

**5-Day Devotional
based on Sunday's message:**



COST OF THE MISSION

*Part 1 - Count the Cost
Luke 14:25-35*

Provided by



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Luke 14:25-35

A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, “If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. “But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say, ‘There’s the person who started that building and couldn’t afford to finish it!’ “Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? And if he can’t, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own. “Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown away. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!”

Day 1: Heart Check: Conviction or Convenience?

Devotional

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to follow Jesus when life is going well? When the bills are paid, relationships are smooth, and everything feels manageable, discipleship seems almost effortless. However, what happens when following Christ requires sacrifice? When it means choosing His way over the comfortable path? Jesus knew that many would be drawn to Him for the wrong reasons like seeking miracles, provision, or social acceptance rather than genuine transformation. He understood that true discipleship isn't built on fleeting emotions or temporary benefits, but on deep, unshakeable conviction. Think about your own journey with Christ. Are there areas where you've been following Him out of convenience rather than conviction? Maybe it's easier to attend church when you don't have other plans, or to be generous when you have extra money, or to forgive when the hurt isn't too deep. The beautiful truth is that Jesus doesn't want reluctant followers. He wants wholehearted disciples who choose Him not because it's easy, but because He's worth it. When our following is rooted in conviction, we discover a joy and purpose that circumstances can't shake. We find that even in difficulty, there's a deep satisfaction in walking with the One who loves us perfectly. Conviction-based discipleship doesn't mean we'll never struggle or doubt. It means that beneath our questions and challenges, there's a settled trust that Jesus is who He says He is and that His way is always best. This kind of faith becomes the foundation for everything else in our spiritual journey.

Bible Verse

"A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, "If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.'" - Luke 14:25-26

Reflection Question

When you examine your relationship with Jesus, what evidence do you see that your following is based on conviction rather than convenience?

Quote

Are you following Jesus out of conviction in your heart, or are you following him out of convenience?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, search my heart and reveal any areas where I've been following You out of convenience rather than conviction. Help me to love You supremely, not because it's easy, but because You are worthy of my wholehearted devotion. Strengthen my faith to choose You even when it costs me something. Amen.

Day 2: Counting the Cost

Devotional

Before starting any significant project, wise people count the cost. A contractor calculates materials and labor before breaking ground. A couple budgets carefully before buying their first home. A student considers the time and financial investment before pursuing a degree. Jesus applies this same principle to discipleship. When Jesus spoke about counting the cost, He wasn't trying to discourage people from following Him. Instead, He was encouraging honest evaluation and intentional commitment. He knew that impulsive decisions often lead to abandoned commitments, and He wanted His followers to understand what they were signing up for. Discipleship will cost us. It will cost our independence. We can no longer live solely for ourselves. It will cost our priorities. His kingdom must come before our personal agendas. Sometimes it will cost our reputation, our comfort, even our safety. However, here's what Jesus wants us to understand, that the cost is always worth it. When we truly grasp what we gain in Christ, forgiveness, purpose, eternal life, intimate relationship with God, the cost seems small in comparison. It's like discovering a treasure so valuable that selling everything else to obtain it feels like the deal of a lifetime. The question isn't whether discipleship will be costly because it will be. The question is whether we believe Jesus is worth the cost. When we see Him clearly, when we understand His love and His purpose for our lives, the answer becomes obvious. He's worth everything we could ever give up and infinitely more.

Bible Verse

"“But don't begin [following me] until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it?" - Luke 14:28

Reflection Question

What specific costs have you experienced or might you need to face in following Jesus? How do these compare to what you've gained in Him?

Quote

Jesus is not discouraging followers, not at all. Do not hear that He's encouraging true discipleship, here. He's warning against impulsive faith, saying don't start what you don't intend to finish.

Prayer

Father, give me wisdom to count the cost of discipleship honestly, and give me faith to see that Jesus is worth every sacrifice. Help me not to follow impulsively, but with deep conviction and commitment. Show me the treasure that is found in Christ alone. Amen.

Day 3: The Death That Leads to Life

Devotional

"Take up your cross" would have sent chills down the spines of Jesus' first-century audience. They had seen condemned criminals carrying wooden beams through the streets to their execution. When Jesus used this imagery, He wasn't speaking metaphorically about minor inconveniences. He was talking about death. However, this death Jesus calls us to isn't physical, but the death of our old way of living. It's dying to the illusion that we can control our lives, that we know what's best for ourselves, that our way is better than God's way. It's surrendering every right to be the master of our own destiny. This sounds terrifying until we realize what this death actually produces, which is life. Real life. Abundant life. When we stop trying to save our lives through our own efforts and surrender them to Jesus, we discover what we were truly created for. We find purpose, peace, and joy that we never knew were possible. Think of it like a seed that must be buried in the ground to produce a harvest. The seed "dies" to what it was so it can become something far greater. When we die to ourselves, we don't become less, but become who God always intended us to be. This daily dying to self isn't a one-time decision but a continual choice. Each morning we can choose to surrender our plans, our desires, our rights to Jesus. Each time we do, we discover more of the abundant life He promises to those who follow Him completely.

