

Lesson 9 Counting the Cost

The gospel message that Jesus proclaimed involves both an offer and a demand. The demand is as total as the offer is free.

The Offer – Salvation

The Demand – Lordship

Consider the three people in Luke's gospel who either volunteer or were invited to follow Jesus.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Yet another said, "I will follow you Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:57-62)

What is Jesus trying to teach his audience, and us, about what it means to follow him?

Consider what Jesus says later in Luke's gospel about what's required to be His disciple.

Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, "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. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:25-33)

What does Jesus mean when he says that in order to be his disciple a person must hate his family and his own life?

What does this passage teach us about the consequence of not "counting the cost" to be a follower of Jesus?

How would you summarize what Jesus means by his last statement in this passage?

*And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross¹ and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:34-38, see also Luke 9:23¹ where he adds, "**daily**")*

What is Jesus calling His followers to do in this passage?

How would you answer the two questions Jesus poses in this passage? What's his point in asking these two questions?

In order to be a follower (disciple) of Christ, there must be:

1. Renunciation of sin (repentance), which is ongoing
2. Renunciation of self, which is ongoing
 - Daily denial of self
 - Daily taking up our cross
 - Daily losing our life

In summary, Jesus is calling his followers (disciples) to make him Lord. To make Christ Lord is to bring every area of our lives into submission of Him.

What are some implications of Christ's lordship for each of the following areas of our lives?

1. Relationship with our spouse
2. Relationship with our children (our parents)
3. Our financial resources
4. Our schedules
5. Our work

Though Jesus demands absolute allegiance to Him as Lord, He provides us with glorious incentives toward that end.

1. for our own sake

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? (Mark 8:35-37)

2. for the sake of others – When Mark 8 says, “*whoever loses his for....the gospel will save it.*”, for the sake of making the gospel known to others.

3. for Christ's sake

*For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life **for my sake** will find it. (Matt. 16:25)*

“He asks no more than he himself gave. He asks a cross for a cross. So we should follow him not just for what we can get or for what we can give, but supremely because of what he gave. He gave himself. Will it cost us a great deal? It cost him more. He left the Father's glory, the security of heaven and the worship of countless angels when he came. He humbled himself to assume human nature, to be born in a stable and laid in a manger to work at a carpenter's bench to make friends with ordinary fishermen, to die on a criminal's cross, and to bear the sins of the world.” (John Stott, Basic Christianity)