

The Parables of Jesus

- The Cost of Discipleship

(Luke 14:26-33)

Jesus was "on the move." He had a large crowd ("a great multitude") that was following Him. They had just left Capernaum and were on a road heading to Jerusalem. (Luke 17:11) He stopped along the road and turned to address the multitude. Everything we read between Luke 14:26 - Luke 17:10

was spoken by Jesus in this same teaching setting. We see that there was a "mixed" multitude consisting of publicans, "sinners," Pharisees and scribes (Luke 15:1-2), as well as His twelve disciples (Luke 16:1).

In this teaching setting along the roadside, Jesus proceeds to bring forth eight parables and analogies.

The Parable of the "Cost of Discipleship" - Luke 14:26-33

The Parable of the "Lost Sheep" - Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15:4-7

The Parable of the "Lost Coin" - Luke 15:8-10

The Parable of the "The Prodigal Son" - Luke 15:11-32

The Parable of the "Unjust Steward" - Luke 16:1-8

The Parable of the "Rich man and Lazarus" - Luke 16:19-31

The Parable of the "Unmerciful Servant" - Matthew 18:23-35

The Parable of the "Master and his Servant" - Luke 17:7-10

These parables and analogies will all "build" upon each other as Jesus brings some vital concepts and truths to His listeners. He is preparing and teaching His disciples to be what they were called to be - disciples of Jesus. (Those who change their lifestyle to that of the One they are choosing to follow.) He was taking this time of teaching to let the disciples know some very valuable lessons for them to take hold of as they would some be called upon to bring the Gospel message to the world.

As He was bringing this teaching, Jesus also addressed and brought correction to many incorrect ways of thinking that the religious leaders, had concerning the true heart of God towards His most prized and precious creation, Man – both Jew and Gentile. In doing so, Jesus was also showing His disciples what they were **NOT** to do and what **NOT** to become as messengers of the Good News and ambassadors of the Kingdom of God.

As mentioned previously, Jesus was on a road leading to Jerusalem. Jesus knew what the environment towards Him in Jerusalem would be- a very hostile one. It would be on this "visit" to Jerusalem that He would be crucified. No one really knew or believed that would happen - no one except Jesus. Jesus knew that the religious leaders had come to despise Him and anyone following Him. They looked upon Jesus and His disciples as a threat to them, personally, and to their leadership position. They would stop at nothing to rid themselves of, not just the leader of the threat - Jesus, but also any disciple of that leader.

Jesus wanted His followers to realize that there will be a tremendous "cost to pay" if they truly desired to be His disciple. This "parable" is literally a warning from Jesus. He is letting them know "up front" that if they choose to "go down this road," both literally and figuratively, with Him to Jerusalem it would not be easy and "glorious" but it would be a difficult, lifelong "costly" journey.

This concept of being a true disciple of Jesus and what that entails was the main point of this first parable. In the parable of "The Cost of Discipleship" Jesus addresses what it truly means to be His disciple and what it will "cost" the individual if they truly choose to follow Him.

The Parable of the "Cost of Discipleship" - Luke 14:26-33

Luke 14:26-33 - *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he*

hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

This section of Jesus' teaching is more of the use of analogies than this being an actual parable. On face value, the beginning statement of His teaching may be perplexing to some. He starts off in verse 26 stating, *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."* Let's endeavor to "hear" what Jesus is actually saying to those who choose to follow Him as His disciples.

First, we must realize that Jesus is not speaking about the human emotion of "hate." He is not telling His disciples to literally hate their family members. Jesus is saying that as His disciple the individual should not place family members or their own desires above their desire to serve and love Him. He was telling the disciples that there would come a time when their family would come against their belief in Jesus. It would be at this time that they would need to "choose whom they would serve."

Anytime we read in the Bible concerning "God hating" it is referring to anything that is **opposite of His character** and purity. Proverbs 6:16-19 tells us, *"These six things doth the Lord **hate**: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."* These are all things that are opposite of God's true character and nature.

It also refers to someone or something that would take God's place as the priority of one's life. In Luke 14:26, Jesus expresses the same idea. Nothing - sister, father, mother, wife, children and even your own life - should be the priority in your life. As a disciple of Jesus, He must be our "first love." If we place anything before Him as the priority of our heart, it really becomes a form of idolatry and we need to repent of it. (Revelation 2:4, 5 - *"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy **first love**. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."*)

In Matthew 12:46-50 we read of a time when Jesus mother and brethren came to call on Him. Jesus was in the midst of a very important time of teaching. When told that they were outside, Jesus makes the comment, "Who is my mother and brethren?" Initially it would seem as if Jesus was disrespecting His mother, which would be breaking one of the commandments. In actuality, Jesus was not disrespecting His mother or His brothers. He went on to use it as an object lesson to teach that anyone who does the will of the Father is truly of His family. Those that do the will of the Father are truly those of His household – the "household of faith."

By the way, we are not told that after the teaching He may very well have went out to them. The point being was that the will of the Father takes precedent and must be the priority of the believer's life. We must be reminded that doing the will of the Father does indeed include loving your biological mother, father, brothers, sisters and let's face, as Jesus taught we are to simply love others, everyone, as He has loved us.

Jesus must be the "Lord" of the individual's life. The term "Lord" means to be the absolute, supreme and final authority in the person's life. It entails a lifestyle of total surrender and obedience to God, the Father,

Jesus and His Word. Nothing and no one is to come before or in the place of Jesus as the #1 priority in the disciple's life.

Jesus continues in Luke 14:27- *"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."* Jesus was expressing the reality that this was to be a total lifestyle change in two ways. It is to be a "dying to self" – both literally as well as figuratively. It is literally being prepared to be persecuted, even unto death, for your belief in Jesus and who He is. A true disciple of Jesus must be willingly aware of, and ready for, both.

