

The Truth Hurts

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this evening, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, in the Gospel according to Luke, Luke chapter 14.

And if we read again at verse 25. Luke chapter 14, at verse 25.

Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned, this is Jesus, and he turned and said to them, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. And then again in verse 33. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

I'm sure we've all heard of or even used the phrase, The truth hurts.

[1 : 20] The truth hurts. And the truth about the truth is that the truth does hurt. Because, as you all know, we don't like being told the truth about ourselves.

We don't like being told the truth that we're getting old. We don't like being told the truth that we might be putting on weight. We don't like being told the truth that, well, we don't like, we don't look nice in what we're wearing.

And one which we can certainly all relate to, me especially, we don't like being told when we're wrong. We don't like being told the truth about ourselves because the truth hurts.

The truth hurts. But, you know, sometimes the truth is necessary. Sometimes we need to be brutally honest. Sometimes we need to just cut to the chase and stop beating around the bush and just say it like it is.

Because even though the truth will hurt, the truth is necessary. And that's what we see in this passage. Jesus tells us the truth about discipleship.

[2 : 29] Because discipleship, it isn't about following a church or a creed or even confessing a confession. Discipleship is all about following Jesus.

It's about being one of his disciples. And as you know, the word disciple means learner. The word disciple means learner. Where Jesus is your teacher.

His word is your school book. And you are his student. You are his pupil. You're a learner who needs to be told the truth about discipleship.

And sometimes the truth hurts. And it hurts because, as Jesus says in this passage, in order to be one of his disciples, it will cost you everything.

It will cost you everything. Jesus says that discipleship requires 100% commitment. Discipleship requires 100% commitment.

[3 : 28] Because Christianity, as you know, it's not a pick-and-mix religion. Where we can pick and choose bits of the Bible that we like and want to adhere to. And just, well, leave the rest.

Nor is Christianity an offshore Christianity. Where you can have two weeks on and then two weeks off. No, Jesus, as you know, he wants dedicated disciples.

He wants committed Christians. He wants motivated members. Jesus wants disciples who love the Lord and who love the lost. Jesus wants disciples who love the Lord and love the lost.

My friend, Jesus is saying to us tonight, and this is something I need to be reminded of. That's why I'm preaching it tonight. This is something I need to be reminded of.

If you want to be one of my disciples, then it will cost you everything. If you want to be one of my disciples, it will cost you everything.

[4 : 27] And sometimes, as his disciples, we don't like being reminded of that fact. But the truth hurts. The truth hurts. And so let's consider Jesus' hard-hitting truths in these verses.

And I want us to consider it under three headings. Where we see Jesus calling the crowds, considering the cross, and then counting the cost. Jesus is calling the crowds, considering the cross, and counting the cost.

So first of all, calling the crowds. We're told in verse 25, Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, 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.

Now all four of our gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they all highlight that the crowds followed Jesus. The crowds followed Jesus.

Because, as you know, as Jesus moved from, he moved throughout the towns and villages of Galilee and further afield, there were crowds who followed him. Now it wasn't just a crowd.

[5 : 42] The gospel writers emphasized that there were crowds. Crowds of people followed Jesus everywhere he went. And as they followed him, they all witnessed Jesus perform miracles.

They witnessed him preach sermons. And they also witnessed him pastor with compassion. But the crowds that followed Jesus, they followed him because at that time, Jesus was the new phenomenon.

Following Jesus was, you could say, the new fad and fashion of the day. Everyone was doing it. In today's language, Jesus had gone viral. Everyone was following Jesus.

Everyone was going to see this miracle worker. Everyone was gathering to hear this preacher who had authority. Everyone was following Jesus, and they were following him in the crowds.

And human nature, being what it was or what it is still, the crowd was attracting an even greater crowd. But for many people back then, as it is now, it was easy to just go along in the crowd.

[6 : 46] It was easy to follow Jesus in the crowd. It was easy to blend into the crowd. It was easy to get lost in the crowd. And for that reason, the gospel writers always saw the crowds as a negative thing.

They always saw the crowds as a negative thing. Because, as you know, my friend, Jesus isn't into crowds. Jesus is never into the numbers game of counting church attendance or views on YouTube or likes on Facebook.

Jesus isn't into crowds. Because, as you all know, there are crowds in hell. Jesus wants disciples. And that's what he reminds us here.

Jesus wants disciples. Jesus wants individuals to come to him. To come to him and to confess him as Lord and to commit their life to him.

