

Reedy Fork Baptist Church

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: "The High Cost of Commitment"

SCRIPTURE IN RESPONSE: Luke 14:25-35

²⁵ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said:

²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.

²⁷ And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?

²⁹ For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you,

³⁰ saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

³¹ "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.

³³ In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

³⁴ "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?

³⁵ It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

I. Key Words:

- Discipleship
- Commitment
- Parable
- Disciple
- Cross
- Cost
- Hyperbolic

II. People, Places, & Times:

- Jesus
- Disciple
- Crowd

III. Background:

In Luke 14:25-35, Jesus addresses a large crowd traveling with him, setting stringent conditions for true discipleship, emphasizing that commitment to him must take absolute precedence over family, personal life, and possessions. He uses hyperbolic language—such as "hating" family—to highlight that love for him must be supreme, demanding the "cost" be counted before following.

IV. In Depth:

1. Lesson Emphasis #1: The Setting (vv. 25-27).

- A.** The time was the last days of our Lord's earthly ministry.
1. It may have been the weekend before his crucifixion.
 2. He had been invited to a meal in the home of a Pharisee somewhere in the vicinity of Jerusalem, where he had healed a man on the Sabbath, thereby incurring the Pharisees' hostility.
 3. He explained his actions with the illustration of the ox or donkey that had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath.
 4. The implication was that human needs were far more important than the life of an animal.
- B.** Jesus confronted his audience with their snobbery.
1. He did so by relating the parable of the great supper, in which the master of the house had instructed his servants to go into "streets and alleys" and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" into his banquet room (v. 21 NIV).

- C. Jesus declared for the first time the terms of discipleship (v. 25).
 - 1. His words had a separating effect, and many of the people left.
 - 2. He made this declaration after he left the Pharisee's house and while he was traveling and speaking to large crowds.
 - 3. A phrase Jesus spoke three times during this brief address to the people is significant: "cannot be my disciple" (vs. 26-27, 33).
 - 4. He was referring to those who refused to put their loyalty to him above their other loyalties.
 - 5. He summarized with this statement: "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (NIV).

2. Lesson Emphasis #2: The Illustrations

- A. Through two parables Jesus gave the reason for his demanding terms of discipleship.
- B. The first illustration (v. 28) concerned the building of a tower and the need to first count the cost.
 - 1. The first parable centered on construction.
 - 2. There is something about building that stirs the creative urges in us.
 - 3. In the story Jesus told, the builder was so obsessed with a desire to translate his dream into reality that he neglected a most important step in the project—he failed to sit down with his builders and count the cost.
 - 4. Many Christian lives are like that of the builder.
 - 5. A marvelous foundation is laid.
 - 6. A set of plans for a new life provides the guidelines for that building.
 - 7. But somewhere somehow someone refuses to count the cost of building a Christian life.
 - 8. Refusing to see the cost of discipleship ensures a pitiful substitute for what God intends in our lives.
- C. The second illustration, that of the king who had to consider the number of his troops before going to battle with another king (v. 31-32).
 - 1. In this story a king was challenged in battle by another king and his army.
 - 2. Jesus asked whether the first king would consider whether to go to war with his 10,000 men against the other king's 20,000 men.
 - 3. If he were wise, he would send a delegation of his men to meet the other king long before they arrived at the battleground to ask for terms of peace.
 - 4. In other words, the king should assess the situation, explore all the possibilities, and then draw upon his resources of wisdom.
 - 5. He should count the cost of the battle, and seeing that he does not have the necessary resources to win, use his ingenuity to bring about peace without the loss of a single man.

D. In both illustrations Jesus was referring metaphorically to discipleship and not salvation.

1. Sadly, there are those who are truly born again who never become dedicated, committed, and loyal disciples of Christ.
2. They are in the circle of his redeeming love and grace, but they remain on the edge!
3. True assessments had to be made.
4. Many Christian lives are like that of the builder.

3. Lesson Emphasis #3: The Application

A. In effect, Jesus was saying that if our purpose is to be his disciple, we must build and we must battle.

1. Both actions require counting the cost and preparation.
2. Often are those who have been, like the rich young ruler, who have liked the thought of following Jesus but have not been willing to count the cost.
3. These people live in spiritual tents instead of in the spiritual mansions God would have them build for him.
4. They win no battles against temptation and sin; instead, they lie wounded on the battlefield because they did not assess the strength of their enemy and prepare themselves to wage war against him.

B. When you and I start to build our lives for God, we will be attacked on every hand.

1. We need both the trowel and the sword.
2. They go together; they are inseparable.
3. Recall the story of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.
4. The people were told to have a trowel in one hand for laying the stones and a sword in the other hand to battle against the enemy.

IV. Make It Happen

- What is the purpose of the two parables that Jesus tells about in Luke 14?
- What is most important to the believer salvation or discipleship?
- What is Jesus focusing on most in the two parables salvation or discipleship?
- What happens when we start to build our lives as a Christian?
- How can we improve our life as a disciple?
- How does our lives resemble that of a builder? Or going to war?

