

Luke 14:25-33

"The Cost of Discipleship"

November 9, 2025

1. Intro

- a. Well, this morning we are faced with the all-important question... "What does it mean to be a "disciple" of Jesus?"
 - i. We know as we read through the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that the most immediate use of the name "disciple" was given to the twelve APOSTLES,
 1. Or the twelve men who Jesus had chosen to follow after him
 - a. For example, in Matthew chapter 10, verse 1, Matthew says that,
 - i. ¹*[Jesus] called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.*
 1. And then it went on to specifically name the twelve Apostles
 - a. So the PRIMARY use of the word "disciple" in the Gospels is in reference to the Apostles
 - ii. But back in Luke chapter 10, even though Jesus doesn't specifically use the word, "disciple," it appears that he expanded this group out to the seventy-two that he sent out to the towns and the villages
 1. He gives the seventy-two "others" the very same charge as he had given the twelve earlier
 - a. Cast out demons...
 - b. Heal the sick...
 - c. Proclaim the Kingdom of God
 2. And as he sent out the seventy-two, he said to them in Luke 10:16,
 - a. ¹⁶*"The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."*
 - i. We would not be wrong at all to say that these men, and possibly women, that were included in the seventy-two were ALSO Jesus' disciples
 - iii. It's helpful to look at the definition for the word "disciple" in Strong's lexicon...
 1. There we read that this term "disciple",
 - a. "Designates a learner who binds himself to a teacher in order to embrace that teacher's worldview AND way of life"
 - i. Strong's goes on to say that in the New Testament, the word "disciple"
 1. Describes the inner circle of the Twelve
 2. It also describes the wider company that followed Jesus during his earthly ministry,
 - a. As we see with the seventy-two
 2. But then Strong's makes a crucial addition to the list
 - a. It says that a "disciple" ALSO describes the ever-expanding community of believers AFTER Pentecost
 - i. In Acts 6:1, the word "disciple" is used in reference to the whole of the early church in Jerusalem, where we read...
 1. ¹*Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the*

Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

- ii. In Acts 9:36, we affirm that this name of “disciple” does indeed include both men AND women, as we read that...
 - 1. ³⁶... *there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity.*
- iii. And then in Acts 11:25-26, we read these critical words...
 - 1. ²⁵*So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.*
- iv. My friends, to be a Christian is to be a disciple of Jesus
 - 1. Going back to Strong’s definition of the word “disciple,” it ends by saying,
 - a. “In EVERY case, the term is relational AND transformational; to be a disciple is to belong to Jesus AND to be changed by him”
 - i. If you are a Christian, then you ARE a disciple!
- v. The reason why I want to emphasize all of this is because I have seen a growing idea within the church that says that these two things are to be separated
 - 1. We are to call people to become Christians
 - a. We do this by telling them that Jesus loves them...
 - i. By telling them that Jesus can forgive all their sins...
 - ii. By telling them of all the promises of eternal life...
 - b. And then we ask them, “Do you want all of these things in your own life?”
 - i. Well just accept Jesus into your heart, and then you WILL be a Christian
 - 2. But then, once we’ve gotten them initiated into the club,
 - a. At some point we disclose to them that there is a second level of a “follower of Jesus” that they can now try to attain to
 - i. That second level, is “disciple”
 - 1. A disciple is one who is TRULY following Jesus in their lives
 - 2. A disciple is one who has reached a level of maturity to begin to pursue the deeper things of the Christian life
 - 3. A disciple is a Christian who is now ready to TRULY suffer for Jesus
 - ii. In this way of thinking, the church is FULL of baby Christians, but it is the DISIPLES who are really putting in the work
- vi. Brothers and sisters, I hope and pray that we can see that this is an utterly unbiblical distinction!
 - 1. When Jesus gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28, he didn’t say,
 - a. “Go therefore and make a bunch of converts to Christianity, and at some point, maybe they’ll learn enough and do enough to finally get the name ‘disciple’...”
 - b. No! Jesus is perfectly clear...
 - i. ¹⁹*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

1. To be a disciple is to belong to Jesus AND to be changed by him
 2. To be a disciple is to be... a CHRISTIAN
- vii. We must have this framework set in place as we turn to Luke 14:25-33, or else we will read this passage wrongly
1. Jesus' words in these verses ARE NOT meant for the super-Christians who finally attain some sort of second-level faith in him
 - a. These words are meant for ALL who desire to be a follower of Christ
 - i. We must ALL count the cost of being his disciple
 1. And so we read, starting in verse 25...

