**Series – Dr. Luke’s Perspective on Jesus**

**Text – Luke 14:25-35**

**Message 60 (November 04, 2018)**

**DISCIPLESHIP REVISITED**

***25Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, 26“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. 27Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 28For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31Or 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? 32And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for***[***terms***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke14:25-35&version=ESV)***of peace. 33So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. 34“Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 35It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”***

# Introduction

1. When you first began to follow Jesus, did you have any idea what you were getting into? I doubt any of us did. The Bible makes the case that our salvation is a work of God alone. We believe that and teach that here. When we were exposed to His Gospel, if we responded in faith, it was because His Spirit had breathed life into our deadness and makes us new creations in Christ. That’s God’s work of regeneration. Once we were made alive, we began our walk with Him as His disciples. It is not that we sat down and tried to weigh whether or not we should believe in Jesus by deciding if it was worth it or not. When He quickened our heart, we repented and believed.
2. But then we read a passage like this where Jesus tells us what it means for us to be one of His disciples. He presents a very straight-forward, non- ambiguous declaration of what is involved in being His disciple. He even identifies three categories of people that cannot be His disciples! Jesus says that to be His disciple, you must hate your family (v. 26), that you must bear your cross (v. 27) and that you must renounce your possessions (v. 33)! Does that surprise you? He follows the declaration with two illustrations that explain the cost involved for those who would be His disciples. He concludes with a final declaration and illustration, ending with ***“he who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*** What did He mean?
3. If He literally meant that we were to hate our families and bear our own cross and renounce all that we have in order to be His disciples, then none of us will ever be His disciples, will we? What was Jesus saying?
4. I have told you a million times that we must understand that life, that salvation, that Christianity itself is all about Him, it’s not about us! I haven’t told you a million times – that’s a hyperbole. It’s a purposeful overstatement to get your attention. It’s not a lie or even an exaggeration; it is a figure of speech meaning I have said that many times. That’s what Jesus is doing here.
5. Luke is letting us know that we are back on the journey to Jerusalem after having left the banquet earlier in the chapter. There were large crowds accompanying Jesus, but He wanted them to understand that this was no parade. Jesus knew He was on His way to the cross to die – most of those following had no idea what was before Him, or before them, if they continued to follow Him. That’s where we pick up this account as Jesus communicates what it means to be one of His disciples.
6. What do those hyperboles of hating our family and bearing our cross and renouncing our possessions mean? Essentially it is a matter of comparison.

**I. JESUS MUST BE MORE IMPORTANT TO US THAN ANYONE ELSE (25-27)** Let’s start with…

A. Our closest family ties (26)

1. This is a hyperbole, but don’t dismiss the point being made.

2. Jesus was not calling His disciples to literally hate their parents or their

spouses or their children or their siblings. In fact, He taught people to honor father and mother, to love one another, to take care of our families, and to hold marriage in high esteem. He who even taught us to love our enemies is not telling us to hate our families!

3. One commentator made the case that “hate” sometimes conveyed indifference to one thing and preference to another. “I love A and I hate B” would mean something like I prefer A to B. Matthew 10:37-38 would support that idea – ***Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.***It may be stronger than a preference. For however strong familial relationships might be, they cannot, they must not undermine our faithfulness to God. Love for Him must always be first.

4. Matthew’s quotation of Jesus makes the case that a familial love over love for God was not worthy of the Lord. Luke’s quotation makes it clear that to elevate love for family over love for God cannot co-exist with being a disciple of Jesus. Jesus must be more important to us than anyone else, including ourselves!

B. Even life itself (26-27)

1. The same impossibility is stated for bearing our own cross. We cannot be His disciple if we do not bear our cross. So, what does that mean?

2. The cross was an instrument of execution. Those who would literally “bear their cross” were being publicly humiliated on their way to being publicly executed. The shame would be unbearable. Death would be inevitable.

3. As Jesus said this to the crowds, what do you suppose they thought He was saying to them? One way or another, to follow Jesus will cost you your life.

4. The primary declaration Jesus was making about being one of His disciples was that no one is to be more important to us than Jesus – including us!

**II. JESUS MUST BE MORE IMPORTANT TO US THAN WHATEVER FOLLOWING HIM MIGHT COST (27-32)** While we are to “count the cost”, this is not so much weighing the pros and cons to see if it’s really worth it to follow Jesus. It is realizing that whatever it costs, following Jesus is worth it. Jesus uses two illustrations to help us understand.

A. On building a tower

1. If you decide to build something, you draw up the plans and then you find out what it will take to secure the materials and the labor before you start. You count the cost. If you don’t do that, you may come up short and not be able to finish – and that would be embarrassing, publicly humiliating. (Church meeting in a basement – no ground floor…)

2. The cost of following Jesus has already been calculated in regard to family and life itself. Some started, but didn’t finish. David Garland writes, ***“When the image is connected to discipleship, Judas is infamous as a betrayer of Jesus. He is joined by Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), Demas (2 Tim. 4:10) and Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20) in the failed disciple hall of shame in the New Testament”*** (p. 602). Whether certain people were believers or not as they began to follow Jesus is not the point of the discussion here. The point is that some who start to follow are not willing to pay the price to be a true disciple of Jesus. Someone else or something else was more important. Jesus gives a second illustration.

B. On fighting a battle

1. The Jews were familiar with their history, and the history of Israel was filled with the record of battles with the armies of neighboring kingdoms.