Jesus wants committed Christians. And, you know, the thing is, Jesus would far rather one committed Christian than 10,000 people just going along in the crowd.

- [7 : 54] Because being part of the crowd doesn't actually count for anything. What counts is discipleship. What counts is wholehearted commitment to Jesus Christ.
- But as Luke describes the crowds who were following Jesus, he says that they were great crowds. They were massive crowds. They were swelling crowds. And they were just going along with Jesus.
- The crowds were just going along with Jesus. But who was in this crowd? Who would have been present in this crowd that followed Jesus?
- Well, we know that there would have been those in the crowd who were committed. Because we know that 11 out of the 12 disciples, they were committed to Jesus. So there were those who were committed in the crowd.
- They had left their tax booths and also their farms. And they had begun following Jesus. They had left everything to follow Jesus. They were committed to following Jesus.
- [8 : 51] And they were in the crowd. And just like the crowd here or at home this evening, there are those who are committed to following Jesus. But also in this crowd, there would have been those who are curious.
- So there were those who are committed, but there are also those who are curious. Because wherever Jesus went, and whenever Jesus preached or performed miracles, there were those in the crowds who were curious.
- They were interested. They were intrigued by Jesus. They liked to hear Jesus preach. They liked to see Jesus perform miracles. But they didn't really know who he was.
- They didn't understand who he was. And if you asked them who Jesus actually was, some of them would have just said, Well, that's John the Baptist. He's been raised from the dead.
- Others would have said, Well, that's Elijah. He's come back from heaven. Others would have said, Well, no, he's just one of the prophets. He's just another prophet like John the Baptist. But whoever Jesus was, they were curious.
- [9 : 52] They were curious, but they were unwilling to confess him as the Christ. They were curious about Jesus, but unwilling to confess him as the Christ.
- Again, the same can be said of this crowd here or at home this evening. Because there are some of you in this crowd who are, I'm sure, certainly curious about Jesus.
- But maybe that's all it is. That's as far as it goes. You're interested in Jesus. You're intrigued by this Jesus. You enjoy coming to church. You enjoy maybe even some of you watching online tonight.
- You enjoy it. You enjoy reading the Bible. You enjoy hearing the gospel. But that's all it is. Because when it comes to Jesus, you're curious. But you're unwilling to confess him as Lord over your life.
- So there were those in the crowd who were committed. There were those in the crowd who were curious. There were those in the crowd who were also confused. And they were confused because in the crowd there were these Pharisees.
- [10 : 57] And as you know, the Pharisees, they knew their Bible. They had grown up reading the Bible. If you were to give a modern equivalent, they were those who had been brought up with family worship from a young age.
- They went to Sunday school. They learned the catechism. They attended public worship on the Lord's Day. They understood what religious righteousness was. And yet they still weren't committed to following Jesus because they were still confused about the way of salvation.

Because the Pharisees in the crowd, like the Pharisees maybe in this crowd or at home this evening, they think that their knowledge of the Bible or their attendance in church or their religious righteousness is enough to save them.

They were confused. They were confused. And so when Jesus is calling the crowds, he's calling those who were committed, those who were curious, those who were confused, and also those who were counterfeit.

There were those in the crowds who were counterfeit. And we know that because Judas was there. Judas was there. And I'm sure that there are many in the crowds, maybe even in this crowd here or at home, who think just like Judas thought.

[12 : 10] Where you think that by just being in the crowd, it's enough to save you. You think that by just being in the crowd and hearing Jesus and seeing Jesus and listening to Jesus, that it's enough for salvation.

But like Judas was wrong, you are wrong in thinking that. You're wrong in thinking that just by being in the crowd, it's enough to save you.

Because those in the crowds who were curious, confused, and counterfeit, they needed to be committed. They needed to be committed. That's why Jesus is calling the crowds.

He stands before those in the crowd who were committed and curious and confused and counterfeit. And he says to them, as it is in the beginning of verse 26, if anyone comes to me, if anyone comes to me, he says.

Despite their misunderstanding of the gospel, doesn't matter who they are, whether committed, curious, confused, or counterfeit, Jesus issues the free offer of the gospel to them. And he says, if anyone comes to me.

[13 : 20] Jesus' offer of the gospel, his free offer of salvation is, as you know, to whosoever. Whosoever. The call to discipleship is to whosoever.

Whether you're committed, curious, confused, or counterfeit, Jesus urges you to come. And notice Jesus says, if anyone. If anyone comes to me.

If anyone comes to me. He doesn't say if anyone comes to a church service. Or if anyone comes to church. Or if anyone comes to a particular denomination.

