

Counting the cost (14:25-33)

25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 “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. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

28 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— 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 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? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”

- When being followed by great multitudes, Jesus taught the cost of discipleship.
- Does God literally mean we should hate our family members?
- Someone has said that not all disciples will be crucified, but all must carry the cross. A man who follows Christ must be dead to his own life and desires.

Salt without taste (14:34-35)

34 *“Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? 35 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!”*

- Salt was used as a preservative and to avoid infection. The influence of believers does the same for society.
- There is always the risk we can start out well but finish up as “unsalted Christians.”

(Note: Chapter 15 was covered in our recent seminar.)

The Parable of the Unjust Steward (16:1-13)

1 *He also said to His disciples: “There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. 2 So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’*

3 *“Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.’*

5 “So he called every one of his master’s debtors to him, and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ 6 And he said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ 7 Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ So he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ 8 So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

9 “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. 10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?

13 “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

- Obviously, the Lord doesn’t want us to cheat people. However, in His storytelling, Jesus could use negative characters to teach positive lessons.
- These debtors were probably tenant farmers who paid a percentage of their crops to the master, through the steward or manager.

- The steward was obviously trying to work his way into the good graces of potential benefactors. There are multiple lessons here.
- First, we have an unflattering comparison between two groups that Jesus calls *the sons of this world* and *the sons of light*. Are we working for the Kingdom of God with the same diligence and "shrewdness" that the children of this age devote to **their** business affairs?
- Second, material things should be used to affect relationships for the good.
- Third, no one can serve two masters. Mammon was the common way of referring to the false god of wealth and riches.
- Fourth, the Lord gives a teaching on faithfulness. Jesus mentions three different spheres of faithfulness in which we can be tested:
 - Faithfulness in small things.
 - Faithfulness in the unrighteous mammon. If you are irresponsible, you cannot be entrusted with what Jesus calls *the true riches*.
 - Faithfulness in dealing with another man's things.
 - Whatever God brings our way is an opportunity to develop in these three different spheres of faithfulness.

The ones who justify themselves (16:14-18)

14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. 15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

16 *“The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. 17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.*

18 *“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.”*

- The Pharisees were mocking Jesus for His teachings about money. One of the principal characteristics of the Pharisees was their desire to appear righteous.
- Jesus says that what we favor and praise as human beings is actually disgusting to God. (This is one verse that you’ll never hear people quoting!)
- The Lord rebukes their easy divorce practices. Some taught that a man could divorce his wife for any reason at all – even if he found someone more beautiful!
- The "jots" and "tittles" were the smallest written parts of Hebrew writing.
- Jesus said they had moved into a new era in which the Kingdom was being proclaimed, and people were pressing into it!

Lazarus and the Rich Man (16:19-31)

19 *“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*

22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' 27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29 Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

- The sin here was in living a careless and thoughtless life, without generosity.
- Many consider this to be a **real story** and not a parable.
- The name Lazarus is thought to come from the Hebrew name *Eliezer*, which means "God has helped" him.
- The crumbs in the story could have been what they called the **sops**, pieces of bread that people used to clean their hands at a meal. Sadly, Lazarus received no sops or crumbs from the rich man's table.

- Important things to note from this story about what comes after this life:
 - The torments of Hell are literal.
 - The Jews seem to have believed that in *Sheol* (the underworld) there were separate compartments: one for the righteous and one for the wicked.
 - We believe Christ has taken out the righteous from Abraham’s Bosom.
 - The New Testament teaches us that now, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.
 - The dead are conscious of each other and they know each other intimately, being able to communicate amongst themselves.
- The story ends on an ominous note: people who don’t have a heart for the Word will not even respond to miracles – not even a resurrection.

Offenses (17:1-4)

1 Then He said to the disciples, “It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! 2 It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. 3 Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”

- Our God commands us to forgive just as much as He has forgiven.
- Unforgiveness can produce strife and a root of bitterness in our hearts.
- The reference to the number seven should be taken as symbolic rather than literal. We are to forgive people always.

- Jesus said it's **impossible** for offenses not to come, but of course we should never participate in those things which cause people to stumble.
- Few things are worse in God's sight than destroying the faith or morals of a young person. They can expect to experience God's wrath!

Duty as well as faith (17:5-10)

5 And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." 6 So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. 7 And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? 8 But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? 9 Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. 10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

- It seems they were asking Him for increased faith to operate in the supernatural. However, we should view ourselves merely as humble servants, even if God uses us to do miraculous things.
- The faith need not be large, as long as the object of the faith is great. Our faith has power because of Whom we are trusting.

Gratitude (17:11-19)

11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

- This entire experience would also serve to prove to the Samaritan that "salvation was of the Jews." In general, it is much more difficult for people who are healed to attribute their healing to the devil.
- The Samaritan's faith (his confidence in Jesus) had made him whole.

Remember Lot's wife (17:20-37)

20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21 nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

- They did not doubt that there would be a literal Kingdom established; the question was **when**. The manner of His coming was not apparent to them.
- Jews then and now have a belief that there will be two Messiahs. One would suffer, and he is referred to as *Messiah Son of Joseph*. The other, conquering Messiah is known as *Messiah Son of David*. But Messiah first had to suffer and then enter into His glory. The same Man fulfills both roles.
- There was much Messianic speculation at this time:
 - There had been miraculous events surrounding the birth of Jesus.
 - The ministry of John the Baptist had created anticipation of Messiah.
 - Jacob prophesied that Judah would have power until Shiloh (Messiah) came. The Jews lost the power to carry out capital punishment in 6 AD.
 - The angel Gabriel had revealed to Daniel (see Daniel chapter 9) the timing of Messiah's appearance.
- But Jesus said the Kingdom would not come that way at all, at least not right away. It would first come as a kingdom of the heart.

22 Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. 23 And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after them or follow them. 24 For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day."

- One day we will enjoy the full manifestation of Jesus' glory! But first, terrible days would come: His followers would long to see Him and yet would not.

- We are not to be led astray! When the Lord ascended, the angels said "this same Jesus" would return (see Acts 1:9-11).

25 "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."

- Jesus predicted His own death, just as Isaiah and Daniel had done.
- It is hard to fathom the depth of sufferings (of many different kinds!) that Jesus experienced.

*26 "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:
27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day
that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise as it
was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted,
they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone
from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of
Man is revealed.*

*31 "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not
come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn
back. 32 Remember Lot's wife. 33 Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and
whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34 I tell you, in that night there will be [cont'd]*

two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. 36 Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.”

37 And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?” So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

- Although the wickedness of the last days will be like the wickedness of the days of Noah and Lot, that is not what Jesus is teaching us here. What the Lord is discussing here is the **suddenness** of the judgment of the wicked.
- Make note of the warning to **“remember Lot’s wife.”** We cannot look back to the world with longing, nor delay in responding to impending judgment.
- Jesus’ statement about the eagles or vultures gathering is difficult, but in essence the Lord is saying that the judgments will take place everywhere. Wherever there is the corruption of sin, the fowls of the air will be found also.
- Scavengers appear in key end-times passages (see Ezekiel 39, Revelation 19).
- Jesus wasn’t **creating** a lot of new end-times teaching. He was echoing what the prophets had already said, and applying many of those details to Himself.
- When Jesus returns, He will deliver His people and execute judgment as the Old Testament prophets had predicted.

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