

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, WA
September 4, 2016

Luke 14:25-33

Following Jesus Means

Hymns: 464 – 428 – 550 -- 510

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? ²⁹ For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’

³¹“Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

Following Jesus Means

1. Hating

A. Jesus’ comment

1. Usually teaches us to love
2. Context: “Carry cross”
3. People can hinder us
4. Life can hinder us

B. Examples

1. Family Christmas gathering
2. Home ownership

II. Committing

A. Jesus’ story

1. Tower demands commitment
2. Figure out ahead to time

B. Commitment needed

1. Punchline
2. Cost involved later if not sooner
3. Goal needs longterm commitment

C. Personal Evaluation

1. Don’t like cost; can’t keep commitment
2. Jesus makes it possible

III. Fighting

A. Jesus’ story

1. Battle—possible victory?
2. If lose, don’t fight

B. Fighting required

1. Becoming Xian = no pain
2. Fight with devil
3. Fight with world
4. Fight with self

C. Can’t win on my own

1. Jesus wants that conclusion
2. Jesus helps us fight. May you be

followers of Jesus

IA1 (Luke 14:25) “ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: {26}“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple.” Hate your father, mother, wife, children, brothers & sisters, even your own life!? That sounds like the opposite of what Jesus usually taught. He usually taught us to love our lives because life is a gift from God. He usually taught us to love our family members because when we do that we are reflecting His attitude toward us.

2 What does he mean here? Notice what the topic is. “If anyone comes to me.” A little later - “he cannot be my disciple.” Jesus is telling us what it takes to be a follower, a disciple of His. {27} “And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” A cross is any difficulty which comes into a person’s life here on this earth because that person is connected with Jesus. It would include physical persecution, verbal ridicule, economic intimidation, or social isolation. Jesus is saying a person has to be able to put up with these things if that person is going to be a follower, a disciple of His. All of these things potentially hinder us from following Jesus.

3 It is in that setting, when that is being discussed, that He says: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, he cannot be my disciple.” If people in our lives contradict our desire to follow Jesus, we are to hate them. If people in our lives hinder us from following Jesus, we are to hate them. If people in our lives try to prevent us from following Jesus, we are to hate them. Even if the people are father, mother, wife children, brothers or sisters, we are to hate them. We are to renounce our normal affections for them and hate them because of what they are doing to our attempt to follow Jesus.

4 {26}“If anyone comes to me and does not hate even his own life--he cannot be my disciple.” If my lifestyle hinders me from following Jesus, I am to hate it. If my life’s work contradicts my desire to follow Jesus, I am to hate it. If my life’s holdings hinder me from following Jesus, I am to hate it. Even if my life - and that includes my lifestyle, life’s work, and life’s holdings - is a gift from God, I am to hate it because of what it is doing to my attempt to follow Jesus.

B1 Let’s make an attempt at coming up with an example. Even though it is three months away, let’s use Christmas as an example. You get along well with your family. You are required by the pressure of the family to be at the gathering of the clan for Christmas Eve. It is entirely a secular event. Jesus is not the focus of the gathering. It conflicts with your ability to worship your Savior with your brothers and sisters in the faith on Christmas Eve and makes it impossible for you to worship your Savior on Christmas Day. If you don’t attend the gathering, you are verbally attacked and socially isolated by your own family members. It is proper for you to renounce your normal affections for them and hate what they are doing to you as you attempt to follow Jesus. Jesus says so.

2 Another attempt at an example. I love my home. It is beautiful, comfortable, practical and in a good location. But it requires a lot of money. In addition to the time that it takes to earn the money that is needed, it takes a lot of time to keep it looking beautiful. It also takes a lot of time to keep everything working properly so that it remains comfortable. Very often I find myself not having enough time to be growing spiritually in my relationship with Jesus, not having enough time to carry out my role of spiritual shepherd by leading my family closer to Jesus. It is proper for you to renounce your love for your lifestyle, life’s work and life’s holdings and hate your life for what it is doing to you as you attempt to follow Jesus. Jesus says so.

IIA1 “Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: {28}“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? {29}For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, {30}saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ Jesus doesn’t tell us why the person wanted to build the tower. It doesn’t matter. Jesus’ point is it took a huge amount of wealth to build a tower. Maybe everything this person owned. He had to decide whether he wanted to make such a commitment.

2 How was he going to make such a decision? He had to try to figure out ahead of time whether he could accomplish building a tower with the assets he had. If he did not do that, he could commit all of his wealth to the project, start the project, run out of assets, and still not have a tower. If he tried to figure it out ahead of time, and came to the conclusion that he did not have enough assets, he would not start the project.

B1 Jesus punchline is the last verse: {33} “In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” So, the meaning of this paragraph must be: Following Jesus means making a complete long-term commitment. That commitment over the long term will cost you. People need to be aware of that.