Or if anyone comes to hear a particular preacher. Or if anyone says a prayer that's written down for them that they have to repeat. No, Jesus says, if anyone comes to me.

Jesus says, if anyone comes to me. And you know, my friend, whether here or at home, this is the call of the gospel. Whether, wherever you are tonight.

[14 : 19] Jesus says, you must come to Christ. And to Christ alone. If anyone comes to me. Because that's the calling of the crowds.

That's the calling Jesus has put upon your life and my life tonight. If anyone comes to me. And you know, the thing, the way that this is worded.

My Christian friend, this is something we need to remember. The way this is worded is, if anyone keeps coming to me. If anyone keeps coming to me.

It's not just a one-off event. We have to keep coming to Jesus. That's what discipleship is. We keep coming to Jesus. And that's the calling of the crowds. Jesus' calling that he's put upon our life tonight is, if anyone keeps coming to me.

If anyone keeps coming to me. But you know, in calling the crowds, Jesus emphasized the importance of considering the cross. Which is what we see secondly. So calling the crowds and then considering the cross.

[15 : 28] Considering the cross. Look again at verse 25. It says, Now great crowds accompanied him. And he turned and said to them, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. And you know, this statement from the lips of the Savior, it's shocking.

We have to admit that. It's absolutely shocking. But it's meant to be shocking. That's why Jesus said it. It's meant to be shocking because to say that we must hate all our family ties, our wife or husband, our father or mother, our children and brothers and sisters, to say that we must hate all our family ties in order to be a disciple of Jesus, as you know, well, that seems to go against the grain of everything that Jesus ever taught.

Because was it not Jesus who said in the Sermon on the Mount, Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. Was it not Jesus who emphasized to the rich young man, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, he said, You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.

And was it not Jesus who taught his disciples, Love one another as I have loved you. By all this, by this, that all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

[17 : 10] And was it not Jesus who said all those things? Was it not Jesus who emphasized love and loving one another and loving God and loving him? It was Jesus who said those things.

So why is he saying this? Why does Jesus say in verse 26, If anyone comes to me and does not hate, hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

It's a shocking statement, isn't it? But you know, we need to be careful but clear. We need to be careful but clear, because this isn't a contradiction.

Jesus isn't contradicting himself by this shocking statement. Instead, Jesus is clarifying himself by this shocking statement.

Jesus, of course, he's trying to get our attention. And he does so very, very cleverly. He has our attention. He's telling us to hate other people.

[18 : 16] He's got our attention. But then Jesus, he uses a negative emphasis in order to give a positive encouragement. Jesus uses a negative emphasis in order to give a positive encouragement.

Jesus emphasizes the word hate, because as soon as you hear it, you know it's a shocking statement. If anyone comes to me and does not hate. So Jesus emphasizes the word hate in order to encourage the need for love.

Jesus emphasizes the word hate in order to encourage the opposite, the need for love. And what Jesus is saying is that in order to be one of his disciples, we must love Jesus more deeply and more earnestly and more sincerely than all of our family ties.

That's what he says. We must love Jesus more deeply, more earnestly, and more sincerely than all of our family ties. We must love Jesus so much.

So much, says Jesus, and this is where it's hard to get your head around it, so much that it's as if you hate your family. And you know, it's quite a statement when you actually think about it.

[19 : 40] But what Jesus is emphasizing is that if you want to be his disciple, if you want to be committed to Christ, if you want to follow Jesus wholeheartedly, Jesus is saying, I must be first.

I must be first, and everyone and everything else must be second. I must be first and foremost. That's what Jesus says.

Jesus says, he must be primary. He must have the priority. He must take precedence. He must have the preeminence. I must be first.

Everyone and everything else has to be second. Whether it's family, friends, children, work, money, possessions, hobbies, even our wishes and wants, our dreams and desires, all of it, he says, all of it must take second place.

It must take second place and fall in line after Jesus. Because Jesus says, if it doesn't, if it doesn't, you cannot.

[20 : 51] And he repeats this phrase three times. You cannot, you cannot, you cannot be my disciple. You know, my friend, my Christian friend and my unconverted friend, it's hard hitting, isn't it?

But the truth hurts. And it's a truth I'm taking to myself. The truth hurts. Because the cost of discipleship is that we must be willing to offend our family and our friends before we offend Jesus.

We must be willing to offend those around us before we are willing to offend Jesus. And of course, that can be a painful experience. It can be painful to put Jesus first above our family and above our friends.

