



House of New Beginnings

ShalomAZ Ministries
In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"The Cost of 'Follow Me'" Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta **Devotion and Discussion Questions**

Key Texts: 1 Peter 3:13-17

When Yeshua said, *"Follow Me,"* He was not inviting us to a life of comfort and applause. **He was inviting us to a cross.** In our culture, we often reduce faith to something transactional: say a prayer, receive blessings, and protect your comfort. But when you look at the words of Peter, Paul, and Yeshua Himself, you see a very different invitation.

It is an *invitation to lay down your rights, to endure rejection, and to keep loving in the face of hatred.* It is an invitation to let go of your life so you can find something better—a life hidden with God, unshakable in the storms of suffering. The early believers understood this because they had no illusions. They knew the cost was everything, but they also knew it was worth it. Today, Peter's words confront our shallow expectations and call us back to the rugged road of true discipleship.

1. YOU WERE INVITED TO SURRENDER, NOT COMFORT

Peter opens by reminding the believers, *"To this you were called."* The context isn't success or prosperity—it's suffering. It's choosing the hard road of obedience when everything in you wants to take the easy way out. In 1 Peter 3:14, he says, *"But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed."* This is not the version of Biblical faith many of us were handed. Most of us were taught that following Yeshua meant things would get better, safer, and easier. But He never promised that. He promised Himself—and that would be enough even when life falls apart.

2.

This doesn't mean God delights in our pain. He isn't cruel. But He knows that surrender refines us. When you give up your right to retaliate, your right to be comfortable, your right to be understood, something happens in your heart. You start to look like the One you follow. You discover the deeper joy of knowing your life is not your own. *"For you have been bought with a price"* (1 Cor. 6:20). You were not called to be customers of a comfortable religion—you were called to be disciples, even when it costs you everything.

3.

4. YOUR HOPE IS PROVEN IN THE FIRE

Peter writes, *"Sanctify Messiah as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you"* (1 Pet. 3:15). He is describing a life so different from the world that it demands explanation. Anyone can hold it together when life is easy. But when you bless those who curse you, when you love those who despise you, when you have peace in the middle of pain—that is a testimony no one can ignore.

5.

Your hope is proven when you're under pressure. When suffering squeezes you, whatever is inside will come out. If you are full of bitterness, that will spill over. But if

you have set apart Messiah as Lord, then what overflows is trust and grace. This is what Yeshua did. As Isaiah prophesied, *“I gave My back to those who strike, and My cheeks to those pulling out My beard”* (Is 50:6). He did not revile in return. He entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly. That’s the model. That’s the call. And that is how the world knows your hope is real.

3. THE COST IS REAL, BUT SO IS THE REWARD

Peter doesn’t pretend this life is easy. He doesn’t tell believers to pretend suffering doesn’t hurt. But he does tell them something profound: *“It is better—if it is God’s will—to suffer for doing good than for doing evil”* (1 Pet. 3:17). In other words, it is better to be wronged than to do wrong. It is better to be misunderstood than to betray the character of Yeshua.

This is the cost of discipleship: laying down your rights, trusting God to vindicate you, and loving when no one loves you back. But there is a reward that outweighs it all. Paul said, *“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond comparison”* (2 Cor.4:17). When you surrender everything, you gain something the world can never take—an unshakable hope, a clear conscience, and the joy of knowing you are pleasing the One who matters most. You discover that to live is Messiah, and to die is gain (Phil. 1:21). That is the paradox of the kingdom: when you lose your life, you find it.

CONCLUSION:

Today, ask the Lord to search your heart. Have you unwittingly been living as a customer of the gospel—taking what comforts you but avoiding what costs you? Today, Yeshua is inviting you back to the narrow road. The call has never changed: *“Follow Me.”* He never promised it would be easy, but He promised you wouldn’t walk alone. If you are ready to lay down your rights, to trust Him with your reputation, your comfort, your very life—today is the day to surrender. Let go of the illusion of control. Take up your cross. Follow Him wherever He leads.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it so difficult to embrace suffering as part of our calling?
2. How does surrender challenge your ideas about what it means to follow Yeshua?
3. What would it look like for you to sanctify Messiah as Lord in your heart right now?
4. Where are you still fighting for your rights instead of laying them down?
5. How can your response to hardship become a testimony of hope to others?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Abba Father, thank You for inviting us to follow Your Son, not just to comfort but to the cross. Forgive us for wanting a version of faith that costs us nothing. Today we choose surrender. We lay down our rights, our pride, and our need to be in control. Fill us with courage to follow You into suffering if that is where You lead. Let our lives bear witness to the hope that cannot be shaken. Make us more like Yeshua.

In Yeshua’s name. Amen.