2 Let’s look at some chronology. I am brought to faith as a little one through the waters of Baptism. No cost there. I spend my early years in a loving Christian family. Everybody believes that Jesus is the Savior. No cost there. I am educated in a Christian congregation where I publicly confess that Jesus died to wipe away my sins, Jesus lived to cover me with his righteousness, and Jesus rose so I will live forever with Him. No cost there. I am also educated in a system which makes me feel foolish for believing what I believe. I can either be not so open about it or get shunned. There’s a cost there. I pursue vigorously a profession in which it is very difficult to do things God’s way. I can either not do things God’s way or not do as well as I might. There’s a cost there. I am given the ability to experience many things in this life with the people who have become my friends. Some of it is not pleasing to God. I can either go along with what they are doing or not be as closely connected with them. There’s a cost there. Jesus point is - we need to know that over the course of time a long-term commitment to following Jesus will involve some cost.

3 Let’s look at the goal. I want to be a follower of Jesus until the Lord calls me out of this life so that I might spend eternity with Jesus. My faith in Jesus when I was a little child won’t affect my eternity if I have lost my faith during the course of my life. My godliness when I was surrounded by a Christian support system at certain points in my life won’t counterbalance my impenitence and rejection of Jesus’ forgiveness for my godless lifestyle if that is where I am when the Lord calls me out of this life. Jesus’ point is - following Him means a lifelong commitment.

C1 Let’s be honest. I don’t like it when something costs me something. I don’t want to lose my friends because I follow Jesus. I don’t want to lose my success because I follow Jesus. I don’t want to lose out on anything because I follow Jesus. I don’t want to make this kind of a commitment. And even if I do, I know I won’t be able to keep it. That is a correct evaluation of me, a sinful human being.

2 But I can do all things through Him who gives me strength. Jesus is my best friend. What greater success is there than having a eternal relationship with God. What better experience can there be than an eternity with the Lord. Jesus makes us aware of the cost of being a disciple.. Jesus makes us aware of the commitment involved in following Him. But Jesus makes us able to do all things by giving us the strength to do even those things that we wouldn’t want to do on our own.

IIIA1 “Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: {31}”Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? {32}If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. A lot of evaluation has to happen before someone goes into a war. The king Jesus describes evaluates his troop strength. He is outnumbered two to one. Would his position make it a fair fight? Would his better equipment make it a fair fight?

2 If he sees that there is no way that he will be able to conquer the enemy, he will not go into the battle. On the basis of his evaluation he determined he would lose his army and his kingdom. That was not what he wanted. So, he would take his chances on the agreements made in a peace treaty.

B1 Becoming a follower of Jesus is the easiest thing in the world. It takes no effort on our part. Eternal life is a gift. God gives it to us freely. He forgives our sins because Jesus died on the cross. He gives us the holiness which Jesus lived in our place. He exempts us from punishment because Jesus suffered it for us. He gives us unending life because Jesus rose from the dead. He gives us faith by sending the Holy Spirit into our lives. It’s all a gift. Free. What could be easier than that!?

2 Following Jesus is the hardest thing in the world. That is because we are immediately in a war. The devil hates it that we have become followers of Jesus. He uses every tactic He can to disengage us from our relationship with Jesus. He tries to convince us that we are going to be missing too much if we follow Jesus. He tries to convince us that we are good enough to live forever on our own and we shouldn’t need a crutch like Jesus. Jesus wants us to be like the king who knew ahead of time what the fight was going to be like.

3 Following Jesus is the hardest thing in the world. It means we have to be constantly fighting. The people around us are going to be influencing our attitudes just by exercising their approach to life. Since their approach to life isn’t God’s approach to life, we have to be fighting it otherwise it will overwhelm us. If we aren’t aware of the need to be fighting, we are going to become just like everybody else and we won’t even notice it. Jesus wants us to be like the king who knew ahead of time what the fight was going to be like.

4 Following Jesus is the hardest thing in the world. It means there is a civil war going on inside each of us every day. The old sinful self which remains a part of us as long as we are in this world insists that self has to come first otherwise we will be overwhelmed by all the other selfish people in the world. Sinful pride keeps insisting that we are better than most of the scum in the world around us and God ought to be satisfied with our best efforts. Since this is an inside lobbying job, we don’t even notice when love for others and trust in Jesus is fading out of the picture. Jesus wants us to be like the king who knew ahead of time what the fight was going to be like.

C1 The devil, the overwhelming numbers of the people around me, my own sinful self. Too many enemies. I am outnumbered. I can’t win this war on my own. I need some help. That is exactly where Jesus wants to lead us with this little story. Remember the punchline. {33}In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. One of the things we give up as followers of Jesus is our self-reliance. We rely on Jesus.

2 What gets us through the fighting? Jesus doesn’t allow anyone to pluck us out of His hands. Jesus gives us real abundance in life. Jesus convinces us that it is a privilege to be the salt of the earth. Jesus love for us compels us to love others. Jesus makes it possible for us to be humble.

Lord help us to continue to hate what is necessary, commit what is necessary, and fight what is necessary so that we might continue to follow Jesus.