

XXV. L.E.A.D. in Biblical Perspective  
*Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship*  
“Christ’s Call to Costly Discipleship”

Luke 14:25–33

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We finished in the last study looking at Luke 14:1–24 and now we’ll look at Luke 14:25–33 which says [25] *Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, [26] “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. [27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. [28] 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? [29] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, [30] saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ [31] 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? [32] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. [33] So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.* The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I would like for you to put a couple of things in your mind. Now multitudes are following Jesus. In preparation of this text, I find this text bone jarring. It’s radical and it has jagged edges. The tendency is to explain it away when the reality is clearly Jesus. This isn’t even one of the Apostles expounding for this is Jesus saying something very profound, pointed, intentional and He’s calling us to something. The ‘now’ in this text is referring back to Luke 9:51 as it says [51] *When the days drew near for him (Jesus) to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.* What He does on the way is recorded from Luke 9 all the way to what He does on the cross as we get into the latter chapters of Luke.

The ‘now’ also includes what we studied in the last study which was a banquet given to Him by the ruler of the Pharisees. The Pharisees had kind of switched tactics for no longer did they debate Jesus because He had handed them their lunch too many times, so now they are constantly trying to catch Him in something. Jesus takes that time at the banquet to embrace something He has started incorporating in His teaching and that is parables. He gives three banquet parables to reach back to Isaiah 25 in which the Messiah is prophesied, who will bring salvation with grace that is lavish and Isaiah describes that lavish grace as a banquet. It is latter called in Revelation 19, the banquet of the Lamb, the marriage supper, but in Luke 24 it’s described as the banquet of salvation. Each parable builds on the other to make a point from all three together.

In the first banquet parable the point is when the Lord of the banquet who has given the banquet of salvation invites you and you come, when you get there you don’t use the banquet to promote yourself but you promote the preeminence of the One who gave you the banquet. In other words, you don’t try to manipulate the seating list but you come in a take the last chair because the same Jesus who spread the banquet of salvation put you on the invitation list and He also has the seating arrangements. You let Him seat you so you just come in with humility lifting Him up to preeminence. So this banquet deals with those invited.

The second parable deals with those who would host a banquet by pointing out the glorious Lord of the banquet who does not invite those who He needs (for He needs no one) but He invites those who need Him – the poor, lame, sick, etc. The reality is that spiritually we are qualified to get invited, don't we? In the third parable every banquet has two invitations – the 'save the date' invitation and the 'come in and eat' invitation. When Jesus got to the 'come in and eat' one everyone started making excuses. Jesus says that they don't come to the Table unless they are compelled so you have to go out and compel them to come.

When we take those three parables together the takeaway from the last study was God saves those who need Him even though they do not want Him, by pursuing them with a compelling message, compelling messengers and with a compelling Minister. The compelling message is the unique Gospel of grace and there is nothing like it. The religions of this world tell us what we have to do and give but the Gospel says it's not what you do but what God has done in the gift of His Son and what He gives for you. If you have come to the Table you are now a compelling messenger so you go out with a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship but not by arrogance for there is nothing more compelling than to meet a Christian that comes with courage, conviction, compassion and contrition. You come with humility yet boldness. Then they have a compelling Minister and it's not me, it's the Holy Spirit who reaches into the heart to give eyes to see and ears to hear. Instead of manufacturing excuses we can't wait to get to the Table.

Did you ever experience that? I remember my granddaddy and grandmother took me to church every Sunday and I did everything I could to come up with every possible excuse. I would show up every two weeks with no pants that would be fit for church so they would go out and buy me a pair. When I got saved I started looking up where I can go to church even when I go out of town for all of a sudden when the door is open I'm there, why? The preachers nor the churches changed but I was changed. It was the Holy Spirit who did the changing, not me. Now I have a hunger and thirst for things I didn't want to have anything to do with. That is what the compelling Minister does.

So Jesus finishes at that banquet and now a large crowd, probably with a mixed demographic are following Him down a road as Jesus is going closer to Jerusalem and He stops to speak to them about the terms of following Him. If they don't follow Him according to His terms then He tells them they cannot be His disciples. He doesn't say 'you may not be' but He says 'you cannot be' and that's a statement of ability. You will not be a Christ follower unless you embrace the terms that are non-negotiable as a disciple.

In the church of Jesus Christ we'll get professions of faith but have you wondered why the church gets few disciples, who are regular in worship, small groups, Bible studies? When you take the number of members and match them with the number in small groups my guess is there will be a significant difference in almost church after church after church. You will notice that Jesus never separates coming to Him and following Him.

