

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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The Words, Works, and Person of Christ

The Gospel of Luke

The Free Gift that Costs
Everything (Pt 4)

October 9, 2022

Sermon Text: Luke 12:49-53,
14:25-33

Scripture Reading: Php 1:18-30

...through many tribulations we
must enter the kingdom of God.

We are examining various portions of the Gospel of Luke which speak to the subject of the cost of following Christ. Salvation in Christ is entirely of His grace and yet it is a free gift which, when bestowed, will cost us everything. Many people begin with what looks like a genuine zeal for Christ

and we are glad because of them. But, as Jesus warned us:

Mat 13:20-21 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, (21) yet 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.

We must count the cost if we are to persevere in following Jesus.

Luk 12:49-53 “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! (50) I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! (51) Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. (52) For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two

against three. (53) They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

[NOTE: Compare vs 53 with Micah 7:6 – “for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house. What does this tell us about the church age as we see this very thing happening?]

The person who insists that the Christian's life in this world must be one of peace, universal love, family and friends...is in a dream world that contradicts Jesus' own warnings. In fact, He warns us that to be spoken well of by all men is a sure sign such a person is not at peace with Him.

Counting the cost. Let's look at it in these words of Jesus:

Luk 14:25-33 Now great crowds accompanied him, 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.

(27) Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

(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? (29) Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, (30) saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’

(31) Or 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? (32) And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of

peace.

(33) So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

What do you suppose was the result? This once more is what Robert Godfrey called an instruction text on “Church Shrinkage” just as we find in John 6 –

Joh 6:66-67 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. (67) So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”

Consider this carefully -

Luk 14:25-33 Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them...

Once again we must slow down and carefully observe. (You can almost hear Bunyan or J.C. Ryle or Lloyd-Jones – ‘*think of this...great crowds accompanied him, what does this tell us?*’). Hendriksen notes:

“On his way to Jerusalem, through Perea, huge crowds are following Jesus. All at once he turns to them and addresses them....that devotion to himself must be so wholehearted that even attachment to parents and to the other members of one’s family must not be allowed to stand in the way.” [NTC, Luke]

Why these huge crowds? What were they motivated by? Perhaps they had heard of His miracles. Or of His feeding the 5,000. Or maybe they simply came out to see what this excitement was all about? Matthew Henry -

Here was a *mixed multitude*, like that which went with Israel out of Egypt; such we must expect there will always be in the church, and it will therefore be necessary that ministers should carefully separate *between the precious and the vile*. [By faithful preaching of God’s Word]

The presence of great crowds is more often, as we see emphasized in Scripture, an indication of

superficial faith that will never last. As Matthew Henry notes, it is the duty of Christ's people, particularly of His ministers, to do what He consistently did when the crowds flocked to Him:

...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.

We have heard something of the same spirit from R.C. Sproul recently. Something like – in light of these Scriptures, there is a high probability that many of you in this large audience are not born again. In contrast, many pastors today are encouraging the crowds that all is well with them.

But think of this – try to imagine being there. These huge crowds of people come out to see Jesus. And then Jesus rains on their parade as He stops, turns around to them, and confronts them with the cost. And

His words are shocking – as He meant them to be:

"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."

"You all are coming to Me. But if you are not willing to pay the price of following me...and here is an example of the cost...then go home now."

Jesus does not permit people to remain under the delusion that they belong to Him when in fact they do not.

This is not a show. It is not a circus come to town for entertainment.

Mat 11:7-19 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (8) What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. (9) What then did

you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. (10) This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ (11) Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (12) From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. (13) For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, (14) and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. (15) He who has ears to hear, let him hear. (16) “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, (17) “‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ (18) For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ (19) The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a

drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

This is the way Jesus dealt with crowds who regarded him as a mere celebrity or with the kingdom of God as some type of party to which all are welcome.

The Cost of Friends and Family

“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, we know that Jesus does not mean by this that to be His disciple we must actively hate with hatred our parents and family. But Jesus often uses shocking words to jolt people to attention and to cause the counterfeits to stumble. What he means by “hate” is seen in the parallel found in Matthew:

Mat 10:36-37 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. (37) Whoever loves father or mother more than me is

not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Here is the point: the world hates Christ and when we follow Him, when we are born again and become His new creations, that hatred is going to be directed at us. Often it comes from family and friends. At such a time, we must make a choice – Christ or even the closest of earthly relationships. Anyone who does not count that cost in advance will never last. Myriads of people who claim to be Christians refuse to leave the City of Destruction for this very reason. Or if they do, they soon return as did Pliable.

Indeed, as we have seen already in Luke’s Gospel, unless we are ready to take up our cross, to deny ourselves, and now as Jesus puts it...hate our own life, we will never see heaven. We will never persevere to the end in following Christ. He will not permit us to be His own people.

Is it Worth it?