2. Before engaging on battle, the king would take inventory of his troops. If he has 10,000 fighting men and his adversary has 20,000, he would have to decide if he could beat those odds and be victorious. If he was convinced that his 10,000 could match the enemy’s 20,000, he would engage. But if it was likely to be a bloodbath, he would send a delegation to negotiate a peace agreement. That might mean paying a tribute to the more powerful king or it might mean full surrender in order to spare the lives of his people.

3. The point of the story was counting the cost. Again, it was not deciding whether to initially follow Jesus, it was to decide if there was a willingness to put it all on the line for the sake of the relationship to Jesus. Jesus must be more important to us than anyone and more important to us than what it might cost.

**III. JESUS MUST BE MORE IMPORTANT TO US THAN WHATEVER WE MIGHT POSSESS (33-35)**

A. Renouncing everything

1. For a third time Jesus uses the phrase ***“cannot be my disciple.”***  This time the issue at hand is ***“all that he has.”*** The word that’s translate here, ***“renounce”*** is variously translated as “forsake”, “give up”, “say good-bye to.” It can mean to get rid of or to break free from.

2. While it is true that Jesus told those who were following Him to sell their possessions and give the proceeds to the poor in Luke 12:33, and He will tell a rich man to do the same later in Luke 18:28, but that was not a universal requirement for discipleship.

3. We can renounce the place of our possessions without immediately selling them or giving them away. It is not done for the sake of renunciation, but for the sake of faithful service. The issue ultimately is the value we attach to what we possess in comparison to our relationship to Jesus. If what we have hinders our walk with Jesus and our service to Jesus, then what we have is a problem that needs to be addressed. David Garland wrote, ***“It requires the abandonment of all projects, plans and personal goals that one cooks up in the course of one’s life, usually for the purpose of redounding to one’s personal honor”*** (p. 605).

B. Losing it all anyway

1. Ultimately, all of our possessions are temporary. The things we possess wear out, rust out, rot, get moldy, are stolen or lost, break, become obsolete…and when we die, they will not be coming with us. Why would we put such emphasis on what does not last? Will we lose it all as a follower of Jesus for the sake of God’s rule, or will we refuse to follow and obey Him and ultimately lose all we have and our soul as well?

2. It is better to use what we have now, investing it in what does not perish, what will not wear out, what cannot be lost or stolen and what will accomplish something of eternal value. We should invest all that we have in declaring the majesty and glory of God’s name!

3. What if we fail to do that? The answer to that question apparently is tied to Jesus’ final illustration of salt. Salt, sodium chloride, does not lose its saltiness. Salt is salty. That’s what salt is. If salt is not salty it is not salt. The good gifts of God are gifts from God; they don’t change into something else. But sometimes those good gifts are mixed with our sinful applications and evaluations of those good gifts and they are corrupted.

4. In Palestine, salt was obtained from the evaporation of water from the Dead Sea, but what remained was not necessarily pure salt. It was a combination of salt and gypsum and some other stuff. The residue after the salt crystals dissolved still looked like salt but it wasn’t salt and didn’t taste like salt. It was worthless – not even worth throwing on the manure pile! That’s pretty much worthless!

5. Animal dung was used for fuel. I read that sometimes it was sprinkled with salt which actually caused it to burn better. But if what was sprinkled was

not salt it didn’t help anything. The non-salt salt was good for nothing. What was Jesus saying?

**Conclusion**

1. Like un-salty salt, so is an uncommitted disciple. There is no value in that.
2. I have two questions for myself and for you as we bring this chapter to a close: First, how serious am I about following Jesus? Second, what would it take to turn me away? There is nothing easy about following Jesus; there is nothing easy about continuing to follow Jesus – but there is nothing more important or valuable than following Jesus.
3. I close with this quote from John MacArthur’s book, *Hard to Believe.* ***The first role of successful merchandising is to give consumers what they want. If they want bigger burgers, make their burgers bigger. Designer bottled water in six fruit flavors? Done. Minivans with ten cup holders? Give then twenty. You’ve got to modify your product if you want to build a market and get ahead of the competition.***

***Today this same consumer mind-set has invaded Christianity. The church service is too long, you say? We’ll shorten it (one pastor guarantees his sermons will never last more than seven minutes!). Too formal? Wear your sweat suit. Too boring? Wait’ll you hear our band!***

***And if the message is too confrontational, or too judgmental, or too exclusive, scary, unbelievable, or too much anything else for your taste, churches everywhere are eager to adjust that message to make you more comfortable. This new version of Christianity makes you a partner on the team, a design consultant on church life, and does away with old-fashioned authority, guilt trips, accountability, and moral absolutes.***

***One suburban church sent out a mailer recently, promising an ‘informal, relaxed, casual atmosphere’, ‘great music from our band’, and that those who come will ‘believe it or not, even have fun.’ That’s all great if you are a coffee house. But anyone who claims to be calling people to the gospel of Jesus with those as his priorities is calling them to a lie.***

***It’s Christianity for consumers: Christianity Lite, the redirection, watering down and misinterpretation of the biblical gospel in an attempt to make it more palatable and popular. It tastes great going down and settles light. It seems to salve your feelings and scratch your itch; it’s custom-tailored to your preferences. But that lightness will never fill you up with the true, saving gospel of Jesus Christ because it is designed by man and not God, and it is hollow and worthless. In fact, it’s worse than worthless, because people who hear the message of Christianity Lite think they’re being rescued from eternal judgment – when in fact, they’re being tragically misled.***

***The true gospel is a call to self-denial. It is not a call to self-fulfillment. And that puts it in opposition to the contemporary evangelical gospel where ministers view Jesus as a utilitarian genie. You rub the lamp, and He jumps out and says you have whatever you want; you give Him your list and He delivers (pp. 1-2).***