**The Cost of Discipleship**

Luke chapter 14 tells us of a point in Jesus’ ministry when huge crowds were following Him. Human wisdom would suggest that throngs of followers would be a sign of success for any religious leader, but in verse 26, Luke tells us that Jesus turned to the multitude and said, “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.”

Read the rest of the chapter and you will find that Jesus was just getting started. One would think that His intent was to run people off! Instead of sugar-coating the message, Jesus told these people exactly what they needed to hear: Being a disciple of Jesus Christ comes at great personal cost.

It’s not that Jesus didn’t care about these folks. On the contrary, His whole purpose in coming into His own creation was to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:19). He uses two illustrations to show why it was important to let people know exactly what they were getting themselves into. If a man starts building a tower but lacks the resources to complete it, the entire project has been an embarrassing fiasco. If a king goes into battle without sufficient strength and manpower to win, he will lose. Ignorance is not bliss.

A person with a superficial approach to Christianity will never make it. Jesus wants each of us to understand just what true discipleship is all about before we make the leap. In Luke 14, He makes it clear that following Him will cost us.

**Relationships.** Jesus expects us to place our relationship with him above every other, including those of our closest family members (v. 26). Sometimes families are divided when some members decide to follow Christ and others do not. In any case, there will be people in this world who will not understand your new-found devotion and feelings will never be the same.

**Possessions.** Jesus expects a person to “give up his own possessions” (v. 33). The apostle Paul provided some inspired commentary on what this means for us: “Instruct those who are rich…to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed” (1 Timothy 6:17-19). The realization that everything I have belongs to God will lead me to use those resources in the ways He wants me to use them.

**Persecution.** Jesus said, “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (v. 27). Persecution can come in all shapes and sizes, some mild, some severe; but it surely will come to any who “desire to live godly in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:12). Jesus bore His cross for us and we must be willing to bear ours for Him.

**Give up my own life.** Paul said it best: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). The cost of discipleship is high, but the cost of losing my soul is infinitely higher. If I were to exchange my soul for the whole world, it would be a pitiful trade.

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