2. Luke 14:25-33

- a. *²⁵Now great crowds accompanied [Jesus], and he turned and said to them, ²⁶"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. ²⁷Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' ³¹Or 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? ³²And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.*

3. Well, there is a LOT to break down in this passage, so let's dig right in!

- a. Obviously, we're hit with a pretty tough verse right out of the gate, aren't we?
 - i. Jesus tells us that, if you do not HATE your own father and mother...
 1. If you do not HATE your own wife and children...
 2. If you do not HATE your own brothers and sisters...
 3. If you do not hate EVEN YOUR OWN LIFE...
 - a. Then you CANNOT be his disciple
 - ii. Well, that doesn't sound very Christ-like AT ALL, does it?
 1. At the very heart of Christianity, we would say that it is to be a religion of LOVE, right?
 - a. John 3:16 tells us that *"God so LOVED the world that He sent his only Son..."*
 - b. 1 John 4:16 and 19 tell us that *"God IS love, and whoever abides in love abides in God,*
 - i. And that, *"WE love because HE first loved us"*
 - c. Jesus himself said that the greatest commandment was to *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength..."*
 - i. And the second is like it: *Love your neighbor as yourself"*
 2. So what in the world is Jesus talking about when he speaks of hating all of these people in your own family, and even hating your own life?
 - a. Well, the key to THIS verse is the key to the whole passage, and that is found in verse 33...
 - i. *"So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has CANNOT be my disciple"*
 - iii. Friends, one of the first things that we must do as we bind ourselves to Jesus, and embrace HIS worldview and HIS way of life, is we must be willing to renounce EVERYTHING for him
 1. And the Scriptures are clear... that includes our familial relationships

- a. Now what we need to understand is that the Jewish concept of “family” in those days was MUCH different than our idea of “family” here in America today
 - i. Family was EVERYTHING to the Jewish people of the first century
 1. The faith of the Jewish people was passed down THROUGH the family
 2. The traditions of the Jewish people were passed down THROUGH the family
 3. Kids were educated in the family, they worked the family jobs
 - a. As they grew older, the children didn’t send the parents and grandparents off to nursing homes
 - i. Everyone lived together
 - ii. Everyone took care of one another
 - ii. Your family was CENTRAL to who you were as an Israelite
2. But, just think about what happened when Jesus came along
 - a. When Jesus came into our world, and began proclaiming that HE was not just the long-awaited Messiah of God’s people,
 - i. But that he was ALSO the very Son of God himself...
 - b. Families IMMEDIATELY began to be filled with tension
 - i. SOME within the family would choose to believe in this Jesus,
 1. And they would LONG to follow him and bind themselves to him as his disciple
 - ii. But for those who DID NOT believe in Jesus and who he said he was, all of this was BLASPHEMY of the highest order
 1. And in those moments, those who desired to be a disciple of Jesus had to make a choice...
 - a. To follow Jesus would mean that they would have to renounce their family
 2. To follow Jesus would mean that their friends, their neighbors, all of their fellow Jews would look at them and say,
 - a. “Why do you HATE your family so much?”
3. The tension would have been very real for Jesus’ disciples in those days, as he called them to renounce their families and follow him
 - a. Which is why he said to his disciples in Matthew 10:21-22,
 - i. *²¹Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, ²²and you will be hated by all FOR MY NAME’S SAKE. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.*
 - b. And then he goes on in verses 24-25,
 - i. *²⁴A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.*
 1. If you desire to be a disciple of Jesus, then you must renounce your family for his name’s sake
 2. And in renouncing your family, you must understand, you are renouncing your own life
 - a. Your identity will no longer be wrapped up in the name of your father