It can be painful to put Jesus first. But that's why Jesus puts it in perspective in verse 27. He says in verse 27, whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Jesus says that our biggest obstacle to discipleship is not your mother or your father, your wife or your husband, it's not even your children or your relatives. No, Jesus says the biggest obstacle of discipleship is me.

[22 : 13] Self. The biggest obstacle of discipleship is self. That's why I'm preaching this to myself before I preach it to you. The biggest obstacle of discipleship is self.

Because in order to be a disciple of Jesus, Jesus says, self must die. Self must die. The only way, and the only way to die to self, says Jesus, is to take up your cross and follow me.

But you know, for someone in the first century, those, the crowds who were present hearing this, hearing this shocking statement of Jesus, when they heard the words cross, or the word, take up your cross, they immediately knew Jesus was not talking about a piece of jewelry around someone's neck.

They weren't talking about a figure of speech about bearing the crosses or having to bear this cross in your life. They knew that the cross was a symbol of submission. The whole nation of Israel knew it because they were under Rome's power.

They knew that the cross was a symbol of Rome's power and Rome's authority. And the cross was a symbol of Rome's terror. That's how they terrified people. Crucifixion was the most excruciating form of capital punishment.

[23 : 31] And everyone in Israel knew that when someone took up their cross, they were not coming back from it. They were taking it up and they were carrying it to death.

And by carrying their cross, just like Jesus had to carry it through the streets of Jerusalem until Simon of Cyrene took it over from him, that signified, the carrying of the cross signified submission, where you were submitting and surrendering to the power and authority and even terror of the Roman Empire.

But you know what Jesus is saying here is that in order to be his disciple, you must take up your cross. You must signify submission, not to Rome.

You must signify submission. You must submit and surrender under his authority, under his kingship, under his lordship. You must die to self, he says.

You must die to the applause of men and the approval of the world. You must abdicate the throne of your heart. You must humbly submit and surrender yourself under the authority of King Jesus.

[24 : 44] You must see that you are nothing in the sight of the greatness of God. And you know, my Christian friend, let's not fall into the trap that, the trap of thinking that Jesus is just speaking to the unconverted.

He's not just speaking to the unconverted about the importance of discipleship. And as we said, the crowds here, they contain those who are curious, confused, counterfeit, and those who are committed.

Because those who are committed, we need to be reminded of this again and again. We need to be reminded that if anyone comes to me, we need to keep coming to him.

The crowd contains Christian friends and unconverted friends. Therefore, Jesus is calling us, all of us, here and at home, he's calling us to carry the cross.

And we're to keep carrying it. We're to carry the cross daily. It's not a one-off event in our lives that we did 30 or 40 or maybe 50 years ago. It's a daily struggle.

[25 : 53] And let's never pretend to an unconverted friend that the Christian life is easy. It is a daily struggle. Isn't it?

It's a daily struggle. But we have to keep going because that's what we're called to do. We're called to take up our cross daily and follow Jesus.

And Jesus says, in order to be my disciple, in order to take up your cross and follow me, in order to submit and surrender your heart, your life, your will, Jesus says to us, stubbornness must go and self must die.

That's hard-hitting, isn't it? Stubbornness must go and self must die. You know, it was my good friend, J.C. Ryle.

I can't wait to meet him in heaven. All these things he has said. He said, if you will not carry the cross, you will never wear the crown.

[26 : 56] If you will not carry the cross, you will never wear the crown. But you know, Jesus, he doesn't want us to be half-hearted in our commitment. And sometimes I feel that that's what I am.

I'm half-hearted in my commitment. That's why he teaches us the importance of counting the cost. Counting the cost. My friend, with Jesus, the truth hurts.

But with Jesus, the truth is spoken lovingly. It's always spoken lovingly. And in this passage, we see Jesus, he's calling the crowds. He's telling us to consider the cross.

And now he says, count the cost. Or to count the cost. That's what we see lastly. Look at verse 28. For which of you desiring to build a tower does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish.

[27 : 59] Or what king going out to encounter another king in war will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000.

And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

You know, when Jesus presents the hard-hitting truths about discipleship, we have to understand from the outset, he's not trying to put us off. Jesus was the most loving man who ever lived.

He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And so when Jesus says this, he's not trying to put us off. He's not trying to discourage or deter you from taking up your cross and following Jesus.

But the thing is, Jesus does want you to know what's required of you as his disciple. And as you know, with Jesus, there are no hidden agendas.

