

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (November 6, 2022)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

For the past seven weeks we've been asking the question, "Why Church?" It's a question on the minds of many of those we share life with. We looked at why God created the Church, why God wants His people to be a part of His Church, and how the Church is the best way for us to know God, know ourselves, and know our place in this world. This morning we turn our attention to Stewardship.

There was a time I believed that I was self-made, deserving of all the good things that came my way, entitled to enjoy what I could afford. I worked hard, completed my education, tried to be a good citizen. Even the things that seemingly just happened, chance encounters and opportunities, I convinced myself were my due, fate smiling on me for my labors and industry. And then the voice of reason, and a dose of reality, sank in.

Yes, I applied myself. Yes, I put in time, effort, and sweat. But literally everything I have: the family and country I was born into, the education offered to me, the opportunities others provided, the friends I have, even my health, has come to me via others, and ultimately, Christians believe, I believe, from God.

For Christians, stewardship (which means "taking care of what we have and who we are") invites us to live our lives recognizing that God is the true source of all things. As Christians we steward (take care of) what God has given us for a purpose beyond ourselves. That purpose is to love Him, and love others. The more we are mindful of that, the more grateful we are, the more we discover a growing love for God, and a genuine love for others growing too. The things that really matter follow: peace, joy, love, eternity, are given to us too.

The passage for this morning is difficult and uncomfortable. In a few verses Jesus will challenge, and offend, each and every one of us. At one of the high points in His popularity He did not capitalize on His success, He did not pander to the crowd, strengthen His power base, tell others what they wanted to hear, instead He was brutally honest, warning all to count the cost if they wanted to follow Him. It may not be what we want to hear, but it's what we need to understand. May God help us count the cost, find the courage, pick up our cross, and follow, live for, Jesus.

### **Count the Cost** (Luke 14:25-35)

<sup>14:25</sup> Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them,<sup>26</sup> "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. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his

own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> 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? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' <sup>31</sup> 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? <sup>32</sup> And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

<sup>34</sup> "Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? <sup>35</sup> 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."

### **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. What did Jesus say in this passage that those in the crowd would find troubling and offensive?
2. What did Jesus say that everyone must do if they want to follow Him?
3. What examples did Jesus use to make His point?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

4. What does it mean that those who want to follow Jesus must hate their father, mother, spouse, children, siblings, even their own life? Why would Jesus say that?
5. What does it mean to "bear [your] own cross"?
6. What does it mean to "renounce" all that you have?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

7. If you had been in that crowd, hearing Jesus talk about "hate", about "bearing your cross", about "renouncing all", what would you think and do? Why would you make those decisions?
8. Think of a major decision you've made? What were the costs of that decision? How did you decide it was worth the cost?
9. What will following Jesus cost you? What is the benefit?
10. What decisions will you need to make to follow Jesus?

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural, easy, and empowering, part of your day. Pray for wisdom and courage. Ask God to help you understand what He has given you. Ask God to help you count the cost so that you understand what only He can provide. God will help you because He loves you.