Bible Verse

"Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me." - Luke 9:23

Reflection Question

What areas of your life are you still trying to control instead of surrendering to Jesus? What might it look like to "die" to those areas?

Quote

Following Me (Jesus) means dying to yourself. Not just believing in who Jesus was, not just admiring who Jesus was, but surrendering every right to control in your own life.

Prayer

Jesus, I confess that I often want to follow You while still maintaining control over my life. Help me to truly take up my cross daily, dying to my own will and surrendering completely to Yours. Show me the abundant life that comes through this surrender. Amen.

Day 4: The Treasure Worth Everything

Devotional

Imagine discovering a treasure chest buried in a field filled with more wealth than you could spend in a lifetime. What would you do? You'd probably sell everything you owned to buy that field, right? The temporary sacrifice would be nothing compared to the permanent gain. This is exactly how Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven. It's a treasure so valuable that giving up everything else to obtain it is the wisest decision we could ever make. The problem is that we often can't see the treasure clearly because we're too focused on what we think we're giving up. When Jesus asks us to surrender everything, He's not asking us to become miserable or empty-handed. He's inviting us to trade our small, temporary treasures for something infinitely greater and eternal. He's asking us to release our grip on things that will ultimately disappoint us so we can embrace what will truly satisfy. The beautiful truth is that we don't surrender out of duty or with grumbling hearts. We surrender out of delight because we've caught a glimpse of what we gain in Jesus Christ. We've tasted His love, experienced His peace, and discovered His purpose for our lives. Every person who has truly encountered Jesus and understood His worth finds the same thing, that He is the treasure that's worth everything. Everything we thought we couldn't live without pales in comparison to the joy, purpose, and eternal life we find in Him. The cost of discipleship isn't really a cost at all. It's the best investment we'll ever make.

Bible Verse

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field." - Matthew 13:44

Reflection Question

How has your understanding of Jesus as the ultimate treasure changed the way you view the things you once thought you couldn't live without?

Quote

Jesus is the treasure that's worth everything. Everything!

Prayer

Lord, open my eyes to see You as the treasure You truly are. Help me to value You above all else and to find joy in surrendering everything to gain You. Thank You, that in losing my life for Your sake, I find true life. Amen.

Day 5: Salt That Transforms

Devotional

Salt in the ancient world was precious. It was used to preserve food, enhance flavor, and even used as currency. However, salt that lost its saltiness became worthless, good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. Jesus uses this powerful image to describe what happens when disciples lose their distinctiveness. When we follow Jesus halfheartedly, when we try to keep one foot in His kingdom and one foot in our own, we become like flavorless salt. We're present but powerless. We attend church but don't influence our communities. We claim to follow Christ but live indistinguishably from those who don't know Him. But when we embrace full surrender to Jesus, something beautiful happens. We become agents of transformation in our world. Our lives begin to "flavor" every environment we enter. Our marriages, workplaces, neighborhoods, and friendships are seasoned with the love, grace, and truth of Christ. This isn't about being perfect, but about being authentic. When people see us living with genuine conviction, loving sacrificially, and trusting God through difficulties, they taste something different. They see that following Jesus isn't just another religious activity but a life-transforming relationship. The mission of God advances through fully devoted disciples who haven't lost their saltiness. When we stop following fully, we stop influencing effectively. However, when we surrender completely to Christ, we become the salt and light this world desperately needs. We become not just believers, but builders of God's kingdom. Not just fans, but faithful followers who make a difference wherever God places us.

Bible Verse

"Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown away. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!" - Luke 14:34-35

Reflection Question

In what specific ways can you be "salt" in your current circumstances, bringing the flavor of Christ's love and truth to those around you?

Quote

When we stop following fully, we stop influencing effectively. And that's when mission stalls.

Prayer

Father, I don't want to be salt that has lost its flavor. Help me to live with such authentic faith and love that others are drawn to You through my life. Use me as an agent of transformation in my family, workplace, and community. Make me a faithful ambassador of Your kingdom. Amen.