

The Cost of Following Jesus

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Date: 24 May 2026

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[0 : 00] So let's turn back to the passage we read in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 14. Luke 14, and looking at verse 25 to the end of the chapter tonight, which is entitled in the ESV Bible.

I have here the cost of discipleship. And I've called this sermon tonight, The Cost of Following Jesus.

The Cost of Following Jesus. As often was the case with Jesus, you see great crowds of people following him.

Not just hundreds, not even thousands, but thousands upon thousands on some occasions following him. Pressing in to hear him, pressing in to touch him, pressing in to ask him for something.

Thousands and thousands of people often following Jesus. And, you know, they're thinking, imagine this church building tonight just packed to the brim.

[1 : 19] Everybody up in the gallery, the people up full, people in all the chairs, people down the aisles, people in the front here, people all around.

We'd be like, wow. If that was happening in our church back in Medvedere as well, I'd be like, whoa, wow. Isn't this wonderful?

Praise God. But Jesus turns around to this huge crowd that's following him.

And he says, if you don't hate your family and yourself, you cannot be my disciple. And if you're not willing to be humiliated, rejected, suffer and die, you cannot be my disciple.

If we were there, we might say, whoa, whoa, whoa, Jesus, steady on. You'll chase them away saying something like that. I'm sure you've heard it yourself, but you hear preachers today and they say things like, come to Jesus and your life will prosper.

[2 : 33] You'll become rich. Come to Jesus and everything will just be wonderful and your problems will all go away. Well, yes, giving your life to Jesus is the best and it's the greatest thing that we can ever do.

And blessings unimaginable are yours now and await you in glory. There's nothing greater that one can do in this life than give his life to the Lord Jesus Christ or give her life to the Lord Jesus Christ. But listen, Jesus never made this a secret. Becoming a follower of Christ will also bring its own troubles to you.

It will bring its own troubles to you. And Jesus is saying to this crowd, are you sure you really want to be my disciple?

Stop right there. You've been following me for some time. Is this really what you want? Have you considered what it might cost you to be my disciple?

[4 : 00] And what does that cost to be a disciple of Jesus? Well, that's what we're going to look in in this passage tonight. What Jesus tells us the cost is to follow in him.

So, I've got kind of one point and then a few sub points after this. The first main point is, Do you truly want to be my disciple?

Do you truly want to be my disciple? So, with this great crowd following Jesus, he stops and he turns and he asks them a number of questions that are designed to answer this question, Do you truly want to be my disciple?

And if we can answer the following three questions with a yes, Jesus says, You can be my disciple. So, question one.

Do you love me more than these? Do you love me more than these? In verse 26, Jesus says, 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.

[5 : 36] Pretty strong words. If you don't hate yourself and your family, your spouse, siblings, you can't be my disciple.

Well, the first thing that we need to take note of is do not take that literally. Do not take that literally. You know, sometimes Jesus says things and he uses figures of speech, I am the door. He doesn't mean he's literally a door, but he means he's the way to heaven. So, Jesus is not saying you must hate your family and yourself.

After all, are we not commanded in the Scriptures to honor our father and mother? And that involves loving them. And are we not to love ourselves too?

Because we're told to love our neighbor as yourself. We're not to hate ourselves. Not to hate literally our mother and father.

[6 : 53] So, what does Jesus mean? Well, in Genesis 29, we're told that Jacob loved Rachel and he hated Leah.

Remember, Jacob worked seven years for Rachel and Laban deceived him and gave him Leah. And then he had to work another seven years to get Rachel.

so it says in Genesis 29 that Jacob loved Rachel and hated Leah. But yet, in Genesis 29, verse 30, it goes on to explain what is meant by that.

We read in verse 30 of Genesis 29, so Jacob went into Rachel also and he loved Rachel more than Leah and served Laban for another seven years.

So, when it says Jacob hated Leah, it doesn't mean he literally hated her. It meant that he loved Rachel more than her.

