RELATIONSHIP STATUS

COMMITTED
Counting the Cost of Following Jesus

Main Scripture: Luke 14:27–28
“And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 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?”

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several weeks, we have been talking about relationships.
We've talked about our relationship with God.
We've talked about biblical friendship
We've talked about family.

And now, as we come to the final week of **Relationship Status**, we have to answer the most important relationship question of all:
What is your relationship with Jesus?
And Jesus makes something very clear:
Following Him requires commitment.

We live in a culture that doesn't like commitment.
We want options.
We want flexibility.
We want an escape plan.
We say things like:
"I'll try it."
"I'll see how it goes."
"I'll do it as long as it works for me."
But Jesus doesn't invite us into a casual relationship.
He doesn't say:
“Try Me.”
He says:
“Follow Me.”
And in Luke 14, Jesus actually tells people to **count the cost** before they make that commitment.

1. JESUS NEVER HID THE COST OF FOLLOWING HIM

Luke 14:27

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

Jesus didn't give people a sales pitch.
He didn't say:
"Follow Me and your life will become easy."

He didn't say:
"Follow Me and you'll never have problems."

He didn't say:
"Follow Me and everyone will like you."

Instead, Jesus said:
“Carry your cross.”

That doesn't sound like an easy invitation.
It sounds like commitment.
It sounds like sacrifice.
It sounds like surrender.
Jesus wanted people to understand what they were getting into.

JESUS WAS HONEST ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP

Sometimes we present Christianity as though accepting Jesus means all our problems disappear.
But Jesus never promised that.
Following Christ doesn't mean you won't have difficulties.
It means you don't have to face those difficulties alone.
Following Jesus doesn't mean there won't be storms.
It means Jesus will be with you in the storm.
Following Jesus doesn't mean everything will be comfortable.
It means your life will have purpose.

CROSS-REFERENCE — John 16:33

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Jesus never promised the absence of trouble.
He promised **His presence and His victory.**

2. FOLLOWING JESUS REQUIRES DENYING YOURSELF

Jesus says:
"Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."
The cross represents surrender.
Before we follow Jesus, the question is often:
"What do I want?"
But discipleship changes the question to:
"What does Jesus want?"
That's the difference between being a believer and being a disciple.
A believer may say:
"I believe in Jesus."
A disciple says:
"I will follow Jesus."

CROSS-REFERENCE — Luke 9:23

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."
Notice the word:
Daily.
Following Jesus isn't a one-time decision.
It is a daily decision.
Every morning we have an opportunity to say:
"Jesus, today my life belongs to You."

THE BATTLE OF THE THRONE

Every person has a throne.
The question isn't whether there is a throne.
The question is:
Who is sitting on it?
Sometimes we want Jesus to be our Savior without allowing Him to be our Lord.
We say:
"Jesus, save me."
But then:
"Don't tell me what to do."
"Don't touch my relationships."
"Don't touch my finances."

“Don't touch my habits.”
“Don't touch my plans.”
“Don't touch my future.”
But Jesus doesn't want to be part of your life.
He wants to be Lord of your life.

CROSS-REFERENCE — Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”
Paul understood what surrender meant.
The old Paul wasn't running the show anymore.
Jesus was.

3. COUNTING THE COST MEANS ASKING WHAT FOLLOWING JESUS WILL CHANGE

Jesus says in Luke 14:
“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost...?”

Jesus gives us a picture of someone preparing to build.
Before they begin, they calculate.
They make sure they have what they need.
They count the cost.

Why?
Because starting something and finishing something are two different things.

JESUS WANTS MORE THAN A GOOD START

There are people who start well.
They get excited.
They come to church.
They get involved.
They make commitments.
They feel close to God.
But eventually something happens.
Life gets busy.
Prayer becomes inconsistent.
The Bible gets neglected.

Church becomes optional.
The excitement fades.
And eventually they walk away.

Jesus is saying:
“Before you follow Me, understand that this is a lifelong commitment.”

CROSS-REFERENCE — Philippians 1:6

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

God is interested in finishing what He starts.
And He wants us to remain faithful to the end.

4. FOLLOWING JESUS WILL COST YOU YOUR COMFORT

One of the greatest enemies of discipleship is comfort.

We like comfortable Christianity.

We want:
Comfortable worship.
Comfortable preaching.
Comfortable serving.
Comfortable giving.
Comfortable obedience.

