

Counting the Cost

Focal Passage: Luke 14:16-33

Life Question: What will it cost me to follow Jesus?

Biblical Truth: Jesus wants our undivided commitment to follow Him as Lord.

The army recruiter on campus was having a difficult year. He actually had more to offer than ever before—more money available for tuition, more flexibility in job assignments, and more leniencies in start dates. Still recruiting numbers were down. What was the problem? "There's a war going on." The realities of service in the military were clearer than ever for those enlisting.

Counting the cost can be difficult. However, Christ commands us to do so, as we walk with Him.

Luke 14:16-21

What is the best excuse you've heard (or used) for not going out with someone?
What is the best excuse you've heard (or used) for not completing a class assignment?
What is the best excuse you've heard (or used) for not being on time for a commitment?
What are those important, worthwhile things that squeeze Christ out of their lives?

"I have papers to write, parties to attend, a job to go to, and friends to hang out with; I cannot come to the banquet. I have too much life to live. I can't commit to you now, Lord. Catch me after I graduate, after I find the right spouse, after I settle down and start a family...And then you will say, after my children are grown, after I get through taking care of my sick parents.

What excuses do you need to give up to serve the Lord?

Following Jesus demands a disciple's primary focus.

Luke 14:25-27

Hate my family. I thought God was all about love.
What does Jesus mean when He says we need to hate those who are closest to us?

Matthew 10:37 says "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."
Our love for Christ must be so strong it makes our love for family seem like hate.

Is there a relationship in your life right now that takes priority over your relationship with Christ?

And then to hate one's own life, whoever does not bear his own cross cannot be my disciple.

The cross meant death. People had to carry their own cross beams to their crucifixion.

A cross is not something we are born with and have no choice over. The cross that Jesus tells us to pick up is that something that stands between us and Christ that we must die to: to our idols...to self. We are to die to self and live for Christ.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" Matthew 6:33

"But I have this against you: you have abandoned the love you had at first."-Revelation 2:4

What about the first fruits of your income? Are you giving that part of your income that belongs to God back to Him? Look at the Old Testament, you can see the concept of First Fruits in which God's people brought the first portion of their harvest to God. (See Lev. 23:10; Neh.10:37.)

Undivided loyalty requires a good set of priorities and keeping first things first in our lives.

As you share Christ with others, are you tempted to water down Jesus' words and the level of commitment He commands just to get them in? Are you tempted to water them down because you're not sold out in that area, or not living up to them?

Luke 14:28-33

How good is society at assessing the cost of their decisions?

In what ways do you see people around you make commitments, then fade away from these commitments?

Are we willing to take the time necessary to help someone else count the cost?

Are we living lives that are examples of this?

Has our call to discipleship cost us?

If we have not counted the cost, how can we help others do this?

If you want to be my disciple, count the cost.

Yes, there is a high cost to pay to follow Jesus, but we receive far more than we give up.

Don't forget the cost of not following Him!

1. Christ's followers are to take up their crosses daily to follow Him.
2. Before following Christ, people should count the cost and then pay it.
3. Whatever price we pay to follow Jesus is far less than the reward we will receive.
4. People who refuse to follow Jesus pay a terrible price.

In a culture where comfort is assumed as a right, following Jesus takes precedence over seeking one's personal comfort.