

## Counting The Cost.

Text: Luke 14:25-35

1) The cost of coming to Christ

Suggested Hymns:

2) The cost of staying with Christ

366,360, 375, 51, 131

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 14:25-35, <sup>25</sup> *Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them,* <sup>26</sup> *“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.* <sup>27</sup> *“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*

<sup>28</sup> *“For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it --* <sup>29</sup> *“lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,* <sup>30</sup> *“saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’*

<sup>31</sup> *“Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> “Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.*

<sup>33</sup> *“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. <sup>34</sup> “Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? <sup>35</sup> “It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Prudent people first estimate the funds needed to complete a building project. Before proceeding, one first determines carefully how much money it will take, and whether it is available. St. Luke makes this practical point, with a spiritual implication, in the text under consideration, <sup>28</sup> *“For which*

*of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it.*

So it is important, too, to count the cost in spiritual matters. Religion is no trifle, though many trifle with it. Being a Christian is no joke, though many jest about it. Following Jesus is not a trivial matter, although many make light of it.

Have you ever considered what is required of you to follow Christ? As Christians we certainly want to follow Christ more closely. However this does not mean that you can come to Christ and stay with Christ without cost. Let us count the cost of following Christ. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. The Cost Of Coming To Christ**

One day, St. Luke tells us, Jesus was invited to have lunch with a leader of the Pharisees. And while He was there, our Lord made every minute count. He turned the luncheon table into a pulpit, and a social visit into an hour of worship.

He silenced the idle questioners, who were there to find fault with His teaching and actions, and before they could speak, healed a man with dropsy, spoke on humility, and concluded His visit by giving a talk on the invitation to a great supper and the excuses that were offered. Then He left the home of His host and continued on His way.

Jesus certainly made a great impression on His hearers, because a great throng of people followed Him. No doubt there were many people in the multitude, if not all, who were attracted to Jesus because of His penetrating words of wisdom, His assistance of mercy to an ailing man, and their own desire to receive His help.

However, there is no indication that they received Jesus as the promised Messiah and the Saviour of their souls. They were following Jesus because of what they might be able to get from Him. And Jesus, who was Divinity in humanity, could look into their hearts and read their thoughts. And because the Lord was seeking true disciples, such as would give Him their hearts and lives in total consecration, He began to teach once more, showing them the difference between positive discipleship and pretended discipleship, telling them what it would cost to follow Him.

***“If anyone comes to Me,”*** He began, ***“and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, ... he cannot be My disciple.*** The Lord here stated one price that must be paid if they want to be His disciples. They must hate their relatives. But “hate” here is not to be understood in the sense that they should despise them, mock them, or no longer associate with them.

Rather the implication is that they must not love their relatives more than, or even as much as, they are to love Jesus. Jesus must always have first place in every follower’s heart. They must be willing to abandon all physical attachments. Their love for father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, etc., must be secondary.

Love for Jesus Christ must come first. He wanted their love and devotion unconditionally, for Jesus said in Matthew 10:37, <sup>37</sup> ***“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.”***

The Lord continued to teach them that they must count the cost of following Him unreservedly when He added, ***“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate ... his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*** This does not mean that they were to hate themselves, their bodies, their physical lives, or the fact that they were even born. But rather they should hate sin. They should hate the results of sin which were so evident in their daily lives. They must shun and avoid evil affections, the lusts of the flesh, unholy desires, excessive ambitions, pride, greed, selfishness, and all that marred their minds and soiled their souls.

They must come to Him with pure hearts so that Christ could ***“reign supreme, and reign alone”***<sup>1</sup> within them. Furthermore, if they intended to be loyal followers, Jesus wanted them to know that they must love Him more than they loved themselves, and that in all things this love to Him must be uppermost in their hearts and lives.

Then the Lord Jesus added an additional cost of true discipleship. He told those who were following Him, <sup>27</sup> ***“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*** Before Jesus stood the Cross on Calvary’s bleak hill. He was on His way to that Cross where He would lay down His life in payment for the sins of all humanity.

Throughout His life our Saviour bore the cross of suffering. The poverty of His lowly birth, the ridicule of those who rejected Him, the inner pangs of soul when He came to His own people and His own people did not receive Him, to say nothing of the mockery and scourging at His trials, the disgraceful death on the accursed tree — all of this made Him the great Cross-bearer.

He bore His cross, and those who would come after Him must also be willing to bear the cross. They must understand, He reminded them, that the cross for Jesus' sake is a mark of true discipleship. They must lay everything at the foot of His Cross and in their continued discipleship be ready to bear the cross of personal problems, heartache, sorrow, affliction, adversity, and the ridicule, the taunts, and the sneers of others, because as Christ was hated by those who would not believe, so they, too, would be hated. Following Him, He warned, was not an easy task. Jesus spoke earnestly to them and exhorted them to count the cost.

Have we counted the cost? So Jesus speaks to you and me today, telling us that we, too, must be willing to sit down and count the cost of coming to Him. The cost is great. He warns us that our love for our parents, families, and relatives must not come into competition with our love for Him.

Too often parents and children become guilty of loving one another more than Christ, when, on Sunday morning, for example, they will either sleep in or spend their time at a sporting event when they should be worshiping Christ in the Sunday school and Sunday service.

And so we might go on. But if we want be true and loyal followers of Christ, then we must, first of all, love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our minds.

And if, as one of Christ's disciples, it means that you will be despised by your relatives, then may God give you the grace and spiritual strength to endure this heartache, and make you willing to separate yourself from them so that you may give yourself wholly to Christ.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus in speaking to us through the Gospel places the qualifications for true discipleship still higher when he insists that we love Him better than we love our own lives, that we be willing to make some sacrifices and

endure some self-denials in demonstration of our love. This is bearing the cross for Jesus' sake.