[8 : 11] And so, we'll find in Matthew chapter 10, Jesus referring to this incident and this teaching again, in Matthew's gospel, chapter 10, verses 37 to 39, it's written there, 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. So, what Jesus is saying when he says if you don't hate yourself and your family, you can't be my disciple, he's saying if you love anyone more than me, you cannot be my disciple.

Why? Why? Because sometimes hostility towards Christ comes from loved ones.

So, when I became a Christian, my sister was raging, fuming, mad that I had become a Christian.

Now they're on gone over to that cult. Sometimes hostility towards Christ comes from loved ones.

[9 : 34] And sometimes following Jesus means being rejected by family because you follow Jesus. We can think of Muslims who convert to Christianity, who put their faith in Jesus Christ.

What happens to them? They're cut off from their family, and their life is in danger. And so Jesus is saying, if you're not serious about following me, when persecution comes from your loved ones, you'll quit on me.

You'll leave me. You will turn against me. That's why you can't be my disciple. You've got to love me more than these. Jesus says, if you truly want to be my disciple, I have to come first, even if that means losing your family.

Jesus says, you don't have to turn away, but some will turn away from you because of Christ. In fact, I was just about a month ago talking to a woman whose father stopped talking to her because she became a Christian.

He no longer communicated with her because she gave her life to Jesus. She loves her father, still loves her father to this day.

[11 : 13] Of course that's hard. Of course that's not easy. But she still continues to follow Jesus. She hasn't given up on Jesus even though he's rejected her for giving her life to Christ.

this is what Jesus means by hate. Her love for the Lord is greater than her love for her family.

Yes, she loves her family very much, but she puts Christ first. Okay, second question that Jesus puts to them.

Are you willing to suffer for my sake? I'm paraphrasing these by the way. Are you willing to suffer for my sake?

Luke 27, whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. will. So, Jesus is saying, are you willing to suffer for my sake?

[12 : 26] Now, when Jesus spoke to the people there, every single person knew what he was talking about. They knew what a cross was.

They knew what crucifixion was. They knew what it meant to carry a cross in a very real and vivid way because they saw it for themselves. They knew exactly what Jesus meant by carrying a cross.

The cross, friends, was not designed to efficiently and kill fastly. it was designed to absolutely humiliate and shame a person and drag out their death.

Much suffering. Those who were crucified were stripped of all dignity and were hung on a cross, nailed to a cross, whipped and beaten before that, hanging across naked, but all to see. and were viewed as the worst of the worst, scum of the earth. And they would hang there, sometimes for days before they would die, in humiliating shame and pain.

[14 : 04] Carrying a cross involved suffering. So Jesus is saying, do you really want to be my disciple? You're going to face humiliation and shame.

People are going to mock you and ridicule you on account of me. Me. people are going to beat you because you follow me.

People are going to imprison you because you follow me. People are going to torture you, murder you for my sake. sake. In John 15, 21, Jesus says, if they did it to me, they will do it to you.

And we have seen that throughout the centuries. and none more violent than in recent centuries.

All the apostles were martyred except John. Peter crucified upside down. Paul, they think, was beheaded. And the pages of history are stained with the blood of Christians.

[15 : 36] But friends, it's not just history. It's not just history. It's happening today. It's happening as we speak. The blood of Christians is crying out to God today.

For example, Christian communities in Nigeria have faced severe persecution over the past decade.

Reports indicate that over 52,000 Christians have been killed since 2009, with thousands of churches and schools destroyed, and millions displaced, primarily in northern and central regions. in 2025 alone, 3,490 Christians were reportedly killed, making Nigeria the country with the highest number of Christian fatalities worldwide.

What's been done about that? What's been done about that? Absolutely nothing. Nobody's shouting about it. There are a number of countries like this we can spend the rest of the evening talking about it.

[17 : 01] In this country, Christians are being arrested for praying. Christians are being arrested for street preaching.

