

Unstoppable Kingdom

Globally: Count the Cost

Acts 21:1-16

When you hear the phrase, ‘Count the Cost’, what comes to mind? A large purchase? Job change? Attempting something hard like a marathon or a new diet? What about following Jesus? It should!

“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 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?...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?...So, therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.” **Luke 14:27-28, 31, 33-The Cost of Citizenship**

Suppose you were given an all-expense paid beach-front home in Tahiti complete with relocation, food, maid, and spending money all included. You may brag about it, get excited about it, and even fully believe that it now belongs to you. But, until you pack your bags and LEAVE your current home behind, the new life is never really yours! This is what so many never fully understand about following Jesus. You will never experience life in Christ until you let go of, and completely surrender your old life! Never!

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” **2 Corinthians 5:17**

Today, in our journey through Acts, we will look at a passage of scripture that describes the Apostle Paul counting the cost. Even while others are discouraging him, he continues to sacrifice for the Kingdom!

Main Idea: The Unstoppable Kingdom Calls its Citizens to Count the Cost

“And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. 2 And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 3 When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. 4 And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5 When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed 6 and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home. 7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. 8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. 10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul’s belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’” 12 When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and

breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, “Let the will of the Lord be done. 15 After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. 16 And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.” **Acts 21:1-16**

Ways Count the Cost as a Citizen of the Kingdom in Acts 21:1-16

I. We Count the Cost as One Family – Acts 21:1-12

The Apostle Paul is concluding his third missionary journey by hurrying back to Jerusalem with the offering from the Gentile Churches for the Jewish brothers there. On his way, the boats on which he had hitched a ride made stops allowing Paul to visit with believers along the way. There was a group in Tyre (vs. 4), several more in Ptolemais (vs. 7), Phillip and his 4 daughters in Caesarea (vs. 8), and Agabus from Judea (vs. 10).

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are...Beloved, we are God’s children now...”

1 John 3:1-2 - One Big Family!

Did you notice that all the members of the family were trying to keep Paul from going to Jerusalem? Why? Because they loved him and did not want anything bad to happen to him! Yet, Paul knew that God had called him to deliver the gift and to serve the Lord, so he counted the cost and went anyway!

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.”

Hebrews 10:24 - That’s what we do in the family of God!

If someone in your life (even a child) is considering taking a risk for the Kingdom of God, please do not be the one to discourage them. Encourage one another to count the cost and obey God no matter what!!! We’re family.

II. We Count the Cost with One Focus – Acts 21:13-14

While Paul appreciated the love, care, and protection. He wasn’t swayed.

“But seek first the kingdom of God...” **Matthew 6:33a - Jesus was clear!**

“Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” **Acts 21:13 - Health, Wealth and Happiness are not #1**

“To choose to suffer means that there is something wrong; to choose God’s will even if it means suffering is a very different thing. No healthy saint ever chooses suffering; he chooses God’s will, as Jesus did, whether it means suffering or not.” **Oswald Chambers - Count the Cost of God’s Will**

God will not help us when we do nothing but associate our comfort with His will. As a family, we must hold one another accountable against this, and focus instead on serving the Lord no matter the cost! Consider Jesus...

“From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.’ But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.’ Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’”

Matthew 16:21-24 - Our focus is squarely on Christ & His Kingdom!

III. We Count the Cost toward One Finish Line – Acts 21:15-16

Despite the objections from members of the family, Paul went to Jerusalem to deliver the generous gift from the Gentile churches. We will see next week just how bad it got and why everyone was so worried. Paul’s approach was similar to that of Jesus when he was nearing the cross.

Jesus: *“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”* **Luke 22:42 - He counted the cost!**

Major Question: Are You Willing to Count the Cost of the Kingdom?

- **To be Saved:** Willing to Believe, Repent, and Submit to Christ?
- **To be Baptized:** Willing to Go Public with Jesus as your Lord?
- **To be Faithful:** Willing to surrender your will to Christ?
 - **In Covenant Community?** Small Group and Membership.
 - **In Serving the Lord and Others?** Time to Volunteer, or Go!
 - **In Generous Giving?** It’s time to start tithing.
 - **In Repentance of Sin?** Stop now and submit to Christ!
 - **In Time Alone with God?** Get up early, read and pray!
 - **In Sharing Christ with Others?** Open your mouth!
 - **In Forgiving Those Who’ve Wronged You?**
It’s time!

I don’t know what exactly God is calling you to count the cost about today, but I can tell you why I do not hesitate to BOLDLY call you to count the cost. It’s because Jesus Christ has already counted the cost for you...

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, **who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.** Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”* **Hebrews 12:1-3**

Jesus counted the cost and decided that submission to the will of God to save your soul was worth it. You were worth it. You are worth it!

You are holding in your hand an invitation to something far greater than a beach house in Tahiti, it’s an invitation to citizenship in the Unstoppable Kingdom of God and it’s signed by the King himself. All you have to do is believe it’s real and surrender your feeble attempts at being the king of your own existence to submit to Jesus as Lord!

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *CSB Study Bible* – Trevin Wax, General Editor (2021)
- *The Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *The New American Commentary: Acts* – John B. Polhill (1992)
- *Acts: Bible Study Commentary* – F.F. Bruce (2017)
- *Acts for Everyone* – N.T. Wright (2008)
- *Acts: The Church Afire* – Kent Hughes (1996)
- *Acts* - John MacArthur (1994)
- *Acts* – K.O. Gangle (1998)
- *The Kingdom of God* – Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1992)
- *The Message of Acts* – John Stott (1994)
- *Kingdom First* – Jeff Christopherson (2015)
- *My Utmost for His Highest* – Oswald Chambers (1924)