In fact, when He gives the invitation He says 'Come' which is evangelism and then He says 'follow Me' and that's discipleship. He puts them both together. He doesn't say just take one but do the other when you want. Luke follows up these three banquet parables with the cost of discipleship so you cannot miss that they are inseparably tied to each other. So as we look at this Luke 24:25–33 text I want you to see that he is giving us two non-negotiable terms, two clarifying questions and one focused summation. Let's look first at the two non-negotiable terms.

We find these two terms in Luke 24:25–26 which says [25] *Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, [26] "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. [27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.* When he says ‘cannot’ he is saying he doesn’t have the ability. So what else is he saying here?

First, I need to make sure you understand this with clarity therefore with context but I don’t want to ‘water it down’ by putting it into context because this is bone jarring. It is clearly mind boggling what Jesus is saying here for He says three times in the text ‘you **cannot** be my disciple’ and says it very pointedly. I can almost hear the Disciples telling Jesus ‘Wait just a minute, this is not good for church growth. Wouldn’t it be great to get to Jerusalem with a multitude yet You’re sifting them out with these statements!’

Jesus says this with two non-negotiable terms. The first non-negotiable is that you have to hate your father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters and your own life in order to be His disciple. The Bible never contradicts itself yet here we have a seemingly contradiction because doesn’t the Bible also tell us to love our neighbor, to love one another, our spouses and children? I would say these people He has mentioned fit into those categories so whenever there is a seeming contradiction, knowing there can’t be a contradiction, then you always go to the simpler texts to understand the more difficult text. Jesus gives us two so that we can understand exactly what He is saying here, then we’ll try to apply it by not taking the jagged edge off.

Let’s first look at Matthew 10, where Jesus uses the same factors of father, mother, wife, brother, sister, etc., for discipleship. When the closest people in your life come against you because you have come to Him then you have a decision to make – them or Him. Matthew 10:34–39 says [34] *“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. [35] For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. [36] And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. [37] Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. [38] And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. [39] Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”*

Christ is not merely an additive in your life. When you come to Jesus this is a big deal and the same people who will not come to Him, unless the Holy Spirit changes them, will be against those who come to Him. Will those people be more important in your affection or will He be more important? Which one will reign at that moment? When you come to Christ you first leave everything and everyone and then Christ is the One who sends you back to them. You don’t bring them with you for you come to Him and then He will send you back to them. Unless God works in their life they will be against you if you come to Him. You have already decided on an unrivaled commitment to Christ. You cannot follow Jesus if you love anyone more than Him. Now let’s look at John 12.

John 12:25 says [25] *Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.* In other words, you have to not simply hate your life but you have to die to your life. I love the verse in Galatians 2:20 that says [20] *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* The life I now live is a gift from God. I don’t bring my children with me to Christ but when I come to Christ He disciplines me in to how to get back into the lives of my children and bring Him to them. He is making it abundantly clear about this radical commitment to follow Him is non-negotiable, with no rivals and that’s the way we move into life.

He doesn't exhaust every possibility but He does comprehensively. Stop and think how He does it. When He says to hate your father, mother, sister, brother and children they are all blood relationships. A wife is a chosen, covenant relationship. To hate himself is a natural love relationship. We are born to love God and those made in the image of God and that include you being made in the image of God so you are supposed to love yourself. Remember the two commandments in Luke 10:27 which says [27] *And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."*

Now we because of our sin nature pervert that love of self into idolatry. It's natural for Ephesians 5:29–30 says [29] *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, [30] because we are members of his body.* But to love yourself rightly you have to first hate yourself, go to Christ and now Christ teaches you how to love yourself so that whatsoever you do you do for the glory of God. This is a radical, non-negotiable commitment that you are making when you come to Christ to follow Him.

The second non-negotiable term is in Luke 14:27 which says [27] *Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.* When this was written in the first century, when the Romans wanted to put someone to death they made a statement so they came up with a way to put slaves, criminals and aliens to death. It was so horrible that a Roman citizen would never have to worry about this happening to them. It was a deterrent and it was torture and it was called the cross death. To die on a cross it could take anywhere from 3 to 5 days possibly before one would die, trying to get every breath and the vultures have already plucked their eyes out. It was a horrible death and Jesus says if you won't bear your own cross you cannot be His disciple.