Christians are being fired from their jobs because of their faith. Friends, being a disciple of Jesus, it's not sitting around a campfire singing kumbaya.

Being a disciple of Jesus means carrying a cross, enduring, scorn, mocking, shame, suffering, and death. If you're going to follow Jesus, you have to be all in, is what Jesus is saying.

Question three. Will you make me Lord of all? Will you make me Lord of all? What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

Are you willing to make me Lord of all? That's what it means. verses 33 to 35. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

[18 : 25] Thus far, Jesus has said, if you don't love me more than your family and self, you cannot be my disciple. And if you're not willing to carry a cross for my sake, you cannot be my disciple.

all of this boils down to is this. Are you willing to meet me Lord of all? Are you willing to renounce everything for my sake?

again, Jesus is saying that you don't have to get rid of everything to be a Christian, but if it came to it, for Christ's sake, would you be willing to walk away from everything, to still follow him?

to lose everything if it came to that, would you be willing to renounce all for him? To be a disciple of Jesus means we must make him Lord of all.

There's no such thing as cheap grace. Sure, I'll add Jesus to my life. I'll get my weak compartment here. I'll say a prayer.

[19 : 57] No, either Jesus is Lord of all your life, or he's Lord of none of your life. It's all or nothing.

For Jesus says here in verse 34 to 35, salt is good. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

It's of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It's thrown away. He has ears to hear. Let him hear. Jesus is saying, if we have neither love nor commitment to him, we cannot be his disciples.

us. We're like the salt that's lost its saltiness and is thrown out. What causes us to lose our saltiness?

One word, unbelief. Unbelief. we do not trust God that if we renounce all for him, he will take care of us or provide for us the things we need.

[21 : 22] need. We do not believe that if we lose everything for Christ's sake, that he himself will be more, more, more, more than adequate for us.

J.I. Parker says, we feel that the risks of out-and-out discipleship are too great for us to take. In other words, we are not persuaded of the adequacy of God to provide for all the needs of those who launch out wholeheartedly onto the deep sea of unconditional living in obedience to the call of Christ.

Christ. To be a disciple of Christ requires us to put all our trust in him, that he's more enough for what I need, for everything, in life and in death.

He's my hope. Well, I want just to conclude with my second point, which is simply this.

Think about it. Because Jesus gave two parables to illustrate the same point. Think about it. Do you really want to be my disciple?

[22 : 58] Then sit down and think about it first. Think about it. So Jesus gives this illustration. If you were going to build a tower, you would sit down and think about it.

You would work out if you had enough money to complete the project before you started it.

Because it would be foolish not to. To launch into something without thought.

And making the same point, Jesus speaks of a king going to war. He would sit down with his commanders and advisors to find out if they could win the battle against a much larger force or should they seek peace.

And again, to go without war, without thinking it through, would be foolish. So Jesus is saying to this great crowd that's following him, do you really want to be my disciple?

Stop for a moment. Sit down and think about this for a moment. To be my disciple, you have to hate your spouse, your family, yourself, you have to carry a cross, you have to renounce everything for me.

[24 : 21] Now think about that for a moment. Do you still want to be my disciple? Friends, that is called counting the cost. Counting the cost.

Jesus is not trying to discourage people from following, but he's trying to tell you what it's going to involve if you follow me. But just as we must count the cost of what it involves in following Jesus, we must also count what we'll get in return for following Jesus.

Don't forget about that either. Because to have Christ is worth everything. Because he said it himself.

What do you profit if you gain the whole world? you get it all, but you lose your soul at the end.

What's it profit you?

What did all that profit you? Absolutely nothing. On the 7th of January 1996, in my cousin's house in Plopton, I thought about everything I was going to lose and suffer.

[25 : 54] I can't really say that word suffer compared to my brothers and sisters and other places. All I was going to lose for following Jesus Christ. My girlfriend's gone.

She's the atheist. This is going to, some of these guys may longer want to be my friends. Thought about it all. about it all. I thought I thought about it all.

