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## Counting the Cost

Luke 14:25-33



*The National Monument of Scotland is a memorial in Edinburgh honoring the Scottish soldiers and sailors who died during the Napoleonic Wars. Construction of the monument began in 1826 but was halted in 1829 due to lack of funds. It still stands uncompleted mainly as a monument to the failure of the builders to “count the cost” and as a result has come to be known as “Scotland’s Disgrace”, and “Edinburgh’s Folly”. This is a perfect illustration of Jesus’ teaching in Luke that anyone who wants to follow Him must “count the cost”. Jesus used the illustration to teach what each of us must be willing to give up if we want to follow Him.*

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus teaches us of the necessity to “count the cost” before one commits to follow Him:

***25 Now large crowds were going along with 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.***

***27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.***

**Luke 14:25-33**

Large crowds were following Jesus. All these people were not committed to trusting Him and following His teaching. They were interested. They wanted to see His miracles. But most of them did not believe He was the Son of God who had come to save them from their sin. Jesus challenged the crowd to consider what it meant to be a true disciple – one who genuinely followed Him. He warned them not to make a rash, uninformed, emotional decision to become His follower. He was honest with them up front about what it cost to be a true Christian.

We find elsewhere Jesus taught when those who claimed to be His followers but had not counted the cost faced challenges, trials, and temptations, they turned from following Him (See Matthew 13:1-30). This indicates they had never been genuine followers of Christ.

### The Cost of Following Christ

Jesus laid out three things we must be willing to give up if we want to truly follow Him.

He said ***we must hate our families***. Jesus did not mean we dishonor, disrespect, or neglect our families. It is a relative statement. Jesus is saying that our loyalty to Him must exceed every other relationship, even those that are closest and dearest to us. Jesus teaches us that **HE** must be more important to us than anyone else.

Jesus informs us a true follower ***must carry their own cross***. He tells us that **HE** must be worth anything and everything that we might have to endure because of following Him.

Jesus warns that a real believer must be ***willing to renounce their possessions***. Again, Jesus uses hyperbolic or relative language to get our attention. He doesn’t mean Christians can have no possessions. He teaches that **HE** must be more important to us than our stuff. If He should call us to give up our stuff, we must be willing and ready to do so. We must be possessed by Him and not by our stuff. The British preacher, J.C. Ryle described Jesus’ teaching this way:

*“It does cost something to be a real Christian, according to the standard of the Bible. There are enemies to be overcome, battles to be fought, sacrifices to be made, an Egypt to be forsaken, a wilderness to be passed through, a cross to be carried, a race to be run. Conversion is not putting a man in an arm-chair and taking him easily to heaven. It is the beginning of a mighty conflict, in which it*

costs much to win the victory. Hence arises the unspeakable importance of "counting the cost." (Ryle, J. C. *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots*. P. 139. Kindle Edition.)

Jesus gives us some challenging teaching about what it takes to truly follow Him. He doesn't want us to simply make some emotional decision. He doesn't want us to be followers in name only. He wants us to count the cost before we make a commitment to follow Him.

This may seem to be a negative message. It likely discouraged many of the crowd from following Jesus. If indeed it costs so much to follow Christ, why would one ever make such a commitment to be a Christian? It is because of the treasure we find when we chose to trust and follow Him!

### The Treasure of Following Christ

Here in Luke Jesus describes the cost of following Him – the things we must **give up** if we want to be His disciple. Elsewhere in His teaching and in the rest of the New Testament we find the treasure we **gain** when we follow Christ. I like to call this "Gospel Accounting". In one column we "count the cost" of what we must give up, sacrifice, and endure to follow Christ. In the other column, we consider what we gain when we choose to follow Him.

After the Rich Young Ruler decided not to follow Jesus because of his possessions, we see this conversation between Jesus, Peter, and the disciples;

***28 Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You." 29 Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, 30 but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last, first." Mark 10:28-31***

Jesus says when we count the cost and leave every earthly thing to follow Him, we gain great spiritual blessings in this earthly life and most importantly of all – eternal life!

Jesus also gave us some pointed teaching about what we value and treasure:

***19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21***

Jesus warns not to value temporary, eternally worthless things but rather to treasure what is of eternal value.

Let us see how Paul describes this Gospel Accounting:

***7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith... Philippians 3:7-9***

Three times Paul said he "counted" earthly things to be loss, in fact to be rubbish compared to the value of knowing and following Christ. "Count" is a financial term that means to carefully consider or reckon as one might do with a financial statement or audit. Paul carefully counted the cost and determined the treasure of having his sins forgiven, of being right with God, and of knowing and following Christ were worth more than anything he might ever have to give up in this life.

Jesus taught two parables that describe how we should value Him. He said the Kingdom of God is like a man finding a treasure hidden in a field. He goes and with joy sells everything he has to buy the field. He described the Kingdom as a merchant seeking fine pearls. When he found one of great value he sold all that he had and bought it (See Matthew 13:44-46).

Jesus is our treasure! Jesus is our pearl of great value! We consider His glory, His greatness, and His holiness. We contemplate all He did for us when He came to earth, took on human nature so that He could suffer and die for us, then rose again that we might be right with God and have eternal life. Then our gospel accounting makes it clear – in light of the treasure of knowing and serving Christ, we are joyfully willing to give up everything in order to follow Him!

### A Warning and an Encouragement

Jesus' teaching is both a warning and an encouragement to us. It is a warning to each us who claims to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Have we really counted the cost?

It is also an encouragement to us. None of us value Christ and follow Him completely as we should. This reminds us to consider who He is and all He has done for us so that we might treasure Him more and follow Him more closely every day

#### INTERIM BIBLE STUDY

Monday, October 16

8:00 A.M. House Government Org Conference Room  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Floor East Wing)