's about the same size as the average small Church in America.

But you see, that small number didn't matter to JESUS. He wasn't seeking HUGE CROWDS, He was seeking genuine DISCIPLES. He would rather have 120 true, whole-hearted disciples, than 10,000 half-hearted, superficial followers .

(PAUSE)

I want you to picture this dramatic scene in LUKE 14 in your mind:

Jesus is walking along and following behind him is this great multitude of people, perhaps hundreds, even thousands.

Suddenly Jesus turns around and in essence He says, “OK, you want to follow Me........you want to be My disciples........here is what it is going to cost you!
In our text, Jesus lays down three requirements of anyone who would be His disciple. And each case, Jesus tells us, “If you are not willing to pay this price, you cannot be My disciple.”

First of all.....

I. Following Jesus Costs My UN-RIVALED LOVE (v.26)

26 “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.

1. During His ministry Jesus said many “hard things” that were very disturbing and difficult for the people to listen to. And what He says here in verse 26 is one of the most difficult of all.

2. Is Jesus really commanding us to “hate” the members of our own family? HATE is such a strong word. It is a very harsh.....cruel-sounding word. When we think of “hatred” we picture Isis terrorists beheading innocent people. We picture the racially charged hatred of those in Ferguson, Missouri towards police officers.

3. Doesn’t the Bible teach us to honor our Father and mother? Doesn’t the Bible teach husbands to love their wives and wives to love their husbands? Doesn’t the Bible teach parents to love their children?

Is Jesus asking us to do something that completely contradicts everything else the Bible teaches us about loving our family? Absolutely not!
3. When you read Matthew's rendering of this same command it gives us a much clearer understanding of what just what Jesus is saying.

Matthew 10:37 (NKJV) He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

4. Listen carefully. What Jesus is saying is, “If you really want to follow Me,” I want your un-rivaled love. I will not play “second fiddle” to anyone else in your life.

Is Jesus making an unreasonable demand? Absolutely not! Think about it this way: No husband wants to have to compete with another man for the love and affection of his wife, does he? No wife wants to have to compete with another woman for the love and affection of her husband, does she?

5. Christ doesn’t want to compete for our love and affection with anyone! Not our parents, not our mate, not our children, not our brothers and sisters, and not even ourselves.

6. Latin theologian and historian JEROME once wrote,

“If Christ should bid me go this way, and my mother did hang about my neck to draw me another; and my father were in my way, bowing at my knees with tears begging me not to go; and my children plucking at my garments should seek to pull me the other way; I must unclasp my mother; I must push to the very ground my father, and put aside my children, for I must follow CHRIST.”

If I am to be a true follower of Jesus Christ, He demands “first place” in my life. He requires my UN-RIVALED LOVE.
Secondly.......

II. Following Jesus Costs My UN-SELFISH SACRIFICE (v.27)

27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

1. To understand what Jesus meant by this we must think what this expression would have meant to the people of His day.

2. During the time of Christ, crucifixions were a very common sight throughout the land of Israel. Jewish historian Josephus records that the Romans terrorized the Jewish people into total submission by crucifying as many as 500 Jews per day. In fact, there were so many crucifixions during one stretch of time the Romans ran out of timber to make any more crosses. I have read from other historical sources that during the time of Christ as many as 30,000 - 40,000 Jews were crucified.

3. No doubt many, if not most of the people in that great multitude that day had witnessed a crucifixion; they had seen the horrific site of crosses with dead bodies hanging on them dotting the hillsides all across their land.

Imagine how difficult it must have been for them to hear Jesus say, “And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

4. What is “the cross” Jesus is referring to? Many today think “the cross” refers to some particular trial they have to deal with in their every day life like a physical infirmity.......or a family problem.....or an overly-demanding boss.....or an over-bearing mother-in-law.
5. LISTEN CAREFULLY! *The cross* Jesus is referring to is NOT some difficult circumstance forced upon you or some difficult person you have to deal with each day. *The cross* is something you pick up voluntarily. It is *the cross of self-sacrifice*............"the dying to one's own selfish desires and pursuits so that CHRIST can live His life through us. As the apostle Paul says, "For I have been crucified with CHRIST, it is no longer I who live, but CHRIST who lives in me.”

