

COSTS OF BEING A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.
22 Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and in Your name drive out demons and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

Matthew 7:21-23, NIV

What would it be like to serve God all your life only to hear Him say the words “I never knew you?” Hearing the music of Jaws right before the attack, or the scraping of Freddie Krueger’s claws, the moans of zombies, or the wings of Dracula would not instill fear in a person as intense as hearing our Saviour say that we are not going to heaven. No car wreck, divorce, bankruptcy, or disease could ever be more damaging than taking an eternal journey through the valley of death! With these four words “I never knew you” eternally ringing in our ears, will we not spend an eternity beating ourselves up for having let a lifetime of opportunities to say YES to Christ only to be answered with a profound NO? Wearing all our pretentious good deeds on our hearts will not hide the fact that the stone was never turned to flesh. It saddens me greatly that way too many people in the church have a form of religion that gains them a good reputation but not an eternal home in heaven!

Does this passage not serve as a warning not only to those who knowingly reject God but also to the pretenders as well? Do you this morning have a false sense of security because you are standing on the foundation of unbelief? You may say but pastor I believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God! This is a good start, but I want to remind you that even the demons believe in

Jesus and shudder in fear (James 2:19), but everyone knows that they are not going to make it into heaven! You may say but pastor I read my Bible, pray and sing the hymns! No matter how high the mountain of cheap grace one is standing on without making Jesus Christ as the Lord of one’s life, one cannot expect anything at the end of the valley of death but to be cast into a sea of fire. My intention in today’s sermon is not to put fear into one’s heart but out of love to encourage



you to examine your heart to see if you have counted and accepted the costs of becoming a disciple of Christ. To accomplish this, I am going to examine Luke 14:25-35 and in doing so outline four points of what it truly means to be His disciple!

²⁵ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them He said:
²⁶ “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. ²⁷ And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be My disciple.”

Luke 14:25-27, NIV

Point 1: Not all People who “Follow” Jesus Have Good Motives

After Jesus had left the home of the Pharisee in Luke 7:36-50¹ we are told that a large crowd formed “an entourage”² and accompanied Jesus on His journey towards Jerusalem.³ While coming to Jesus was a good “first step” in response to the Gospel message (John 5:40; Matthew 11:28),⁴ the motives of this crowd were highly questionable.



Many expected Jesus to say to those who followed Him since you are such good and faithful servants let me now fulfill all your social, physical, mental needs and desires. Some of them probably thought they could get Jesus to once again perform the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:1-14) so that they could use their money to buy things such as luxury goods.⁵ Others might have bought into the Jewish belief that this king of king would conquer Rome only to make them

“privileged” over all other people.⁶ Others might have joined the crowd because in their minds it was the “in or cool” thing to do! While we do not know what were the exact motives of this

¹ J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, [*A Handbook on the Gospel of Luke*](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 534.

² Walter L. Liefeld, [*“Luke,”*](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 979.

³ Robert H. Stein, [*Luke*](#), vol. 24, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 396.

⁴ I. Howard Marshall, [*The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 592.

⁵ D. A. Carson, [*“How to Get the Best Bread in the World,”*](#) in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Jn 6:25–59.

⁶ Matthew Henry, [*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1876.

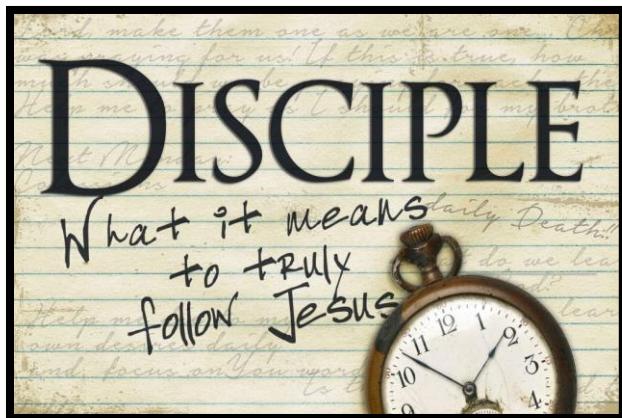
crowd, we do know that they were questionable enough that Christ felt compelled to explain to them what a true disciple entailed.

Lest we think too little of this crowd, do not many people in our churches today have questionable motives as well? While many go to church for spiritual growth and guidance, to

worship God and have fellowship with other believers; do not others go to church for the same reasons that this crowd followed Jesus? How many people attend church each year to appease a mother, father, spouse or child? How many of you have met the “one” or “group” that goes to church to seek control over other people? Who has not met the “modern day” Pharisee who demands holiness from church members while refusing to clean the inside of their own cup? And who has not met those whose only aspiration is to promote their “good” reputation or those whose prayers

reflect their mistaken belief that Jesus is to be nothing more than a genie in a bottle? While it is true that the church is to be a hospital for us sinners, should not our motives at least reflect the desire to become true disciples of Christ?

Point 2: Disciples of Christ put Him First



Knowing their motives were questionable at best Jesus turns to the crowds and explains to them that if they want to be His disciples they must hate father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters and YES even their own lives. His statement was not meant as a contradiction of the Law⁷ that says to love one’s parents, family and self (Exodus 20:12; 1 Timothy 5:8; Matthew 22:29);⁸ but merely that to be a true disciple one’s love and allegiance to

⁷ John A. Martin, “[Luke](#),” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 243.

⁸ Craig A. Evans, [Luke](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 229.

Christ⁹ must be so intense that our love for others and self will seem like hatred in comparison! ¹⁰ True discipleship means rejecting any attempts of family, friends, self or this world to think or do anything that is considered evil in His sight!¹¹ True disciples are ready to walk the path of rejection Jesus walked,¹² to identify with Him in His suffering¹³ and if called to be crucified for the sake of the Gospel message. Unlike the rich young ruler, with their pearl and treasure (Matthew 13:44-45) in hand true disciples will give up everything else to finish the race well!

