

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY NOTES ▪ October 29, 2017

Guest Pastor Allen Parr

SERIES: Preparing the Church to Leave the Building

SERMON: The High Price for a Free Gift

Text: Luke 14:25-35

CENTRAL MESSAGE:

Many people confuse Christianity with discipleship. A person can be a Christian without necessarily being a disciple. The church is great at making Christians and even getting people to join the church, but what exactly does it look like to make a disciple? Sadly, we have sold people the idea that it's enough to say a prayer, walk the aisle and attend church and that equates to being a disciple. Jesus had an altogether different picture of what a disciple is. In this message, we will take a detailed look at how Jesus pictured and described discipleship.

CONTEXT:

News about Jesus had spread around town and people knew that Jesus could heal people with the touch of His hand. People had heard about how amazing a speaker He was. They heard about how great He was at debating the greatest theologians of the day. They heard that He could feed more than 5,000 people with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread. They had heard that He could even control the weather.

And so it's a lot like today. These people were part of the crowd but they weren't *committed*. They were more like *fans* than *followers*. And so perhaps this large crowd of people was interested in seeing a magic show or following him for a free handout or for what they thought they could get from Him. And so Jesus has what every preacher dreams of having...a large crowd of people following Him. Here is His chance to let them know that He can heal their marriage and erase their debt and prosper them with wealth. Here's His chance to hand out

AMITY BIBLE CHURCH

“Knowing God and Making Him Known”

fish sandwiches in hopes that an even bigger crowd will come back next week!

But, Jesus doesn't do that. Instead, Jesus gives this crowd the most honest and clearest picture about what it really means to be a disciple...what it really means to call yourself a Christian...what it really means to be a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. He doesn't sugar coat it. He doesn't water it down. He's not trying to build a mega-church. Instead, He presents six paradigm shifts. He challenges the crowd to change their mind about whatever they thought it meant to be a disciple of Jesus.

“If Anyone”

This is not just a special call for pastors or missionaries. Jesus is clear that the expectation for discipleship and commitment is the same for everyone. Every man, woman, boy, or girl - no matter your color, socioeconomic status, political views – every usher, musician, greeter, AV worker, youth worker, children worker, pastor, deacon, trustee, missionary, staff member. What Jesus is about to say is a call to discipleship no matter who you are!

Qualification #1: A True Disciple elevates FAMILY over FAITH (Luke 14:25-26)

In this section, Jesus challenges the crowd to consider that if they are going to be His disciples, they must be willing to elevate Him above and beyond every other significant relationship in their lives, including the relationship with their family. This was very tough because the people He was speaking to placed an extremely high value on family. In many instances, family was all they had. Allegiance to Jesus must be in a category within itself.

Qualification #2: A True Disciple displays SACRIFICE over SELF-CENTEREDNESS (Luke 14:26)

Salvation costs you nothing, but discipleship will cost you everything. One of the things that Jesus is calling for here is total surrender, total sacrifice. What Jesus is saying is, “If you're not willing to give up your entire life for Me, then you cannot be my disciple.” Christians are afraid to give up control of certain things to God because they know that if they do, then God just may require them to do something they are not comfortable doing. So, we stay in what I call comfortable Christianity. We remain in the crowd! We attend church and still give, but we never move from the crowd to the committed.

SO MANY GIVE SO LITTLE TO THE ONE WHO GAVE SO MUCH

Qualification #3: A True Disciple prepares for a life of PAIN over PLEASURE (Luke 14:27)

Jesus then says that if anyone does not carry their cross, they cannot be His disciple. In this day, people knew exactly what it meant to carry their cross. This meant the willingness to be crucified if indeed it came to that. We live in a time when many preachers are preaching an easy life leading to disillusionment. Jesus is brutally honest with His followers about the true cost of discipleship. We love lives of pleasure, but we must brace for times of pain.

Qualification #4: A True Disciple elevates RELATIONSHIP over RELIGION (Lk. 14:27)

Next, Jesus invites His audience to “follow Him.” This was an invitation for them to be His disciples. The word disciple literally means learner. He is still inviting us to be His learners - lifelong learners. This means we must spend time with Him and develop intimacy rather than just attending church and doing our religious duties.

Qualification #5: A True Disciple values COMMITMENT over CONVENIENCE (Luke 14:28-33)

Jesus then gives two examples of people who give careful consideration before making a commitment. If we do not do this, we will have half-finished erected towers which then leads to being ridiculed by the outside world. A true disciple counts the cost before making a commitment instead of committing to everything leading to burnout and eventually having to quit.

Qualification #6: A True Disciple is USEFUL to God rather than USELESS (Luke 14:34-35)

Jesus, as usual, compares us to salt. Salt was a very precious commodity in those days. It was used as a flavor enhancement and also to preserve food from spoiling. Both uses were to create change in its environment. Salt loses its saltiness if it becomes contaminated with other minerals. The analogy is clear. When we allow ourselves to become contaminated with the world, we lose our saltiness and therefore become as useless to God as salt that has lost its flavor. A secondary use of salt was for fertilizer to keep weeds from going. But, Jesus says He can't even use us for that if we lose our saltiness. This is a call to remain uncontaminated by the world so we can remain useful to God.

Jesus closed this teaching out by inviting His followers to truly listen to what He was saying. He said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.” We should meditate on this and ask ourselves if we are truly willing to be genuine disciples of Jesus Christ.