

Counting the Cost

What does it mean to be a follower of Christ? Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.” (*The Cost of Discipleship*). In this lesson, we will look at 3 paragraphs in the Gospel of Luke that spell out the cost.

I. The commitment of being a Christian – Luke 14:25-33

- A. In what sense are we to “hate” family members? v. 26
 - 1. Jesus is using hyperbole (overstatement) to get people’s attention.
 - 2. In truth, our love for the Lord should burn with such intensity that familial love can never compare (cf. Luke 11:27-28).
 - 3. What will we do if we truly love God? I John 5:3; John 14:15
- B. What does it mean to *bear one’s own cross*? v. 27
 - 1. In the first-century Roman world, crucifixion was a painful, shameful means of execution.
 - 2. Jesus could not have spelled out the commitment of discipleship in language any stronger!
- C. Counting the cost – vv. 28-32
 - 1. A builder constructing a tower must do some calculations.
 - 2. A king facing a military skirmish also must deliberate the cost of battle.
 - 3. Application: a disciple of Christ must “renounce all that he has” (v. 33). What does this mean in practical terms?

II. The Lordship of Christ – Luke 6:46-49

- A. If we “call” Jesus Lord, there is an implied surrender to His will.
 - 1. Lordship on His part means absolute submission for the true disciple.
 - 2. To call Him Lord and fail to do what He says is hypocrisy.
- B. The little story about the man who “dug deep” has special meaning to those who live in coastal areas.
 - 1. On the Pacific coast, mudslides and earthquakes have a way of ruining property value.
 - 2. The same goes for hurricanes on the outer banks of North Carolina.
 - 3. In California especially, building codes give great attention to solid foundations.
- C. The same is true of the gospel.
 - 1. We will be unprepared for spiritual torrents if we do not ground our faith in the exact requirements of the God’s Word.
 - 2. If we really trust Jesus, we will do precisely what He tells us to do.

III. Obedient Slaves – Luke 17:5-10

- A. In response to the apostles' demand, "Increase our faith," Jesus talks about having faith "like a mustard seed" (v. 6).
1. The genetic code built into a tiny mustard seed has great potential.
 2. Likewise, faith makes "impossible things" possible!
 3. All this is predicated on an absolute, unwavering trust.
- B. The slave illustration (vv. 7-10).
1. This is a difficult analogy for modern people who enjoy all the protections and rights of labor laws. A slave was the walking, talking property of someone else.
 2. When he did what was expected, there were no congratulations or promotions.
 3. Even though the institution of slavery might cause us to shudder, the application of willing service to a generous, heavenly Master is not hard to see.
- C. The proper balance between *God's part* and *our part* in salvation.
1. Obeying the Lord does not mean we are inherently "worthy."
 - a. In fact, salvation is a matter of God's grace and mercy (cf. Eph. 2:8-10).
 - b. Nothing we "do" will ever make us "worthy" of heaven's blessings.
 2. On the other hand, God's mercy does not exclude the fact that we have a "duty."
 - a. This includes "all things which are commanded you."
 - b. Can we willfully disregard any of the Lord's command's? Not if we have "counted the cost"!
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Notes to Teachers:

Many people in our society have trouble coming to terms with the whole idea of obedience.

- Postmodernists want to experience God on their terms, not His.
- Many professed Christians subscribe to a "faith only" theology that undermines an absolute submission to God's plan.

Remember that Biblical faith involves 3 sub-components:

- Conviction (of mind)
- Trust (of heart)
- Submission (of will)

This lesson emphasizes the *absolute nature* of that submission.