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Have You Counted The Cost?

LUKE 14:24-35

Introduction

1. Counting the cost is important in any financial endeavor.
 - a. Before buying an automobile it is important to ask yourself not only if you can afford the monthly payments of that automobile, but also the insurance, fuel, tires and maintenance costs throughout the time you will own the vehicle.
 - 1) One of these items, the cost of insurance is apparently something which many car owners do not consider when purchasing an automobile.
 - 2) Almost 13% of those driving a vehicle in the U.S. are currently uninsured.
 - 3) Here in Tennessee, the percentage is much higher, 23.7%, or almost 1 in 4 drivers. (<https://www.simplyinsurance.com>)
 - b. Before buying a home, there a number of factors which need to be considered as well.
 - 1) Mortgage payments, insurance, property taxes, utilities, maintenance and improvements are all a part of home ownership.
 - 2) Failure to consider these things may result in the loss of that home or the inability to maintain it.
2. In our text this morning, Jesus has much to say about our counting the cost before we make the decision to follow Him.

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3. Less than halfway through Luke's account of our Lord's life, we find these words, "When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem;" (Luke 9:51, NASB95)
 - a. The phrase in the NASB translated as "He was determined" is literally "set

His face.”

- b. Even though Jesus knew what awaited Him in Jerusalem, He was bound and determined to go there anyway, because He had come “to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45).
4. Later, in Luke 13:22, we are told, “And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem.” (Luke 13:22, NASB95)
5. Then, just eleven verses later, in Luke 13:33, He added, “Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.” (Luke 13:33, NASB95)
6. By the time we come to our text here in Luke 14, scores of people had attached themselves to Jesus.
7. Some today would call them “hangers-on” because they kept hanging on to Jesus, waiting to see what His next miracle would be.
8. So, as we see here in our text, Jesus laid out in unforgettable terms the cost of being a disciple, a follower or learner of Jesus.
9. He wanted everyone who thought they would like to be His disciples to understand that discipleship would cost them dearly.
10. However, if they still made that decision and stayed the course, the benefit of following Him would make it all worthwhile.
11. The same is still true for us today, and as we look at what He had to say to that crowd almost 2,000 years ago, I want to encourage each of you to ask yourself, “Am I willing to pay the cost?”
12. You see, Jesus wants commitment not just numbers.

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I. The Cost of Discipleship

A. THE RELATIONAL COST

“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot

be My disciple.” (Luke 14:26, NASB95)

1. These words cause us to sit up and take notice.
2. Is Jesus saying that before we can follow Him we must literally “hate” all those in our family including ourselves?
3. No. His call to “hate” those closest to us, including ourselves, is not literal but rhetorical.
4. If we take this command literally, then God’s command to “honor your father and your mother” (Mark 7:10; Exodus 20:15) makes no sense.
 - a. Neither does Paul’s instruction to those of us who have wives to “love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25).
 - b. Nor Jesus’ own example of taking little children “in His arms” and “blessing them” (Mark 10:16).
 - c. Nor His command us to “be reconciled to your brother” (Matthew 5:24).
 - d. Nor His instruction that we “love [our] enemies” (Luke 6:27).
6. The truth is, Jesus teaches us to . . .
 - a. “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 19:19).
 - b. “Love one another, even as I have loved you” (John 13:34).
7. This is not a call to be insensitive or to leave all feeling behind, but to give Jesus first place in our lives, to make Him our “first love” (cf. Matthew 10:37).

“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.” (Matthew 10:37, NASB95)
8. In Jesus’ day, a person’s decision to follow Him marked that person and came with a cost:
 - a. They would be put out of the synagogue, excluded from your own family and ostracized within the community.
 - b. You don’t have to read far in the book of Acts to find that the decision to

follow Christ brought physical persecution upon many Christians and cost some their very lives.

9. The same is still true today in many Muslim countries as well as communist China.
 - ❑ The question for each of us to ask ourselves is “Do I love Christ so much that I am willing to accept rejection by my own family and friends?”

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B. THE SACRIFICIAL COST

“Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:27, NASB95)

1. In Jesus’ day, the cross was an instrument of execution.
2. Jesus bore a cross as He went to His death (John 19:17).
3. The apostle Paul after many years of preaching the Gospel, told the Christians in Philippi that his desire was that he “know Him [Christ] and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:10-11, ESV).
4. Jesus says to us, “If you want to follow Me and be My disciple, you must be willing to bear the pain of persecution.”

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5. It is something which, according to Jesus in Luke 9:23-24, we must be willing to do on a daily basis.