[29 : 02] There's no small print. that you might miss. No, Jesus, he just puts the truth out there, even though the truth will hurt. And we might not like hearing the truth.

We might sometimes just want to switch off to the truth. If you're at home, maybe you want to turn the volume down to the truth. But the truth is necessary, even though the truth hurts.

Because sometimes we need to just cut to the chase, as we said, and stop beating about the bush and just say it like it is. And that's what Jesus does because he says that he doesn't want half-hearted disciples.

He wants whole-hearted disciples. Jesus doesn't want lazy or lethargic or laid-back or lukewarm learners. He wants lively and loving learners.

Jesus doesn't want poor and passive witnesses. Jesus wants passionate and practical witnesses. Jesus doesn't want careless and casual Christianity in our lives.

[30 : 00] Jesus wants Christ-centered and committed Christianity in our lives. And this is the thing, and I'm saying it to myself, my friend, I'm saying it to myself, it costs to be a committed Christian.

It costs to be an earnest evangelist. It costs to be a dedicated disciple. And Jesus says to us, it'll cost you everything. It'll cost you everything.

Your life might not be the way you wanted it to be. That's why it'll cost you everything. But if you want to be a lazy and lethargic learner, says Jesus, if you want a lax and lukewarm view of the Lord's day and the Lord's cause, if you want to be a poor and passive witness that lives like the world and pleases self, if you want this pick-and-mix religion that picks and chooses bits of the Bible and wants to adhere to some things and abandon other things, if you want an offshore Christianity with two weeks on and two weeks off, says Jesus, if you want to be a church member on paper but not in practice, if you want to be a Sunday morning saint but not a Sunday evening sinner, if you want a casual and careless Christianity from your couch at home, and if you want to be a distant and disconnected disciple from all the Lord's people, then Jesus says to us plainly, don't bother.

Don't bother. bother. And it's hard-hitting, isn't it? Jesus says, if you're not going to count the cost of discipleship, then don't bother.

If your Christianity is not going to affect your entire life, don't bother. If your Christianity is not going to shape the way you live, the way you think, the way you speak, then don't bother.

[31 : 51] If your Christianity is not going to affect where you go and what you do and how you live, Jesus says, don't bother. And yes, we all know that we are a work in progress, we are a process of sanctification, but Jesus is reminding us the importance of following him, because if our Christianity is not going to affect our worship and our witness and our work, Jesus says to us, don't bother.

If your Christianity is not going to make you consider your character, your conduct, and your conversation as a Christian, then don't bother becoming a disciple.

And you know, we might think, well, that's a bit harsh, Jesus. Tone it down a bit, water it down at least, so more people will adhere to what you're saying. But my friend, the truth hurts.

The truth hurts. And what's clear is that Jesus would far rather a committed Christian than someone, as we said earlier, just went along in the crowd.

He would far rather a committed Christian than someone who just went along in the crowd. And Jesus says to us, failure to count the cost would be foolish. Failure to count the cost would be foolish.

[33 : 08] Because he says to us, well, who would build a tower? Who would build a tower without first counting the cost? Or a modern equivalent, who would build a house without first counting the cost?

There are so many things to factor in. The main one being, can I afford it? If I start this building project, will I be able to finish it? Will I be able to finish what I've started?

And what Jesus is saying is that when it comes to being his disciples, we need to sit down and really think what it is to follow Jesus. Because we can't just rush into it and then drop out halfway, says Jesus.

But at the same time, we can't put it off. That will be too late. My friend, Jesus, he isn't trying to put you off becoming one of his disciples.

He wants you to know what you're getting yourself into. And that's important. Because being a disciple is a serious business. And it requires commitment.

[34 : 13] Now, I know that for many of you here, and also at home, you're aware that becoming a Christian is a serious business. You know what it requires. You know that it requires commitment.

And maybe for you, you might be thinking, well, what if I start but I can't finish? I've heard so many people saying that to me. What if I start but I can't finish? What if I become a Christian and make a commitment and make a profession and then fall away?

I don't want to let people down, they say. I don't want to let the church down. I don't want to let Jesus down. But my friend, that's why Jesus tells us to count the cost. Because if you're serious about committing your life to Jesus Christ, you will count the cost.

You will take up your cross and you will follow Jesus. My friend, it will cost you self to come to Jesus. It will cost you your soul to stay away from him.

It will cost you self to come to Jesus. But it will cost you your soul to stay away from him. That's what Jesus meant when he said in verse 31, 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.

