

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

December 18, 2019

The Gospel of Luke

The Cost of Biblical Discipleship

Topics – Luke 14; discipleship; priorities

Text – Luke 14:25 - 35

Introduction

In the first part of chapter 14, Jesus was rebuking the religious leadership regarding things that they considered very important, and yet fell very short of God's big picture. They were offended when Jesus healed people on the Sabbath. They claimed that it was a violation of their Sabbath rules. In the opening verses of this chapter Jesus heals a man who had an edema type disease called "the dropsy."

Jesus then deals with the subject of pride because He noticed that these Pharisees were very concerned about their position or status at the dinner. He then admonishes them about who they invite to their "suppers." He alluded to the fact they only invited people who could "recompense" them, or benefit them somehow.

The last subject we discussed from this chapter was the Parable of the Supper, which was really a picture of the Nation of Israel's rejection of their invitation to receive their Messiah:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11)

As a result of their rejection, the invitation that was originally given to Israel was then given to the Gentiles:

"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matthew 21:43)

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." (Romans 11:25)

In these last eleven verses of the chapter, Jesus is discussing the cost of true, Biblical discipleship with those that followed Him. By this time, it was very apparent that the religious leadership of Israel was not following Him. He also knew what was ahead for Him – crucifixion. If the Leader, the Object, of the of the Christian faith could expect to be crucified, what should His followers expect. Discipleship will always be very costly. It was going to cost the followers of Jesus in the first century, almost without exception, their lives:

1. John the Baptist – beheaded by Herod (Matthew 14:3 – 12)

Note – John the Baptist is said to be the last of the Old Testament prophets as well as the first of the New Testament prophets. He is not part of the church. (John 3:29) He is the friend of the bridegroom, not the bride or part of the bride. The bride of Christ is the Church.

2. Jesus – crucified

3. **Stephen** – stoned to death in Jerusalem in A.D. 34 (Acts 7:59)

4. **James the son of Zebedee** – beheaded by Agrippa in A.D. 45

5. **Philip** – stoned in Phrygia in A.D. 54

6. **James, the brother of Jesus** – beaten to death on the steps of the Temple in A.D. 63.

7. **Barnabus** – burned on Cyprus in A.D. 64

8. **John Mark** – dragged through the streets of Alexandria in A.D. 64

9. **Simon Peter** – crucified (upside down) by Nero in A.D. 69

Note Peter's wife was also crucified.

10. **Paul** – beheaded by Nero in A.D. 69

11. Additional martyrs of the first century

Aristarchus, Epaphras, Priscilla and Aquilla, Andronicus, and Juna were all martyred by Nero in A.D.70. Silas was beaten to death in Macedonia; Onesiphorus and Porphyrius were dragged to death by horses; Andrew was crucified; Bartholomew was flayed alive; Thomas was burned by hot plates and eventually stabbed to death; Matthew was nailed to the ground and beheaded; Matthias was crucified and beheaded; Luke was hanged in Greece in A.D. 93; Antipas was roasted alive in A.D. 95.

Note – John the apostle is said to have been boiled in oil by Emperor Domitian but miraculously survived. He was banished to the penal isle of Patmos where he was given the Revelation by the Lord. Tradition has it that he was eventually released and returned to Ephesus where he was the pastor. He died at the age of 100 being the only apostle that was not martyred.

True biblical discipleship will never be popular with the majority of people because the Bible plainly teaches that:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)

I. Notice the Crossroad Ahead (v. 25)

These multitudes that followed Jesus would not all be with Him in the end.

In John 6 – Jesus had multitudes following Him when He fed the five thousand men, and perhaps more than twenty thousand men, women, and children. He later began preaching some truths that were difficult for some to hear, and in fact, it offended many. Read John 6:60 – 69.

Another example of an unwillingness to continue following the Lord Jesus Christ when it becomes unpopular or costly was when the multitudes welcomed Jesus into the City of Jerusalem during His triumphal entry on what we commonly call Palm Sunday:

*"On the next day **much people** that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, **Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.**" (John 12:12-13)*

*"When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, **Crucify him,***

*crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. ... But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, **We have no king but Caesar.**" (John 19:6, 15)*

In Jesus interpretation of the Parable of the Sower, He clearly teaches that some who receive the Word will eventually turn away from it:

"But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." (Matthew 13:20-22)

Disciples of Jesus Christ in 2020, you too will be faced with a crossroad where you will need to decide whose team you are on.

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision." (Joel 3:14)

Will you follow the multitudes down the broad way, or will you follow the Saviour through the Door, the strait gate, and the narrow way?

II. There will Be a Choice Ahead (v. 26)

Biblical discipleship may demand a choice between God's will for your life and pressure by family and friends. God is not saying here that we are to literally hate with feeling our parents or our family and friends, but He is saying that we are to always choose the will of God over any other will, even the will of our family:

"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first." (Mark 10:28-31)

III. There will Be a Cross Ahead (v. 27)

The Cross represents the willingness to pay the ultimate sacrifice in our following the Lord in sacrifice. The Cross is a symbol of death. The death of our will must be considered when considering whether or not we will follow the Lord in discipleship.

IV. There will Be a Cost Ahead (vs. 28 – 33)

Here the Lord asks us to consider the cost involved with following Him. The Lord gives two examples of people who had to carefully weigh the pros and cons of particular actions: one involving a building project, and the other involving going to war. Before you go to war, you need to make sure that you have sufficient strength in order to win; and in order to build a tower, you need to make sure you have enough money and materials to finish the project.

Too many Christians do not carefully consider the cost of biblical discipleship.

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.¹

V. There will Be a Casting Away Ahead (vs. 34 – 35)

I believe the Lord is teaching here that a disciple who turns his back on the Lord is like salt that is no longer salty. It is useless. Christians are supposed to be useful, fulfilling the will of the Lord and glorifying Him in the process. If we choose to turn our backs on the Lord we are like salt that is no longer salty, we are not fulfilling our purpose. We are useless to Him.

Conclusion

Have you counted the cost of discipleship?

Don't dabble with God. Either get in or get out. Be a Spirit-filled Christian. Live for the Lord. Be willing to sacrifice and pay the price to follow Him and get the possible to the world around you.

I Met the Master

I had walked life's path with an easy tread,
I had followed where comfort and pleasure led;
And then by chance in a quiet place—
I met my Master face to face.

With station and rank and wealth for goal,
Much thought for body but none for soul,
I had entered to win this life's mad race—
When I met my Master face to face.

I met Him and knew Him, and blushed to see
That His eyes full of sorrow were fixed on me;
And I faltered, and fell at His feet that day
While my castles vanished and melted away.

Melted and vanished; and in their place
I saw naught else but my Master's face;
And I cried aloud: "Oh, make me meet
To follow the marks of Thy wounded feet."

My thought is now for the souls of men;
I have lost my life to find it again,
Ever since alone in that holy place
My Master and I stood face to face.

—John R. Rice, *Poems That Preach*²

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, *The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart and 1501 Other Stories* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2016), 505.

² *ibid.*