- b. Your identity will no longer be tied to the family name, or the family business, or the family estate
 - c. Your identity will no longer even be tied to any of the tribes of Israel, or the family tree of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
 - 3. Your identity will now be found in Christ, and in Christ alone
 - ii. And Jesus understood that this would come at great cost to many people
 - 4. Now, the family unit of today is not near as strong as it would have been back in Jesus' day... especially here in America
 - a. But the principle is still there, isn't it?
 - i. I would guess that just about all of us have unbelievers in our families
 - 1. All of us likely have a son or a daughter, a mother or a father, an aunt or an uncle...
 - a. Who has decided that this whole Jesus thing is just a sham
 - i. We've all been caught up in some sort of fake, man-made, mythological religion
 - ii. And they want nothing to do with any of it
 - ii. And so, at family gatherings, if Jesus is brought up, then you might get mocked for it
 - 1. If you bring up your faith in Christ as the Son of God, you might get ridiculed, or even ostracized
 - 2. And if you are so intolerant to begin to say things such as, "Jesus is the ONLY way to the Father, and ALL other ways only lead to eternal destruction"
 - a. At that point, you will likely begin to be hated... by your own family
 - 5. But Jesus lays a choice before each of us...
 - a. We certainly continue to love our family, and lay ourselves down for them, and pray for them and share the words of life with them
 - i. But we must ALSO make the choice to renounce them before Jesus
 - 1. For by his precious blood, he has brought us into a NEW family
 - 2. THESE are now your mothers and fathers
 - a. THESE are now your sons and daughters
 - b. THESE are now your brothers and sisters
 - iv. My friends, if you truly desire to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, then you must renounce ALL of your old earthly relationships,
 - 1. As well as ALL of your identity that was wrapped up in those relationships
 - a. Jesus himself says that, if you are not willing to do so, then you CANNOT be his disciple
 - i. We are saved by faith alone
 - 1. But the OUTWORKING of that faith is a renouncing of ALL earthly relationships
4. But Jesus doesn't stop at our relationships, does he?
 - a. In verse 27, Jesus says to the great crowds – and to us,
 - i. 27Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.
 - b. Now, we've talked about this before, but we must re-emphasize the fact that Jesus said this BEFORE he himself actually went to the cross

- i. So the people hearing his words WOULD NOT have had the same idea of the cross as we have today
 - 1. We look at the cross as a place of victory and triumph
 - a. It was on the cross that Jesus bore the weight of our sins, and bore the full weight of the wrath of his Father
 - i. It was on the cross that Jesus' body was given for us, and his blood was shed for us,
 - 1. All so that we, a bunch of unworthy sinners, could be brought into the New Covenant with God our Father
 - ii. This is why we celebrate the cross, and we have them displayed in prominent places in our churches, and even in our homes
 - 1. At the cross, we were given life, and life eternal!
 - ii. But the people in the great crowd of those days would have had no concept of such things
 - 1. For them, the cross meant shame
 - a. The Romans had devised the torture of the cross to be for the lowest of the criminals
 - i. These were the dregs of society... the embarrassments to the empire... the traitors to all society
 - 1. To be crucified upon a cross meant a public shaming in the most humiliating of ways
 - 2. But it also meant pain, didn't it?
 - a. Jesus' physical experience at the cross really wasn't a whole lot different than most of the other criminals who were crucified in those days
 - i. These criminals were often whipped with the lash before the crucifixion, which would intensify the pain as they were hanging on the rough wooden cross
 - ii. They would also often have to make the same public journey from the place where they had been whipped, to the place where they would be crucified,
 - 1. As they literally bore their cross upon their beaten and bloody backs,
 - a. With people mocking them and jeering them all along the way
 - iii. They would also have nails driven through their hands and their wrists,
 - 1. And often one long nail driven through their ankles
 - a. Set at just the right height so they could painfully lift themselves up for just a moment to relieve the pressure on their lungs,
 - i. And not die from suffocation
 - c. When the people of those days heard the word "cross," they would have immediately associated it with shame and pain
 - i. They would have associated it with SUFFERING
 - 1. Jesus said to them, if you are not willing to bear the cross of YOUR OWN suffering, then you cannot be my disciple
 - a. Friends, this is why I absolutely despise the heresy of the prosperity gospel of our day
 - i. Those who preach this false gospel want us to believe that Jesus suffered so we wouldn't have to