But Jesus didn't call us to comfort.
He called us to **carry a cross.**

Sometimes following Jesus will make you uncomfortable.
Sometimes Jesus will ask you to forgive someone you don't want to forgive.
Sometimes He will ask you to serve when you would rather sit.
Sometimes He will ask you to give when you would rather keep.
Sometimes He will ask you to step out in faith when you'd rather stay where you are.
Sometimes He will ask you to speak when you'd rather remain silent.
Sometimes He will ask you to remain silent when you'd rather speak.

That's discipleship.

CROSS-REFERENCE — Romans 12:1

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.”

A living sacrifice doesn't get off the altar whenever things become uncomfortable.
It remains surrendered.

5. FOLLOWING JESUS MAY COST YOU RELATIONSHIPS

Jesus said something challenging in Luke 14.

Luke 14:26

“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.”

Jesus isn't commanding us to hate our families.
Scripture clearly commands us to love our families.
The point is that our love and loyalty to Christ must be **greater than every other loyalty.**
Jesus must come first.

CROSS-REFERENCE — Matthew 10:37

“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or

6. TRUE COMMITMENT CHANGES YOUR LIFE

When you genuinely surrender to Jesus, something changes.

2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

Christianity isn't simply behavior modification.
It is transformation.

Jesus doesn't simply make you better.
He makes you new.
Your desires begin to change. Your priorities begin to change.
Your relationships begin to change. Your attitude begins to change.

Your words begin to change.
Your response to difficulty begins to change.
Your relationship with sin begins to change.
Your heart begins to change.

HOLINESS CONNECTION

This is where our holiness theology becomes incredibly important.
God doesn't simply want to forgive us.
He wants to transform us.
God wants to produce Christlike character within us.

Galatians 5:22–23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Entire sanctification is not simply about what we stop doing.
It is about what God produces within us.

God wants to sanctify our hearts so that our lives increasingly reflect Jesus.

A surrendered heart becomes a transformed heart.
And a transformed heart produces a transformed life.

7. COMMITMENT MEANS STAYING FAITHFUL

Galatians 6:9

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

There will be days when you don't feel like following Jesus.
There will be days when prayer feels difficult.
There will be days when worship feels hard.
There will be days when serving is exhausting.
There will be days when obedience doesn't seem to make a difference.
Keep going.
Don't quit.
Don't walk away.
Don't give up.

Your feelings don't determine your commitment.
Your circumstances don't determine your commitment.
Jesus is worth following even when following Him is difficult.

CROSS-REFERENCE — Hebrews 12:1–2

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith."

Notice where we're supposed to look:
Jesus.
Not the circumstances.
Not the people around us.
Not the obstacles.
Jesus.

THE ULTIMATE QUESTION

As we close this series, we've talked about relationships.
But every relationship we've discussed ultimately points back to this one.

What's your relationship status with Jesus?

Maybe your status is:
"Searching."
You're looking for answers.
You're trying to figure out who Jesus is.

Maybe your status is:
"Complicated."
You believe in Jesus, but you're struggling to surrender.

Maybe your status is:
"Disconnected."
You used to be close to God, but you've drifted.

Maybe your status is: **"Following."**
You're trying to live for Christ.

But perhaps Jesus is asking you to move beyond simply following Him occasionally. He's asking for **complete commitment.**

THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. WHO IS ON THE THRONE OF MY LIFE?

Is it Jesus?
Or is it me?

2. WHAT AM I HOLDING BACK FROM GOD?

Is there an area where you are saying:
"Jesus, You can have everything except this"?

3. AM I FOLLOWING JESUS OR JUST ADMIRING JESUS?

There's a difference.
A follower obeys.
A follower trusts.
A follower surrenders.
A follower keeps going.
A follower says:
"Jesus, wherever You lead, I'll go."

CONCLUSION — "COMMITTED"

At the beginning of this series, we talked about relationships. Today, we end with the most important relationship of all. Jesus isn't asking you to add church to your schedule. He's asking you to give Him your life. He isn't asking you to simply believe in Him. He's asking you to follow Him. He isn't asking for part of your heart.
He wants all of you.

Romans 6:22

"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life."

Jesus offers freedom.
But freedom isn't freedom to live however we want.
Freedom is the ability to finally live the way God created us to live.