If some ailment casts you on a sickbed for a number of months, could you then, like Job, rejoice in the Lord and endure the cross? Would the loss of friends, loved ones, sudden grief, temptations, self-denials, and afflictions that come into your homes, find you looking up, through your tears, to Christ in prayer? Would you be willing to commit to the Lord all your burdens, and carry in your hearts the confidence that, in His own time, the Lord Jesus will remedy all your ills, knowing that *“all things [must] work together for good to those who love God”*?<sup>2</sup> Can you bear your crosses patiently in full submission to His will? Are you counting the cost of coming to Christ? Similarly, the cost of staying with Christ demands no less.

## 2. The Cost Of Staying With Christ

And having come to Christ, the cost continues, because it costs something to stay with Christ. Following Christ is a continuous process. Once a person becomes a disciple of Christ, he must not forsake Him. But Satan, always the *“roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,”*<sup>3</sup> tries in many and various ways to make the follower disloyal.

He creates doubt, despair, disillusionment, disappointment, discouragement, and dejection. He strikes the Christian with temptations, sins, and evil longings, so that the disciple must turn to Christ in fervent prayer for strength to ward off these vicious assaults. There must be included in the cost of discipleship a daily reading of the Bible, so that we may *“grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*<sup>4</sup>

Coupled with this, there is the cost of praising the Saviour in His sanctuary in association with other followers, so that by our continuance in *“the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”*<sup>5</sup> we may find additional spiritual strength in our warfare against the attractions and distractions of this world and the cunning, crafty, pulling powers of our own flesh.

As we associate intimately with the Lord Jesus, through His Word and by our worship, we find the cost of such discipleship continues to mount, just as He says in Matthew 10:22, <sup>22</sup> *“And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.”*

And when Jesus adds, <sup>13</sup> ***“But he who endures to the end”***<sup>6</sup> we know that it is this endurance, this continuous fighting against evil forces, this effort in clinging to Christ will sap our spiritual strength and resources.

But great and loving Saviour that He is, Jesus never leaves us without hope and help. Therefore He concludes, ***“shall be saved.”*** We have all that we need to make the fight of faith worth while, to give us courage on our pilgrimage, to give us strength for the battle and comfort and blessing for our loyalty.

Counting the cost of coming to Christ and of staying with Christ is far more vital and significant than a man’s estimating the cost of building a tower or some other building. For if a man lays the foundation and proceeds with the framework of a structure, and then finds that he does not have enough money to finish his project because he did not first estimate the cost, he exposes himself to public ridicule and disgrace.

Moreover, coming to Christ and staying with Christ is more important than a ruler’s plans to invade another country. If he does not have sufficient military strength to bring his campaign to a successful completion, he will find himself begging for terms of peace.

Much more than this is involved when we have come to Christ and are determined to stay with Christ, for no one who is unwilling to lay his all at Jesus’ feet can be His disciple. Those are the plain words of our Saviour, and discipleship means total consecration in the first place and then a continuous re-dedication of all that we are and have to Him and to His cause .

And there is an additional cost involved in coming to Christ and in staying with Christ. Like Christ, we must make our influence felt. We must demonstrate our faith in Him. We must radiate His love for us by loving our fellow men. We must show people everywhere that we are His disciples. They must know that we have been with Jesus. We are to be the salt of the earth. Salt makes food palatable, it gives flavour to food and it preserves food. When salt fails to do this, there is really no value left in it.

Thus a disciple of the Lord has the duty to preserve the world from spiritual ruin, to permit the beams of divine grace to shine through in his daily life, and by his influence in word and deed bring others to Christ. But if the Christian’s self-denial, faith, and love give way to worldliness and self-indulgence, if he walks no

more with Christ and becomes disloyal, then he is like salt that has lost its power of preservation and flavouring. He becomes a castaway.

My friends, as the present-day disciples of Christ we must be the salt of the earth. In the shop, the store, on the street, in the factory, among our classmates, in the Armed Forces, in our social contacts, while visiting our unchurched or unbelieving relatives, we must be as effective in a spiritual way as salt is in a physical way.

We must keep others from spiritual decay. All about us in the world there is corruption and decay in business, politics, and social activities. Such spiritual degeneracy should never be able to touch the disciples of Christ. No, rather, they should be able to resist it with the Holy Spirit's help and serve as a powerful influence against it.

The Lord Jesus has given us some positive and penetrating instruction today, as He pleads with us to count the cost of following Him. Make no mistake about it! For anyone who wants to come to Christ and stay with Christ, the cost is great. And the cost of discipleship continues every day, for new demands are made upon our loyalty to Jesus every day.

Repeatedly, in some way or another, the Lord comes to us to ask for our discipleship. Those who are as yet afar off, but who are thinking about joining His ranks, He asks to count the cost involved in coming to Him. He asks them to remember that it means loving Him more than all who are near and dear to them on earth, loving Him more than they love life itself, and a willingness to bear the cross.

Those who have come He warns that this loyalty means a continuous sacrifice. And when we who are His disciples recall all that Jesus endured so that we might be received as the sons and daughters of our Father in heaven, His love for us will give us the strength of faith, love, and devotion to continue our discipleship.

As we count the cost of coming to Jesus and of staying with Him, our prayer is

*Thy life was given for me;  
I give myself to Thee. Amen*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Hymn 131

<sup>2</sup> Romans 8:28

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 5:8

<sup>4</sup> 2 Peter 3:18

<sup>5</sup> Acts 2:42

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 24:13