

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP”

For individual study or group discussion

According to a recent Gallup poll, 81% of U.S. adults believe in God, but a record low of 20% of Americans recognize the Bible as the literal Word of God. Currently, only one in four Americans is a *practicing* Christian, defined as someone who “identifies as Christian, agrees strongly that faith is very important in their lives and has attended church within the past month.”¹

In Luke 14:25-35, the requirements for being a follower of Christ are much more demanding: “Anyone [who] 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. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (vv. 26-27). One has to wonder what percentage of U.S. Christians would be left using Jesus’ criteria? As we discover in today’s passage, **the Cost of Discipleship** is steep, and there are many not willing to pay the price.

Clarification about discipleship: There is no discipleship without a cross (vv. 25-27).

Despite the many hard sayings Jesus has said thus far, the crowds are still following him as he makes his way to Jerusalem. In today’s passage, Jesus delivers another tough message (vv. 26-27). Any prospective disciple of Christ must be willing to give up everything, including family, and follow him unconditionally.

- Theologian N. T. Wright summarizes the call to radical discipleship: “When there is an urgent task to be done, as there now is, then everything else, including one’s own life, must be put at risk for the sake of the kingdom.”² Read Luke 18:28-30. What are God’s promises to those who forsake all to follow Christ? (cf. Mark 10:21-31)

Illustrations for discipleship: There is no discipleship without cost (vv. 28-33).

In verses 28-33, Jesus shares two illustrations representing the considerable cost of following him. The first illustration portrays the importance of follow through. If you begin a project, you must see it through to completion. With the second illustration, Jesus instructs preparing for the inevitable. War is coming. Are you prepared to fight or should you do your best to make peace? One way or another, a follower of Christ must be prepared and count the personal cost.

- According to verse 33, how should one view their commitment to Christ? Does your life reflect the kind of self-denial that Jesus requires? In what ways are you failing to live according to God’s standards (1 Peter 1: 13-21)?

Implication: Count the eternal cost of NOT following Jesus (vv. 34-35).

In verses 34-35, Jesus again uses another illustration to warn those who profess Christ, but are unwilling to leave all and follow him. Disciples of Christ are to be like salt, which permeates and transforms food, making it appetizing. But if the salt has lost its flavor, it is worthless and will be thrown out (v. 35).

- Christians are to be like salt, transforming our culture, as we live out the light of the Gospel in our lives. Otherwise, what is our purpose? Revisit and discuss *The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree* (Luke 13:6-9). How is its message similar?
- In the ancient world, salt served the vital purpose of preservation. Without refrigeration, salt would stop the decay of food. Read Colossians 4:5-6. How should a follower of Christ interact with the world?

DATE: November 5, 2023

SPEAKER: Wil/Brian

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 14:25-35

Family Dinner Table

Counting the Cost

On October 28, 1946, missionary and martyr Jim Elliot penned in his journal the following words, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” As Jim made plans to travel to Ecuador and preach the Gospel of Christ to the Auca Indians, he counted the cost of discipleship. Little did he know that following Christ would cost him his life, but according to his journal entry the day he died, he was ready: “I walked out to the hill just now. It is exalting, delicious, to stand embraced by the shadows of a friendly tree with the wind tugging at your coattail and the heavens hailing your heart, to gaze and glory and give oneself again to God—what more could a man ask? Oh, the fullness, pleasure, sheer excitement of knowing God on earth! I care not if I never raise my voice again for him, if only I may love him, please him. Perhaps in mercy he shall give me a host of children [i.e., converts] that I may lead them through the vast star fields to explore his delicacies whose finger ends set them to burning. But if not, if only I may see him, touch his garments, and smile into his eyes—ah then, not stars nor children shall matter, only himself. O Jesus, Master and Centre and End of all, how long before that glory is yours which has so long awaited you? Now there is no thought of you among men; then there shall be thought for nothing else. Now other men are praised; then none shall care for any other’s merits. Hasten, hasten, Glory of Heaven, take your crown, subdue your kingdom, enthrall your creatures.”

- Pray Psalm 27:7-14, this week.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Woodlands Gathering, church plant partner

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

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¹ Jones, J. M. (2023, May 31). *Belief in God in U.S. Dips to 81%, a New Low*. Gallup.com. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/393737/belief-god-dips-new-low.aspx>

² Wright, N.T. *Luke for Everyone*. 2004, Louisville, KY. John Knox Press. 180-81

³ Elliot, Jim. *The Journals of Jim Elliot*. 2002, Ada, MI. Revell Publishing.