



First Baptist Church Selmer

TRANSFORMED: FROM DEATH TO LIFE TO ABUNDANT LIFE • RENUNCIATION •
LUKE 14:25-35 • 6/16/2024

MAIN POINT

Following Jesus requires us to love Him more than anything, or anyone, else.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Has there ever been a time you obeyed God's will, but in doing so, caused others (even family) to be upset with you?

How can following God's will lead to differences, disagreements, and divisions even against family members?

At its core, the call to discipleship is about identity. Jesus wants us to identify ourselves first and foremost as His followers. But we tend to identify ourselves by the things of this world we most value, like our relationships, our belongings, and our jobs. Following God's will for your life can be very different than how others believe your life should go.

Through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God wants us to fully trust in Him despite even what others may have planned for our lives. This doesn't give us a license to sin or arrogantly turn our noses up to others but shows us that God wants us to live our lives fully devoted to His plan alone.

We will look today at Jesus' call to His disciples in Luke 14:25-35. Following Him comes with a cost; we have to sacrifice the things of this world to be His faithful disciples.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 14:25-27.

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.'" (ESV)

What's your initial reaction to these words from Jesus? Why?

Why might following Jesus cost you relationships?

Do family commitments or other priorities ever hinder your commitment to first seek God's will or plan for your life? Why or why not?

In this teaching, Jesus emphasized that His followers were to love Him above everyone else, including their own families. Following Christ is giving Him primary allegiance. This truth is easier to understand than it is to practice. As disciples of Christ, we must understand and accept that our relationship with Him takes precedence over all other relationships.

What actions can you take to ensure that your relationship with Jesus takes precedence over all other relationships?

What did Jesus mean by bearing one's own cross and following Him (v. 27)?

Is it easier for you to prioritize your relationship with Jesus over your family or over your own interests?

In addition to putting Christ above family, Jesus added a second requirement for discipleship. The disciple must put Christ above self. What Christ has in mind is the absolute nature of His demand to follow Him. Jesus Himself was committed to His Father to the point of sacrificial death.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 14:28-33.

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 of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot by my disciple." (ESV)

What point was Jesus making through His illustrations about the builder and the king?

What did Jesus advise anyone to do before making a commitment to follow Him?

Jesus' two parables in these verses stress cost analysis. Jesus' point in these two stories about the builder and the king is aimed at those in the crowd who were considering becoming His disciples. They should count the cost of following Jesus before they embark on a life of following Him.

What typically keeps people from following Jesus today? What things in your life do you find most difficult to give up for the sake of following Christ?

What does this text reveal about why discipleship might cost you earthly possessions?

Having possessions does not keep a person from discipleship, however, if possessions control any person, it is not possible to live a life that is pleasing to God by making Him the top priority in it. God does not settle for second place. We should understand Jesus' command to give up their possessions as a willingness to do so whenever necessary to follow Him faithfully (Luke 12:33).

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 14:34-35.

34 "Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 35 It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (ESV)

What does the salt analogy emphasize about discipleship?

Have you had to forfeit a pursuit of something else—even something good—because of your commitment to Jesus?

In His concluding remarks about discipleship, Jesus compared discipleship to salt that has gotten wet and lost its flavor and its effectiveness. In reality, the salt really wasn't salt at all. Similarly, a disciple who values his or her earthly possessions more than Jesus is not a disciple at all. One enters into discipleship and continues in discipleship when he or she understands Jesus' uniqueness and infinite worth and thus puts Him above all. Anything less is not true discipleship; anything less is like salt that's salt in name only.

Read Hebrews 12:1-2. What do these verses call us to cast aside in order to follow Christ?

How does this encourage you in your effort to follow Jesus wholeheartedly?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What does "a lifestyle of sacrifice in the name of Jesus" look like? What are some of the key characteristics of this lifestyle?

Is there anything in your life right now that, if you gave it up, you would be better equipped to love people and point them to Christ? If so, what?

How can you support someone else in the group as he or she examines their own priorities this week?

PRAYER

Spend quiet time reflecting on the cost of discipleship and any convictions God is revealing about making Him your highest priority. Recommit yourself to God and the ministry He has called you to during this prayer time.

COMMENTARY

| LUKE 14:25-35

14:25. Jesus was back on the road again and heading toward Jerusalem. Great crowds were accompanying Him but were not following as disciples but as spectators. They simply were hanging around hoping to benefit in some way from Jesus' ministry. Jesus'

desire was not for the followers to remain as they were but to draw them to a choice of personal commitment. An open invitation—anyone who comes to Me—begins the message, and its difficult stipulation is to hate one's family. The list of family members includes the closest of family ties such as father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters. As the crowd was trying to absorb this teaching, Jesus added the additional requirement of hating even one's own life. Then Jesus concluded that anyone who does not comply with His words cannot be My disciple.

Matthew's Gospel (10:37) reveals that Jesus meant His followers were to love Him above everyone else, including their own families. Following Christ is giving Him primary allegiance. Christ followers understand and accept that their relationships with Jesus take precedence over all other relationships. His voice does not waver when claiming priority even over family loyalty—Follow Me (Luke 9:59).

14:27. In addition to putting Christ above family, Jesus added a second requirement for discipleship. The disciple must put Christ above self. Specifically, the stipulation is to bear one's own cross, a requirement that pictures the crucifixion. It was the very death Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem to face. If anyone does not put Jesus above any cost, Jesus said he or she cannot be His disciple. Again, the inclusive offer to whoever ends with the negative exclusion cannot be My disciple.

14:28-30. For which one of you is a rhetorical question that begins the first story and draws Christ's hearers into the plot. A builder, probably a farmer, had an idea—he wanted to build a tower. It must have been enormous because the foundation alone depleted his funds. His start did not have a finish. Such a project needed a first sit-down decision. He did not plan to fail, but he failed because he failed to plan. The embarrassment—begin to ridicule him—could have been avoided if the man had thought through (Jesus' word was calculate, meaning "count with pebbles") the amount needed to finish the construction. The builder fell victim to rushing into a project before counting the cost.

14:31-32. The second parable introduces a similar story, but the main character is a king, going to war against another king. This king, who had 10,000 troops, was being invaded by a greater king, who had 20,000. Here was another sit-down decision that called for thinking first before acting. Adding up the obvious, the king's decision was to send a delegation while the enemy was still far off and ask for terms of peace.

14:33. Then Jesus began to apply the two parables to discipleship. The phrase "*So then*" unites the two stories. The phrase "*every one of you*" is an inclusion without exception, and the phrase "*does not give up*" describes an attitude that refuses to let go. We should

understand Jesus' command to give up their possessions as a willingness to do so whenever necessary to follow Him faithfully (Luke 12:33).

14:34-35. In His concluding remarks about discipleship, Jesus compared discipleship to *"salt."* Salt was important to the people of the ancient East. It retarded decay in food, and of course it flavored food. In the first century most salt came from salt marshes rather than from the evaporation of salt water with the result that the salt contained many impurities. When salt got wet, it lost its flavor and its effectiveness. It was no longer salt at all. Similarly, a disciple who values his or her earthly possessions more than Jesus is really not a disciple at all. In a world full of competing voices, the disciple as well as the would-be disciple should give full attention to what he/she has just heard. This ending encourages ears to hear, to listen. This challenging statement moves information to application—put this to work in your life.