[35 : 36] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

And you know, in this illustration, Jesus, he doesn't emphasize the importance of finishing. Jesus emphasizes the importance of surviving. Because when Jesus is not on the throne of our heart, we are, well, we think that we are the kings and queens of our own life and our own destiny.

But like the king with ten thousand soldiers going out to fight against a king with twenty thousand soldiers, you might, you must count the cost of warring against King Jesus.

You must count the cost of warring against King Jesus. Because King Jesus, as you know, he is the stronger king. He has all authority in heaven and on earth.

He has power to destroy both body and soul in hell. Therefore, the simple, the smart, and the sensible thing to do, as Jesus is alluding to here, is to concede.

[36 : 50] To concede to King Jesus, to confess him as Lord, and to consider terms of peace. You know, someone once said, if Jesus is not Lord over all, then he is not Lord at all.

If Jesus is not Lord over all our life, every area, then he is not Lord at all. My friend, it will cost yourself to come to Jesus, but it will cost you your soul to stay away from him.

And you know what discipleship all boils down to with us, whether unconverted friend or Christian friend, what's more important to you? What's more important to you?

It's Jesus first. It's what's more important, yourself or your soul? That's why Jesus asked the question, what will the prophet a man if he will gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul?

What's more important to us? Our self? Our self? Or our soul? It will cost yourself to come to Jesus, but it will cost you your soul to stay away from him.

[38 : 05] You know, we're nearly done. I'm nearly finished. You know, so many people ask me during the coronavirus pandemic, they asked me, what do you think the Lord is saying to us?

We saw a death toll reach hundreds of thousands. What is the Lord saying to us? We saw people living in lockdown. What is the Lord saying to us? We saw lives changed, families torn apart.

What is the Lord saying to us? My friend, what the Lord is saying to us is what he has been saying to us for 2,000 years. Count the cost. Count the cost.

Jesus says, if any one of you does not renounce all that he has, cannot be my disciple. Jesus is saying to us, as he's been saying for 2,000 years, we must come to him and keep coming to him.

That's the call of the Christian church, to come to him and to keep coming to him. And you know, my friend, the truth is, the truth hurts.

[39 : 18] But sometimes the truth is necessary. Sometimes we need to be brutally honest. Sometimes we need to just cut to the chase, stop beating around the bush and say it like it is, because the truth is necessary.

And you know, what we've been reminded this evening, what I'm being reminded this evening, is that it will cost me self to come to Jesus. It will cost me my soul to stay away from him.

If we will not carry the cross, my friend, we will never wear the crown. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Yourself or your soul? May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Now let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to Thee for Thy truth.

And we know that Thy Word is truth. Thy Word even assures us that the Lord's sanctifying us through that truth. And we confess even this evening as we sit under Thy Word that the truth hurts.

[40 : 39] It is a painful reminder to know what we are and what we are not. That we are sinners and yet we need to keep following this Savior. And we confess, O Lord, when we stray, when we backslide, when we wander, and even when we're lost.

We confess, O Lord, that we need to come and take up our cross daily and and follow Jesus. This Jesus who has done everything for us. He has made that new and living way.

And He calls us to follow Him. O Lord, we give thanks for Thy truth. A truth that is lovingly put before us. And Lord, may we apply it to ourselves.

That Thy Spirit would apply it in our lives. That we would not neglect it or think that it doesn't apply to me. But Lord, that we would take it to heart. And that we might grow in grace.

And in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Lord, do us good, we pray. Bless us in our being together. Remember us in the week that lies ahead. A week that is unknown to any of us.

[41 : 46] But we give thanks that we began our week in the Lord's house. On the Lord's day. Coming around Thy Word. Bless us then, we pray. Keep us ever looking to Jesus.

The author and the finisher of our faith. Go before us for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening by singing again in Psalm 119.

Psalm 119. It's on page 404 in the Scottish Psalter. We're singing from verse 57 down to the verse 60.

Psalm 119 at verse 57. Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord. I have resolved and said that I would keep Thy holy word.

With my whole heart I did entreat Thy face and favor free. According to Thy gracious word, be merciful to me. Down to the verse marked 60 of Psalm 119.

[42 : 59] We must stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise. Amen. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord, I've always long answered that I would give Thy holy word.

With my whole heart I didn't lead Thy face unfavorably.

According to Thy gracious word, be merciful to me.

I thought upon my former ways, And in my life will drive.

Unto Thy testimonies view, My feet enter with Thine.

[44 : 57] I did not save or linger long, As lost Thy slothful hour.

But it's to be Thy lost to keep, Myself I did prepare.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.