In a figurative sense, Jesus is teaching that the old nature and its sinful, lustful desires must die within. His disciples will have to "put off" the old man and its ways and "put on" the new Christ like nature and lifestyle. Ephesians 4:22-24 - *"That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye **put on** the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."*

In Luke 14:28-30 Jesus declares, *"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish."* Jesus is teaching his followers that if they chose to follow Him and be His disciple, they must understand that they must completely commit and give their entire life to it. They must be ready to be "all in" or not in at all.

The "tower" referred to by Jesus is a fortified structure that is built to a considerable height. Its purpose is to repel a hostile attack or to enable a watchman to see in every direction for if and when the enemy would come. The use of this illustration suggests being prepared for a struggle, a battle or even a war. Jesus is implying that the true disciple of His needs to be totally prepared for a battle, a "spiritual" battle that will come against the disciple of His. The true disciple of Jesus must be willing to make the choice to "finish" and be willing to lead the lifestyle of a true believer in Christ no matter what comes against them.

If it is not a total commitment the individual may, and most likely will, decide to "bail out." Jesus states that this actually makes that individual look like a fool. However, more importantly, it doesn't make the faith or Jesus, look good. It gives place for you, as well as Jesus, to be mocked. Unfortunately, this has happened time and time again within the Body of Christ. People become "on fire" for Jesus for a while but never become true rooted disciples.

The Parable of the Sower puts this very much into perspective. As it states, many will receive the Word with gladness, but when persecution and tribulation come for being a true disciple and believer in Jesus; or when things don't always go well and times get tough – the individual who is not rooted may fall away. However the true disciple will flourish in these times of difficulty and their "fruit" (the character and nature of Christ within the true disciple of Jesus) will shine forth bearing thirty, sixty and one hundred fold blessing for the Kingdom.

Jesus continues His teaching on the cost of being a disciple of His. In Luke 14:31-33 He states, *"Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."*

He uses an example of a king that, on outward appearance, has the smaller army than the king that he will be at war with. In the natural understanding, it would be a wise thing for the king with the smaller army to try to "make peace" with the king that has the larger army. However, this is not how the true disciple of Jesus is to think.

Jesus expresses that being a disciple of His is not always going to be easy. There will be times when it may seem that you are fighting a battle and that you are outnumbered by the enemy (forces of darkness). Being a disciple means that there is never to be a time to make peace or to compromise with the enemy, the devil. As a disciple of Jesus, there is no "plan B." It is only "plan A" - God's way, which may be the difficult way but it will always lead us to victory for the purpose of bringing forth the Kingdom.

Ultimately, if we try to "make peace" with the enemy, it will be a "false peace" designed to bring compromise and destruction to your life. Jesus is very clear. A disciple of His must be "all in." There is to be no compromise. A true disciple of Jesus is to not be "lukewarm" in their commitment to Him." We must take note that in this teaching of Jesus concerning the cost of being a disciple of His, He uses examples of being in a battle or at war with something. Hmmm....

In other words, this discipleship stuff is not easy but rather very, very difficult. I believe that this is where the Body of Christ sometimes falls short when we speak to and evangelize people concerning Jesus and salvation in Jesus. Many times, we bring a "pie in the sky" gospel. We tell others, "Just accept Jesus and everything will be and go great. You will be so blessed."

This is actually opposite of the approach Jesus took. He was straight up and up front with what the cost of choosing to be a disciple of His would be. Yes, we enter into relationship with Him and the Father; Yes, the Holy Spirit will dwell within us; Yes, we have eternal life. However, there will be many attacks and battles that will take place as the enemy, both in the spirit realm and in the natural realm, will come.

Remember, Jesus taught that the student is not greater than the Master. If the Master is attacked and persecuted then why would the "disciple" think that he or she would be better than Jesus and not suffer difficulties, persecutions and attacks of the enemy. That is another reason why many "fall away." They have been "lied to" and given a faulty foundation to build a "tower" on.

A word of exhortation to Christian leadership here - Jesus is telling us that there needs to be a total commitment to Him and **Him only!!!** He is not saying that a leader should use this passage of scripture as reference in coercing a person's commitment to a ministry, a church, a pastor, an evangelist, etc., no matter how good of a ministry it may be. As leaders, we are to always point people to Jesus, not to ourselves, our ministry or whatever. It is Jesus who is to be the believer's "first love" and their first commitment.

We must enter into this new lifestyle of being a disciple of Jesus, knowing the cost, which ultimately is our entire life; all that we are; all day, everyday; 24 hrs/day, 7 day/wk.- **COUNT THE COST!!!**

Jesus concludes this section of His teaching with the analogy of "being as salt" upon this earth. In Luke 14:34, 35 He declares, *"Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."* Jesus uses this analogy many times.

In this usage of the analogy of salt, as we know it is in the context of a teaching concerning what it meant to be a true disciple of His. In its context here in Luke, Jesus uses this analogy to express that a true disciple of His must "count the cost" and know that this new lifestyle, the Christ like lifestyle, will be **difficult** and must be **different**. The disciple may not be accepted by even their own family and friends because of being **different** and therefore being a "**difference maker**." They would be choosing to live a lifestyle where Jesus would be their "first love."

Being a disciple of Jesus would mean that there would be harsh persecution and temptations to compromise and "make peace with the enemy." The disciple of Jesus must "count the cost of being "**difference maker**" in this world and to those around them.

We, as the disciples of Jesus, are to make a difference in this world. We are to be "**difference makers**" to whomever we come in contact with and wherever we may be. If we slack off, and our zeal for God decreases, it will affect us and we will literally be good for nothing except the "dunghill." Jesus was telling the people to wake up and be the child of God that we are called to be.