²⁸“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? ²⁹For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, ³⁰saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’ ³¹Or 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? ³²If 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. ³³In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be My disciples.

Luke 14:28-33, NIV

Point 3: True Disciples Have Counted and Embraced the Costs of Serving Jesus

“Oh, count ye, then, the cost! and if any of you have taken up a religion which costs you nothing, put it down and flee from it, for it will be your curse and your ruin.”

C.H. Spurgeon¹⁴

⁹ Gavin Childress, *Opening up Luke’s Gospel*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 135.

¹⁰ Michael Wilcock, *The Savior of the World: The Message of Luke’s Gospel*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 147.

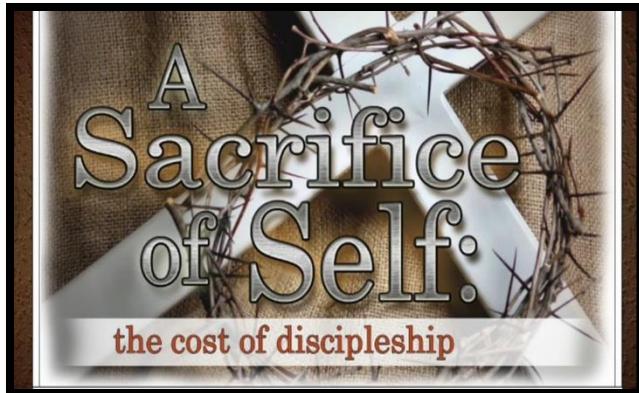
¹¹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Counting the Cost](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 20 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1874), 114.

¹² Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 404.

¹³ Darrell L. Bock, 401.

¹⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Counting the Cost](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 20 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1874), 116.

After having explained the level of commitment involved in becoming His disciple, Jesus tells the crowd to count the cost before saying YES. While “without money and without price” we are justified freely by His grace to be born again into His family,¹⁵ this does not mean that discipleship costs us nothing! As if giving up all creature-comforts,¹⁶ my body, soul, talents,



house, children and time were not difficult enough,¹⁷ Christ tells the crowd that His followers must be ready to face fierce opposition.¹⁸ Those who choose to pursue peace with God through belief in the atoning sacrifice of His Son Jesus¹⁹ automatically join a war not against flesh and blood but against the powers of this dark world (Ephesians 6:12). To stand against a foe far more powerful than oneself requires building a tower of defense, the foundation of which stands on

the cornerstone of one’s salvation. Only the armour of God Himself will enable one to stand amid derision, shame and reproach²⁰ of the enemy’s fiery arrows (Ephesians 6:10-17). While this battle is already won by the blood of the Lamb,²¹ Jesus warns the crowd they should not become disciples until they have counted²² and agreed to the costs of completely surrendering and committing to Him!

³⁴ “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? ³⁵ It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

¹⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, 111.

¹⁶ Matthew Henry, 1876.

¹⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, 116.

¹⁸ Ibid., 113.

¹⁹ Darrell L. Bock, 402.

²⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, 113.

²¹ Ibid., 119–120.

²² Craig A. Evans, 229.

Point 4: Discipleship Means a Lifetime of Reflection and Renovation of the Heart

Building a tower of defense that is firmly grounded in the cornerstone of one's salvation while wearing the armour of God is not enough for true discipleship requires constant reflection and a practical outworking of one's faith.²³ Since only salt with impurities can lose its



saltiness,²⁴ a true disciple of Christ must see themselves as those who are under constant renovation.²⁵ True disciples are in the process of allowing God to claim more of their lives which will know no end, either in time or in eternity!²⁶ "Salvation is not deliverance from hell alone; it is deliverance from sin."²⁷ Walking by God's grace²⁸ a true disciple seeks and crucifies the old self (Ephesians 4:22-24) on a daily basis through confession and repentance (1 John 1:9)²⁹ with the overall goal of following the lifestyles, habits and way of the thinking of

his/her master, Jesus Christ (Luke 6:40).³⁰ With the sacramental bread hypocritically sticking in their mouths,³¹ Jesus warns that being a half-hearted, salt with impurities kind of person will result in worldly disdain and ridicule,³² for only those striving to be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16) will be given the honor of planting a "crop that yields a hundred, sixty or thirty times that was sown" (Matthew 13:23).

35b "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

²³ Gavin Childress, *Opening up Luke's Gospel*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 135.

²⁴ D. A. Carson, 2108.

²⁵ Darrell L. Bock, 403.

²⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, 112.

²⁷ Ibid., 120.

²⁸ Darrell L. Bock, 404.

²⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, 117.

³⁰ Craig A. Evans, 409.

³¹ C. H. Spurgeon, 118.

³² Ibid., 117.

Conclusion

What would it be like to serve God all your life only to hear Him say the words “I never knew you?” On that eternal journey through the valley of death will you not regret saying NO to a lifetime of opportunities to become His disciple? Going to church to appease others, obtain power, a good reputation or an easy life through answered prayers; are not the right motives of true disciples of Christ. True disciples are ready to walk the path of rejection Jesus walked, to identify with Him in His suffering and if called to be crucified for the sake of the Gospel message. True disciples have counted the costs of standing to fight against the evil forces of this world, by building a tower of defense based on the cornerstone of their salvation and putting on the armour of God. And lastly, true disciple of Christ sees themselves clearly as those who are under constant renovation and in the process of allowing Christ to claim more of their lives which will know no end, either in time or in eternity! So, I implore you to take the time, examine yourself for if you are not already His disciple take the time right now to surrender your heart to Him!

Whoever has ears let them hear: while it costs a lot to follow Jesus, it costs more not to!