“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.” (Luke 9:23–24, NASB95)

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6. As a disciple of Jesus we must be willing to share in His rejection by the world (John 15:18-19; 1 John 3:13).

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If

you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.” (John 15:18–19, NASB95)

“Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.” (1 John 3:13, NASB95)

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II. Assessing The Cost

A. BUILDING THE TOWER

“For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? “Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’” (Luke 14:28–30, NASB95)

1. Now that Jesus had gotten the people’s attention, He then shared with them two parables which serve to illustrate the importance of stopping to count the cost before you make a decision.
2. The first parable involves an individual preparing to build a tower, perhaps either to guard his vineyard (cf. Matthew 21:33; Mark 12:1) or to protect his home.
3. Before building, the wise person takes time to — “sit down and calculate the cost” — he makes a reasoned assessment.
4. He doesn’t begin construction until he knows he can afford to complete it.
5. Should this builder fail to make a careful assessment, he might find himself unable to finish his project.
6. This would undoubtedly lead to embarrassment on his part because of the ridicule he would experience.
7. The same is true with discipleship — we must first consider whether we are ready to take on the personal commitment and sacrifice required to follow Jesus.

8. If we do not finish our course and keep the faith, please know, it is not God who has failed, but we ourselves because of our own lack of commitment, resolve and reflection.

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“Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? “Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.” (Luke 14:31–32, NASB95)

1. The second parable involves one king going out with his army to meet another king in battle.
2. Both of these parables make essentially the same point, but with slightly different emphases.
 - a. The builder of the tower is free to build or not to build, as he might choose.
 - b. The king, on the other hand, was confronted with an enemy and needed to make a quick choice.
3. The king has half as many troops as the enemy.
4. If he is wise, Jesus said, he “will . . . first sit down and consider” whether he is strong enough with his smaller army to be victorious over the larger foe.
5. He may find it wiser to “ask for terms of peace” (v. 32).
6. To have launched into battle without reflection would have been disastrous.
7. Before we choose to follow Jesus, we must first give serious consideration to our decision.
8. Almost every accomplishment in life requires counting the cost:
 - a. Proficiency in a particular sport or on a certain musical instrument requires it:
 - 1) How many hours are you willing to commit to practice.
 - 2) What other activities are you willing to forgo to see your dream become a reality.

- 3) In his book "The Tipping Point," author Malcolm Gladwell continually refers to the "10,000 hour rule" — the key to achieving true expertise in any skill is simply a matter of practicing, in the correct way, for at least 10,000 hours.
- b. Various trades require it (i.e., electrician, plumber, welder, mechanic, HVAC, etc.)
 - 1) There is always the need to keep current on the latest technology, codes and procedures.
- c. Certain professions demand it (i.e., accountant, doctor, lawyer, pilot, etc.)
 - 1) It doesn't end with the degree.
 - 2) There is always the need for continuing education if you are to stay at the top of your field.
9. The question for each of us comes down to this,
 - a. "What am I willing to commit to in following Jesus?"
 - b. "What sacrifices am I willing to make?"

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C. CONSIDERING OUR POSSESSIONS

- "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." (Luke 14:33, NASB95)
1. These questions are important because as Jesus said, "none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." (Luke 14:33, NASB95)
 2. Discipleship involves distancing ourselves from any materialistic attachment to the world.
 3. Such attachment can be very destructive.
 4. Jesus must be the object of our focus — we must attach ourselves to Him, not to our possessions.
 5. It is not how little we give that is the question, but how much God deserves.

Conclusion

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“Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? “It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”” (Luke 14:34–35, NASB95)

1. We understand that salt is often used as a seasoning and as a preservative, but did you know it is also used as fertilizer?
2. When Jesus said that salt which has become tasteless is useless for either the soil or the manure pile, He was pointing to a practice of His day.
3. In that time, salt was often added to manure piles as a way of enriching it for the fertilizing of crops.
4. Not only would it mask the smell, but it would make the manure more beneficial for whatever was being planted.
5. What Jesus is saying is that if the salt loses its special characteristics, it isn't even good for the manure pile.
6. If you or I obey the Gospel and commit to living our life for Jesus Christ, but somewhere along the way lose that commitment, that distinctiveness, we are of no benefit to anyone.
7. This morning, ask yourself,
 - a. “Am I still devoted to my Lord?”
 - b. “Have I taken the time to count the cost?”
8. If you need to rededicate your life to Him this morning, let us help you.
9. If you need to turn to Him in obedient faith, everything is ready.