

Stories of Grace and Truth

Luke 14.25-35

February 25, 2024

In order to follow Jesus to Jerusalem this Lenten season, we are looking at some of the more challenging of his parables. We have rejoiced at the good news of God's great grace in the earlier parables, but now the road gets narrower as Jesus tells us that God's great grace comes with certain demands. As TW Manson said, "Salvation is free, but it isn't cheap." So especially now, let's heed Jesus' words: "Whoever has ears to hear, let them listen."

Pastor Eric

Opening Up:

Of all your possessions, what's your favorite?

Read Luke 14.25-27. What in the world is Jesus doing telling his followers that they must hate family, even their own lives? What does he mean by "hate?" What does this tell you about what it means to be Jesus' disciple? Based on this, what would you say is the difference between a disciple and a believer? Has there been a point in your own life when you stepped out from being a *believer* to a full-fledged *disciple*?

Focus on verses 26, 27. Imagine when or how a disciple might be asked to love Jesus more than family (in other words, what might this "look like?"). Imagine what it might look like to love him more than your own life, more than your possessions (verse 33). Have you ever had the experience of choosing to love Jesus more than any of these?

Now look at the parables in verses 28-32. Again, we have twin parables, but not identical twins. Does one emphasize something that the other does not? In a nutshell, what is Jesus' point in these parables? What are the things (items, people, dreams) that you love the most (hold dearest)? In general, what do you imagine Jesus thinks about these things?

"Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without the living, incarnate Jesus Christ."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Discipleship

Imagine how a disciple of Jesus might sacrifice for Jesus in everyday life (as opposed to the rarer dramatic acts of sacrifice). Is there anything *in your own* daily life that you give up, or sacrifice, in order to follow Jesus? Is there anything else you think Jesus might be asking you to sacrifice? What does it really mean to give Jesus priority over your life? What does it mean to follow him exclusively. To give him your all?

What competes most for your love for Jesus? Pray that you will find the strength necessary to make the sacrifices needed to follow Jesus more completely.

"Only the simple and singlehearted are happy. For only the singlehearted has a clear direction . . . following him is the most joyful thing in the world because it frees a [person] from all the things that tempt and torment the halfhearted and tug and toss them to and fro."

Helmut Thielicke

The Waiting Father

Read Matthew 28.19, 20: Since Jesus calls us to make *disciples*, how does this discussion about the cost of discipleship bear on his call to make new disciples?