When Satan and the world comes to put you to death, you say I've already died for we are sheep counted to be slaughtered. I die to self and live in Christ. Don't worry I brought my cross and I'll die on it. You don't have to bear my cross and I don't have to bear your cross but I should help you bear your cross. Yet we're called to bear our own cross but whatever comes against you in this broken world you have already died to yourself and brought the instrument of the cross and if you haven't done that then you can't be His disciple because His disciples will die daily. You have been bought with a price. I Corinthians 6:19–20 says [19] *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

Jesus has made these two non-negotiable terms abundantly clear for if anyone is to come after Christ you first set aside all relationships, and you come with no modifications, unadulterated, unmitigated, non-negotiated relationship to Him, but when He sends you back to those relationships it will be totally different because it's Him at work in you now. You remove everything that would stop and then when it would cost you, you say it's already dead, here's my cross for I do not fear those who can kill the body. My soul is His and everything I do from this point on is to the glory of God.

Then He gives two clarifying questions. One is built from the profession of construction and the other is built from royalty. The first is in Luke 14:28–30 which says [28] *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? [29] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, [30] saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'*

The second is in Luke 14:31–32 which says [31] *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? [32] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.*

This is why Jesus stopped. Here come these multitudes and we think that Jesus ought to keep making it easier because we have to get the numbers but Jesus is going to speak the truth. He says it is going to cost you to follow Him. He is not going to be like that builder or that king for He is going to give us the cost. He paid the cost for our salvation, now when you come to Him there will be a cost to follow Him. It's called the costly discipleship. Then He ends up with a focused summation.

Luke 14:33 says [33] *So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.* So anything that would beckon for your affection, allegiance and adoration has to be renounced. Renounce literally means to bid goodbye. When you come to Christ you bid farewell to everything and everyone that does have claims if you're going to follow Jesus for if you don't you cannot be His disciple. So where does that leave us?

Here is the takeaway for this study. Salvation is free (praise God) but discipleship costs. That is why nothing in my hands I bring to pay for my salvation because Jesus paid it all, but nothing in my hand I bring also means I don't come negotiating my following of Christ. Become surrendered. I love the hymn that Judson W. Van DeVenter wrote which is *I Surrender All*. The refrain says;

*I surrender all, I surrender all;  
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,  
I surrender all.*

To follow Christ is to obey Christ. Who obeys Christ? It is those who love Him. So if you're going to be a disciple that's obedience. To love Christ is to have no rivals for our allegiance, affection and adoration. Things will be uncovered but when you come to Christ you don't come negotiated, adulterated, mitigated or a modified relationship. You come with nothing in your hands and Christ is now your life. I have come to give to Christ all of my relationships and as I am discipled I know that Christ will send me back to those relationships different. They will be blessed because no longer will I be sent to manipulate them for myself but now I'll be sent encourage and bless them because I don't need them for I have Christ. Now Christ can use me in them. Seek first His Kingdom and let Him add the things to you. I don't come for a reformation but a transformation.

I had a man come to me to tell me that another pastor told him his house was too big. I told him 'ask your pastor what the square footage is that is holy and I'm not trying to be smart.' I don't care how big or small your house is, my concern is does it have you. How did you get it? What are you doing with it? I have met people with small houses that have idols. I have met people with big houses that have idols. I have met people with small houses that use them gloriously and people with big houses that use them continually, but the question is, who has you? Do you have Jesus because you want a big house? You give that all to Him because it's His. It's like the church in Acts 2 where none of the people considered their property their own so they gave as people had need (Acts 2:45). It belonged to the Lord.

God has given you things to help you. The other day I went to the doctor and they took all my vital signs. God has given us that. If you want to know who has you then ask yourself who has the Lord's Day in your life because if the Lord doesn't have it in your life then He doesn't have the other six days. Does He have your tithe (really His tithe)? If He doesn't have it then you haven't left everything. Is gathered worship the most important thing in your life is it just something you try and accommodate in your life if something more important hasn't pushed

it out of your schedule? We don't live for God's glory if we can't gather for God's glory. He has given you those helps, indicators and barometers. If I'm not being faithful to this text then please come tell me and I understand providential hindrances.

I'm just asking what has you or what has a hold of you? Do I/you have a modified, negotiated relationship with Christ or have I/you left all to follow Him? Where I/you haven't left it He will show it to me/you, because if you don't find it then Satan will. Satan knows me and he has a reconnaissance team. Satan has probes and he eventually will find out what or who in your life is more important than Jesus. He will find the cost that you're not willing to pay and then we become a mockery. Then we retreat from the battlefield. Satan will find out who or what is more important to you than Jesus.