But then I thought about this too. What will I lose if I don't give my life to Jesus? And one of the things God was speaking to me as a young man was, do not harden your heart.

And I was aware I was hardening my heart. And sometimes I'd get off. No, because I wound up going down another. No, I'll stop there. I was aware I was hardening my heart.

And I thought to myself, what if God stops speaking to me? Or what if I don't hear him anymore?

The Bible doesn't just throw out empty words.

[27 : 07] It says, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. Why? Because we can, there's a danger of harden our hearts towards God. We know the gospel inside out.

We know the story. We know how it goes. Don't harden your heart. So there, in that room, my cousin's house, I went on my knees and I prayed silently in my heart.

I started asking Jesus to forgive me. I started confessing some sins I could think of. I asked him to save me, to have mercy on me, to come into my life and to change me.

And I got up that late afternoon in January and I walked into Kyle Free Church for the first time since I was a young lad.

And by his grace, I'm following him today. You think it's your own strength, but I wouldn't be following him today. Yes, there are challenges, but Jesus gives you the grace grace, and he will help you every single step of the way.

[28 : 41] What will you lose for giving your life to Jesus? But what will you lose if you don't give your life to Jesus?

Paul sums it up like this, and it's just amazing this verse because you know Paul suffered a lot, the Apostle Paul. beating stonings and imprisonments the lot for being a follower of Jesus.

And he writes in 2 Corinthians 4, 17-18, for this light, light, momentary affliction.

Paul. For this light, momentary affliction, that's how Paul sees it in comparison to eternity. this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen.

For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal, forever, with no end. so Jesus is saying, are you ready to become my disciple?

[30 : 05] Yes, it's not going to be easy, but I'm going to help you every step of the way. I'm going to be with you every step of the way. I don't promise you an easy path, but I promise to help you.

Do you want to be my disciple? Will you follow me? Will you commit to me? Will you renounce all for my sake? Let's pray.

Lord, you never promised us that the Christian life would be an easy life. You told us plainly, you told us truthfully. And we will have our challenges for following you.

the world, sin, the devil, but you've also promised us, Jesus, great glories, great riches, now and in the future.

You've promised to take us through it and to take us across the finish line. Because who would make it without you, Jesus?

[31 : 28] We have stumbled, we have faltered, we have failed many times, Lord, but you have picked us up. And you have set us on the path again.

And we thank you for that. And I pray for anyone here tonight who's thinking about becoming a Christian, but who's worried about the cost.

Lord, you told us to think about it, but you've also warned us of a greater cost in not following you.

So I pray, Lord, tonight that there's anyone here who's thinking about giving their life to you, surrendering all to you, that God, your spirit will work in their heart now and they will surrender all to you.

And those of us who have been following, maybe we've fallen off the road somehow. We're turning up in church, we're doing the things, but in our hearts, we're kind of far from you.

Lord, I pray that you will restore us, that you, as the good shepherd you are, will bring us back beside still waters, bring us beside green pastures, and that you will restore our soul again.

[32 : 48] And so Lord, I pray for mighty works in the kingdom of God in our lives this evening, that will last from now unto eternity.

For this I ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Our final psalm then is psalm 84 verses 7 to 12 on page 339.

Amen. So we'll sing verses 7 to the end, to 12.

So they from strength and weeded go still forward unto strength, until in siren they appear before the Lord at length. Let's sing this to God's praise. verse 7.

Lord, a glad Lord, God of hosts, my prayer hear, O Jacob's God, give ear.

[34 : 46] See God, our shield, look on the face of thine anointed ear.

For in thy course one day excels a thousand rather in my God's house will thy keep adore!
and dwell in tent of sin. For God the Lord's a sound and shield, will grace and glory give, and will withhold no good from them that uprightly do live.

O thou that art the Lord of hosts, that man is truly blessed, who by a sure red confidence on thee alone doth rest.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen. Amen.