



WEEK FOUR: THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus drew large crowds who were impressed and allured by his miracles and wise teachings. But many of his followers were fickle. Knowing this, he defined what it meant to be a true follower of his; one he could call his disciple. Today we look at the cost he assigned to all those who would choose to follow him, making sure they understood the radical nature of that call.

Christ demands that we keep him as our first love, and not allow anyone or anything else to trump that place in our hearts. As we examine today's texts, we need to have an honest moment with ourselves and ask, *are we truly Jesus' disciples?*

TEXT: LUKE 14:25-33

1. COMPREHEND GRACE

Most of us happily embrace the idea that grace is a free gift that cannot be earned; and so we should. But in doing so, many of us attach a lower value to that grace – grace that cost Christ everything. When God extends grace to us, in the very same breath, he calls us into a different life, one of following him at great cost to ourselves. We freely receive, but in the transaction, we fully surrender the rights to our own lives.

- ❖ Q: Why do we cheapen grace when we try and accept Christ without fully surrendering to him as our Lord?
- ❖ Q: Why is submitting to Christ's Lordship not the same as trying to earn his grace, and why is this so vital to understand?

2. COUNT THE COST

- Read Luke 14:28-32 & 1 Corinthians 6:17-20

Jesus gives the listeners two easy-to-understand illustrations to help them understand how important it is for them to calculate the cost of following him. He wants his followers to know exactly what they are signing up to when they say yes to being his disciples.

True Christianity will cost us in a number of ways that will seriously affect our levels of comfort:

- We have to surrender our autonomy, because we are no longer our own.
 - We have to lay down our pre-occupation with ourselves, and place our focus on others. This is extremely hard, because we are all so incredibly self-centred.
 - We have to give up the sins we hold so dear, because these things do not line up with God's word.
 - We will have to surrender many pleasures that the world tells us we can and should have, because we are no longer our own, and no longer make decisions based on what we feel we want. This means we will no longer be the manager of our money, resources, time or energy. All of these things get handed over to God for his use and purpose.
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10 THINGS JESUS I WISH NEVER SAID

But in exchange, we get Christ, who is more than enough for us. Instead of a restless soul, we will be satisfied by the peace, contentment and joy that is found in him. But not only that, when we walk with him, he begins to change who we are from the inside out, through the power of his Holy Spirit that lives in us. This change has an impact, not only on our own inner life, but also on those around us, because he transforms who we are.

- ❖ Q: When you first came to Christ, were you taught about the cost of following him? (What was your experience?)
- ❖ Q: Do you think that as many people would respond to emotional altar calls and evangelistic crusades, if they were told what the cost of following Christ was? Explain.
- ❖ Q: What do we get in exchange for giving up our lives for Christ, which really does make it worth it?
- ❖ Q: How has this been evidenced in your own life over the last year?

3. CARRY YOUR CROSS

- Read Luke 9:23

It is important for us to grasp, that the cost we are called to count, is not just in the beginning of our relationship with Christ, where we say yes to following Jesus. The cost continues daily, for the rest of our lives. We are called to put the desires of our old nature to death continually, and this process will hurt, or at least, be uncomfortable, every single time. Every time we get presented with an opportunity to respond or act according to our own wants or perceived needs, instead of following Christ, we have to choose to die to self. Endless opportunities to gratify our flesh will rise up, in every season of our lives, regardless of how close to Christ we become. We can be sure that every single time without fail, he will call us to carry that 'cross' and follow him. And he tells us that if we don't, we cannot be his disciple.

- ❖ Q: In what way are you having to 'carry your cross' for the sake of following Christ, during this phase in your life? (I.e. in what way are you having to lay down your own wants/desires in order to live in the way God wants you to?)
- ❖ Q: Why is it important for us to realize that the call to die to self will come to us in every season of our lives and not just in our Christian infancy?
- ❖ Q: What are some of the common struggles against 'self' within our own community, and what do you think God is calling us to do in light of this message to count the cost?
- ❖ Q: How do you think we can help one another, in this community, to remain faithful disciples of Christ?

4. IS JESUS WORTH IT?

- Read Philippians 3:7-8

Paul understood, at a life transforming level, the profoundness of the treasure he had been given in Christ. He could see comparatively, that the value of Christ far outweighed any temporary gain or pleasure in this life. Our problem is that we do not get it.

10 THINGS I WISH JESUS NEVER SAID

When we look at Christ, we so often see a God of our own making, that needs to bend towards our own comforts and pleasures, and we very often treat him like a genie in a bottle. We want access to his power, but we also want him to stay small and insignificant, so that we can remain in control of our own lives. But in so doing, we rob ourselves of the greatest treasure.

Christ wants us to know and experience all that he is, and all that he died to give us in his gift of salvation. He is worth every sacrifice, every obstacle and every difficulty. His value is beyond all we could hope or imagine. If we cannot see him for who he really is, let us ask him to make himself known to us deeply and profoundly, so that we can wilfully count the cost to following him.

- ❖ Q: Is your view of Christ huge and magnificent, or do you need a revelation of who he really is?
- ❖ Q: What should we do if we realize that we do not see him as he really is?
- ❖ Q: What should our prayer, as a Gospel Community be, as we come face to face with the cost to following Christ?

Personal Reflection Q: What is the one big take-away that God is asking you to put into action this week, in response to this message?