

## **“There is a Cost”**

### **Luke 14:25-35**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Everything has a cost. Gas, groceries, vacations, vehicles, homes, medicines, and so on, all have a cost, and it is one that none of you can escape. Your well-being requires all of these things for you to continue living your daily life, at least if you wish to do so in any type of comfort. As one infamous “krusty krab” once said, it all requires, “Money, money, money, money, money, money!” Despite the greedy musings of said crustacean, the cost of discipleship, that is, the cost of following Christ, is not a monetary one. In our text this morning, Jesus says that you must hate your entire family, and your own life, if you wish to be His disciple. What does He mean by that? Am I literally to hate my brother, sister, mother, and children, casting them out of my life as if they didn’t exist? Am I to despise myself and see no value in my life? Not necessarily. What Jesus is saying is that your love for your family or yourself cannot be more important than your love for God. Your love for Christ must be first and foremost in your life, and that is the cost that you must weigh, as the parables that Jesus tells the crowd indicate.

There is a cost to being one in the faith who follows Jesus. And the sinful flesh you carry wants nothing to do with that cost. According to your Old Adam, life is just peachy, and you should do everything you can to make sure it stays that way. You’ve all heard, and probably stood upon the old adage of “family first.” That is a fantastic mentality to have in this life. Your families are blessed gifts from the one true God, and the truest picture of the love of God for His people. But, as it says in Exodus 20:5 when Yahweh gives His first Commandment to His people, “You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.” God will not share you with another, and that includes if you make those around you gods above Him. There is a call from Jesus, not to abandon your family, but to count the cost by lowering them in comparison to the One you made you.

When Jesus speaks of a king sitting down and counting the cost of war and if he is willing to pay it, there is an underlying theme that is in this parable from Christ. The king does not pay this cost alone. The cost is heavy and the evil one is strong. The Christian cannot face the battles of this world alone, for you have only “ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand.” So, the question is, do you fight the battle alone with your 10,000, trusting in your own power to get through it? That’s what the world and the modern church wants you to believe. They teach you that

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you have the power to overcome the evil one, to overcome sin, and even death by your own power. If you just believe hard enough, pray hard enough, and trust in “science” to guide you through your life, then you can indeed achieve whatever you seek to accomplish.

But that is not what the life of a Christian is all about. The life of one who follows Christ is a life of persecution and hatred. Jesus Himself says in Luke 21:17, “You will be hated by all for My name’s sake.” And that hatred does not only come from outside of your personal circles, but within them as well, even within the nuclear family we all prize so dearly (and rightfully so). This promised hatred and division is what the Lord came to bring to us by the nature of His saving work for all mankind, to divide the wheat and the chaff and separate the goats and the rams. He says in Luke 12:53, “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 her mother-in-law.” Jesus is not pitting these family members against one another in a medieval battle where the strongest and most skilled warrior survives. This battle within the family is about the faith. There are those whom you love dearly who are lost, wandering in the world as those who either don’t know Christ or have actively chosen to reject Him.

This is a difficult thing for our human nature to grasp. God does not promise to save all of your family members just because of your fidelity to Him in your faith. He does not promise to save your children, their spouses, your parents, your aunts, your uncles, or any other people that you care for in this world. By the sacrifice of Jesus, He has offered salvation to all people, but every person’s sinful flesh has the power to reject that precious gift. As God-fearing people, you bring your children up in the faith, you remind your parents of the faith which was given to you, and you should be sharing the truth of Jesus’ free gift with all those in your life that are lost in the world. For many here, including myself, and around the world, that is the cross they must bear as they follow Christ. There is a cost, and it is one that all must pay for the faith.

Everyone bears a different cross in this life. Your cross to bear may be the one I just mentioned, or it may be something very different. There certainly are those who have faithful families and don’t have to battle the devil within their own walls in the same way as others. But the point of all of this is not to get lost in the sadness and depression of having lost loved ones, or in the fear and burden of your own cross. The point of all of this is that despite those realities, the one cross that has been borne for all mankind is the source of your comfort in these struggles. The cross of Jesus which has redeemed the world is what brings you hope for the lost ones in your life. Everyone in the world is one

whom Christ has died for, and that includes those who have rejected that truth. Forgiveness life and salvation is theirs if they would stop resisting the work of the Holy Spirit in their life. And the only way that happens is through the Means of Grace which God works through you. He works His will of salvation through the proclamation of the Word, “so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,” as it says in Philippians 2:10-11. Preach to those you love and pray that the Holy Spirit would work in their hearts, leaving them in the hands of a merciful but just God who desires the salvation of all men. Don’t sit and be silent.

You have been called to proclaim the one has been sent forth on your behalf with the terms for peace. That one is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who went forth to the cross to die the death that you deserve. That is the reality of what I mentioned earlier. You do not walk this life of faith alone. You do not face the 20,000 enemies on your own with the certainty of failure. By the blood of Jesus, peace has been achieved. But not peace with the world – peace with God and reconciliation in Christ Jesus. You have been reconciled to God and given peace with your Creator. He loves you with a love beyond all knowing, and that is why Jesus says that to follow Him you must love God above all things, even the ones whom He has given you in this life. And thanks be to God that according to His steadfast love, our loving Father in heaven holds us in His arms, bringing us the peace we need to persevere in this life full of struggles and angst.

The cost of being a believer is always weighed against the benefits of that faith which is given. The cost to many is much too high, and for some, they think there is no cost at all. For both camps, the same salvation is offered; the same blessings are given and received if they have faith in the one true God who has given them. Yes, there is a cost to being one in Christ Jesus. Not a cost to becoming such, but certainly as a result. And the cost in this world is one that many have to pay in greater measure than others. Many here today have paid such a price for your faith. Rejection and hatred from family and friends, persecution from the world around you, and the pain of pushing away someone who has rejected Christ are all things that plague the Christian life of the believer. But the Lord has called you to love God above all things – above family, friends, co-workers, and all things in this world. The cost of following Christ is not monetary, but it is heavy. Though you do not walk this life of faith alone.

The Lord has borne your burdens and paid the price for your faith at the cross, and has surrounded you with those who together with you are one body in Him. Every one of the people surrounding you today are just as the Lord says in Luke 8:20-21. There, the Evangelist records, “And He was told, ‘Your mother and your brothers are standing

outside, desiring to see you.’ But He answered them, ‘My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.’” Jesus did not abandon His mother and brothers as if they didn’t exist, but they were no different in the eyes of God than the ones who gathered around Him in faith to hear the Word of God. All those who have “ears to hear, let him hear.” Those who have ears to hear are those in the faith of Jesus Christ, and that, dear friends, is you.

Hear the Word of God which unites you in brotherhood as the body of Christ, as the sons of God He has claimed you to be. Your salvation is secured and the love of God in Christ Jesus is yours for eternity. No greater blessing can be known than that. And yes, there is a cost in this life, but that cost is miniscule in relation to the abounding love of the Father which holds you in His loving care. He has redeemed you, a lost and condemned person, and guaranteed your place in heaven by the blood of His only Son. By the blood of Jesus, you can bear the cost of following Him, and by the blood of Jesus you are assured of the salvation which is yours. Your heavenly home awaits you, where the Father will welcome you into the light of His glory for all eternity, to dwell in the place where all cost comes to nothing as you dwell in His perfect paradise forever. Amen