When we come to Christ we come for discipleship and I picture this as a funnel. The top of the funnel is glorious and it's a commitment to Christ, it's Lord's Day worship, it's preaching, it's prayer, it's the sacraments, all of these wonderful things and then the funnel starts moving down into the 70 then to the 12 and into the 3 but we never get down there because we won't be consistent at the top, because we have other things that are more important to us than Him. It may be sports, a job, a relationship. But something has a negotiated dynamic in our life and as long as it's there you will not and cannot be a disciple. Salvation is free but discipleship costs you everything.

Our Lord gave us another little indicator. Jesus taught this very same thing when three guys said they would follow Him and the next thing that came out of their mouths was 'but first...' There was nothing wrong with what they said they wanted to go do but what was wrong was that, that was first before Jesus.

I'll never forget when my wife and I pulled up to Covenant College. I was starting class the next day and my wife was pregnant with our first child. Everything we owned was in a 6 by 12 trailer. I had a dog that eats the world, no job, no place to live and \$75 in my pocket. If my kids did that I'd kill them. After I pulled in by the end of the day I had two jobs, a place to live and I started classes the next day. Three years later I finished school with no debt. Why did I go there? I went there to learn that in all things Christ might have preeminence. I knew it wasn't true in my life but I wanted it to be true.

In chapel I heard the choir sing the glorious hymn of the preeminence of Christ. That hymn was *All For Jesus, All For Jesus* and the first part says;

*All for Jesus! All for Jesus!*

*All my being's ransomed pow'rs;*

*All my thoughts and words and doings,*

*All my days and all my hours.*

I believe with all my heart it's that non-negotiating relationship and I praise God that salvation is free but it's the gift that costs you everything. It cost you sin, yourself, but now instead of coming to Jesus with your possessions He is your possession and He's enough. Now your possessions and your relationships are all His. He's our Lord, our Savior and He's enough. No man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).

We have an elder in this church that had an aunt that was like a sister. She is what I would call a country aunt and everything you think about country was true about this lady. She recently went to Jesus but she had written a poem and she had him read it. Then he gave it to me to read and I asked to share this with you all. Do you want your last days to be joyful? Then make this day all His, all you are, all you have for He is preeminent in all things. She was a

precious poet warrior and I'd give anything to get her poem put to music. Here is what she wrote in her poem;

*Don't grieve for me for now I'm free,  
I'm following the path that God has laid for me.  
I took His hand when I heard Him call,  
I turned my back to Him and left it all.  
I could not stay another day, to laugh, to love, to work or play,  
Tasks left undone, well they will have to stay that way.  
I found that place at the close of day.  
If my parting has left a void,  
Then fill it with remembered joy.  
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,  
Ah these things too I will miss.  
Be not burdened with times of sorrow,  
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.  
My life's been full, I've savored much,  
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.  
Perhaps my life seemed all too brief  
But don't lengthen it now with undue grief.  
Lift up your heart and share with me,  
God wants me now, He set me free.*

Isn't this a beautiful picture? She left all to come to Jesus now look at all the relationships she enjoyed because it was all Jesus. Now she is free because the day He called her she left everything for Him. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Will you follow Jesus? Will you surrender all? Will you give Him your all? Hear what the hymn says;

*All to Jesus I surrender,  
All to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him,  
In His presence daily live.*

*All to Jesus I surrender,  
Humbly at His feet I bow,  
Worldly pleasures all forsaken;  
Take me, Jesus, take me now.*

*All to Jesus I surrender,  
Make me, Savior, wholly Thine;  
Let me feel Thy Holy Spirit,  
Truly know that Thou art mine.*

*All to Jesus I surrender,  
Lord, I give myself to Thee;*

*Fill me with Thy love and power,  
Let Thy blessing fall on me.*

*I surrender all,  
I surrender all.  
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,  
I surrender all.*

Come and follow Him unhindered and un-entangled for He is enough. He is your life. He is not at the top of the list of your life. He is your life and will make the list for your life. I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

### Power Point

#### THREE BANQUET PARABLES TAKEAWAY

God saves those who need Him even though they do not want Him by pursuing them with a compelling message, messengers and a minister.

#### THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Christ's Non-Negotiable Terms

Christ's Clarifying Questions

Christ's Focused Summation

#### LIFE TAKEAWAY

Salvation is free, but Discipleship Costs

To follow Christ is to obey Christ...

To obey Christ is to love Christ...

To love Christ is to have no rivals for our adoration-affection-allegiance