6. You notice in verses 28-32 Jesus uses two brief parables to illustrate the seriousness of *counting the cost* before we make a commitment to follow Him.

In verses 28-30 Jesus uses the example of a man who sets out to build a tower without first considering how much it would cost to build the tower. And half-way through the construction he runs out of money and can’t complete the tower, and everyone looks at his half-finished tower and laughs at him.

In verses 31,32 Jesus uses the example of a King who goes to war against another king without counting his troops to see if he has enough soldiers to secure the victory.

7. The “Builder” in vs. 28-32 and “The King” in vs. 31,32 represent Jesus Christ, not you and me. Jesus is building His Church and He needs the best building materials, the most committed followers He can get. “Half-hearted, half-committed Christians make poor building materials. In fact, the world looks at shallow, superficial Christians and “laugh” at the LORD and the Church He is trying to build.
8. As “the King” Jesus is fighting a battle against Satan. He doesn’t need disloyal soldiers who are going to defect or desert in the “heat of battle.” He needs brave, courageous soldiers who will stand firm!

9. My friend, there is no such thing as “a part-time Christian.” You are either “all in” or “you are not in at all!”

How Much Does It Cost To Follow Jesus? It cost my UN-RIVALED LOVE. It cost my UN-SELFISH SACRIFICE.

And finally.......

III. Following Jesus Costs My UN-RESTRAINED GENEROSITY (v.33)

33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

1. What Jesus is telling us here is: If you are a lover of money or a lover of material things you CANNOT be my disciple.

   Jesus said it this way in Matthew 6:24 (NKJV)

   “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON”. (money)

2. More “would-be followers” of Christ have been derailed by their “love of money and material things” than we will ever know.

   The apostle Paul writes in I Timothy 6:10, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”
3. Here's the point: **You can't be possessed by CHRIST if you are possessed by your possessions.**

4. There are two ways you and I can hold on to material possessions.

   We can hold them in our clenched fist and say, “These things belong to me, I spent my hard-earned money to buy them and nobody is going to take them away from me.”

   Or we can hold on to them with a loose grip and say, “Thank You LORD for loaning these material things to me. I realize I am not the owner, but just a steward of these things, and if You want them back, tell me and I will let them go.”

   The latter is the attitude of a true follower of Jesus Christ!

5. Your attitude about money and material things reveals a lot about the depth of your discipleship. **What is the one thing you have that you wouldn't give up if Jesus asked you to?**

   If Jesus said, “You love your money more than you love Me. I want you to empty out your bank account and give that money to feed the poor and come follow Me, **would you do it?**

   If Jesus said, “You love your “things” more than you love Me. Get rid of your “stuff” and come follow Me, **would you do it?**

6. **Whoever of you does not forsake all he has cannot be My disciple.**
CONCLUSION

ILLUSTRATION

The third weekend in January has become something I look forward to each year. This coming Friday, Lord willing, I plan to go to the annual Brown Library Book Sale at the Convention Center in Washington.

Now that might sound dull and boring to you, but for me personally, to walk into a room with over 25,000 books on sale for as little as .50 cents to $1.00 is a real adrenalin rush!

Everyone who goes to this Book Sale has particular books they are looking for. Some shop for Romance novels. Some shop for Children’s Books or Cook Books. I shop for Christian Books and Bible Commentaries.

Over the years I have walked out of that book sale with $200-$300 worth of books that I bought for $10-$20. I would never pay full price for these books, but when I can get them for a “rock bottom price”

I’m afraid that is the kind of Christianity many are looking for. They want a cheap, “bargain basement” type of Christianity that costs little or nothing at all in the way of time, effort or commitment.

In today’s study, we have learned that there is no such thing as “cheap discipleship.” Have you truly COUNTED THE COST?

Are you willing to give Christ your UN-RIVALED LOVE!

Are you willing to give Christ your UN-SELFISH SACRIFICE!

Are you willing to give Christ your UN-RESTRAINED GENEROSITY!

Have You Counted The Cost?