1. They want us to believe that Jesus walked in poverty, so we could walk in wealth and prosperity
2. They want us to believe that Jesus bore our sicknesses upon his body, so we could walk in health and longevity of life
3. They want us to believe that Jesus went to the cross, and experienced all the shame, all the pain, all the persecution...
 - a. So that we could walk in comfort and ease with the favor of man
- b. Brothers and sisters, the Bible teaches no such gospel!
- ii. If you desire to be a disciple of Jesus, if you desire to be a Christian...
 1. Then you MUST be willing to walk the road of suffering
 - a. You MUST be willing to bear your own cross
 - i. If not, then you cannot be his disciple
- d. And then Jesus gives us two illustrations to show us what this suffering must look like
 - i. It must be a willingness to suffer ALL THE WAY TO THE END
 - ii. And it must be a willingness to suffer in what appears to be HOPELESS conditions
 1. So first, Jesus teaches us that we must be willing to suffer all the way to the end
 - a. And he uses the illustration of a man who starts building a tower
 - i. The problem is, this man literally failed to count the cost
 1. He didn't sit down and figure out how much materials he would need to build the tower
 2. He didn't figure out how much he'd need to pay all the subcontractors
 3. He didn't put together any kind of budget before he got started
 - ii. This man just jumped right in and started building
 1. He got the foundation put in place...
 2. Maybe he got the stones up to a certain place
 - a. But then the funds ran out
 - i. He couldn't pay for any more rocks and mortar
 - ii. He couldn't pay the stone masons to work another day
 - iii. So the project was left unfinished, and the man was mocked for his inability to endure all the way to the end of the project
- e. And Jesus ties this illustration directly to our suffering, and our willingness to bear our cross and follow after him
 - i. My friends, again, the Scriptures are so very clear on these things
 1. We already heard Jesus say it in Matthew 10:22...
 - a. *"You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who ENDURES TO THE END will be saved."*
 - i. The great cost of being my disciple is that the world will hate you because of me
 1. This hatred isn't going to let up
 2. In fact, you can pretty much be guaranteed that it is going to INCREASE over time
 2. This is what Jesus will say later in Matthew 24, verses 9-13...
 - a. As the end draws near, more of his disciples will be delivered up to tribulation and death
 - b. MANY will fall away and betray one another and hate one another

- c. False prophets will rise up and lead MANY astray
 - d. Lawlessness will increase
 - e. The love of many will grow cold
 - i. But then Jesus says in verse 13,
 - 1. “The one who ENDURES TO THE END will be saved”
- 3. In Revelation 2 and 3, we get the incredible privilege of getting to read 7 letters that the resurrected Jesus composed FROM HEAVEN to seven different churches
 - a. Most of these letters were filled with correction for those churches who had begun to stray from the faith,
 - i. And even rebuke for some who had outright departed away from him
 - b. But in Revelation 2, verses 8-11, we get a sweet and tender letter to the church in Smyrna
 - i. This church received no rebuke or correction, but only words of compassion and encouragement
 - 1. For the church in Smyrna was a church that was enduring MUCH suffering
 - a. Jesus said to them that he KNEW the tribulation they were experiencing
 - b. He KNEW the poverty they lived in
 - c. He KNEW the slander that they had to live through on a daily basis
 - 2. And he said to them, “Do not fear, EVEN THOUGH THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET WORSE”
 - a. There is still more suffering yet to come
 - b. There is still more tribulation yet to endure
 - ii. And Jesus says to those who are already suffering, “Be faithful UNTO DEATH, and I will give you the crown of life.”
 - 1. Endure to the end, even though your cross is about to get A LOT heavier...
 - a. And you will be saved!
- f. My friends, there is a cost to being a disciple of Jesus
 - i. If they called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household?
 - 1. We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ
 - a. But the outworking of that faith is a willingness to endure suffering, all the way to the end
 - 2. Jesus teaches us this in the Parable of the Sower, doesn't he?
 - a. In this parable, the second seed gets thrown on rocky ground, but it never bears any fruit
 - i. In his explanation of the parable to his disciples, Jesus says in Matthew 13, verses 20 and 21,
 - 1. *²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.*
 - ii. This is the one who started to build a tower, but he failed to count the cost

1. So when tribulation came... when persecution came... when the weight of his cross of suffering became too great
 - a. He fell away
 - i. And the world mocked him for claiming to be a disciple of Jesus, yet being unwilling to endure all the way to the end
- ii. My friends, we must ALL count the cost of following after Jesus
 1. Is he worth the suffering that we will face, all the way to the end?
 - a. A TRUE belief in Jesus says that he is ABSOLUTELY worth the cost of our endurance!
- g. But in his second illustration, Jesus also shows us that we must be willing to suffer in what appears to be HOPELESS conditions
 - i. Look at the details of his illustration in verse 31...
 1. Clearly, the first king in the illustration is meant to portray the one who desires to be a disciple of Jesus
 - a. And this is a king who is at war
 - i. He's got a decent sized army that will fight for him
 - ii. But when he sits down and he looks at the numbers,
 1. He realizes that the opposing king has an army that is TWICE as big as his own
 2. And if he chooses to go to war against this other king, then the odds of winning are pretty much hopeless
 - a. So what will the first king do?
 - b. If he continues on, and he engages in the battle with the second king, there will indeed be MUCH hardship within his own army...
 - i. There will be MUCH loss and turmoil...
 - ii. There will be MUCH suffering...
 1. By all outward appearances, the situation is absolutely HOPELESS
 2. So what is the alternative to engaging in the battle?
 - a. Well, the alternative is COMPROMISE
 - i. Before things get TOO hard, go make peace with the other king
 - ii. Before anyone has to go through TOO many difficulties, go try to get the king to be your friend
 - iii. Before anyone has to suffer TOO much...
 1. Compromise with the enemy
 3. For this certainly looks like a hopeless situation for the first king, doesn't it?
 - a. Kind of like when the very Son of God left the glories of heaven and emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant
 - b. Kind of like when the One who rightly deserved the title of King of kings was constantly being ridiculed and rejected by his very own people
 - c. Kind of like when Jesus, our Messiah, chose to bear HIS OWN cross,
 - i. And wicked and lawless men beat him, crucified him, and buried him in tomb
 1. By all outward appearances, that seemed like an utterly HOPELESS situation, didn't it?
 - ii. But Jesus knew the truth of what was REALLY going on
 1. This is why the writer of the book of Hebrews says to us, in Hebrews 12, verses 1-2,

