

MEET YOURSELF IN LUKE'S PARABLES
Part 8: Parables on the Cost of Discipleship
(Luke 14:25-35)

INTRO - Remember Charles Dickens' classic novel "Great Expectations"? In this passage using parables our Lord tells those who claim Him some of His great expectations. In His teaching we find some of the most demanding words in all the Bible. They're penetrating, exacting, and tough. Jesus' words in this passage are not for the unbelievers. They are expectations of believers. Theme is true discipleship. He tells how to live for Him and what it means to follow Him. Sadly, most Western world Christians are content-rich, but commitment-poor.

MAIN TRUTH: Following Christ costs everything.

SETTING: Headed to Jerusalem and death (9:51; 13:33)

CONEXT: 14:1-24 confronted danger of selfishness (lack sympathy, humility, kindness, availability). Now vv. 25-35 a call to selflessness and full surrender to Christ.

I. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR DISCIPLESHIP (14:25-27, 33 *cannot*)

- A. (vv.25-26) *LOVE THE LORD SUPREME* – Our Jesus requires His disciples to place our relationship with Him above all others. Using purposeful exaggeration (hyperbole), Jesus says our love for Him must by comparison outshine all other loves, even for our family. Matt. 10:37 makes this clear... Jesus never reduced the requirements for discipleship to hold on to would-be disciples (Jn. 6:60-68). He expects a love and a loyalty that transcends all human relationships. I must love no one more than I love Him (Matt. 22:37). Hughes . . .
- B. (v.27) *FOLLOW HIS PLAN WILLINGLY* – Jesus not only requires He have priority in our human relationship, but also in our personal goals and desires. To carry His cross and to follow Him is nothing less than willing surrender to God's will for your life. This means death to self, to our own plans and ambitions and a willingness to follow Him no matter the shame or suffering. Jesus is saying we must put to death any part of us that resists Him and His will. To follow as His disciple we must deny and our will and do His will. C.S. Lewis . . .
- C. (v.33) *FORSAKE MATERIALISM COMPLETELY* – The third requirement for discipleship is we must lay all our possessions before Him and recognize His total ownership. He tells us to give them *up* not away necessarily. He is not telling us we must not own anything. Rather, we shall never let any possession own us! How often has a materialistic mindset enslaved a believer to home, cars, clothes, etc.? These are not wrong in themselves, only when they keep us from following Him as Master of our lives. He is only rightful owner of our lives and possessions.
- D. *SUMMARY:* These are the requirements for discipleship. He says without obedience in them we cannot be His disciples. They are all about giving Him His deserved authority over our personal relationship, ambitions, and possessions.

II. THE REASONS FOR DISCIPLESHIP (14:28-32)

- A. Jesus illustrates the reasons that discipleship is costly by telling two complimentary parables. They teach us there's a price to pay and risks to take to follow Jesus. These two parables tell us *why* discipleship has such great expectations.
- B. *PARABLES* – These tells us of a man considering building a tower and of a king considering battling an enemy. We must count the cost of following Christ and consider the cost of refusing to do so. Just as the unfinished tower was visible evidence of impulsive commitment, so an uncommitted Christian is visible evidence of a failure to become more like Christ. Jesus is looking for disciples who will rise to the challenge and pay the price. While the cost of following Christ is high the cost of not following Him is much higher!

III. THE RESULT OF DISCIPLESHIP (14:34-35)

- A. *ANALOGY* - Christians who meet the requirements and live up to their Lord's expectations live a life of influence and impact, just like SALT. In Jesus' day salt was a valuable commodity in preserving food, as a purifying agent against decay, as a seasoning for flavor, even as a fertilizer for some plants. But, it can become saltless and virtually useless.
- B. *APPLICATION* – Christians are to become disciples that serve as the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13). They are the Lord's moral preservatives and seasoning agents in a lost world. The essence of our saltiness is in our discipleship – our unconditional commitment to Christ as Lord of our life. Without being a growing disciple a Christian is as influential as saltless salt. Our influence depends on our spiritual distinctiveness, which is directly related to our unreserved devotion to our Lord. The power of discipleship is not just the strength of what we say no to, but also strength we receive from Whom we say yes to!

CONC: Too many bland saltless Christians today; not enough true disciples functioning as salt. The tragedy of the lives of most believers is they are basically inconsequential – don't make a difference. 3 questions: Do you love the Lord supremely? Are you following His plan willingly? Have you forsaken materialism completely? If yes, then Christ's investment in you has been worth the price He paid. If no, then a useless saltless saint. The demands of discipleship from our Lord are incompatible with partial commitment or casual discipleship. He has never looked for attachment without commitment – NEVER!