

COUNT THE COST

Wednesday, April 21

Reading: Luke 14:25-35

Luke 14:26 *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. 27 And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."*

As Jesus continues His journey, great crowds follow Him. Jesus knows that many of them are not true believers. They are there for the miracles or to be part of "the in-thing." Jesus warns them of the cost of being His disciple.

CARRY THE CROSS (14:25-27) – A person cannot follow Christ and hold a higher allegiance to anyone else. Jesus is not saying that a disciple must literally hate his family, but that He must be first. Their love for Him should make all other loves pale by comparison.

"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" (Matthew 10:37)

A true disciple must be willing to give up his own life and take up the cross of Christ. Jesus was totally committed to the Father's will. He had "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51 NKJV). Jesus had previously made this demand of the Twelve (Luke 9:23-24). Now He repeats it for the entire crowd. To follow Jesus a person must be willing to give his all.

COUNT THE COST (14:28-33) – Jesus uses two illustrations to express the importance of knowing what it will cost to follow Him.

It Requires Planning – If someone begins to build a tower without first determining if he has enough resources to finish, when he runs out of money before the project is complete he will look like a fool. Those who plan to follow Christ must also decide if they are willing to pay the price of being a disciple. It may require alienation from friends and family, hardships, and danger. They may even be asked to give their very lives.

It Requires Sacrifice – The second illustration is of a king going to battle. He must determine if his army is able to win the battle or if it would be better to seek a peace treaty. He may have to give up his desire for victory for the benefit of all his people. So disciples must be willing to sacrifice their wants and desires for the cause of Christ. Anyone who is not willing to give all for Jesus is not worthy of being His disciple.

Jesus concludes His discourse on discipleship by comparing His followers to salt. Salt was used for preserving food and to add flavor. Believers are God's salt and are to have a positive effect on the world. However, if they blend in with the world and refuse to stand for Christ they are as worthless as salt that has lost its flavor. To be a follower of Christ requires a person to stand and sacrifice for the kingdom of God. Jesus' message of "counting the cost" flies in the face of the "easy-believism" of many churches today. Salvation must be more than saying a prayer. It must be more than going to church and trying to live a good life. It requires a today dedication and commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Master!

READ THRU THE BIBLE: 2 Kings 13-16; John 15