

PARABLES OF JESUS

PARABLES ON THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP, LUKE 14:25-35

A. An emphasis on discipleship (25-27)

1. Jesus left the banquet and great crowds followed Him (25), *Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them,*
 - a. Jesus had just taught at a banquet about the coming banquet in the messianic kingdom which was free to those who receive the Messiah. His emphasis changed as He spoke to large crowds on the way to Jerusalem. Now, they will hear what it will cost them if they choose to continue following Him to the cross because discipleship is costly.
 - b. Thomas Constable, *Salvation guarantees heaven, but it also calls for complete commitment to Jesus, not to secure heaven but to express gratitude for heaven.*
2. He described two demands for following Him (26-27), *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. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.*
 - a. One's first priority is Jesus.
 - 1) To the Hebrew, love and hate are not necessarily words of emotion but a decision of the will.
 - a) To love is to choose whereas to hate is to reject.
 - b) Note Romans 9:13, *As it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.*
 - c) J. Dwight Pentecost, *God's love for Jacob was demonstrated in His choice of him to be the heir to the Abrahamic promise, and God showed His hatred of Esau in setting him aside from the line of promise. Thus loving and hating were manifestations of God's choice.*
 - 2) Jesus was emphasizing the importance of His role in the lives of those who choose to follow Him.
 - a) Our love for Christ must be so deep that it exceeds our love for family.
 - b) True commitment to Christ demands that one love Jesus more than oneself.
 - b. One must openly identify with Jesus.
 - 1) Persecution comes to those who follow Christ.
 - a) Apostles, Acts 5:41, *Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.*
 - b) Paul, Acts 9:16, *For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.*
 - c) Christians, Philippians 1:29, *For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.*
 - 2) Obedience is non-negotiable.
 - a) Disciples must not only choose to follow Him but obey Him, as well.
 - b) The cross of Christ was Jesus' test of obedience. God's will is the disciple's test of obedience.
 - 3) Identification with Jesus confirms His authority, John Martin, *When the Roman Empire crucified a criminal or captive, the victim was often forced to carry his cross part of the way to the crucifixion site. Carrying his cross through the heart of the city was supposed to be a tacit admission that the Roman Empire was correct in the sentence of death imposed on him, an admission that Rome was right and he was wrong. So when Jesus enjoined His followers to carry their crosses and follow Him, He was referring to a public display before others that Jesus was right and that the disciples were following Him even to their deaths.*

B. The cost of discipleship (28-33)

1. The Parable of the Tower Builder (28-30), *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? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'*
 - a. One must understand that there is a cost involved in following Jesus.
 - 1) Jesus told this parable to those in the crowd who were thinking of following Him.
 - 2) One should count the cost before starting a large project.
 - 3) Jesus wanted people to know that there is much more to following Jesus than being observers.

- b. There are consequences for one who starts following Jesus but then stops.
 - 1) Such action brings ridicule on the person as well as on Jesus.
 - 2) Zane Hodges, *The simple fact is that the New Testament never takes for granted that believers will see discipleship through to the end. And it never makes this kind of perseverance either a condition or a proof of final salvation from hell.*
 - c. Do I have the right motives, the right stuff to be a disciple?
2. The Parable of the King going to Battle (31-32), ***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? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.***
- a. One must plan for success.
 - 1) This parable continues Jesus' instruction on discipleship.
 - 2) It is important to assess one's motives and gifts as well as the strength of the enemy.
 - 3) Thomas Constable, *Jesus was not encouraging people to stop following Him because they feared they could not withstand temptations. He wanted them to follow Him, but intelligently, not naively.*
 - b. Lack of planning leads to defeat.
 - 1) There is not only the possibility of failing a task but failing one's purpose.
 - 2) Discipleship is spiritual warfare against the enemy of our souls.
 - 3) Zane Hodges, *Discipleship to Jesus Christ is not an invitation to a Sunday school picnic. It is an invitation to spiritual warfare.*
 - c. Do I understand how powerful the enemy is?
3. The call of Jesus to total commitment (33), ***So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.***
- a. This is a call to make Jesus the priority of one's life.
 - b. Possessions must not control a disciple. They must be useful in the pursuit of following Christ.
 - c. Thomas Constable, *...one should not begin following Jesus without being willing to sacrifice anything to complete that project successfully.*
 - d. Saint Francis de Sales, *We must live in this world as though the soul was already in heaven and the body moldering in the grave.*
 - e. Do I understand how seductive this life is?
- C. The importance of discipleship (34-35), ***Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 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.***
1. Jesus compared a disciple to salt.
 - a. Eugene Deatrick, *Salt was important in the ancient East because it flavored food, retarded decay, and in small doses fertilized land.*
 - b. Donald Carson, *Most salt in the ancient world came from salt marshes or the like rather than from the evaporation of salt water, so it contained many impurities. The sodium was more soluble than many of the impurities. It could leach out leaving a substance so dilute that it was of little worth.*
 - c. As salt could lose its saltiness, so disciples can lose passion for Jesus.
 - d. Thomas Constable, *The disciple who does not continue following Jesus faithfully falls under divine judgment, not that he will lose his salvation but part of his reward, specifically the opportunity for further significant service.*
 - e. A disciple who doesn't continue following Jesus has lost his purpose for living.
 2. He urged those to understand the implications of His teaching.
 - a. Those considering discipleship must realize the importance and difficulty of that commitment.
 - b. Discipleship is not difficult. It is impossible if I don't realize that it must be the work of God in and through me.
 3. Do I realize what it means to be a disciple of Jesus?