

The Cost of True Discipleship Luke 14:25-33

by David Servant

The cost of true discipleship is loving Jesus more than others, carrying one's cross, and loving Him more than material things.

Scripture: Matthew 6:24, Matthew 7:21, Luke 9:23, Luke 14:26, Luke 14:33

Topics: "Discipleship", "Self Denial"

Description

David Servant emphasizes the importance of studying the Gospels in their entirety to gain a comprehensive understanding of Jesus' teachings. He highlights Jesus' clear message that being His disciple requires utmost devotion, surpassing even our closest relationships and material possessions. True disciples are willing to deny themselves and prioritize God above all else, even if it means facing challenges or sacrifices. Servant challenges listeners to consider the true cost of following Jesus, stressing that salvation is a gift that may demand everything from us.

Transcript

By studying almost everything that the Gospels record about the life of Jesus, we have an advantage over daily devotionals that only consider random portions of Scripture: we don't avoid or miss anything that God wants us to know about Jesus. The only record we have of Jesus' life is found in the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Holy Spirit inspired them to write exactly what they did, so all of it is important, and we shouldn't neglect any part.

Today's reading is one of those portions that some people avoid, because what Jesus said seems too demanding of them. But ignoring what Jesus taught doesn't do away with what He said! Everyone needs to face up to what we've just read.

Jesus was very plainly teaching that there is a cost to be His disciple. He expects our highest devotion, and He couldn't have made His standards more clear.

First, we must love Him even more than the people we love the most: our fathers, mothers, spouses, children, brothers and sisters. In fact, Jesus said we must love Him more than our own lives. True disciples of Jesus are sold out to Him. Jesus is not just a part of their lives, He is the center of their lives.

Second, Jesus said that we must carry our own cross in order to be His disciples. What did He mean? He wasn't saying, of course, that His followers must literally carry a cross on their backs wherever they go.

The carrying of the cross that Jesus talked about must be symbolic of something.

In Jesus' day, when crucifixion was a common means of punishment, the expression He used was probably common. It would have meant, "Do the thing that you would naturally not want to do," or "Deny your selfish desires for a greater cause." Those who are Christ's true disciples have done just that. The most important thing in their lives is no longer pleasing themselves, but pleasing God.

Third, we must love Jesus more than any material thing if we are to be His disciples. Jesus owns us and everything we own. Therefore, He should have control over everything we possess, and we should do with it as He directs.

Unfortunately, too many people decided to become followers of Christ without first considering what it might cost them. When they do realize the cost, they change their minds. For example, a person might decide to follow Christ, but when he does, all his friends abandon him. So, in order to gain back their friendship, he stops obeying Jesus. Or a new follower of Christ who didn't count the cost might be required by his employer to lie to customers or lose his job. In order to keep his job, he stops following Jesus.

Have you considered the cost of following Jesus? It seems like a contradiction, but it's true: Salvation is a gift that could cost you everything!

Q. Can someone be a Christian without being a disciple of Christ?

A. Not according to the Bible. Neither Jesus nor any of the apostles taught that a person could be a believer in Christ without becoming a follower of Christ. There are not two classes of Christians, the uncommitted who believe in Him and the devoted followers. Those who truly believe in Jesus become His disciples.

Q. Is it possible for a person to be a disciple of Jesus, but not give away any of his earnings to support the spread of the gospel or help the poor?

A. In light of all that Jesus said about our responsibility as His followers pertaining to money, it seems highly unlikely that such a person could actually be a true follower of Christ.

Application: A major problem in churches today is that many people claim to be Christian, but they really aren't. They think they're going to heaven just because they prayed a prayer to receive Jesus, even though their lives are no different from that of non-Christians. They are unwilling to sacrifice anything for the sake of following Christ, such as their time, their selfish pursuits, their money or their reputation. Those kinds of people are going to be very surprised when they are condemned to hell. We need to tell them the truth.

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