

The Cost of True Discipleship

We live in a world where many profess to be Christians but their lifestyles suggest otherwise. People say they are Christians but there is no change in their lifestyles or behavior. They are not prepared to make any sacrifices or adjustments.

St. Luke 14:25-33: And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

The cross is an instrument of death and humiliation. Taking up one's cross and following Christ implies going to one's death.

As followers of Christ, we need to count the cost and be willing to pay the price. Serving the Lord is costly. This modern day "cheap grace Christianity" makes people feel good because they attend church, but it will not save them.

Nowadays you cannot tell some Christians from non-Christians, due to worldliness infiltrating the Church. The Bible says in St. Matthew 7:20 "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." We may not be asked to forsake all, but we must be prepared to do so. The patriarch Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son to God and he believed that God was able to raise him from the dead and restore his life.

St. Luke gives an account of three half hearted followers that came to Jesus: St. Luke 9:57-62: And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said. Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Nothing more is heard of the first would-be follower after Jesus spoke to him. The second man made an excuse because he had something to do first. His request may have seemed reasonable, but it did not mean that his father was anywhere near to death. It may have taken years, but he saw no urgency in responding to the Master's call. He wanted to do so in his own time.

What are excuses that some people use today?

1. Some feel that they have to sort out their lives.
2. Some feel that they have to indulge in the world.
3. Some feel that they have to get a good education.
4. Some feel that they have to marry first.

We cannot put anything before God. He must always be our number One priority. The third would-be follower was prepared to follow Jesus, but only on his own terms. He came with conditions. His attitude said "Let me go back to the old lifestyle for a while." When we come to God we have to get rid of the reverse gear, as the song goes, "the world behind me, the cross before me, no turning back." Sometimes, like these individuals we make the decision to follow Jesus, but we are halfhearted in our service to Him. We get our priorities all wrong. We expend all our efforts to acquire worldly things and neglect the things of God.

Our Advice to Members states: "As a member, you count one and should attend every regular service as far as possible. Remember no one can fill your place and the service will be that much hindered without your presence."

Some members attend church on a Sunday and neglect midweek services and prayer meetings. There is a growing trend to slacken our attendance at Church services when we are undertaking academic study. It is God who blesses us with the ability to study. When we continually miss out on Church services, our inner spiritual man slowly dies.

To be a true disciple of Christ's means to follow His teachings whatever the cost. When we come to the Church we accepted the teachings of the Bible. If our circumstances change, the teachings still stand. If our husbands or wives leave us, we still have to abide by the teaching against Divorce and Re-marriage evil. We cannot walk away and say " ... This is an hard saying; who can hear it." (St. John 6:60).

St. Matthew 16:24-26: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Many come to God with their own agendas and have no intention of surrendering their self-will. Until we are fully surrendered to the Lord, we will not know true peace. One song sums up total surrender to God perfectly:

Let the Lord have His way, in your life every day, there's no rest, there's no peace till the Lord has His way. Place your life in His hands, rest secure in His plans; let the Lord, let the Lord' have His way.

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