Let me insert something here that we must remind ourselves of as we consider this matter of the cost of following Jesus:

Mat 19:27-29 Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” (28) Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (29) And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

And again:

Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

But if we would have the reward, we must carefully count the cost and then be ready and willing to

pay it when the Lord presents us with the invoice.

So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now, he had not run far from his own door, but his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, Life! life! eternal life! [Luke 14:26] So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain. [Gen. 19:17]

Bunyan, John. The Pilgrim's Progress - Unabridged With Original Illustrations .
www.graceflow.org. Kindle Edition.

Most people who claim to be Christians are not willing to pay the price.

The demand which our Lord makes upon us here is particularly stringent and heart-searching, yet it is a wise and a necessary one. Experience shows, both in the church at home and in the mission field abroad, that the greatest foes to a man's soul are sometimes

those of his own house. It sometimes happens that the greatest hindrance in the way of an awakened conscience is the opposition of relatives and friends. Ungodly fathers cannot bear to see their sons taking up new views of religion. Worldly mothers are vexed to see their daughters unwilling to enter into the gaieties of the world. A collision of opinion takes place frequently as soon as saving grace enters into a family. And then comes the time when the true Christian must remember the spirit of our Lord's words in this passage. He must be willing to offend his family rather than offend Christ.

The line of duty in such cases is doubtless very painful. It is a heavy cross to disagree with those we love, and especially about spiritual things. But if this cross is laid upon us, then we must remember that firmness and decision are true kindness. It can never be true love to relatives to do wrong in order to please them. And, best of all, firmness accompanied by gentleness and consistency – in the long run of life – often brings its

own reward. Thousands of Christians will bless God at the last day that they had relatives and friends who chose to displease them rather than Christ. That very firmness was the first thing that made them think seriously and led finally to the conversion of their souls.

Ryle, J. C.. Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of Luke: A Commentary (Updated Edition) (p. 319). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

The Humiliation of Starting but Not Finishing

We have all started projects and not finished them, haven't we? I have started many books, but never finished them. Maybe you have some unfinished "monument" at your house. We knew some people once who started building a log home but were so sluggardly then watched the walls rot, never finishing the house.

Luk 14:28-32 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? (29) Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, (30) saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

(31) Or 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? (32) And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

In each of these scenarios there is a *cost to be considered. Those who fail to count it before beginning are fools in the end.*

NOTE: Ultimately of course, the cost is paid by Christ and can never be paid by us. Salvation is a free gift BUT (and Jesus is dealing with the BUT here) – when He saves us, these hardships and costs will be what we find in following Him and we must acknowledge that right at the beginning. This is one of the

great lessons we will learn from reading through Pilgrim's Progress together. Christian actually (because he foolishly tried a detour)...actually came to a point of considering suicide.

We learn from this passage that those who are thinking of following Christ should be warned to count the cost. This is a lesson which was intended for the multitudes who followed our Lord without thought and consideration, and was enforced by examples drawn from building and from war.

It is a lesson which will be found useful in every age of the church. **It costs something to be a true Christian! Let that never be forgotten.** To be a mere nominal Christian and go to church is cheap and easy work. But to hear Christ's voice, and follow Christ, and believe in Christ, and confess Christ requires much self-denial. It will cost us our sins, and our self-righteousness, and our ease, and our worldliness!

All – all must be given up. We must fight an Enemy who comes against us with twenty thousand followers. We must build a tower in troublesome times.

Our Lord Jesus Christ would have us thoroughly understand this. He bids us to count the cost.

Now, why did our Lord use this language? Did He wish to discourage men from becoming His disciples? Did He mean to make the gate of life appear more narrow than it is? It is not difficult to find an answer to these questions.

Our Lord spoke as He did to prevent men from following Him superficially and inconsiderately, from mere fleshly feeling or temporary excitement – who in time of temptation would fall away. He knew that nothing does so much harm to the cause of true religion as backsliding, and that nothing causes so much backsliding as enlisting disciples without letting them know the cost of what they take in hand.

Jesus had no desire to swell the number of His followers by admitting soldiers who would fail in the hour of need. For this reason He raises a warning voice.

He bids all who think of taking up service with Him to count the cost before they begin. **Well would it be for the church and the world if the ministers of Christ would always remember their Master's conduct in this passage.**

Often, far too often, people are built up in self-deception and encouraged to think they are converted when in reality they are not converted at all. Feelings are supposed to be faith. Mere convictions are supposed to be grace. These things ought not to be so. By all means let us encourage the first beginnings of religion in a soul. **But never let us urge people forward without telling them what true Christianity entails.** Never let us hide from them the battle and the toil. Let us say to them, "Come with us!" But let us also say, "Count the cost!"

Ryle, J. C.. Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of Luke: A Commentary (Updated Edition) (pp. 319-320). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

Luk 14:34-35 "Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? (35) It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."