

DISCIPLESHIP ISN'T FOR WIMPS!

Luke 14:25-35

**We live in a time when it's fashionable to go to church.
More people call themselves "Christians" or "Born Again"
than at any time in history.**

85% of all Americans consider themselves "Christians".

One out of three adults calls himself or herself "born again".

Barna Research, an evangelical research team, confirms that 34% of American adults are in fact genuine, professing Christians.

They use two criteria:

1. $\frac{2}{3}$ say they've made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today. [$\frac{2}{3}$!!!]
2. $\frac{1}{3}$ selected one of five statements about their destiny: "When you die, you will go to heaven because you have confessed your sins and accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior."

Most who call themselves Christians are too busy to do much about it!

Only 1 out of 5 "believers" reads their Bible regularly.

Only 1 out of 5 "believers" is involved in leadership in a local church.

Only 1 out of 5 "believers" is involved in a small group study of some kind.

[Interestingly 1 out of 12 *non-believers* claims to be involved in a religious small group study of some kind.]

"We don't have time!"

Americans have more leisure time today than any generation in history.

Our problem isn't lack of time.

It's the number of options for how to use it,
and how we choose between them.

Jesus speaks to this issue in the passage we have before us.

He makes a clear distinction:

He has said repeatedly: "*Whosoever will may come!*"

He offers *salvation* to all who stop trusting themselves and their efforts and cling to Him.

DISCIPLESHIP isn't for everyone.

Discipleship is for a select group.

Jesus repeats a startling declaration three times:

"You CANNOT be my disciple!"

The Great Commission is to make disciples.

We're all to be about that.

But not all who come to Christ for salvation,
are willing to pay the price to become disciples.

Discipleship is not for wimpy Christians.

It requires a commitment to pay the price!

In the light of the growing rejection of Jesus, whoever wishes to be His disciple must be willing to sacrifice everything, even life or family. It may cost that.

Jesus has been visiting a leading Pharisee,
exposing their motives and thoughts.

Healing the man with dropsy, He points out that they're concerned about their children, whom they love, and their beasts, that give them a profit, but not about one of God's children who is suffering.

He uses their banquets to demonstrate that
 they're out to get first place for themselves.
 They're not interested in coming to God's banquet.
 Then He turns to the crowd following Him
 and warns them about the cost of discipleship. 14:25

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said:

It was popular to follow Jesus.

You could be one of the crowd.

But that didn't make you a disciple.

Lots of people were coming to see the show!

Swindoll, *Living above the Level of Mediocrity*: "An eaglelike lifestyle doesn't come cheap. Being different is costly, especially when most are satisfied to blend in with the majority. There aren't many magnets on earth stronger than peer pressure.... As a familiar motto goes, 'It's hard to soar like an eagle when I'm surrounded by so many turkeys!'"

Thomas Paine wrote in 1776:

"What we obtain too cheaply, we esteem too lightly."

56 signers of the Declaration of Independence paid the price:

5 were captured by the British and tortured

9 died in the war from bullets or hardships

12 had their homes looted, burned or occupied.

2 lost their sons in the battle.

Should we expect to pay less to follow Jesus?

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP 14:25-35

Some think Jesus went after crowds. In reality the opposite is true.

He makes clear that the issue of *COMMITMENT* would thin the ranks.

DISCIPLESHIP REQUIRES COMMITMENT

Jesus reminds them that His popularity is short lived.

He is on His way to Jerusalem to die.

If they follow Him, it's going to mean a cross.

They must be willing to sacrifice everything, even life or family.

Not the way to draw crowds!

Three times He says: "You cannot be my disciple!"

Is that how you get someone to become one?

We tend to say, "It won't take that much effort!"

Or, "we don't want to put too much of a burden on you!"

Jesus told them up front what it would cost! It may cost everything!

If we tell Him we want to follow Him,

He tells us up front what we are getting into.

* He wants no false expectancy.

* No illusions

* No bargains

They must be prepared to pay whatever it takes!

He picks **THREE DIFFICULT ISSUES**—sensitive areas where those who follow Him will have to consider the cost:

CHRIST COMES FIRST

1. Christ comes before family 14:26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple."

We love Him more than our own flesh and blood.

Use of Hebraism – not "hatred" – that's sin

Hebrew uses antithetical statements to express preference.

We have to make a choice!

Which means more to us: family or Jesus?

Will we give up acceptance by family
to take what Jesus offers?

Mal. 1:2-3 and Rom. 9:13: God hates.

He "loves" Jacob; and "hates" Esau.

How can the One whose nature is love hate?

Not a reference to the emotional feeling of hatred.

It has to do with the will.

God has made a choice.

Now we must make a choice:

What's most important to us? Family? Or God?

Wiersbe: "Our love for Christ must be so strong that all other love is like hatred in comparison."

Their families are about to put pressure on them to forget about this "Jesus" business.

Jesus told them that families would be divided over Him.

Which is more important?

Are we willing to turn our back on family and stick with Jesus?

Is Jesus Christ the number one Person in your life?

2. Christ comes before self 14:27

OR WE CANNOT BE HIS DISCIPLES!

"And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

Taking up the cross implies death – to self, our plans and desires.

For many of those who would stick with Him on the way to the cross,
it would mean literal physical death.

Were they willing to pay that price?

For us it probably only means leaving behind all we possess
and giving up our own lives for Him.

Our "cross" is not just some affliction we have to endure,
as some imagine.

"That obstinate person I have to put up with is
just "the cross I have to bear!"