- a. ¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
- 2. Jesus KNEW that, despite all outward circumstances, his suffering was FAR from hopeless
 - a. He KNEW that there was a great JOY that awaited him on the other side of the cross
 - i. He KNEW that, on the other side of death, the joy of walking in full obedience to his Father would be his
 - ii. He KNEW that, on the other side of death, the joy of true communion with his brothers and sisters would be his
 - iii. He KNEW that, on the other side of death, an eternity awaited him
 - 1. Eternity with the Father and the Spirit
 - 2. Eternity with the saints of God
 - 3. Eternity in the New Jerusalem where he would be seated at the right hand of the throne of God
- h. And so, even though all around him seemed completely hopeless, Jesus endured for the joy that was set before him...
 - i. And he refused to compromise with the enemy
 - 1. In the wilderness, Jesus refused to compromise before Satan when Satan tempted him to give into the desires of his flesh
 - a. And Jesus said to him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'"
 - 2. Jesus refused to compromise before Satan when Satan tempted him to question and test his Father's faithfulness
 - a. And Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test'"
 - 3. And Jesus refused to compromise before Satan when Satan offered him the greatest temptation of them all...
 - a. Do you see all these kingdoms here on the earth, Jesus?
 - i. Do you see all their glory... all their wealth... all their power?
 - 1. Just fall down and worship me, and I will give them ALL to you
 - a. Make peace with me Jesus
 - b. Compromise with me
 - i. And I promise, you will not have to endure ANY suffering
 - 2. But Jesus said to him a third and final time, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him ONLY shall you serve!'"
 - ii. Jesus refused to compromise with his enemy
 - 1. He refused to compromise with the world
 - a. He could have avoided ALL the suffering... all the pain... all the shame... all the rejection
 - i. He could have avoided ALL OF IT, if he would have just made peace with the world
 - 2. But praise God, that is NOT what he did

- a. Jesus instead RENOUNCED this world... he RENOUNCED the ease and comforts... he RENOUNCED the fame and favor and prosperity
 - i. And he took up his cross instead
 - 1. For he counted the cost of worshiping his Father in heaven
 - 2. And he decided that it was INFINITELY worth any suffering he might experience in his few years here on this earth
- 5. My friends, this is the cost for all who truly desire to be a disciple of Jesus
 - a. To be his disciple means that you are binding yourself to HIS worldview
 - i. To be his disciple means that you are embracing HIS way of life
 - 1. To be Jesus' disciple means that you have truly placed your faith in him as the very Son of God
 - a. And you are willing to renounce EVERYTHING to follow after him
 - i. You've looked at his infinite worth, and you've decided that he is indeed worthy of you enduring suffering all the way to the end
 - ii. You've looked at his infinite beauty and majesty, and you've decided that he is indeed worthy of refusing to compromise with this world
 - 1. No earthly relationship can compare with the relationship you have with Jesus
 - 2. No earthly comfort can compare with the comfort you have in him
 - 3. No earthly treasure can compare to the infinite riches that God the Father has promised to you in Christ
 - 2. And therefore, in the midst of absolutely hopeless conditions, your hope remains unshaken
 - a. For your hope is in Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Savior, our Resurrected King
 - i. Renounce EVERYTHING before him
 - 1. And he will lead you through the deepest gloom
 - 2. He will lead you over every troubled sea
 - 3. Even through death's cold wave,
 - a. Jesus will lead you through it all
 - i. For you will TRULY be one of his disciples!