Taking up the cross means dying to self,
allowing Christ to live His life through us.

It means leaving all we have behind – giving it all up for Him.

Is Jesus the number one Person in your life, even before yourself?

Will we live for Jesus or live for self?

3. Christ comes before possessions 14:28-33

Example of the builder 14:28-30 *"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower.*

Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?

*29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him,
30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'*

Example of the king 14:31-32 *"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against
another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men*

to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.

Enough men to win the victory

If he doesn't count the cost and prepare adequately for opposition, when opposition comes, he'll have to make peace with the enemy.

Know what it will cost and prepare adequately to withstand the attack of the enemy.

Plan so as not to have to give in!

Fundamental Principle: COUNT THE COST! 33 *"In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."*

Unless you give up everything that is YOURS,
you can't be HIS disciple!

Corrie ten Boom: "I've learned that we must hold everything loosely, because when I grip it tightly, it hurts when the Father pries my fingers loose and takes it from me!"

Jewish Talmud: "Man is born with his hands clenched, he dies with them wide open."

ONE PERTINENT ILLUSTRATION: SALT 14:34-35 *"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? 35 It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

If, due to fear of consequences, His followers lose our distinctive identity, we'll be useless as tasteless salt.

Salt is only good while it is salty.

Otherwise it serves NO useful purpose;

it is useless and good only to be discarded.

Literally he says that it is not even useful when thrown out on the ground or into the manure pile. ***It is worthless. Period.***

What is the distinctiveness of salt?

The most notable evidence of its distinctive nature is its **tangy taste**. If it loses the quality that gives it that taste,

it has lost all that makes it salt, it's worthless!

What is the distinctiveness of a disciple of Jesus?

COMMITMENT TO HIM!

Our willingness to give up everything to follow Him;

without that, it's worthless!

The distinctive thing about SALT is its TANGY TASTE.

The distinctive thing about DISCIPLESHIP is COMMITMENT.

The distinctive of a disciple:

he gives up everything He has to follow the Master!

If we're not willing to give it all up for Him,

He will lay us aside as useless.

How about US?

Anybody want to follow Him, no matter what it costs?

Discipleship isn't for everyone!

But if we want to be HIS disciple,

We better be prepared to give up everything. It may cost us that!

When it comes to discipleship,

**Jesus is more interested in the *quality* of the relationship
than in the *number* of followers.**

* As far as **salvation** is concerned,

Jesus wants His banquet table full—every spot taken.

When it comes to **discipleship**,

He wants **those who are totally committed to Him**

—who are willing to give Him everything.

- * **Salvation** is available **for all who trust Jesus.**

Jesus offers that to every person.

Trust Him, and receive life.

Discipleship—following Jesus

—is **for those willing to pay a price!**

- * **Salvation** is **for all who are come to the cross.**

Discipleship is **for those who carry their cross and follow Him.**

When Jesus was out preaching, everyone flocked to Him. That was fun. It was the socially acceptable and popular thing to do.

"Let's go listen to Jesus!"

But when He went to the cross, He was all alone.

The masses were gone.

Even His closest loved ones abandoned Him.

They couldn't pay the price.

Following Jesus means taking up a cross!

Communist youth and his commitment.

He was willing to "take up the cross" for something much less than what God has given us!

Are we willing to take up *OUR* cross, for the most valuable Person, the most valuable cause ever presented on this earth?

Hal Lindsey tells of a house church in Russia before the recent political transformation: Believers arrived in small groups to avoid suspicion. At night they would meet, closed in, quietly worshipping God. Suddenly the door burst open and two armed soldiers broke in. One shouted: "All right—everyone line up against the wall. All those who are willing to renounce your commitment to Jesus may leave now!" Several left, then a few more, as they were given a chance to renounce Him and escape.

After a final two slipped away, no one else moved. Parents with small children looked at one another trembling. After a few moments of silence, one of the soldiers closed the door. "Keep your hands up, we wish to join you in praising God together. We, too, are Christians. We were sent to arrest the people at a church several weeks ago and were converted to Jesus. But we have learned that ***unless people are willing to die for their faith, they cannot be fully trusted.***

"What we obtain too cheaply, we esteem too lightly!"

How does that compare to the attitudes in Heb. 11? **11:32-40**

Do we share their attitude about following Jesus?

Jesus is on His way to the cross.

To follow Him means to join Him in heading for the cross.

Are we willing to join Him there?

Jesus isn't after a crowd.

He's after the real thing—people willing to give up family, self, and possessions to follow Him. ***WILL YOU?***

Sir Ernest Shackleton, famous South Pole explorer, wrote one of the most effective advertisements ever written: "Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold,

long months of complete darkness, constant danger. Safe return doubtful." Commenting on the overwhelming response received, Shackleton said, "It seemed as though all the men in Great Britain were determined to accompany us."

When Garibaldi recruited men to fight off invaders, he wanted only soldiers who were true patriots. In reply to the question "What do you offer?" he said, "I give you neither pay nor quarters nor provisions. I offer only hunger, thirst, forced marches, battle, and possible death." Yet he gave them something to fight for: "Let him who loves his country with his whole heart, not with his lips only, follow me."

German theologian Dietrich **Bonhoeffer**, executed by the Nazis because of his faith, said: **"When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die."** To follow Jesus, no matter what the cost—that's the way of the cross.

– a cause worth living for!

– a cause worth *dying* for!

Cost of discipleship = commitment to follow Him, whatever it costs.

It's NOT for wimps!

=> I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS!